

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1922**

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TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER, 1922.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES,  
1921-1922.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message transmitting the Supplementary Estimates, Revenue, Trust and Special, and Loan No. 2, 1921-1922.

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

VOTE OF CREDIT.

ON ACCOUNT 1923-1924.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message recommending that provision be made, on account, for the services of the several departments of the public service for the year ending 30th June, 1924, of the following sums:—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £1,200,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of £700,000;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £600,000.

The message was ordered to be referred to the Committee of Supply.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I desire the permission of the House to make a personal explanation.

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: During the discussion upon the Estimates of the Department of Public Works on the 6th instant, the Minister in charge of that department made personal references to myself. By interjection, he desired to know how much I had paid the "Courier" for the insertion of an address to the electors of Nundah in the year 1893. Later he read what he stated was a translation of a circular printed in German and commented thereon. As I have never had the opportunity of seeing the supposed original circular, though I have endeavoured to do so for the past twenty-nine years, I cannot express an opinion upon the accuracy of the translation even. As this translation distorts well-known facts and is inaccurate, is not signed by my usual signature, and misnames my address at that date, I would much like to see the original. The supposed translation appeared under an advertisement signed by the late Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who therein advised the electors of Nundah not to vote for me, and was signed and authorised on behalf of the committee of the candidate endorsed by that leader, who was then Premier of the State. It was admitted to be a political squib at my expense. During the war the Labour party quoted this

mythical translation in the House, and also published it by circular distributed to the electors of the Albert at the last two general elections. My conduct during the war and my life's record previous thereto, no doubt caused such electors to estimate the object of my opponents at its true value, as evidenced by the increased majorities cast for me on each such occasion. Obituary notices of my late father's descent, which appear in the "Brisbane Courier" and "Daily Mail" of 26th May, 1910, four years before the war, are identical with those of my personal explanation in this House on 5th November, 1914. Quoting from "Hansard," volume cxviii., of the year 1914, page 1756, I said—

"I am proud to be descended from so noble a man as my late maternal grandfather."

To-day I am still as proud, and I only wish that I could emulate the good works of that noble man mentioned for his labours for the welfare of his fellows by all early historians of our State. His name to-day still remains a household word in the electorate which I have the honour to represent and in other districts of south-eastern Queensland. I refer to the late Pastor Haussmann.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Another political squib; another "dud."

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—SIXTEENTH  
ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.  
DISTRICT OFFICES.

Question stated—

"That £73,120 be granted for 'District Offices.'"

Mr. J. JONES (*Kennedy*): I take this opportunity of placing before the Committee some figures in regard to the number of stock owned by cattle-breeders in Queensland. I do that because, whenever I rise to speak on this question in this House, I am accused by Government members of speaking in the interests of the large graziers in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: You may not think so, but you do so.

Mr. J. JONES: The figures I have comprise the following districts:—Burke, Burnett, Cook, Darling Downs, Gregory North, Gregory South, Leichhardt, Maranoa, Mitchell, Moreton, North Kennedy, Port Curtis, South Kennedy, Warrego, and Wide Bay. The total number of owners in those districts owning 1,000 head of cattle and over is 916. The number owning from 301 to 1,000 is 1,682; those owning from 101 to 300 total 4,431; while the men owning under 100 head total 39,203. The total number of owners is 46,232, and they own 6,455,067 head of cattle. That means that only one in every fifty-four owners in Queensland owns over 100 head of cattle.

Mr. COLLINS: 916 owned more than all the rest put together.

Mr. J. JONES: The hon. member is quite wrong; there are hundreds of owners who own from 1,000 up to 3,000.

Mr. COLLINS: Give us the exact figures.

Mr. J. JONES: I have not got the exact figures. I have given the figures relating to small owners, and I cannot do more than that. I do not think that 916 big graziers

*Mr. J. Jones.]*

returned all the members of the Opposition; it is the small owners who returned members on this side.

Mr. POLLOCK: The big fellows coax them into the Graziers' Association.

Mr. J. JONES: Even when the small owners were getting £10 to £12 a head for their bullocks they were making only about £10 a week. I do not think that those men in the good days were making more than what could be called a fair thing, considering that they were living on their selections and had to maintain and educate their families in addition to paying rates, rents, and taxes. The same men who three years ago were receiving a gross income of £300 to £400 are to-day receiving a gross income amounting to about £100 or £150, and out of that amount they have to pay this rackrenting Government at least one-half. I would like the workers of Queensland—not the workers on cattle stations, but the men working on the railways, the men working in the factories, and the men working in the cities—just quietly to sit down and compare the two classes of graziers in Queensland. On the one hand, the selector with a paltry 300 or 400 head of cattle, and, on the other hand, the biggest pastoralist in Queensland—the owner of the State stations. The Government have to pay a rental of only 17s. per square mile, whereas the adjoining selector has to pay at the very least £2 a square mile. The selector has a wife and family to maintain, he has his children to educate, and he is put to expenses in connection with a hundred other forms of taxation. In good times the selector has to pay State income tax and Federal income tax.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is not true.

Mr. J. JONES: The Government, in connection with State stations, have to pay, roughly, about 17s. per square mile, and they also pay shire council rates and marsupial rates. They have no other liabilities excepting just to run the station. They have an unlimited supply of money, which they can borrow at 5 per cent. The selectors have to pay 7 per cent. to 8 per cent., and, if they get any financial assistance from the Government, they are charged 10 per cent. I ask any working man to consider the position of the State stations, owned by the biggest pastoralist in Australia, and paying the smallest rent and taxes. They cannot pay their way, yet they expect the poor, unfortunate selector to be able to pay all this taxation.

Mr. COLLINS: Tell us about the sheep stations.

Mr. J. JONES: I am dealing with the cattle industry; I am not referring to sheep stations. I am trying to impress upon the Government the serious position in which the cattle industry is to-day. I am not saying anything that is not correct. If hon. members opposite can refute any of my statements, I hope they will do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government recognise that serious position, and they are assisting the industry by reducing the railway freight on cattle and by allowing a remission of rent.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: By increasing the railway freight 60 per cent., and then reducing it by 20 per cent. That is the Government's form of assistance.

[Mr. J. Jones.]

Mr. J. JONES: Did I understand the Minister to say that the Government have given the small selector a reduction of rent?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A remission of rent.

Mr. J. JONES: I am glad to hear that. If we get a reduction, I am quite satisfied.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is only deferred; it is not a remission at all. Why does the Minister use the word "remission"? You want to mislead the Committee.

Mr. J. JONES: If the Government are only going to give a man time, that is not going to be of any assistance to him. Unless something is done to bring about a reduction of rent for the small selectors, Queensland is going to be very sorry for it. To-day land is being abandoned, and selections are being thrown up. The hon. member for Burke told us that land in the Gulf country was being abandoned.

Mr. RIORGAN: I did not say that. I said nobody was taking up country.

Mr. J. JONES: The hon. member seemed to be under the impression that, because people lived a long distance from the railway, they could not pay their way, and land was not being taken up. I can give this House instances where holdings totalling 140,000 acres within 40 miles of the Burdekin meatworks have been abandoned during the last twelve months, and if men cannot pay their way when they are living almost alongside meatworks, what chance have the men living out at Cloncurry 500 miles from a meatworks? If the Government do not recognise the position and grant a reduction in rents—

Mr. POLLOCK: You want the Government to give instructions to the Land Court?

Mr. J. JONES: They have done so in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not correct.

Mr. J. JONES: I do not for one moment wish to make any reflection on the Land Court, but men holding the position that the members of the court hold know the feeling of this so-called Labour Government. They know that for the last five or six years they have been howling about a rise in rents; they know what is expected of them, and naturally they do what is expected of them. When we have instances of where the Land Court has raised the rents higher than the Assessing Commissioners have valued the holdings, and in spite of that fact, the Government have appealed and said the rents were not high enough, which bears out my contention that these gentlemen have complied with the Government's wishes. It is an extraordinary thing that a Labour Government in particular should be so keen on raising rents; that they should think the only way to populate Queensland is by imposing high rentals. That seems to be the only idea of statesmanship that hon. members opposite have.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They placed the power in the hands of the Land Court.

Mr. J. JONES: Cut that out.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: To carry out the wishes of the Government.

Mr. J. JONES: For years and years the owners of these small holdings were supporters of Labour, but to-day they are

opposed to the Labour Government. They voted for Labour because they said Labour would always be fair to the under dog. I do not think they have been fair to the under dog.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Mitchell was returned unopposed.

Mr. J. JONES: That does not show that what I am saying is incorrect. The present Government are the hardest Government on the small man that Queensland has ever known. The Government stations are paying 17s. a mile rental, and they are charging selectors alongside up to £5 a mile.

Mr. FOLEY: Where is that?

Mr. J. JONES: Valpre. Mr. Morey, the owner of this place, said to me recently, "I have 100 bullocks to sell, and I will get £400 for them if I am lucky, and my rent comes to £350." He is a good man, and the Government leave him with £50 for the year—not one-third of what they are giving men in the city in the way of relief. Hon. members opposite seem to imagine that they are going to populate Queensland by charging high rentals. It reminds me of a story I heard some years ago. A friend of mine—an Australian native, born of Irish parents—said he had heard so much about old Ireland—you know about the blarney stone and all those things. He made up his mind that if ever the time came when he was financially strong enough to go to Ireland, he would take the opportunity. The time came and he went there. He travelled over a great part of Ireland. On one occasion, he was travelling through an agricultural district. I might mention that this was the time when Ireland was suffering from the same disease that we are suffering from here—rent extraction. Men there did not know when their rents would be raised; the landlords could raise them as much as they liked. This man was being driven in a jaunting car.

Mr. BEBBINGTON interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would appeal to the hon. member for Drayton to restrain himself. As I have mentioned before, I would ask hon. members to give the "Hansard" staff a fair opportunity to report hon. members correctly. I hope the hon. member for Drayton will allow the hon. member for Kennedy to proceed.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. JONES: As I was saying, this man was travelling through an agricultural district. They passed one home which looked much superior to others, and the Australian said, "Paddy, who is living there?" The driver replied, "The man who owned the house was the landlord, and he used to live there, but he is dead now. The people shot him." The Australian asked what they shot him for, and the driver said, "He was talking about raising the rent." If landlords in Ireland were shot for talking about raising the rent, what should be the fate of this Government for not only raising the rents by 100 per cent. or 200 per cent. more, but making the increase retrospective for seven years.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Would you shoot them?

Mr. J. JONES: I would not. I would put them on selections of poor quality, and, after they had been there several years, I would

raise there rents 100 or 200 per cent. and make it retrospective for a few years. When the small cattle men got on their feet and had a few pounds to spare, the Government turned round and said, "We will raise your rents 200 per cent., and we will make the increase retrospective for seven years."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The rents have been increased by 600 per cent. in the Charters Towers district.

Mr. J. JONES: The Government hit these men with the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, which is generally known as the "Repudiation Act." I stand here for a reduction of rents for the small men, who are fifty times more important to Queensland than the big pastoralists. In the 1902 drought, these small men sold out their holdings to the bigger owners, and the result was that closer settlement decreased. That is taking place again to-day. The man who has a bit of money is buying out his neighbours all round, and where you have now a dozen settlers, in two years you will only have one station run by one man and some black boys. That means decreased population. I hope that the Government will show a little statesmanship and do something to help those men who are now losing money.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I do not know whether the hon. member who has just spoken was quite sincere in all that he said.

Mr. J. JONES: Quite serious.

Mr. POLLOCK: He made some serious reflections on the Land Court judges, which no member of the Committee could allow to pass unchallenged. He drew an analogy, in the first place, between rentals paid by small selectors and the rentals paid by the Government for the various State stations. In the absence of correct figures from the Lands Department, I am not prepared to say that those statements of his are correct.

Mr. KERR: He had the figures, and he gave them to you.

Mr. POLLOCK: Suppose he gave them, does the hon. member—who knows nothing at all about this question—suggest that the Government receive an unfair preference at the hands of the Land Court judges? That is what it amounts to.

Mr. J. JONES: Why should they get any preference at all?

Mr. POLLOCK: The rents of these stations were fixed some years ago by the Land Court, and when the term for which that rental was fixed has expired, what is to prevent the Land Court again raising the rental of those stations?

Mr. J. JONES: Why don't you pay income tax?

Mr. POLLOCK: Does the hon. gentleman say that the State stations are exempt from appeals to the Land Court?

Mr. J. JONES: Yes.

Mr. POLLOCK: The State stations are not exempt from appeals to the Land Court. In connection with the rentals, every hon. member knows that in almost every instance the big pastoralist does not pay nearly so much rental as the small selector has to pay.

Mr. J. JONES: That is just what I said.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is quite true; but that does not apply to the State stations. The State stations are not getting any unfair preference in that regard at all. The hon. gentleman made a statement which he has no

*Mr. Pollock.]*

right to make. He said deliberately that he believes an instruction was given by the Government to the Land Court.

Mr. J. JONES: So it is, indirectly.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is erroneous. The Land Court procedure is very simple. The judges of the Land Court are appointed for fifteen years at £1,000 per year; consequently they are above anything like intimidation from any party, whether it be the graziers or the Government. The position of a Land Court judge is one that should make him independent, but whether it works out in practice that way or not no one can say. People can hurl accusations against anybody in any office, but to say that the Government have attempted to interfere with the Land Court judges is quite wrong. The Government wish the Land Court judges to be in an independent position, and no one can say that the judges give a preference to anybody. No one should make a statement like that unless he has evidence to substantiate such a charge. If we take the procedure of the Land Court, we find that the assessing Commissioner, backed up by the land rangers—who should know every bit of country within their district—fix what they consider to be a fair rental on behalf of the Crown. They go into court armed with proofs of what they consider is a fair rental. The lessee of the country also has an opportunity of putting his case before the court, and the Land Court judge is there to hold the balance evenly between the two parties. What is wrong with such a system? If we wipe out that system, what shall we put in its place?

Mr. BRAND: Why is the rent for the State stations made smaller than the rent of the selector?

Mr. POLLOCK: The State stations have to come up for assessment the same as the others. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that the State stations and every other station in Queensland do not come up for reassessment? I say they do. There are many cases of stations now that are due for reassessment, but the Land Court has not yet had time to deal with them.

Mr. J. JONES: Owing to the repudiation.

Mr. POLLOCK: Repudiation! The hon. gentleman certainly seems to be obsessed with that catch-cry.

Mr. J. JONES: I am obsessed—that is quite true.

Mr. POLLOCK: The State stations will come before the Land Court for reassessment the same as the other stations. There is no reason why they should not. The State stations have to pay rates and taxes the same as the other stations.

Mr. MOORE: They do not pay rates. They give the local authorities a grant.

Mr. POLLOCK: Does not that amount to the same thing?

Mr. MOORE: No.

Mr. RIORDAN (to Mr. Moore): You know nothing whatever about it.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the Government did not give a grant to the local authorities, and if the Government had to have the rates of the State stations assessed by the local authorities, as almost every member of the local shire council is a station-owner, do you think the local station-owners would heavily

tax their own stations and put a light tax on the State stations? •

Mr. J. JONES: You are reflecting on the councils now.

Mr. POLLOCK: Of course, I know them. As to the councils, especially in cases of that kind, we know that the Government are looked upon as a fair mark. [11.30 a.m.] Everybody who can get the opportunity to take down the Government usually does it—(Opposition interjections)—and if the State stations were liable to rates and taxes, they would pay twice what the average station in the vicinity pays. (Opposition laughter.) The Government which stood for such a thing as the rating of State stations by private owners would find that the latter would get their own back for rentals by hitting the Government up for rates.

Mr. BRAND: Your argument is very weak.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is very sound, if you look at the personnel of the local authorities concerned. There is always a tendency on the part of such bodies to promote their own interests at the expense of the industries run by the Government. Suppose that they assessed the State stations for more than the private stations.

Mr. J. JONES: They cannot do that. You are talking nonsense.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about the right of appeal?

Mr. POLLOCK: There seems to be rather a storm of dissent, probably because the argument is not palatable to hon. members opposite.

Mr. BRAND: There is no argument at all in what you say.

Mr. POLLOCK: The late Dr. Kidston—who, I believe, was the best Land Court judge Queensland has had, although he was opposed to this party politically—laid down very definitely the principle that the fair rental for land should be based upon what experienced persons were willing to pay for the same class of land in the vicinity. That is a truism. It is common sense that a judge should say that, if Marathon station in the Hughenden district, for instance, is paying £1 per square mile and incoming selectors are prepared to pay £3 per mile, the station proper should also be compelled to pay £3. That was the reason for the passing of the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920. The pastoral lessees were separated only by a wire fence from land of the same kind in the same locality, but they were paying only one-third of what the selectors were paying, and there is nothing wrong with giving the Land Court power to charge the same rentals to both sections, as we have done. I am willing to admit that there is something in what the hon. member for Kennedy has said—that there happens to be a slump in the cattle industry.

Mr. J. JONES: Because the price of cattle rose, you raised the rents.

Mr. POLLOCK: The pastoralists did not raise wages on that basis.

Mr. J. JONES: The Arbitration Court did.

Mr. POLLOCK: There was no advocacy on the part of any hon. member on the other side, when cattle were at £14 and £15 a head, for an increase of wages, nor was there any action in that direction on the part of the pastoralists, yet immediately the price of

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cattle dropped a few pounds in value, despite the fact that the Government have given concessions to pastoralists—

Mr. J. JONES: What concessions have they given?

Mr. POLLOCK: They have reduced freights on the railways.

Mr. J. JONES: That does not affect the men on the coast. They cannot pay their way.

Mr. POLLOCK: Whether they can pay their way is a matter for determination by the Land Court. The Land Court has the whole of the evidence before it, and if it makes an unfair assessment and this House believes that a principle should be laid down to give the graziers relief, it is quite another matter. Perhaps it would be well, for a year or two until the market recovers, to give relief to the men who are suffering most seriously. It is a matter which is certainly open to argument, but it is certainly not open to argument in the case of sheep country. The Arbitration Court, not so long ago, decided that the wool industry was as prosperous as ever. The increased demand for fine wools among all sections of the community and from all parts of the world has created a big inquiry for merino wool. Everywhere we find the workers maintaining the right to dress in fine clothes, just the same as men who do not work; and one cannot but admire their attitude, and that demand—which probably will never cease—has placed Queensland on her feet, because in Queensland we grow practically nothing but merino wool. In New Zealand and other colder parts of the world they go in for crossbred wool, for which there is not such a demand.

Whether there is anything to guide the Government or the Land Court to a belief that a higher price is going to obtain for cattle in the near future I do not know. Perhaps there may be something to be said for the necessity for giving concessions to cattlemen on selections; but simply to criticise the Land Court judges, who fixed rentals of land when cattle were at a high value, is unfair. If the hon. member were to give notice of his intention to move that a definite instruction be laid down in the Land Act to give relief to men who have been suffering, and who have not been able to make a living at all because of the low prices of cattle, I could understand his attitude; but he has merely criticised men who have given a decision on the facts laid before them, and, in the big majority of cases, when cattle were at a very big price.

Mr. J. JONES: For how long? For four years.

Mr. POLLOCK: For four years. Nevertheless, experienced men were willing to pay a higher rent than the judges fixed as a fair rental at that time. The judges had no alternative. Does the hon. member say that the same argument would not be forthcoming from his side, and from some of the pastoralists, and perhaps with some justice, if the price of wool fell? But would they criticise the Land Court judges if they fixed the rents when wool was low?

Mr. J. JONES: I think it was a mistake to raise rents at all.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is an entirely different matter. Why does the hon. member assume that the Land Court judges have done wrong, and accuse the Government of having

given them instructions? He knows that nothing could be done by the Land Court judges except to fix rentals as they did. There may be something in the argument that ten years is too long a period for which to fix rents—that prices can fluctuate, and a holding which is valuable to-day can become almost valueless before the period for which the rental was fixed has expired—just as I believe it is unsound to fix wages for so long as five years, as the Commonwealth Arbitration Court did for the shearers and shed hands. Using that as an illustration, the cost of living may be high when the wages are fixed, but just before the expiration of the award four years later it may be down to almost nothing. To fix wages for such a long period is unscientific. On the other hand, as more frequently happens, the cost of living may be very low when the award is made, but may rise 60 per cent. within four years, and in such a case the Commonwealth Arbitration Court system—and in a similar case our Land Court system—is responsible for a very serious anomaly. Men were forced to work on wages based on the cost of living four years before. No matter how much it went up, they had no redress, and there was practically no appeal unless there was a dispute extending over two or more States. I believe that a somewhat similar system prevails in regard to the fixation of rentals by the Land Court. Perhaps the method is somewhat unscientific and could do with some revision. I do not say that the judges have been guilty of receiving any instructions from any Government. I do not think they would consent to approaches being made by any Government or party on the question of the fixation of rents. If any hon. member can show that they have at any time listened to approaches of the Government or of the pastoralists in regard to fixation of rents, he should move that the judges be retired from office. I would support such a motion if I thought that the judges had listened to any outside influence. It is a remarkable state of affairs to have this late-hour agitation for a revision of rents, and this late-hour abuse of Land Court judges. I was out near the border of the Northern Territory a few weeks ago, and I met a man who was complaining of the high rate of wages which he had to pay. When I asked him why, he said it was because cattle were worth only a couple of pounds a head. There seemed to be something in his argument. He said he was paying £4 a week to his men. When I asked him what he thought would be a fair thing, he said that £2 10s. would be any amount. If £2 10s. would be any amount with the present price of cattle, there must have been something wrong with the rate of wages when cattle were £14 and £15 a head. There was no screaming then about the Land Court rents or the wages. Now that cattlemen are suffering the pinch they begin to see something of the viewpoint of the men who are trying to struggle along on £3 a week. The Government ought to take into careful consideration all these factors before they do anything in connection with tinkering with rents. I make bold to say that if the price of wool came down to-morrow to 8d. or 9d. per lb. for best quality wool, there would be an agitation all over Queensland for a reduction of wages. If the pastoralists were able to cut a couple of pounds a month off the wages of the shearers, the shed hand, the woolpresser, and the general worker in the industry, they would say that the Arbitration Court

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had done a fair thing. They would not take any cognisance of what wages ought to be now, considering the present prosperity of the industry. I say that wages in both the sheep and cattle sections of the industry have never been fixed at a decent price even by the Arbitration Court. When one considers the unusual profits made in the boom times, I think the Arbitration Court has been mistaken. I am not accusing the judge of listening to outside influences as the hon. member for Kennedy has done. If there is to be any reduction in rents or wages when prices are bad, there should be an increase in both when prices are good.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The argument of the hon. member for Gregory with regard to the payment of rates for the State stations is an absurd one. The valuation basis is twenty times the annual rent.

Mr. POLLOCK: Do you say that State stations are not paying enough in rates?

Mr. MOORE: I say they are making a grant which does not amount to as much as the other people are paying.

Mr. POLLOCK: On which stations?

Mr. MOORE: On any of them. It is not the fault of the shire councils. The statement that, because there are owners or managers of stations on shire councils they would make the State stations pay double or treble what other people are paying, is an absurd one. The Local Authorities Act does not permit discrimination of that sort; there is a definite basis for valuation on which all properties are valued; that is, twenty times the annual rent. If the State stations pay less rent than other people pay, they consequently pay less rates, because their valuations will be lower. I do not want State station rents to be raised; I want the others to be reduced. It appears to be a most extraordinary position that, because the court started to assess rents when the price of cattle was high, it still has to continue on that basis when the price has dropped down to practically nothing. The rents of cattle stations to-day are exactly similar to those fixed when the court started to assess the rents at a time when cattle were high. In many cases the sheep stations may be paying a fair rent; but, when one reads of the enormous losses from dingoes and flies and of the difficulties with which the people have to contend, I do not think anybody will say that the rents charged on sheep stations are too low. In my opinion, they are all too high. The argument of hon. members opposite presupposes that everybody is a tremendously large landowner; whereas the fact is that the great majority are small landowners, who have a difficult row to hoe, especially on cattle stations. The fact that the court happened to start reassessing the rents when cattle were high in price is going to be a hardship to the people who are having their rents fixed to-day.

I want to call attention to the remarks of one of the judges of the Land Court, in which he suggested that two more judges and more assessors should be appointed, because, he said, the assessing of the runs was so slow that it would entail a great hardship on the people. Naturally it does. Instead of getting any increase, the inclination is for the number of officials to be reduced. I will quote a few remarks made by Mr. Hardacre, which are very much to the point. When the Land Acts Amendment Bill was

going through the House the Government distinctly stated that there would be no Government interference—that the Land Court was going to fix the rents. They said that evidence would be placed before the court, and the only body which would have anything to do with the fixing of the rents would be the Land Court. Then one of the judges points out that, after having given his decision, the Crown are the first people to appeal.

Mr. PAYNE: That wipes out the idea that they are under the thumb of the Government.

Mr. MOORE: It was a stricture on the Government, which made the definite statement that they were going to stand by what the Land Court decided; but, when the decision of the court did not suit them, they sent out two assessors to make a different valuation.

Mr. POLLOCK: They have the right to do that, under the Act.

Mr. MOORE: They have the right, but, after having said that they were going to abide by what the Land Court decided, the Government immediately let the court know that they did not consider its decisions were right—that the rents being fixed were not high enough, and they sent out new assessors to try and get the rents up still higher.

Mr. POLLOCK: Only in the most glaring cases.

Mr. MOORE: What Mr. Hardacre says is well worth taking notice of. On 24th November last, at Charters Towers, referring to the shocking inadequacy of the evidence put before him in regard to pastoral rents, he said—

“It was not an easy task, and had been rendered more difficult by recent legislation which had abolished the 50 per cent. limitation increase in rentals. Under that limitation increases varied from a few shillings to £1, but now they ranged from 20s. to several pounds. The work of the court was now much more difficult than under the previous narrow limitation of increases, and the consequences now were immensely greater, especially when it was remembered that the rents were retrospective, in some cases for five or six years, thus imposing extremely heavy burdens, especially in cases where the lessees had not anticipated that the rent would be made retrospective. These difficulties were still further increased by the fact that neither the Crown nor the lessees appeared to have realised the new conditions when placing their evidence before the court. In this respect he instanced the proceedings at Winton and Hughenden courts, his decisions in which were appealed against by the Crown, and in which appeals the Appeal Court had now given its decision. In most of these cases the only Crown evidence was the Assessing Commissioner's report, this being, in some cases, five or six years old, and practically obsolete. The Commissioner was put in the box in only a very few cases. Despite the fact that the court had determined rentals equal to the Assessing Commissioner's valuation, and in some cases more, the Crown had immediately appealed against its own Assessing Commissioner's valuation, and had sent out a fresh inspector to make

[Mr. Pollock.

new inspections. That in itself was a strong commentary on the Crown's own evidence. At the Charters Towers and Bowen court, which were held later, the Crown gave almost no evidence other than the Assessing Commissioner's report. It would be of much greater assistance to the court if the Commissioner were sent into the box, where he could be cross-examined. His (Mr. Hardacre's) experience was that the evidence was meagre and insufficient, and showed a shocking inadequacy in the presentation of Crown cases. Nearly all the cases at Winton and Hughenden, and also some at Charters Towers, had retrospectivity for five or six years. Many of them had not been previously reported on. He had been informed that there were 1,000 pastoral leases in the State which had not yet been reported on at all, though some had passed into the second period of the leases. He was of the opinion that to bring the Crown cases up to date, to avoid the mental and financial unsettlement of the lessees, and to obtain a fair legitimate rental for the Crown, an additional member of the court, perhaps two, should be appointed, and also several more assessing commissioners. On the other hand, the lessees were equally subject to comment regarding the manner of giving evidence. In concluding, Mr. Hardacre said that he was not making personal reflections on any one, but it was time that the court made some comment on the way in which the cases were brought before it. He had certainly done his best to arrive at correct decisions, and he did not think the parties should complain when better evidence was not brought before the court."

That is a very stringent stricture from a judge of the Land Court. He pointed out that over 1,000 lessees had not been brought into the court, and that the commissioner in a large number of cases had not made a report. Some of these lessees had even gone into their second period. It was absolutely unfair to keep those lessees waiting, and have them subjected to the financial strain that exists at the present time upon the determination of the rent. The Department of Public Lands has taken no notice of the remarks of that judge of the Land Court. They have appointed no more assessors and no more judges. They are still dragging on in the same old way. There are a large number of cases still to come before the court. The lessees will be placed in a very awkward position when the rents are assessed retrospectively for six or seven years. It is not a fair thing that the Government should be allowed to sleep on their rights and then compel the lessee to pay a high retrospective rent, dating back five or six years. The judge of the Land Court called attention to the class of evidence put before him, and asked for better evidence; but apparently nothing is going to be done. The Government are still prepared to allow this financial burden to hang over men's heads. The lessees do not know the exact amount of the financial burden. Can anyone say that is going to be for the benefit of this State, or that it is going to encourage settlement? If private persons acted in the same way as the Government, there would be an outcry all over the State. The sooner the Government wake up to the position and appoint another judge of the Land Court

and more assessors, in order to deal with the cases to be dealt with by the court, in order to allow the people to know the extent of their liabilities quicker than at present, the better it will be for the State. The lessees are in a very serious position. This does not only apply to the large cattle-owners, but also to the small selectors, and it is up to the Crown to look into the whole position, and see whether it is a fair thing that rentals should be based on the value of cattle when they were bringing very high prices. It is all very well for the hon. member for Gregory to say that the rent is based on what it is worth to an incoming lessee. When resumptions are made, the most suitable portions are resumed.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is not so.

Mr. MOORE: As a rule, the most suitable portions are resumed. There is a certain area of rough country left in the original holding, and it is not fair that that rough country should carry the rent paid by the selector when the eyes have really been picked out of the country. In a great many cases the eyes are picked out of it.

Mr. PAYNE: Not in one instance.

Mr. MOORE: In the prickly-pear country the land is not resumed where the lessees allow the pear to grow. If they attempt to keep it clean, then it is resumed for closer settlement. To say that a certain area of the rough country should carry the same rent as the good country is ridiculous. It is a question of the carrying capacity of that part of the country which is left. The Land Court should assess that land on that basis. It should not be assessed on the report of any inexperienced person. How is a judge to say whether the evidence given is the evidence of an experienced man? We know that people have gone on to selections without having any experience. They take part in a ballot because they think they have a chance of getting a selection, but there is no proof that they are experienced. We know that a large number of selectors have paid too much for their blocks, because they did not know what they were taking on. I hope the Government will take notice of the remarks by the judge of the Land Court to which I have referred, and will, as soon as possible, appoint officers to assess the remaining pastoral holdings, so that lessees can approach the court as quickly as possible.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I want to enter my protest against the statement by the Opposition that the Land Court is under the thumb of the Government. The Land Court is a body of men appointed above Parliament. It seems strange to me that, if the members of the Land Court are under the thumb of the Government, the Government should appeal against the decisions of the court. It is a monstrous thing for anyone to say that a man who has been appointed to an independent position above Parliament is under the thumb of Ministers or anyone else. I think the deputy leader of the Opposition should have been ashamed of himself when he said, "Hear, hear!" to some remarks intimating that members of the Land Court were under the thumb of the Government. If that kind of thing is permitted, the whole public life of this country will not be worth a snap of the fingers.

Mr. BRAND: It is not worth that now.

*Mr. Payne.]*



Mr. PAYNE: There has been a great deal of argument about the Land Court fixing the rents. Anyone who knows anything about the matter admits that it is a difficult thing to do the fair thing by everybody. I ask the hon. member for Kennedy, if cattle to-day were at the price that they were three or four years ago, would he consider his rent too high to-day?

Mr. J. JONES: I expect the Government to keep agreements with me, and not repudiate them.

Mr. PAYNE: If the Land Court had to take into consideration the fluctuating values of stock and wool, droughts, and everything else, no charge could be made for the rent of land at all. If all these things are taken into consideration, I do not know how you are going to arrive at a fair rent for the man on the land.

Mr. BRAND: Does the hon. member think they should not be taken into consideration?

Mr. PAYNE: Probably they are. All the members of the Land Court have had years and years of experience—one of them in this House—and I am quite satisfied that in making their decision they take all those factors into consideration. I believe, if there should be any reduction in the rent, it should be for the small man.

Mr. J. JONES: That is what I am saying all the time. I am glad to hear the hon. member back me up.

Mr. PAYNE: Under the old Tory Government, the big landholders whom the Opposition represent, set out to tie up the Land Court under an Act which hon. members opposite claim to have been repudiated, which made it an utter impossibility for the Land Court to get a fair rent from those big holders.

Mr. J. JONES: The Government could resume seven-sixteenths of it.

Mr. PAYNE: Under the old Tory Government the small grazing selectors were paying 3d. per acre whilst the big squatters were only paying 1d. for their land. Under the Land Act, the Land Court [12 noon] could only raise the rent of the big holdings by 50 per cent. That is, in ten years it could increase his rental to 1½d. per acre. I say the Government were wise in getting rid of that anomaly in the Land Act.

Mr. J. JONES: The same thing applies to-day.

Mr. PAYNE: I am afraid the hon. member for Kennedy has got a bit mixed in regard to the land laws. I claim to have some knowledge of them. Land is taken up under so many different headings that I am afraid the hon. member does not understand the position. I do not know whether the hon. member came under the 50 per cent. limitation.

Mr. J. JONES: Of course, I did.

Mr. PAYNE: If the hon. member came under the 50 per cent. limitation and the holding adjoining did not come under that limitation, what kind of a lopsided law was it that gave a 50 per cent. protection to one man and not to the other? There should be no protection at all, or else everyone should be protected.

Mr. J. JONES: Why did they not resume my seven-sixteenths? Because nobody wanted it.

[Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE: I do not know why. Probably it was an oversight, or probably the Government of the day were friends of the hon. member, and they did not want to resume it. In the Western sheep country there are very big holdings carrying from 60,000 to 100,000 sheep. They can work their stock per thousand cheaper than the small man, and you have the anomaly of the big man paying only one-third of the rent paid by the grazing selector, and the law as it stood would not permit the Land Court to get a fair rental from the big man. This 50 per cent. limitation has a very long history. As a matter of fact, it goes back to the 1886 Act. Previous Governments—not Labour Governments—wiped it out altogether, but it was again reintroduced in the 1897 Act. The 1902 Act, which was introduced by the Philp Administration, gave a very big extension of leases. I do not object to that Government giving an extension of leases, but I do complain that the extensions were for too long a period. Everybody in Queensland at that time knew very well that our flocks and herds had been wiped out as a result of years of drought, and station products were practically of no value.

Mr. J. JONES: You are wrong.

Mr. PAYNE: The Philp Administration passed an Act granting an extension of leases, and Mr. Philp was not a Labour man. He got a concession when he granted the extension of leases, because he included a provision in that Act whereby he could resume one-fourth immediately any holding came under that Act, and then, after a certain number of years, he could resume another quarter for closer settlement, and the lessee was entitled to only half the holding for the whole period of the lease. When the Bill was going through, Mr. John Cameron, who was then member for North Brisbane, moved an amendment in clause 2 providing for the 50 per cent. limitation in rentals, and the Secretary for Public Lands at the time, Mr. Dalrymple, objected to the amendment, and Mr. Philp said they had given the pastoralists quite enough—they had given them a big extension of their leases—and the limitation was not included. Strange to say, the limitation was not put back in the Act until 1905, and all this talk about men entering into an agreement with the Government is all moonshine. When those men came under the 1902 Act, they had no protection in regard to a 50 per cent. limitation at all.

Mr. J. JONES: The banks would not advance money under those tenures.

Mr. PAYNE: There was no necessity for the banks to advance money in 1905, as things were not too bad. There was no drought.

Mr. BRAND: There were no cattle in the State. Queensland had to be restocked.

Mr. PAYNE: I know all about that. There was no urgent necessity for reintroducing that 50 per cent. limitation in the 1905 Act. When hon. members opposite rise in their places and say that the Government have repudiated something, they are saying something that is absolutely untrue.

Mr. J. JONES: It is true. I am one of them.

Mr. PAYNE: You never got a 50 per cent. limitation until 1905.

Mr. J. JONES: I know.

Mr. PAYNE: Was your lease taken up before 1905?

Mr. J. JONES: Not so far as I am concerned.

Mr. PAYNE: Had the lease been taken up?

Mr. J. JONES: Of course, it had.

Mr. PAYNE: What is the use of arguing that, when you took up the lease, you had a contract containing certain provisions, when that is incorrect? It is a difficult thing for the Land Court to fix a fair rental, considering that we suffer from periods of droughts, and that prices are high at one period and low at another. Since the Government wiped out the 50 per cent. limitation they have been getting a big increase in rent from the big holdings in the west, which, in times past, did not pay a fair rent. I have no hesitation in saying that there are small selectors in my district who are paying too much rent to-day. On the average, they are paying 3d. and 4d. an acre, while the owners of the big holdings are not paying half that amount.

Mr. J. JONES: What about the State stations?

Mr. PAYNE: I dare say the State stations are paying the same rental as the other stations in the neighbourhood. Are the State stations paying a less rental than the stations adjoining?

Mr. J. JONES: Of course, they are.

Mr. PAYNE: If they are, I am not aware of it. With all the talk we hear about too much rent being paid, it is a strange thing that there should be such a tremendous rush for land, and cheap land in particular, in every part of Queensland. Only a few months ago seven blocks were thrown open, ranging from 12,000 to 20,000 acres. These were resumptions from Albilbah and Ruthven, and there were between 500 and 600 applicants for each block. They were practical men who had been reared in the industry. What is the good of trying to misrepresent the Government by saying that too much rent is being paid? The Government are responsible for the upset price which is fixed; the Land Court only deals with it periodically after a ten-years' term, and I think the upset price fixed for that country was 2d. and 3d. an acre, and some of it is not the best sheep country there. There were 500 or 600 applicants, who were all practical men; yet hon. members opposite talk about the land being too dear. If practical men, who have devoted the whole of their lives to the industry, are prepared to take it up, and there are 500 or 600 applicants for each block, there is nothing in what hon. members opposite say.

Mr. POLLOCK: What about prickly-pear?

Mr. PAYNE: There is very little prickly-pear in the Western district. The only experience I have had of prickly-pear land has been while travelling through pear-infested land as one of the members of the Public Works Commission. Compared with what the pastoralists are paying, I have no hesitation in saying that the small selectors may be paying too much rent, but it is their own fault. When the law was in existence under which the land was thrown open to tender, you had the wonderful anomaly of

men paying 6d. an acre for land in Central Queensland.

Mr. J. JONES: Did the Government reduce their rent then?

Mr. PAYNE: I do not know.

Mr. J. JONES: I know that they did. They were a fair Government.

Mr. PAYNE: I am glad the Government have wiped out that rotten tender system, under which practical men who had been brought up in the industry gave as much as 6d. or 7d. an acre for the land. I am quite satisfied that any small holder—even a cattle-owner—who came to the Government and asked for consideration because he could not pay his rent, would not be pressed by the Government. I have in my own electorate some small men whose rents had been fixed, I think, by another Government. The previous Government allowed some of the holdings to run to the second term, and then they struck a fresh rent which was retrospective for ten years, and it became a great hardship to these people, especially small men, who had to find the back rent. That has been happening in my own electorate, through no fault of this Government, but of the previous Government. The present Government, in every instance, gave those men sufficient time to enable them to pay the increased back rent. If the hon. member for Kennedy knows any small cattlemen who cannot pay their rents—we all know the bottom has fallen out of the cattle industry to-day, but the position may be better in another year—they will get consideration from the Government. When they have gone to the Government and shown a just case, there has not been one case which has not been fairly dealt with by the Government.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): My own opinion is that close settlement will take place upon the coastal lands of Queensland. I admit that the Department of Public Lands is a very difficult department to handle, because while it may be necessary in some parts of the State to have blocks of 100 square miles or more, in other parts a few acres will suffice to enable a man to get a livelihood. My argument in connection with land settlement is that the Department of Public Lands has no right to allow any one to take up land unless it thinks that the person taking it up can get a decent living from it. There should be more assistance given than is being given by the Department of Public Lands or any other department in that direction. Take for instance, my own electorate. The Proserpine district has the second heaviest rainfall in the State, and it is the same about Innisfail and Babinda. What is the use of telling a man to settle on a piece of land, no matter how rich it may be, if there is a creek in between his land and the tramway, where, owing to the heavy rainfall, it is practically impossible for him to get his cane or other product over the creek? I claim that the Department of Public Lands, when surveying this land, should also provide for the building of bridges over the creeks in those wet districts to enable the farmer to get his product to the tramline. I have seen men in my own district having to use five horses to bring a ton of cane to a tramline, and then they have been bogged on the way. It is impossible for a man to make a living under those conditions. The land is good and will grow crops, but it is too difficult to get the crops to market. It is all very well to say that the shire council should attend to these

*Mr. Collins.]*

things, but those bodies are not wealthy enough, especially in the wet districts, although those in the dry districts may be able to do it. In my own district there are about 500,000 acres of land open, or to be opened, for selection by the end of the year. There are blocks of from 50,000 acres down to blocks of 40 acres or 50 acres according to the locality. I am one of those who believe that, if this State is to progress, we must get right down to bedrock and get people settled upon the land. Although I have not lived in a Western district, I know a little about it. My friend the hon. member for Kennedy can hardly claim that he is in a Western district. His electorate happens to adjoin my own, and there is similar land to that which he mentioned in my electorate. When the hon. member was quoting figures this morning he should have given the whole of the figures.

Mr. J. JONES: I had not got them.

Mr. COLLINS: I claim that the hon. member is not appealing so much for the small selector—that is not his intention—

Mr. J. JONES: It is my intention.

Mr. COLLINS: As for the big lessee. I have here the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. While the hon. member was giving the illustration about the landlord in Ireland, it would be just as well for him to examine his own country, and see if our own backyard does not want cleaning up.

Mr. J. JONES: I told you that.

Mr. COLLINS: I question whether, from my study of the different countries of the world, there is any country in the world where there are so few people owning so many head of cattle as in Queensland, and so few people owning so many head of sheep. The hon. member quoted the number of cattle-owners with 1,000 head and upwards. There are 916 of them, and they own 2,717,535 cattle out of a total of 6,455,067. Those 916 people own more than half the cattle of Queensland. The hon. member for Kennedy is asking for a reduction of rent for those 916 cattle-owners.

Mr. J. JONES: No, I did not ask for a reduction in the rents of those cattle-owners. I asked for a repeal of the "Repudiation Act."

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member quoted the total number of cattle-owners as 46,232. Does the hon. gentleman not know that there is a large percentage of those remaining cattle-owners on 160-acre, 320-acre, or 1,280-acre blocks who would not come under the Land Act Amendment Act?

Mr. J. JONES: It is all repudiation.

Mr. COLLINS: There is no such thing as the "Repudiation Act"; it is the Land Act Amendment Act. That is the name of the Act which we passed in 1920, and I am very pleased that we passed it, because I advocated it for a quarter of a century previously. I was always in favour of the equalisation of the selectors' rents and the rents of the big pastoral holders, and I was glad we were able to pass it into law. The hon. member for Kennedy is continually talking on behalf of those 916 cattle-owners I have just referred to. We do not represent them, so they must be represented by members on the other side of the House. The hon. gentleman is always talking about repealing the Land Act Amendment Act. They say they will repeal it if they get into power.

Mr. J. JONES: I will if I get a chance.

[Mr. Collins.]

Mr. COLLINS: That shows they are speaking in the interests of the big cattlemen and the big sheepmen. They are supposed to be only speaking for the cattlemen, but their remarks also apply to the sheepmen. If we look up the statistics in regard to sheep, we find that 214 owners own 9,156,940 sheep. There are 159 owners in Queensland to-day who own from 20,000 to 50,000 sheep, and the total number of sheep they possess is 4,884,224. There are forty-six individuals to-day owning from 50,000 to 100,000, who own in the aggregate 3,215,847. There are nine men who own upwards of 100,000 sheep, who own between them 1,056,869. As I just stated, our latest figures show that 214 owners in Queensland own 9,156,940 sheep out of a total of 17,404,840 sheep in Queensland to-day. Those are the people whom the hon. member for Burrum stands for. Those are the people the hon. member for Nanango, the hon. member for Cunningham, and the hon. member for Lockyer stand for.

Mr. EDWARDS: Who told you that?

Mr. COLLINS: Because hon. members opposite say that they are in favour of the repeal of the Land Act Amendment Act, and, if they are in favour of that, they stand for the 214 sheepowners who own over 9,000,000 sheep.

Mr. J. JONES: I do, at any rate.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Kennedy is honest, at any rate. He admits that he stands for them. So it is not merely the cattlemen that hon. members opposite stand for. The hon. member for Kennedy seems to think that it is all a matter of rent. If a man owns 100 square miles of country, and we were to reduce his rent by £1 per square mile, that will be reducing it by £100 altogether. That is not going to solve the cattle difficulty. It will not solve the cattle difficulty at all, because it is not a question of rents. Our latest returns show an increase of 500,000 cattle, and we have got to consider what is the solution of the problem. The cattle problem can only be solved by getting markets. That is the solution, if hon. members opposite want to know. Italy has a population of 38,000,000, and statistics show that the Italian people consume less than 50 lb. of meat per head per annum. The cattlemen should organise and see if they cannot do something to establish retail shops and wholesale shops in Italy, and then they will find a good market for their products. The same thing applies to Germany and other countries. In my opinion, that is where we shall find a solution of the cattle problem as we know it to-day. We shall not find the solution in reducing rents. Many of the small men own only 10 square miles, and, if we reduce their rents by £1 per square mile, it would be a mere bagatelle. A reduction of rent is not a solution of the problem at all so far as the cattle industry is concerned. With regard to the sheep industry, I have not had any practical experience, but I am not so stupid that I cannot read the papers and see the prices the sheep-owners are getting for their wool. Will anyone get up in this Chamber and say that the sheepowners cannot afford to pay the rents that they are paying at the present time?

Mr. J. JONES: I question very much if they can pay them.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Aubigny says that both sheepmen and cattle-men are paying too high a rent. Too long the sheepowners have been getting their land practically rent free. The hon. member for Kennedy inferred that this Government should be shot, because that was the illustration he used in regard to the Irish landlord who he said was shot.

Mr. J. JONES: I did not infer that.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. gentleman used that innuendo. No doubt, that is what he inferred. If I had made a statement of that kind I would have been accused of being a revolutionary, and I now accuse the hon. member for Kennedy of being one. (Laughter.) I well remember when I was travelling round with the Public Works Commission seeing the fine homes on some of the stations we visited. Anyone going into the western parts of Queensland will see the palatial residences in which the managers of the stations live, while in the background you see the huts and hovels for the workmen, just the same as the hon. member for Kennedy referred to. The owners of these stations do not live there. As a rule they live down in Woolloomooloo, or St. Kilda. (Opposition laughter.) We have landlords in Queensland to-day just the same as they had in Ireland to whom the hon. member referred.

Mr. J. JONES: State landlords.

Mr. COLLINS: Not State landlords, but private landlords. Many of them are making large incomes, and a great many of them live in the southern parts of the Commonwealth. They make large incomes out of Queensland, but they do not spend their money in Queensland. Anyone that knows anything about our Western country, must know that, in spite of all its richness—and I do not doubt its richness—it is still in the same state of nature as it was when Captain Cook went up the coast. Most places just have an old wire fence round them, and that is the only improvement that they have. Why, some of the men on 160-acre blocks along the coast have made more improvements than many of the big pastoralists have done.

Mr. STOPFORD: Look at the Gilbert River.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. My friend reminds me of the Gilbert River. There are many other places just the same. If this country is ever going to become great, we shall have to go in for small holdings. It is not the big pastoral holdings that will make Queensland great. The nine owners I have just mentioned owning 1,000,000 sheep, will not make Queensland great. These people, including the Jowetts and others, must not be permitted to rule in this State. I hope that the Land Act Amendment Act will not be repealed.

Mr. J. JONES: I hope it will.

Mr. COLLINS: That Act should have been on the statute-book years before we placed it there.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Kennedy wants to repeal that Act in the interests of the big squatters and pastoral companies. He admits it. I represent a fairly large cattle district myself. What the cattle owners have to do is to find markets, and I hope that the Minister in charge of the Estimates, together with the rest of the

Cabinet, will assist them to find markets and so help the cattle industry.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): I do not think there are any Estimates of such great importance to Queensland as the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands. If we hope to become a great State, we must first of all settle the people on the land. In my travels through the country districts it has been really remarkable to find such a contented feeling amongst the people who are struggling on the land, many of them in the face of great difficulties.

Mr. J. JONES: Why do you rack-rent them?

Mr. FORDE: One would infer from that that hon. members of this side were out to crush the man on the land.

Mr. J. JONES: So you are.

Mr. FORDE: Many interjections of that kind come from the hon. member. The hon. member for Bowen struck the nail on the head when he said that hon. members opposite represented the wealthy pastoralists and big landowners.

Mr. J. JONES: I represent all classes; not one class.

Mr. FORDE: If we are to settle people on the land successfully we must go in for closer settlement. We must resume the large estates, particularly those along the railway lines. In travelling through [12.30 p.m.] Queensland one cannot help thinking that the early pastoralists got all the good land along our railway lines, any many of them got freehold, and I think the policy of the Government in trying to break up these large estates and settling people in growing cotton and other crops or carrying on mixed farming is very laudable. The Government, very rightly, have resumed approximately 260,000 acres of land of the very best kind in the Capella and Clermont districts for closer settlement.

But, if land settlement is to be a success, we must pay more attention to the provision of good roads, of water supply, and small tramways acting as feeders to the railway lines. Anyone who travels and notices the great difficulties experienced by settlers in the early stages from want of water cannot help thinking that there has been a lack of foresight on the part of those who have handled land settlement in this State in the past. I admit that in the last six or ten years great strides have been made in supplying water at economical prices to settlers on the land, but we shall have to pay more attention to the matter. I have seen some of these small farmers who have been unable to get water compelled to leave the land, in consequence; and I say it would be a good policy on the part of the Government to put down community bores. It is impossible for the settlers in some cases to do it themselves, because they do not know what will be the cost. Some bores may be put down at a low cost, others may cost hundreds of pounds; and if the Government put down such bores in central positions to serve eight or ten settlers, they would be immensely helping the struggling selector in the early stages of his settlement. The absence of such assistance cripples many to-day. They spend all their savings and all the money they can borrow in putting down a bore; and if it is not successful, they have to get off the land.

The hon. member for Bowen rightly said that in some parts of his electorate in bad

*Mr. Forde.]*

weather it is almost impossible for the selectors to get to the nearest railway station for the want of good roads. I have seen that state of things in Central Queensland and other parts of the State. If many of those selectors, living only 8 or 10 miles from the line, had but good roads on which to take their produce to the nearest railway station they would be satisfied. When I was in North Queensland, I noticed very bad roads, particularly in the electorates of the hon. member for Herbert and the hon. member for Bowen. We have them in Central Queensland. This is a matter on which the Government have concentrated a good deal of attention. The Main Roads Board is doing good work, and I am glad that a programme has been laid down which will necessitate the expenditure of approximately £1,000,000. That will be money well spent.

It is also necessary for the Government to assist men on the land to get markets for their produce. As the hon. member for Kennedy rightly says—we all know—there is a slump in the selection of land for cattle-raising because of the collapse of the meat market. This is a problem which the cattle owners of Queensland might take up, too. I remember listening to a very able address by Major Belcher, the head of the British Empire Exhibition Mission, who properly said that it was not a good thing for the big cattle men to lean on the Government for everything. He pointed out that, if they put aside a certain sum every year for the purpose of carrying on propaganda in other parts of the world, they would be able to dispose of Australian meat and bring prosperity to the industry. He showed that the slump in the industry has occurred because we are not keeping up with the Argentine and other meat-producing countries—which have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds a year in propaganda with the of pounds a year—in propaganda with the world the reasons why they should buy Australian meat. The Argentine has shops throughout Great Britain, and its propaganda forces the sale of its meat, whereas it has been said by persons in a position to know that Australian meat in Smithfield market has not looked in nearly as fit condition as the Argentine meat. This is something in which the cattle owners might co-operate with the Government, and see what can be done through the Agent-General's office. Australians nobly helped Great Britain in the great war, and I believe that the people of Great Britain are sufficiently grateful to give all the assistance they can to the returned Australian soldiers who are growing cattle by buying their meat in preference to foreign meat, if the facts are only put before them in a proper and lucid manner. I hope the cattle men will take the matter up. Such a result would be of infinite benefit to them, and it could be achieved if they were to put aside a certain sum of money every year in proportion to the number of cattle they have. I find on inquiry that there are possibilities of meat markets in the East, in India, and in Java, but the absence of cold storage is at present a great disadvantage. If we could open up markets there our land settlement would be greatly encouraged, and I hope the Government will take the matter up in conjunction with the representatives of the meat industry.

I am pleased that the Secretary for Railways, who happens to be in charge of these

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Estimates, has brought about a reduction of 20 per cent. in cattle freights, sheep freights, and pig freights, and I am glad, too, that the Government have given a remission of rentals in deserving cases, because one has only to travel in country districts to realise the bad times which the men in the meat industry are experiencing, and to recognise that they should get every assistance it is possible to give them.

A good deal of land settlement is going on in Central Queensland, and I want to say a word or two on the Northern Burnett scheme and also the Dawson Valley scheme. As early as 1904 the matter of opening up the Northern Burnett district was brought prominently under the notice of the public, and in August of that year Surveyors C. Phillips and F. J. Charlton were deputed by the Morgan Government to report on the whole of that district. The report was very favourable. Inter alia, it read—

“Taking it as a whole, we regard the Northern Burnett as one of the finest districts in the State, and admirably adapted for close settlement. The country is from 500 to 2,000 feet about sea-level, so that the climate is healthy and decidedly bracing in winter. The soils are black, brown, and chocolate volcanic of great fertility.”

Then we had the late Under Secretary for Lands, Mr. Gordon Graham, reporting to successive Ministers that the Northern Burnett lands should be resumed and thrown open for close settlement. Of course, some hon. members opposite will say that we are inflicting a great hardship on many pastoralists by resuming their land. It is quite natural for the pastoralists and their representatives to show a keen resentment at the action of this Government in the interests of closer settlement, but it is good for the country. There is no action which any Government can take which will not offend somebody; but I hold that it is the interests of the majority of the people which should be considered. With regard to the Northern Burnett, Surveyors Forde, Mackay, and Suter classified the lands as follows:—First-class agricultural land, 186,729 acres; second-class agricultural land, 399,695 acres; first-class grazing land, 498,631 acres; second-class grazing land, 336,124 acres; making a total of 1,421,179 acres. That total acreage will be available for settlement in the Upper Burnett. Certain railway lines will be necessary. The Many Peaks-New Cannindah, the Rannes-Monto, and the Mundubbera lines, I am glad to say, are being carried out at the present time. It is no use settling people 20 or 30 miles from a railway and making them travel over bad roads to the nearest railway station. It is quite impossible for settlers to eke out an existence on a small area in these places. The Northern Burnett lands have been favourably reported on by departmental and outside experts. Mr. J. C. Brünnich, the Agricultural Chemist, made an analysis of samples of soils from nineteen different localities, and reported that the great majority were soils of exceptionally high fertility.

The Government had great difficulty in pushing on with the Northern Burnett land settlement scheme because of obstacles put in their way by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Immigration Officer, Mr. H. S. Gullett, went through

those lands, reported very favourably on them, and recommended the Commonwealth Government to go on with the scheme, which, he said, was one of the biggest land settlement schemes in Australia. When Mr. Gullett could not get his views accepted by the Commonwealth Government, he resigned a position that was worth to him approximately £2,500 a year. The Rockhampton "Morning Bulletin" of 27th February, 1922, reported the resignation as follows:—

"Mr. H. S. Gullett, the Commonwealth Superintendent of Immigration, has resigned.

"He stated this afternoon that before the war the States were running immigration on lines incomparably superior to those now followed by the Commonwealth. When the latter came on the scene it expressed contemptuous views about the pre-war State efforts. Under the magical Federal touch they were to have a grand immigration scheme coupled with a national development of works and the opening up of Crown lands. A great scheme, which included the unification of the railways, was launched two years ago. The Premier of Queensland (Mr. E. G. Theodore) saw the futility of the schemes proposed to forward immigration, and propounded the Upper Burnett lands scheme. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) undertook if he was satisfied about the soundness of the Burnett scheme to find the money, if possible. The Commonwealth report was in Mr. Hughes's office weeks before it was read, and, but for questions in the House of Representatives, would probably have never been read. Mr. Gullett also stated that he said deliberately the Burnett scheme had never been considered on its merits by the Federal Government. It was condemned by the Government because it came from Mr. Theodore. He held no brief for Mr. Theodore or the Queensland Government, as politics did not concern him. Only Western Australia and Queensland had put forward definite immigration schemes, one going through probably, and the latter being refused. Mr. Gullett added that he had been closely connected with all the States in the past year, and he was confident that if Mr. Hughes disclosed the terms on which he was prepared to act, and handed the negotiations to another Minister or official, all, or nearly all, the States would by now have been embarked on big reproductive nation-building schemes. But Mr. Hughes, who administered immigration, apparently had no time to do the job himself, and would not delegate it to anyone else. If the Commonwealth was serious about immigration, it should concentrate on the two Northern States, which were capable of absorbing more immigrants than all the rest of Australia. But it seemed that these two States were to have no immigration policy until they mended their political ways. The British Government was eager to help, and within the past year it had been ready with a straightout offer of some millions sterling, provided the Commonwealth put forward a definite scheme. Mr. Hughes did nothing, however, beyond making speeches. Mr. Gullett concluded by saying that, under

the circumstances, he felt that he could do more for immigration by resigning the position and by a protest and appeal to the people."

Mr. Gullett could no longer stand the shuffling of the Commonwealth Government in not going on with that scheme, which was favourably reported on by the Commonwealth officers, who were sent up to report on it. The Hughes Government refused the loan of £2,000,000 asked for by the Queensland Government for the purpose of building the necessary railway lines, and carrying out the preliminary works incidental to such a settlement scheme. It is time that party politics were put aside altogether when dealing with such big national questions. When a Government put forward a scheme of such great importance, not only to Queensland but to Australia, as the Northern Burnett scheme is, the money should be forthcoming. The petty excuse offered by the Commonwealth Government, according to Mr. Gullett, that the money could not be made available because there was a Labour Government in power in Queensland—should not be tolerated by the people of Queensland. There are other big schemes in Queensland nearer to my own electorate which I want pushed on at full speed. The Dawson Valley water conservation and irrigation scheme—in which my friend, the hon. member for Mount Morgan, has taken a keen interest—is one of gigantic importance, and one of the most interesting that has ever come before the people of Australia. I had the opportunity, with other hon. members on this side, of visiting the site of the proposed dam on the Dawson River, and travelling through all the lands that are being thrown open for closer settlement and irrigation. It is really a wonderful site for a dam, which will impound 1,250,000 acre-feet of water. It is estimated that 220,000 acres of land will be made available for irrigation along the Dawson River, making it possible to settle 20,000 settlers. That is land settlement on a large scale. It is a big national scheme. The dam will cost a considerable sum of money, and the whole scheme will cost approximately £4,000,000 when completed. It will necessarily be a progressive scheme, which will have to be carried out in sections. I am pleased that the Government are building the railway from Baralaba to Castle Creek. It is of no use to settle men on the land unless they are also provided with railway communication. That railway will encourage settlement. The Government are now carrying out a survey from Castle Creek to Delusion Creek. Delusion Creek was the place where we had lunch when the hon. member for Mount Morgan was with us, and where he was photographed as Napoleon. (Laughter.) The irrigation scheme in Victoria, on the Murray River, has greatly increased the value of land in that neighbourhood. It is estimated that the irrigation scheme on the Dawson River will increase the value of land by at least £22,000,000. The value of land in the vicinity of the Hume irrigation scheme, on the Murray River, was increased from £11,000,000 to £89,000,000 because of the water conservation and irrigation scheme there. The land on the Dawson River is eminently suited for cotton-growing. We had an opportunity during our trip of visiting many cotton areas. Now that the Government have given a guaranteed price of 5½d. per lb. for raw

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cotton of best quality for a period of three years from 31st July, 1923, there will be a great increase in cotton cultivation along the Dawson River.

There is another scheme which might be taken up by the Government later on. I refer to the Fitzroy irrigation scheme. If that scheme is gone on with, it will cause land settlement along the Fitzroy River. I have an extract from the report made by Mr. V. J. Crowley, an electrical engineer, who was kindly sent to Central Queensland some years ago by the Premier. In his report he states—

“The Fitzroy River is one of the most interesting in the State from a utilisation point of view. On account of its great variation of flow it must be considered as a conservation proposition, and, generally speaking, a conservation scheme in Queensland means irrigation works to utilise the water.

“If the storage is constructed for hydro-electric purposes only, then the cost of the works is so high per horse-power available that it will pay better to use mechanical power rather than water power, as the interest on the works will be higher than the cost of fuel. This is the situation on the Fitzroy River, so that any proposition undertaken will require to be a combined irrigation and hydro-electric one. It would be possible to instal an irrigation scheme without the hydro-electric plant, but to do so would be poor policy on account of the waste of power and the expensive channels that it would be necessary to build down either side of the river from the dam. Provided a hydro-electric plant is installed, the water can be pumped directly out of the river electrically in the vicinity required.”

If, as time goes by, a dam is built across the Fitzroy River and water is backed up for 40 or 50 miles, there will be available more than 100,000 acres of land along the banks of the river for irrigation purposes. That will encourage closer settlement. It will encourage agricultural pursuits so that farmers in that area along the Fitzroy River will be able to produce fodder to supply not only the requirements of the coastal belt but the requirements of the Western area which suffer from the ravages of the droughts to which Central Queensland is periodically subjected. I mention this matter so that the Government will keep it in mind with a view to carrying that scheme out when the Dawson Valley water conservation and irrigation scheme becomes an accomplished fact.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): I think it has been truly stated that all wealth springs from the land, and it has been further truly stated that, when you desire to judge the conditions of the mass of people, you have to look at the land laws of the country. I claim that the Government has from its very inception endeavoured to do what is fundamentally right by laying down the conditions of land tenure that will give to the greatest number of people the greatest facilities for settling on the lands of the State. During the speech of the hon. member for Rockhampton hon. members opposite, recognising his fighting ability and the manner in which he deals with them if they interject, discreetly left this Chamber.

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That is a practice that they have been pursuing for some time when the hon. member for Rockhampton has spoken.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why?

Mr. STOPFORD: Simply for the reason that hon. gentlemen opposite who are supposed—I say advisedly supposed—to represent the interests of the country testify their interest on the fundamental question of land settlement by means of their eloquent silence. I have a perfect right to interpret that silence in my own way. In view of recent happenings, it has been openly stated that, if hon. members opposite were to get back to this side of the House, an extension of pastoral leases would be granted to the big squatters. I interpret that silence to mean that hon. members opposite dare not raise a discussion on a vote of such vital importance. Anyone who has studied political events in this State knows that the Government determined that the interests represented by hon. members opposite should pay a share towards the revenue of this State equal to what is paid by the small grazing selectors. We had the delegation going to London. We had the howl in the Tory Press against what the hon. member for Kennedy has termed repudiation. We find, as the hon. member recognises, that our Land Act Amendment Act—which I refuse to regard as repudiation—has met with the approval of the vast majority of the people of this State, and hon. members opposite dare not publicly assert that, if they are returned to power, they will pass a measure to repeal that Act, or that they will hand back to the big vested interests the money we have received by way of rent under that Act, which is a very just Act, and which rent we have used in our humanitarian policy of promoting the interests of the workers of this State. Hon. members opposite do not rise in their places and clearly and distinctly say what their attitude would be in regard to that matter, if they were on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. MOORE: Does the hon. member believe in a 10 per cent. penalty for men who cannot pay their rent?

Mr. STOPFORD: If I had well-grounded views upon any legislation that was placed upon the statute-book by our opponents, and those views were sufficiently grounded to permit me to call it repudiation, I would have “guts” enough to say that, when I got on the Government side, I would remove it from the statute-book and give back to the people what had been taken from them. Hon. members opposite by their silence testify, first, that they are not game to take part in this debate, and to say definitely that a repeal of the Act will take place, and that a repeal of the Act will carry with it a refund of the money collected by way of rent.

Mr. MOORE: Does the hon. member believe in a 10 per cent. penalty for those who cannot pay their rent?

Mr. STOPFORD: I will not be drawn off the track by the hon. member to deal with comparatively an infinitesimal item: but, as a matter of fact, the penalty for the late payment of rent has been remitted in cases of necessity. In this very important matter, affecting the welfare of every citizen of the State, representatives who brand themselves as Country members, and who profess to be keen in advocating every country interest,

have displayed a most eloquent silence. They have certainly obtained the services of the hon. member for Kennedy, whose advocacy in this Chamber can only be regarded as one of personal interests—his interests have been assailed and not the interests of the whole of the community—which robs any argument he may have adduced of any value.

The hon. member for Kennedy [2 p.m.] has repeatedly in this Chamber, hurled across the word "repudiation." Repudiation, to my mind, consists of repudiating some existing contract. Before you can repudiate anything, something must exist. The hon. member would have been well advised had he acquainted himself with recent history, when he would have found that others who share his opinions had decided, at their own personal expense, to seek redress, or rather support of their contention, from the highest legal tribunal in Australia, viz.: the High Court. The South Australian Pastoral Company and three others, representing the interests of 200 others, brought a test case before that high tribunal, and that court, which sat in April and gave its judgment in June—a court which cannot be termed particularly biased in the interests of this Government, and consisting of Chief Justice Knox, Mr. Justice Isaacs, Mr. Justice Higgins, Mr. Justice Duffy, and Mr. Justice Starke gave a unanimous judgment, and Mr. Justice Higgins, one of the ablest legal men in Australia, in giving his judgment, stated emphatically that no contract existed. There we have a repudiation of the arguments of hon. members opposite, not from a Labour source, but from the highest legal tribunal in the whole of Australia. But we have still a higher tribunal which has supported our attitude, that is the tribunal of Queensland democracy, which to me constitutes the highest tribunal to which any politician can submit a case for decision. Let us take the case of the Mitchell electorate. In that electorate there are sixty-nine large holdings, and sixty-six of these holdings enjoy what is known as the 50 per cent. benefit clause under the 1905 Act. That was an Act that only protected holdings which had been taken up prior to its passage, and gave preferential treatment to those men because they had a sympathetic Government in power.

Mr. J. JONES: We have not got one now.

Mr. STOPFORD: No, you have a Government in power to-day who are sympathetic to the masses of the people, and not to a section of the people.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FLETCHER: The people do not think so.

Mr. STOPFORD: What an insane interjection from a dying politician! I am going to the highest tribunal—to the democracy of this State. There is not a squatting district represented on the Opposition side of the House. I was saying that in the Mitchell district, where there are sixty-nine large holdings, only three of which were not enjoying the benefits of the 50 per cent. clause, there were hundreds of grazing selections, very few of which enjoyed the benefits of that clause; yet in this Chamber there sits a man who was returned unopposed for that electorate because he had met the wishes, not of the few squatters who had a special benefit conferred upon them so that they might get accommodation from the banking institutions in 1905, but simply because this Government, supported by the hon. member

for Mitchell, had stood for the best interests of all the people in his electorate, the large majority of whom are small, struggling graziers. Now the hon. member for Kennedy stands up and talks of repudiation of contract with the grazing selector.

Mr. J. JONES: Yes.

Mr. STOPFORD: Let us imagine the position created by this unfair condition, which was obtained by the methods disclosed by the Secretary for Public Works in the secret meeting which he divulged to the House, when the pastoralists stated that they were able to obtain many concessions by using their influence in the lobby of this House. I can almost imagine that I can see those interests when the Land Act Amendment Bill was before the Chamber. Do you think that they foregathered in the lobby with their highly-paid barristers to ask for a 50 per cent. benefit clause in the interests of the small graziers? Whose interests was it in? It was in the interests of the moneyed classes, from whom they had drawn their fighting funds from the dawn of political history in Queensland. If the interests of the grazing selectors were in the minds of those men, I ask why it was that immediately the leases then existing were terminated—when the Government exercised their privilege of resuming a portion of the holdings which enjoyed a 50 per cent. protection and called upon men with small capital to vie with one another at the ballot-box so that they might get a portion of it—why was it that the 50 per cent. protection did not operate on the resumed portion which was cut up into grazing selections? What an anomaly! Can the hon. member stand up for that? Here was a large area which the pastoralists had exploited for forty or fifty years; then it became resumable under low rentals, and the men with small capital were asked to participate at the ballot in the hope that they might take up what, under that Administration, meant the worst portion of the holding; and immediately it was divided into smaller holdings the benefit clause of 50 per cent. disappeared, although it remained as a protection for the large interests that formerly held that land. I desire to say, in answer to the hon. member for Port Curtis, that not only have we evidence of what the democracy has said in regard to our action in the case of the hon. member for Mitchell, who was returned unopposed to this Chamber, but we have it in the case of the Secretary for Public Lands, who represents the electorate of Warrego, and the hon. member for Balonne, the hon. member for Gregory, the hon. member for Barcoo, and the hon. member for Burke. It applies in all electorates where this particular Act applies. Practically, the people concerned in those electorates said to each member, "Well done, my good and faithful servant, go forward and carry on your good work." The electors, by their votes in those electorates, gave the most eloquent testimony that anyone could ask for in regard to the righteousness of the proposal which we passed in this House.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: You are quite an orator. Let us get on.

Mr. STOPFORD: I regret that the leader of the Opposition was absent on his Dalby farm during the earlier portion of my remarks, but I challenge him now to let us know how long he is going to pursue this

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eloquent silence in regard to this matter. The hon. gentleman has camouflaged the question quite enough by saying that he wishes to get to another vote. The whole welfare of the State is affected by this vote, because it is on our land laws and the administration of the Department of Public Lands that the prosperity of the people of the State depends. I infer from the silence of the leader of the Opposition that he does not wish to offend the moneyed interests who subscribe to his political fund, and the hon. gentleman will not say whether he is in favour of the repeal of this legislation or not. I ask the hon. gentleman to state definitely if he is or is not in favour of the repeal of the Land Act Amendment Act. Is the hon. gentleman in favour of returning to the pastoral lessees the extra amount collected in rents by this Government? Will the hon. member say that the statements made by Mr. Garbutt are a true indication of his silence on the matter? Will the hon. gentleman say whether he will give an extension of leases as compensation to the pastoral lessees for what hon. members opposite are pleased to call the "repudiation" agreed to by this Government? I do not think this debate should be allowed to close without some consideration being given to a very valuable document that has been presented to Parliament. I refer to the report of the Public Service Commissioner, whose investigations of the Department of Public Lands, in common with other departments, have revealed a very close consideration of the best interests of everyone who deals with that particular department. If I had not been drawn off the track by the speech of the hon. member for Kennedy I would have had more time to deal extensively with this particular document. I consider every hon. member should make himself acquainted with the details of the Commissioner's report and the suggestions contained therein, because I believe that the result of the inquiry he has made is going to make for a better condition of things so far as the organisation of the Department of Public Lands is concerned. There are some suggestions in that report, such as in connection with shortening the procedure for making land available for settlement. I am not criticising the officials of the department in any way, because I realise that, with the extension of our railway system, the expenditure of our public money, and the large activities the Government have embarked upon since they came into office, have naturally placed upon that department huge responsibilities. If, as the result of their efforts to cope with their new work, certain disorganisation has crept in, I feel sure that the recommendations contained in the report I have just referred to will go a long way to improve and benefit the organisation of the department. Taking the report broadly, it is worthy of some consideration. Recommendations are made whereby greater facilities will be offered to people to get on the land. I remember on one occasion when Mr. Gordon Graham, the former Under Secretary of the Department of Public Lands, and a most excellent officer, gave evidence before the Public Works Commission in connection with a railway proposal, he stated that, if 100 settlers arrived in the State at that time he would be unable to place them on land close enough to a railway to ensure them reasonable chances of successfully earning their living.

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Mr. J. JONES: There is plenty of room now.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. member is wrong. When the Mount Morgan mine closed down I went to the Lands Department and asked if they could settle 100 men with small capital. I will admit that I wanted those men settled in the district of the hon. member for Herbert, where I knew that cane lands on the Tully River would give them an absolutely assured success, and the department said that it was impossible. I was informed that, although we had expended money in building a railway line, it was no use putting more men on the land there because the sugar-mill capacity was not sufficient to cope with cane produced more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the railway. If, as a result of this inquiry, we are going to have speedier methods of dealing with land settlement, if we are going to break down many of the delays which at present are experienced between the time the application is made and the time when the settler is finally placed on his holding, I venture to say that the labours of the Commissioner will not have been in vain.

It is my intention to dilate somewhat on one aspect of this report, that is, the part which asks for inquiry into the methods of solving the difficulties caused by freehold land being held out of use. When we consider that the people of this State are annually paying interest on a large public debt, £48,000,000 of which has been expended on railway construction, and when we remember that one man is utilising his land to the fullest capacity whilst side by side with him a mere speculator holds land out of use—although the unimproved value of his land increases to the same extent as that of the man who is utilising his land to the fullest extent from the expenditure of that public money and the industry of the people in the district—we realise that the land which is held out of use along our railways is a menace to all the people in the district and the State as a whole. It may be argued that an increase in our unimproved value taxation will meet the case. I do not think so, because in increasing that tax you place a burden on the man the unimproved value of whose land has been increased by the extension of some public utility, but who is using his land for the benefit of the whole of the State. I believe that sooner or later serious consideration must be given to some form of taxation of land of that description which will not hit the man in the immediate vicinity who is utilising his land. My idea is that we might impose some form of "non-productive" tax, based on the income of the man in the vicinity who is utilising his land for the benefit of the State, or a tax equal to the average railway earnings from land of a similar area in the district.

The bell indicated that the time allowed to the hon. member under the Standing Orders had expired.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): One almost feels inclined to congratulate the Government on the manner in which these Estimates have been handled and the manoeuvres resorted to in order to prevent discussion on some of the most important items. We are engaged in discussing Estimates amounting to £23,000,000. Because of the time wasted by hon. members opposite, within two hours £16,000,000 of that total will go through without any discussion. Up to the time of

my rising six members have spoken to-day, of whom four were Government members. During the discussion of the Estimates hon. members opposite on one small vote alone have taken up something like 800 inches of space, compared with less than 400 inches by members on this side. The public of Queensland must realise that in some of the votes which yet remain to be discussed—State Enterprises, Railways, and so on—there must be some items which Government supporters are seriously afraid of having discussed. That is the only construction that can be placed on the way in which time has been taken up by one Government member after another. Will all this discussion to-day lead to another acre of settlement, or will it increase our productiveness in any way? Not a bit. We have been prevented from discussing votes which, in the public interest, should be fully discussed.

I recognise that the hon. member for Mount Morgan is one of the most courteous speakers on the other side. At the same time, his personal attack on the hon. member for Kennedy was not worthy of him. He accused that hon. member of having spoken from personal motives. In the back part of my electorate I represent very much the same class of selector as is represented by the hon. member for Kennedy. I am not a Crown lessee, so no one can impute personal motives to me. Speaking on behalf of the small graziers in my electorate, I say that every word which was uttered by the hon. member for Kennedy is borne out by the facts of the case. Those people in the present time are in a deplorable condition. Why are men chosen to represent an electorate in Parliament, to voice the wishes, the desires, and the interests of the electors? Simply because they happen to be engaged in the industries in which their electors are interested. The hon. member for Kennedy had every right to speak as he did in connection with the cattle industry in his electorate without the slur of personal interest being cast at him.

During the discussion, what is called the "Repudiation Act" has been mentioned. I quite understand that hon. members on the other side do not like the true facts of the case to be brought up. If ever there was an act of moral repudiation, it is embodied in that piece of legislation. We know that in 1905, owing to the fact that stock were not going on to those Western properties, a special Act was passed containing a proviso dealing with rents. On the strength of that Act a large amount of capital was brought into Queensland that otherwise would not have been invested here, nor the improvements it was expended on made. Queensland has received the benefit of that investment, which was made in good faith, on the assumption that the promise made by the Queensland Parliament in 1905 would be observed. That promise has been broken. Can it be wondered at that, under such circumstances, the credit of Queensland has suffered all over the world? The market to which we usually apply for money has been closed to us simply through that breach of faith towards those who put money into our Western country. I notice that the hon. member for Mount Morgan stressed the point that the High Court declared that the Queensland Parliament had the power to do what was done. Of course, Parliament has the power to do anything. That makes the crime—if I may call it so—all the worse, because the

Government knew they could do wrong with impunity. We can do anything with a majority in this Chamber. If the Government chose to pass a short Act, they could take an innocent man off the street and hang him. They have power to do that, though it would not be right. The point is, is it right to do these things? The Government have, by the use of their servile majority, seriously compromised the good name of Queensland. The consequences of the Land Act Amendment Act will react disastrously on Queensland. It was not only wrong to pass that Act, but it was a serious blunder. We have had a good deal of talk on land settlement. We have had talk and talk and talk, not only by the inch or the foot, but, I may say by the yard, but it goes for nothing. I will quote an instance where land settlement has been retarded in my district. I refer to Eungella Tableland. The possibilities of that land are equal to those of any area of similar nature in Queensland. Prior to this Government coming into power this country was on the point of being settled by a group of dairy-farmers from the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. It was intended that they should grow grass and place cattle on those pastures and go in for dairy pursuits. That would have taken place had there not been a change of Government in 1915. To show the fruitfulness of the back country in that district, I intend to quote a letter written by a Victorian who subsequently took up some of the land, but who was hunted out because of the actions of this Government. He says—

"The truth is I am one of the 'laughed-at innocents' who selected land on the Eungella Tableland in 1920 with a group of New South Wales farmers. Having had twenty years' experience with fruitgrowing, I recognised on the Eungella Tableland absolutely the finest fruitgrowing country I have seen in Eastern Australia, also including Tasmania and New Zealand. My neighbour, Mr. Charles Dunning, an experienced farmer from Tamworth, New South Wales, says it is the finest dairying country he has ever seen. I have no doubt that this tableland would have been one of the most successful settlements ever established in Queensland: but what is the result as far as I am concerned? While I am busy 2,000 miles away selling my orchard and vineyard at a loss of £5,000 below its market value to comply with the residence clauses in your Queensland Act, I had the mortification of reading your leading article last November stating that the balance of the unselected blocks were withdrawn from selection."

Through a change of land tenure brought about by this Government the first company from the Northern Rivers gave up the intention of coming to Queensland, and the settlement of that area was dropped. Out of a reserve of 13,000 acres the Government have 3,000 acres reserved on the frontage, which means that 10,000 acres are blocked to settlement. For the last ten years numerous settlers have taken up land there; but they have always found it impossible to get over the difficulty of those 3,000 acres of unoccupied land forming the frontage. There is dense scrub on this frontage, and, if the settlers cut a track through it, the sun cannot get to the track to dry it up when there is a heavy fall of rain, and it becomes a bog.

*Mr. Swayne.]*

No roads can be constructed because the local authorities receive no rates from that area. Dozens of men have taken up the land and have had to release it and return to Victoria and New South Wales simply because of the conditions imposed by this Government. It was impossible for them to hold some of the best land in the State. That is a glaring case of the effect of the Government policy. Anyone acquainted with land settlement knows that people will not go behind thick scrubby land to take up a holding. Settlement must be worked from the front of the land. It is impossible to do this on this area, because the Government have reserved that frontage of 3,000 acres.

I may also say that something like £20,000 of public money has been spent in making roads to this area, which is within 5 miles of a railway. The action of the Government in reserving this area is a great [2.30 p.m.] injustice to the Mackay district, as that area should be the source of all the butter and dairy produce required in Mackay; and I hope the hon. member for Mackay will join with me in trying to induce the Government to reconsider this matter, and bring about an alteration in their decision that the whole of this area should be reserved as a State forest. I give place to no one in my desire to see that the future timber requirements of this State are provided for. It is stated that there is valuable cedar on the frontage. So there is; but I understand the department can reserve that timber for five years, and sell it as required. Then north and south of the 13,000 acres designed, there is just as good cedar and more beech on the head of the Broken and other rivers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not wish to prevent the hon. member from drawing a comparison, but I hope he will not discuss the "Forestry" item on this vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think you will realise that the two questions are closely interwoven and that it is almost impossible to dissociate them. Even from the forestry point of view, we are not getting any benefit from that land. We know that, when trees reach their maturity, they should be sold; but until the last few months not a single stick has been sold off this land. I pointed out some years ago that people were ready to buy the timber, yet it was allowed to rot. Whether you take it from the land settlement point of view or from the forestry point of view, the administration of the department in connection with this matter has been disgraceful. The Government have been in power seven years, and during those seven years valuable timber has been allowed to rot. It is an example of how the present Government do things. They have kept this timber until it has become useless and of no value to anyone. In keeping settlers off this land, they have adopted a dog-in-the-manger policy, and have cut the Mackay district off from one of the best pieces of its back country. The very choicest hinterland has been cut off, and it is most unfair that the whole of that area should be withheld from selection and devoted to forestry purposes. The Minister should consult the members for the district regarding it. There is plenty of land on this plateau both for settlement and for forestry purposes.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): When I arrived in this Chamber, after travelling by mail

[*Mr. Swayne.*

train from Dalby, the hon. member for Mount Morgan took occasion to throw out a challenge which, I understand, had been thrown out this morning. This reminds me of an incident which occurred on the mail train which I would very much like to discuss on the Railway Estimates. Most of the time that I was travelling on that train, I was watching the guard put in cream cans.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why should he not?

Mr. VOWLES: It is supposed to be a mail train. The hon. member for Mount Morgan referred to the attitude of the Country party in connection with the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, and he tried to associate the Country party with certain statements which he said Mr. Garbutt had made.

Mr. BRENNAN: The member for Kennedy made them, too.

Mr. VOWLES: I know nothing about any statements made by Mr. Garbutt, and any statements he may have made he has made them of his own volition. The policy of the Country party on this matter is well known. It has been made public, and the hon. member for Mount Morgan should know that it would be irregular for any Government to make provision for the repayment of taxes collected by a past Government. The policy of the Country party reads in effect—

"The Country party will repeal as soon as possible all legislation of a repudiatory nature placed on the statute-book by this Government.

"If any injustice has been done in the past, the question of compensation by an extension of leases will be considered."

(Government laughter.) The Theodore Government must take the responsibility for what has been done, but the Country party will see that justice is done in future to all sections of the community. There is no equivocation about that. Hon. gentlemen opposite know that it is part of our platform; and, because they have got hold of some bogus minutes of some meeting in the North, when somebody stated something else, they wish to connect it with our party, and I take this opportunity of replying to the challenge of the hon. member for Mount Morgan.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your statement now confirms what the Minister for Works quoted.

Mr. MORGAN: This was in our platform years ago.

At 2.35 p.m.,

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

Mr. VOWLES: I would like the hon. member for Mount Morgan to read our platform. The hon. member for Mackay made a certain statement, and the member for Herbert made another statement, and on each occasion it was apparent that the statements were obtained from stolen documents.

Mr. STOPFORD: They must have existed.

Mr. VOWLES: How do you know they existed? What is more, did the hon. member not read out that these were merely recommendations?

Mr. BRENNAN: What is a recommendation?

Mr. VOWLES: There is a big difference between the recommendations of one individual who lives in the North and the policy of a party like the Country party. I, as the

leader of that party, am morally responsible to a certain extent, and I tell you that, so far as the repayment of this back money is concerned, it is an impossible proposal. However just it might be to repay the money, it is impossible in the future to make repayments of moneys improperly collected in the past. The Theodore Government have to bear the burden, and, if it is thought an injustice has been done, then each case will be judged on its merits.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): The remarks of the leader of the Opposition confirm the statement made by the Minister for Works, which was reiterated also by the hon. member for Mount Morgan, that the Country party are pledged, first, to repeal the Land Act Amendment Act; and, second, to consider the matter of refunding moneys approximating half a million or more to certain pastoral and squatting companies which have paid retrospective rentals under the Land Act Amendment Act.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No! No!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The leader of the Opposition said so this afternoon. He said that that plank of the platform meant that, if injustice was done, it should be put right.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say the platform said that at all. I said that that was the effect of it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Exactly; that is the effect of it—if injustice has been done, the money must be refunded.

Mr. VOWLES: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why this quibbling, this bandying with words?

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I rise to a point or order. Is the Minister in order in saying that I am quibbling? I never referred to a sum of £500,000 or any sum of money. I said that, if injustice has been done in the past, compensation by extension of lease will be a way of correcting it.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is worse.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not wish to misrepresent the leader of the Opposition. It is just as well that hon. members opposite should stand up to their accepted policy. The leader of the Opposition did not mention a sum of £500,000, but he said there was more than half a million pounds involved, and that, if hon. members opposite happened to be returned to power, they were going to repeal the Land Acts Amendment Act and make a refund.

Mr. FLETCHER: No refund.

Mr. J. JONES: Wrong again.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will buttress my remarks by the minutes of the meeting of the Queensland Country party, held at the Union Bank Chambers on 23rd June last. That place is coming to be known as the Trades Hall of the Country party. I want first to point out what a serious matter this is. If this legislation is going to be repealed, if leases are going to be extended, who are going to suffer? The graziers of Queensland are going to suffer. The small graziers are going to be compelled to make up an enormous sum of probably £1,000,000 in order that that money may be returned to the squatocracy of Queensland. (Opposition interruption.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We are getting more lies from you. You have been lying all the morning.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call upon the hon. member for Drayton to withdraw the words, "You have been lying all the morning."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In accordance with the rules of the House, I will withdraw them; but the Minister has been making incorrect statements all the morning.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am dealing with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, and not of the hon. member for Drayton, who is interjecting in such a ridiculous manner. I would point out what a serious matter this revelation of the policy of the Country party opposite is in relation to the Land Act Amendment Act. It is a serious matter for the State and for the graziers, if the leases are going to be extended and this money has to be refunded. That admission has been made, and it means that the graziers of Queensland will have to find the money. I want to quote from the minutes of the Country Party Executive Council meeting which I previously referred to—

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

1. To recommend—

Mr. VOWLES: To recommend.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let me proceed. The leader of the Opposition has admitted that the plank he quoted is to remedy injustice. If you start with the Opposition claim of injustice, then you start with the basis of repeal and the basis of refund.

Mr. FLETCHER: No refund.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. If there is an injustice, there must be an extension of leases, and there must be a refund of money unjustly paid.

Mr. VOWLES: No refund. If you are talking about refund, that is your policy and not ours.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The leader of the Opposition said that, if there was any injustice, the matter of compensation would have to be considered.

Mr. FLETCHER: He did not say so.

Mr. BRENNAN: He did.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let me proceed with my quotation—

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

We have obtained millions of pounds from the most exacting centre of the world as far as security is concerned, and that sufficiently deals with the latter portion of that recommendation. There were various other sections of the resolution, including—

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

Further—

"Mr. Edkins thought that, although all this was intended to be done"—

This is a remark by Mr. Edkins, one of the great outside controlling forces of the Opposition—

"it was nevertheless bad tactics to put it into the front window."

At 2.41 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

*Hon. J. Larcombe.]*

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a remarkable thing that one of the most important planks, so far as land settlement and the graziers are concerned, should be kept out of the front window. I think it is the duty of members on this side to place it in the front window, and let the people know what the policy of the party opposite is. Can they honestly deny that that is their policy? It is given expression to by Mr. Edkins, who controls the Graziers' Association, and who is in receipt of nearly £4,000 a year. He is a man who has much influence with hon. members opposite.

Mr. BRAND: He has no influence at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is no good the hon. member saying that, because Mr. Edkins, in his official capacity in connection with the pastoralists, must have an influence upon hon. members opposite. This is a Country party meeting which I am referring to. (Opposition interruption.) It may be unpalatable to hon. members opposite to have these remarks in "Hansard," but I do not think they should object to the revelation of their platform to the public. Mr. Garbutt said—

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

That is another significant aspect—they will be pledged to refund that money. What does that mean, so far as the graziers and the taxpayers of Queensland are concerned? It means that half a million of money will have to be found to be paid back to these great pastoralist companies, the shareholders in which are living in other parts of the world. This has a serious aspect for the small grazier. I am certain that, when this platform is made public throughout Queensland, there will be a revulsion of feeling on the part of the graziers against the Country party for making such a pledge. It is not in harmony with the policy of the farmers of the State generally. It is simply a plank that has been formulated in the interests of the wealthy pastoralist institutions who have governed the State for over fifty years. Their influence was only countered and minimised when this Administration was returned in 1915. Another member of the meeting, 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 men."

That is significant. This is a party which is claiming to represent the small grazier in Parliament, and here they are trying to place in their platform the planks which they intend to translate into law which they admit themselves are going to affect disastrously the small grazier in the State.

The general question of the Land Act Amendment Act—this alleged repudiatory legislation—has been discussed time and again during the debate. It was discussed by the hon. member for Kennedy, who submitted his views in a way that I take no exception to; but his views are not those of the Government, and I do not think they are views which should be translated into legislation.

The hon. member for Kennedy referred to this legislation as repudiatory legislation. When we are twitted with remarks like that, we naturally ask: Has the party opposite been guilty of repudiation? Is this cry com-

ing from a party who are guiltless, so far as repudiation is concerned? I say emphatically that we did not pass any repudiatory legislation at all. It was only the restoration of a right that the State and the selectors were deprived of. The party opposite were guilty of repudiation in a most flagrant manner in 1912 in connection with the carters' award in Rockhampton. The carters obtained an award under the Wages Board Act, but that award was immediately repudiated by the hon. member for Bulimba, who was then Secretary for Public Works. I recollect in connection with the last municipal elections throughout Queensland that the Tory candidates were returned pledged to no more increase in taxation and no further increase in expenditure. What happened as soon as the municipal elections were over? These aldermen told the electors that they were going into the municipal garden to plant beautiful flowers of economy, and reduce taxation. What happened in connection with all the councillors which were returned pledged against increased taxation and expenditure? The mayor of South Brisbane was immediately granted an increase in his allowance. The allowance of the mayor of Brisbane was fixed at £1,000 a year. Yet hon. members opposite talk about repudiation when their candidates pledged to no further expenditure acted in that way! We know how the pledges of the party opposite were broken in a most flagrant manner in New South Wales only a few weeks ago, when the Fuller Nationalist Government repudiated their pledges to the public servants. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What did you do?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will tell you later what I did. I am dealing now with hon. members opposite. I am dealing with the Nationalist party in New South Wales, and showing how they went back on their pledges to the public servants of that State. Immediately they were returned to power they removed the public servants from the protection of the Arbitration Court. They also sacked 160 men in the Government printing works, and in other ways they repudiated their pledges to the electors.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Tell us what you did for the public servants?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not dealing with what I did just now. I have shown that the party opposite repudiated the carters' award in 1912. It was not only repudiated by the hon. member for Bulimba, but was substituted by another award which provided for longer hours and lower pay. These were the things that were done by hon. members opposite who now complain about repudiation. In the municipal sphere in Queensland, and on the Nationalist side in New South Wales and in other States, the same thing occurred. We had a very significant indication of what the people think about these aspects of repudiation. There was a municipal election in the North Ward of Brisbane about a fortnight ago, when the Labour candidate was returned with a substantial majority. That shows that the people were disgusted and dissatisfied with the repudiatory policy of the Tory candidates who had been returned at the previous election.

I would like to give a quotation from a journal, which is the official organ of the

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primary producers of Queensland. I refer to "The Producers' Review."

Mr. MORGAN: A journal you bought?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is an insulting remark.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The trouble is that the editor of that journal could not be bought.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The editor of that journal could not be bought by the hon. member for Murilla or any of his colleagues. Let me refer to what that paper has to say about this alleged repudiatory measure. This paper is issued monthly on behalf of the producers of Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: On behalf of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is issued on behalf of the producers of Queensland. I want to read a quotation from "The Producers' Review" in regard to the Land Act Amendment Act, the so-called "Repudiation Act," so that I can get it into "Hansard"—

"Nearly the whole of the pastoralists and practically all of the selectors of Queensland are paying rentals fixed by the court without any limitation; but there are still about 1,000 pastoralists who claim special privileges under the law of last century. The Bill proposes to wipe out that special privilege and put all selectors on the same footing, whether they be pastoralists or merely struggling pear selectors. Australia does not believe in special privilege, and every remnant of it should be rooted out of our laws. But why should we go on giving the special privileges to banks and English financing companies while the bulk of our own hard toiling selectors and lessees are paying many times higher rentals? This very restriction is one of the last remnants in Queensland of the old time special privileges of the days when the squatters bossed Queensland, and regarded the small selector as a plague sent to worry them. We are told that the English financing companies are breathing out fire and brimstone. Of course, they are—that is, the companies who have been enjoying this remnant of special privilege."

Could anyone place the position more aptly and appropriately from the viewpoint of the producer? One could not do so if he read a volume. That is what "The Producers' Review" says. It says that the Government were only removing the last remnant of vested interests and monopoly. It points out that it removes the legislation introduced by squatter-bossed Governments at a time when the farmer was looked upon as a plague and a pest. Our legislation in connection with the Land Act Amendment Act was morally sound, economically sound, and from every point of view was simply putting the pastoral lessee on the same plane as the small grazing selector.

Mr. VOWLES: Do you say that "The Producers' Review" is the organ of the farmers' party?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not; it has been turned down by all the farmers' councils and the executive.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has been turned down by a few politicians.

Mr. MOORE: It has been turned down by all the branches.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will give another quotation from "The Producers' Review," so that I can get it into "Hansard." It is headed, "Wanted a Straight-out Country Party." It reads—

"Politics in Queensland to-day is in a state of flux, and the old discredited politicians who have been rebuffed again and again are endeavouring to foist upon the new party their policy of place-hunting ineptitude and intrigue. . . . Do the farmers imagine that the State campaign committee, representing moneyed interests, middlemen, shippers, and huge monopolies, will act in the interests of a party that has sworn death to middlemen and other parasites? It is apparent that once again the farmers have been hoodwinked."

That is what "The Producers' Review" says about the party opposite. We have been accused of misrepresentation and unfairness, but here you have "The Producers' Review" speaking of the party opposite as being dominated by middlemen monopolists and by those interests which are fighting and not assisting the primary producers of this State. These remarks from "The Producers' Review" show that hon. members opposite do not represent the producers of Queensland. You have only got to look at this paper month after month, and you will find the commendations which come from all parts of the State from farmers regarding the policy of the journal. That, I think, is proof that "The Producers' Review" is widely read and accepted as the authoritative journal bearing upon the producing interests of Queensland.

Mr. BRAND: What does it say about land settlement?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member desires it, I shall certainly give him another remark or two from "The Producers' Review." Dealing [3 p.m.] with the land settlement policy of the Government and the attitude of hon. members opposite, it said, in April last—

"One thing that the farmers, however, should realise is that they owe nothing to their so-called political leaders. No sooner had Mr. Theodore outlined his proposals than these politicians began scurrying about calling futile conferences, and behaving in such a flagrantly obstructive manner that prominent Nationalist newspapers, both in the city and the country, warned them to stand aside and let Mr. Theodore undertake that which they had so hopelessly failed to accomplish."

"The Producers' Review" stated that Mr. Theodore had to step in and do for the producers, for land settlement, and for the State what hon. members opposite had hopelessly failed to accomplish! And on 10th April, *inter alia*, it said—

"If the Country party had been an effective and constructive organisation, it could have had the credit for some of the big reforms now being made. As it is, not one scrap of credit can be claimed

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by the Country party. It spent its time and energies in futile and destructive criticism of no possible value. It failed signally to be an effective Opposition, and it will go on adding failure to failure so long as it persists in its footing futility. The scurried and terrified attitude of the Country party during the past month has been more than a joke; it has been a weariness to the flesh."

Those are sermons which hon. members opposite should take to heart. When an important journal like "The Producers' Review" sees fit to make very scathing criticisms of hon. members opposite, they should be prepared to consider them, and they should be ready to search their souls to find out what is wrong. (Opposition interruption.) It is quite evident that hon. members opposite have lost touch with the producers of Queensland. (Renewed interruption.)

Let me deal for a moment or two with the remarks of the hon. member for Kennedy and the hon. member for Aubigny. The latter made a complaint with reference to the increasing number of reappraisement cases, and urged that they should be attended to. It is quite correct to say that there should be no undue accumulation of reappraisement cases. As a matter of fact, last year some extra assessing rangers were appointed, and more motor cars and other necessary means of speedy conveyance were provided, so that the number to-day is being reduced as quickly and as satisfactorily as possible.

The hon. member for Kennedy asked the Government to consider favourably the requests of the grazing industry, which, he pointed out, was suffering disastrously at the present time, so that the graziers were entitled to consideration. With those sentiments I thoroughly and whole-heartedly agree. It is deplorable that the industry should be so hard-hit by depressed prices and threatening drought conditions, although I hope that the fears in the latter case will not be realised. The Government have not waited until Parliament met or these Estimates were discussed to consider the unfortunate position of the graziers of Queensland. In many ways they have done work of an active and satisfactory nature to minimise the evil effects referred to by the hon. member for Kennedy. The Premier some time ago in Rockhampton met a deputation of graziers, and referred to the advisability of a meat pool.

Mr. MORGAN: He did not do anything.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is an ungenerous remark, because the deputation promised that they would formulate a scheme to place before the Premier, and up to date they have not done so. What is the good of being unfair in a matter of this kind? What is the good of introducing party politics? The hon. member knows quite well, or he ought to know, that the Government promised to support any reasonable scheme formulated by the graziers. The Lord helps those who help themselves, and the graziers are prepared to help themselves, although they have not done so up to the present. Any responsibility for undue delay does not rest with the Government. This week or next week a conference of the grazing interests will be held in Melbourne, and the Queensland Government desire to send a representative there.

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Mr. VOWLES: A representative of the Lands Department?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. VOWLES: Why do you deal with that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For the simple reason that the hon. member for Kennedy raised it, and it was discussed. It is all very fine for hon. members to make wild, wide criticism, but they cannot expect it to go without remark. (Opposition interruption.) The hon. member for Dalby was not here this morning, and he does not know what took place.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Mirani was not allowed to get on to forestry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Do I understand the hon. member for Marilla to suggest that I was unfair to the hon. member for Mirani when he was on his feet?

Mr. MORGAN: I said the hon. member for Mirani was not allowed to get on to forestry.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to remind the hon. member that he must not reflect on the Chair.

Mr. MORGAN: I am just reminding the Minister that the hon. member for Mirani was not allowed to deal with forestry.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must know that I am not as dense as that. The hon. member for Kennedy raised the distinct question of what the Government were doing to help the graziers of Queensland, and the Minister is replying. I think that any Minister is entitled at any time to address the Committee in reply to any matter raised by hon. members opposite.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would have preferred to sit still and say nothing, but then there would have been a suggestion of unfairness, secrecy, and failure to recognise courteous representations. I was proceeding to point out that the Government intended to be represented at that conference, and we hoped that the Opposition would afford the necessary "pair," and that the disgraceful practice which was established when we wanted to send a representative to the Fruitgrowers' Conference in Melbourne will not be followed on this occasion.

In addition to promising assistance in the matter of a meat pool and in respect of the graziers' conference, the Government have reduced cattle freights to the graziers of Queensland. Before this reduction took place, the Government had a policy of keeping fares and freights as low as possible. Our cattle freights were the lowest in Australia. Notwithstanding that, the graziers came along to me and to the Government, and suggested that we should still further reduce freights. We agreed to do so, and we reduced them by 20 per cent. We did not limit the reduction to the graziers; we extended it to the pig raisers and the cream producers. Further, when the season was bad some time ago, the cattle producers came to me and to the Government, and asked for a reduction in cattle freights. We reduced the freights by 50 per cent.—which no Government had ever done previously in the history of Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They did.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They did not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I challenge you to show that they did not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member is talking "bunkum." I have had the statistics looked up. Rebates were given previously.

Mr. VOWLES: There was a 33 per cent. reduction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Those rebates had to be paid back.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did any Government ever make a 50 per cent. reduction?

Mr. VOWLES: Thirty-three per cent., I said.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say that this Government reduced starving stock freights by 50 per cent.—a greater reduction than any other Government ever made to the graziers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is an incorrect statement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is an incorrect interjection. The leader of the Opposition was quite correct.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say that previous Governments carried cattle cheaper than you did.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mention has been made of the question of rents. The Government have deferred rents and penalties; they have deferred taxation, and in various other ways they have met the graziers of Queensland who made representations to them, and who have since sent along appreciative and congratulatory letters. The graziers of Queensland are very pleased with the concessions and the protection which the Government are affording them at this very serious time.

Mr. MORGAN: They do not vote for you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They do. As has been pointed out, in the Mitchell electorate the opponents of Labour could not get a candidate. That is a great pastoral and grazing constituency. In the Barcoo, Balonne, Warrego, and other grazing electorates for years the Government have received large majorities. This is not a new-found zeal for the Labour party or the Labour Government on the part of the producers in those electorates; they have been doing it over and over again for the last ten, fifteen, and in some cases nearly twenty years. So, when we get down to the sound basis as to what the graziers of Queensland think of the Government we find their opinion reflected in the votes that are cast for the Labour candidates at election time.

Mr. J. JONES: Not in the Kennedy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member cannot say too much about his win; because it is a well-known fact that the late Mr. O'Sullivan was unfortunately ill during the last election campaign, and was unable to go up to the electorate. That was his disadvantage, and it was to the disadvantage of this party. But in the electorates I have mentioned and in others, election after election, the producers have returned the Labour candidates. There must be reason for that. If the criticism of hon. members opposite was sound and accurate, the Labour candidates would not save their deposits in the grazing constituencies. Yet, year after year, they come back with substantial majorities; and the anti-Labour

organisations could not get a candidate to oppose the hon. member for Mitchell.

Mr. VOWLES: What has that to do with land settlement?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members opposite will interject, and, when I reply, they protest. I want to get back to the remarks of the hon. member for Kennedy, and remind him that there is something else required besides meat pools, reduced freights, and such like things. There is the question of markets and of quality of the products of the industry. The hon. member for Kennedy knows that those two aspects of the meat industry have been discussed time and again at conferences of producers in Queensland. The blame for the absence of markets and for the inferior quality of the product has not been placed upon the shoulders of the Government, even by the producers of Queensland. Then, again, the Government have generously passed legislation enabling—within certain limits—the graziers to carry over their losses from one year to another. The very legislation which permits the imposition of a penalty—about which hon. members opposite complain—was passed by hon. members opposite.

Mr. VOWLES: You have not rescinded it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is an apologetic attitude to take up. If hon. members opposite were concerned about the interests of the graziers and primary producers and objected to this penalty, why did they support the legislation which permitted it to be imposed? To-day the interest is about twice as high as when hon. members opposite imposed that 10 per cent. penalty; but the present Government have restrained their hand, they have enabled the graziers to have their taxation deferred, to have their rents deferred, to have the penalty deferred, and in various other ways have given to the industry the consideration that it wants.

Mr. MORGAN: With 10 per cent. interest.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member knows that that is not correct. That is just a generalisation that does not accord with fact. In many cases the penalty has been wiped out or greatly reduced when the circumstances of the case have permitted it. I have here a statement which I secured from the Lands Department just before I came into this Chamber this afternoon. I am not going to read it, because hon. members opposite would object to its reading taking up too much time. It is valuable information to the graziers and producers of Queensland; yet hon. members opposite would object to its being read.

Despite all that hon. members opposite say, the land settlement policy of the present Government is sound, rational, comprehensive, and vigorous. The electric current of vigorous action is running through the whole of our public works policy. Just for a moment let us take a bird's eye view of our policy. There is the Burnett scheme, which will settle 5,000 settlers in a few years. There is the Dawson Valley scheme, which will settle ultimately probably 20,000 settlers. There is the cotton-growing scheme, in which in a few years millions of pounds will be invested. To-day hundreds of thousands of pounds are being

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secured by the cotton-growers of Queensland, and the acreage is being increased. Then, again, with the completion of the North Coast Railway an increased acreage of sugar lands will come under cultivation. The Government are appointing a Commission to ascertain the best sites, with a view to erecting more mills. In that five-branched policy—the Burnett scheme, the Dawson Valley water conservation and irrigation scheme, the cotton-growing scheme, the North Coast Railway completion scheme, and the sugar-mill scheme—we have all the elements and essentials of a vigorous, new, big land settlement policy, and a true appreciation of the possibilities of Queensland, of its large area and the necessity for increased population. With a policy like that it is futile for hon. members opposite to indulge in vague generalities with the idea of discrediting the Government's land settlement policy.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I am very sorry that illness has prevented the Secretary for Public Lands from being present. I know that he has had much more experience of land matters than the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, and, no doubt, he would have dealt with matters appertaining to the land in a much more practical manner. The Secretary for Railways told the Committee that the Government have reduced freights on live stock by 20 per cent. He did not tell the Committee that the Government had previously increased those freights by 63 per cent. The Government are still charging the stockowners of Queensland a great deal more than was being charged in 1914, when conditions were so much better than they are at the present time. The hon. gentleman has been very liberal to the cattle-owners of the State. The freight was increased by 63 per cent., and now he comes along and says, "See how liberal the Government have been. We will reduce the freight by 20 per cent." Notwithstanding that reduction, the cattle-owners to-day are paying 30 per cent. more in freight than they were in 1914.

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

Mr. MORGAN: I do not know whether this Government have brought a blight on the people of Queensland, but during the last seven years, since they have been in office we have not had one full good year. We have had one-half of the year good and the other half bad, but we have never had one good whole year. Evidently the Government have brought a blight upon people who have settled on the land. When the 10 per cent. penalty was passed by the Denham Government in 1910, I strongly and strenuously opposed the imposition of that penalty. The Labour Opposition members of that time were not opposed to that penalty. I was opposed in that matter to the Government that I was supporting, but I could not get that penalty lowered because I was in the minority. There may be some justification for the 10 per cent. penalty so as to prevent people using money that rightly belongs to the Government. There is no justification for a 10 per cent. penalty during times of distress. I admit that in certain instances the Government have reduced that penalty, notwithstanding the fact that the Secretary for Public Lands on more than one occasion told us that the law would not permit him to do so. I am pleased that he has discovered that the law

will permit him to do so or else that he is breaking the law. I am not against him for breaking the law if it is necessary to give consideration to the man who is unable to pay his rent. I would like to see that practice applied to all those who are in such an unfortunate position that they cannot pay their high rents to-day. The Minister has endeavoured to administer the Act in accordance with its true wording; but, unfortunately, our Land Act is not a good Act for Queensland. The Act should be remodelled in such a way that the people can have land at a cheaper rental than they are paying at the present time. The present Government are a rack-renting Government. After the people on the land have paid their rent and their taxes, they have little left for themselves. They are really working for the Government. This Government have rack-rented the man on the land ever since they took office. The Minister tried to justify the repudiation of the Land Act Amendment Act by stating that it was necessary to bring the rents of the big pastoralists more into conformity with the rent paid by the small graziers. The first injustice was done by making the rentals of the small graziers too high. If the Government wished to be fair to the people on the land, they should have reduced the rental of the small grazier to the level of the rent paid by the large pastoralist. There was no justification for breaking the contract with the large pastoralist in order to make the rent paid by the two sections of landowners more in conformity with one another. There are people to-day paying 50 per cent. more than they should by way of rent. The hon. member for Burke, who has lived in the pastoral country, gave an illustration which I was very pleased indeed to hear. He advocated that certain conditions should appertain to the North, and I consider those conditions should appertain to the West and the South as well. Unfortunately, the Government are looking to the Lands Department for revenue, although that department has no right to be a revenue-producing department. It should only obtain sufficient revenue from the people to meet its own responsibilities. The revenue should be obtained through the Taxation Department. If a man on the land, be he large or small, makes a profit he has to pay income tax, and that should be sufficient. He should not be rack-rented out of his farm or holding in the way that the Government are doing. He should have an opportunity to take up land at as low a rental as possible. Unfortunately, the Government are out to discover just how high a rental a property will stand. Their officials carry out the work in the same spirit. No doubt, they are following the policy of the Government. The hon. member for Toowoomba, when he was criticising the Commissioner for Police, said that, if the officials of the Government would not administer their departments in accordance with the policy of the Government, they should be dismissed.

Mr. BRENNAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: Perhaps the Land Court judges are carrying out the policy of the Government in order to get as much rent as they possibly can from the unfortunate landowners.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Murilla in order in saying that the Land

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Court is carrying out the policy of the Government?

Mr. MORGAN: Why does the hon. member want to twist what I said?

Mr. COLLINS: That is what the hon. member said. I want to tie him down to the truth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member for Murilla is not making any reflection on the Land Court judges. If he is, I ask him to withdraw the statement.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not making any reflection. I said that perhaps the Land Court judges were carrying out the policy of the Government in obtaining high rent from the people on the land.

Mr. COLLINS: Is that not a reflection on the court?

Mr. MORGAN: No. I feel sure, Sir, that you will keep your left ear on me pretty closely.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the hon. member for Murilla that, when an hon. member of the Committee rises to a point of order, as Chairman, I must allow him to state that point of order. I then ask the hon. member, as I have a perfect right to do, if he has made the statement attributed to him; and, if he assures me that he has not, then I allow him to proceed. I do not think the hon. member for Murilla can expect anything fairer than that. I hope the hon. member will not cast any reflection upon the Chair, for, if he does, I will deal with him.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not making any reflection upon the Chair, Mr. Kirwan. I was pointing out that you would perform your duties so well that you would keep your left ear well open, and that you would not allow me to cast any reflection upon the Land Court judges. There was no need for the hon. member for Bowen to rise to a point of order.

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

Mr. MORGAN: In order that Queensland should be prosperous, it is necessary that the Government, whether representative of the Labour party, the Country party, or any other party, should endeavour to get the people upon the land on the best conditions possible, and the Government should also see that, when they are placed on the land, they have sufficient opportunity to become successful, prosperous, and, if possible, rich men. They have just as much right to accumulate wealth by producing from the soil as they have to accumulate wealth by working in different industries. Any man—the hon. member for Bowen or anyone else—who is against the accumulation of wealth by those on the land is not acting in the best interests of the country.

Mr. COLLINS: Don't you put words into my mouth.

Mr. MORGAN: It is only because of the opportunities of accumulating wealth that people are induced to go into the country and put up with the hardships, turmoil, and strife which they have to put up with when opening up new areas, and, if [3.30 p.m.] you take away from them the right to accumulate wealth, you will not get the right class of people to go

on the land. The policy of the Government in regard to land settlement is wrong, because it is to tax, and keep on taxing, the man on the land until he begins to squeal. As a member of the Labour Government once said, the Labour party are out to make the squatters squeal, and in the process of making the squatters squeal they likewise made the small man squeal. If you interfere with an industry in which the large man is engaged, you may affect his bank balance, but you affect the small man's bread and butter. The dairyman at the present time is in a bad way because his poddy calves are not saleable, whereas, only twelve months ago, his poddy calves were worth from £5 to £6 off the bucket. That is one way in which the small man has been made to squeal, owing to the fact that the meat industry has ceased to be a payable undertaking.

I will show what this Government have done so far as the man on the land is concerned—the man who, we are told, when they go electioneering, is the backbone of the country. I am afraid, while we say he is the backbone of the country, we also think he is capable of carrying the greatest taxation, because we put more taxation on the man who goes on the land than on any other class in the community. The man on the land has to carry the whole burden of taxation, while the man in the city carries a part only. In 1914 the revenue from land from all sources was £961,608—less than a million—while the revenue for 1921-1922 was £1,515,575—an increase of £553,927, or over half a million.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: Hon. members should go among the wives and children of the poor, unfortunate people who to-day have not enough to eat, and say, "Hear, hear!" They are the people whom they have rack-rented in order to obtain a portion of this £500,000. The Government, in many cases in my electorate, have increased the rentals by 200 per cent., and not through the Land Court, either. They have increased occupation license from 10s. per square mile to £2 per square mile. That is what they have done to the poor selector who has had to take up occupation country to keep his stock alive, and the hon. member for Bowen says, "Hear, hear!"

Mr. COLLINS: "Hear, hear!" Make the squatters squeal.

Mr. MORGAN: I hope that will appear in "Hansard." It is not the squatter whom the hon. member is making squeal, because the squatter is still in existence. We do not hear of the squatter giving up his country, but we do hear of the poor, unfortunate little man who has been squeezed out. The hon. member for Bowen says, "Hear, hear!" because he has been squeezed out by this rack-renting Government. The Government have done everything possible to drive off the land the settler whom Queensland is so anxious to retain. In some portions of Queensland the Government are endeavouring to put people on the land, and in other portions they are driving them off the land. We are not going to gain anything by settling a few hundred people in the Burnett and having a few hundred settlers leaving Tara and other parts of Queensland owing to the actions of the Government in connection with taxation and because of the burdens they have placed upon them in the matter of increased railway freights and other things.

*Mr. Morgan.]*

On the necessities of life, the Government have increased the railway freights on these people, not once, but on three separate occasions. I am very sorry we shall not be able to discuss the Estimates of the Railway Department. Take the number of occupation licenses at present granted. That is a sign that Queensland is deteriorating from a land settlement point of view. The area under occupation license at the present time is greater than during any period since 1914. That is the worst form of land tenure. Under that tenure you need not get rid of any pests on the land. All the Government care about is to get as much money from the land as they possibly can in order to carry them over their financial difficulties for the time being.

Mr. W. COOPER: Have you got an occupation license?

Mr. MORGAN: I have got an occupation license, but I say it is the worst form of tenure the country could possibly have. The Government are satisfied to get a big bit in rental, and that is why they have increased the occupation licenses from 10s. a square mile to £2, or even £3 a square mile. They do not care a rap whether the country deteriorates or not. They do not care whether it becomes infested with dingoes and rabbits and other pests so long as they can get a little money. That is a wrong policy. It is a policy of destruction and not a policy of construction, and is a policy that is going to do a great deal of harm.

The Country party's policy in regard to the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 has been clearly explained, and, if we get into power we are going to do what is right and just, independent of anybody.

Mr. BRENNAN: Give it back to them.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, if it is the right and proper thing and we could afford it; but, unfortunately, we cannot afford to do it. If anybody robbed the hon. member and the money was found, it would be repaid to him. It was stated on our platform two years ago that the first thing we would do, if we were returned to power, would be to repeal the "Repudiation" Act, and not only that Act, but many other Acts that the Labour Government have placed on the statute-book. I hope that the Country party will have sufficient courage, when they get into power, to repeal any legislation which they think is wrong and of a repudiatory nature. We are going to stand for justice being done to all sections of the community: to see that right is done from the most humble person to the highest in the State. We are out to give justice to every law-abiding citizen of the State. That is the policy of the Country party; we stand for right dealing with all. That is one reason why there has been a deliberate attack made upon the Country party by hon. members opposite. (Government laughter.) They abuse the Country party in Queensland just as Mr. Hughes abuses the Country party in the Commonwealth Parliament. Mr. Hughes has found out the strength of the Federal Country party, and the Government here have found out the strength of the Country party in Queensland, and have abused and misrepresented and in every way tried to malign us, knowing that the Country party is going to sweep the polls. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The debate has turned on a point which is most advan-

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

tageous to the interests of the Government and also encouraging to the people of Queensland, because there is no doubt that the statement of the leader of the Opposition will show the intention of the Country party, which was not put in the front window before this afternoon. There are only two men we need refer to; one is the leader of the Opposition, whom we must recognise by virtue of his official position, and the other is the hon. member for Oxley, who has "ratted" from the Nationalist party and joined the Country party.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Toowoomba in order in saying that any member in this Chamber has "ratted"?

The CHAIRMAN: The phrase is frequently used in the Chamber, but it is more or less offensive. I hope that hon. members will not use the phrase either in connection with one side or the other.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Oxley has gone over to another party without the consent of his electors. That hon. member said—

"The Country party has discovered that the primary producer is the backbone of Queensland. Secondary industries have never played a very large part in the history of the State, but up till lately the man on the land has had to plough a lone furrow. Of late the Labour party has discovered that the man on the land had taken a position of importance in the State, and has made a mad rush to put legislation on the statute-book."

That is a most important statement. Another important statement was made by the leader of the Opposition this afternoon. He said that he did not believe in repudiation, and that, if an injustice has been done, the question of compensation will be considered, and that, as they cannot refund the £500,000 in question because it has been absorbed in general expenditure, they must meet it, if they find an injustice has been done, by granting extensions of leases.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I never said anything of the kind. I would ask you, Mr. Chairman, to keep the hon. member to facts in regard to what he says. He has said that I referred to the sum of £500,000. I did not refer to any sum of money. That has already been corrected.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Toowoomba must, according to parliamentary procedure, accept the denial of the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. BRENNAN: I accept everything. (Laughter.) I will say that the hon. member did not mention the sum of £500,000.

Mr. VOWLES: Nor any sum of money at all.

Mr. BRENNAN: Nor any sum of money at all; but he said that, if an injustice had been done, they would consider the question of compensation.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say that either. I said that the question of an extension of leases will be considered.

Mr. BRENNAN: "Will be considered" and "must be considered" are the same thing.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say "must be considered," either.

Mr. BRENNAN: How will the question of compensation be considered? We have to find out if an injustice has been done. I will quote the remarks of the leader of the Opposition on the want of confidence motion last year, as reported in "Hansard" for 1921, page 1650—

"There is another matter which has been discussed on every occasion when we have had occasion to criticise the Government, and it may be summed up as—

The damage it has occasioned the fair name of Queensland by its repudiatory legislation.

"Opposition members: Hear, hear!

"Mr. VOWLES: We have dealt with the effect of the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 on pastoralists and grazing farmers."

In effect, the leader of the Opposition says that an injustice has been done, and he says that, if they find an injustice has been done, they will consider the question of compensation.

Mr. VOWLES: Compensation by extension of lease.

Mr. BRENNAN: There are only two ways of compensation; one is by handing back the £500,000, and the other is by extension of leases. One is as bad as the other.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Extension of leases is worse.

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes. We on this side are going to know how the influence of the pastoralists outside is being exerted on the leader of the Opposition. We know that that is why he is making his speech here to-day; he is bound to make it.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the charge against me?

Mr. BRENNAN: The charge against the hon. member is that he is bound by outside influence—by the Pastoralists' Association—to grant an extension of lease if his party get into power.

Mr. VOWLES: Rot!

Mr. BRENNAN: You are bound by your own statements. The hon. member for Oxley spoke on the want of confidence motion in 1921, and he is reported on page 151 of "Hansard" as saying—

"I am hoping that hon. gentlemen opposite will be sorry for the course they have taken in regard to certain legislation that has been placed on the statute-book of this State, and will rescind that legislation, without which the credit of Queensland cannot be restored."

He is bound to do that.

Mr. J. JONES: It is our policy; we are bound by it.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Kennedy says he is bound by it to do away with "repudiatory" legislation and grant an extension of leases. Hon. members opposite are all bound by it, and they cannot deny it. I asked the Secretary for Public Lands recently what number of men went in for a ballot for a block of land in the Mitchell district, and he said there were 1,200 applications by hungry men who were looking for land in that district. Take the stations of Aramac, Bowen Downs, and Mount Cornish, where the resumptions will fall in 1927. Take Manuka, Terrick Terrick, and

other big stations where the resumptions will fall in the near future. Thousands of settlers could go on that valuable land, but the Pastoralists' Association are putting the screw on the members of the Opposition to try to get an extension of leases for the most valuable pastoral land in Queensland to-day. We know very well that the big pastoral companies hold most of the country in the Blackall and Barcardine districts. All they do is to put a wire fence around their property and have a boundary rider on it. They run sheep, and the wool fetches as high as 4s. 3d. per lb. A few years ago they used to get 1s. 3d. per lb., but now they get 4s. 3d.

Mr. EDWARDS: When was that?

Mr. BRENNAN: If the hon. member reads the "Courier" he will see all about the prices for wool. They have good markets oversea, and they get good profits. Yet the owners of these stations have a boundary rider in charge, while they are "jazzing" in Brisbane, and "jazzing" in Sydney, and making big profits. Yet they say that the Labour party are ruining the squatters. That is the sort of stuff we get in the "Courier" and "Daily Mail." There are three pests that we have got to beware of in Australia. One is the "Yellow Peril," the second the prickly-pear pest, and the third is the so-called patriot. The hon. member for Kennedy was honest, when he set out the policy that he advocated. He cannot help himself and his honesty.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRENNAN: After the speech by the hon. member for Kennedy, we had the exposure by the Minister in charge of the Works Department. Then we had the bald statement made by the leader of the Opposition that the question of compensation is going to be considered. The people of Queensland know that the country cannot be developed under the policy of the Country party. Look at the hon. member for Albert as a member of the Country party.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: You advocated collapsible silos.

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, I did. I have often advocated things to the Secretary for Agriculture and they have been brought about. The hon. member for Oxley, the hon. member for Townsville, and other hon. members of the Country party are advocates for the big pastoral companies, and they are in favour of an extension of leases as compensation. If that is the policy of the Country party, it is time that all fair-thinking men knew it. We know that there were 1,200 applicants for one block in the Mitchell electorate. When these people know the policy of the Country party, they will say, "Away with the Country party! We know the Labour party, and we know they are in favour of close settlement."

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): Mr. Kirwan, I have something to say on this vote.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Two on that side.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Drayton in order in interjecting to you, Mr. Kirwan, "Are you on that side?"

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not. I said, "Two on that side."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHAIRMAN: I understood the hon. member for Drayton to say, "Two on that

*Mr. Brennan.]*

side." I did not hear the hon. member for Drayton address me first. Had I done so, I would have called on him first.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is interesting to note the attitude of the Opposition on the question of the 10 per cent. penalty inflicted on those who cannot pay their rentals. Some hon. members opposite were in this Chamber in 1910, supporting the Kidston Government. They included, according to the division lists, Messrs. Appel, G. P. Barnes, W. H. Barnes, Morgan, Petrie, Roberts, Swayne, and Walker. The penalty of 10 per cent. was included in clause 129 of that Bill, and, after making a searching reference of "Hansard," I am compelled to assert that not one of those members raised his voice against the imposition of that 10 per cent. penalty. At that time loan money was obtainable at  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. to 4 per cent., while to-day it is between 5 and 6 per cent.. They object to the Government imposing the penalty now, although they themselves imposed it when money was obtainable at  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. Nobody imagines for one instant that the Government are making undue use of that 10 per cent. penalty.

Mr. J. JONES: They did last year.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member is not a selector. He is a squatter.

Mr. J. JONES: I am speaking for other selectors.

Mr. POLLOCK: The country wants some information in regard to the policy of the Opposition. It was laid down at the meeting referred to during this debate, that the question of compensation to pastoral lessees would be considered, because of the increased rents which the pastoralists were called upon to pay under the Land Act Amendment Act. That Act gave the Land Court power to charge the big squatter the same rental as the small selector, nothing more, nothing less. Because of that injustice, as it is termed, the pastoralists are to get an extension of their leases, if the Opposition are returned as a Government. I want this Committee to understand that until 1927 there will only be 150 sheep selections available for resumption in Queensland in decent sheep country. From then until 1932 there will be a few more. In view of the shortage of land, and in view of the fact that there are from 600 to 1,200 persons in every ballot for good sheep country, you can see what the position is. If the Opposition are returned to power at the next election, are they going to give an extension of leases to big pastoral lessees, although they know that the people of Queensland have been hungering for land for fifteen and twenty-five years? That is what we want to know. We want some information on that. We know that that is the policy of hon. members opposite. The leader of the Opposition said that favourable consideration may be given to the question of compensation. Will the compensation consist of giving back to the lessees portion of the money they paid in retrospective rent, or of an extension of lease? I think an extension of leases is worse, because it will stifle settlement in Queensland for the next twenty or thirty years. I hope the leader of the Opposition will give some indication of the policy of hon. members opposite. If I were on that side and I wanted to get on the Treasury benches, I would at least have the courage to say what my policy was in regard to these matters.

[Mr. Pollock.

VOTES PASSED UNDER OPERATION OF  
STANDING ORDER NO. 307.

At 4 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member's speech, but, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, "Days Allotted for Supply," and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 30th August, I shall now proceed to put the questions for the vote under consideration, the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Public Lands, and the total amounts remaining unvoted for the Departments of Agriculture and Stock, Public Instruction, Mines, and Railways; the Trust and Special Fund Estimates, 1922-1923; the Loan Fund Account Estimates, 1922-1923; the Supplementary Estimates, 1921-1922; the Supplementary Trust Fund Estimates, 1921-1922; the Supplementary Loan Fund Estimates, No. 2, 1921-1922; and the Vote of Credit for the year 1923-1924.

Question—"That £73,120 be granted for the 'Department of Public Lands—District Offices'"—put and passed.

The following items were then put and passed—

Department of Public Lands (balance of vote), £154,043;

Department of Agriculture and Stock, £178,971;

Department of Public Instruction, £1,299,843;

Department of Mines, £81,463;

Railways, £4,738,308;

Trust and Special Funds, £4,564,365;

Loan Fund Account, £4,929,660;

Supplementary Estimates, 1921-1922, £135,168 10s. 8d.;

Supplementary Trust Fund Estimates, 1921-1922, £116,100 9s. 9d.;

Supplementary Loan Fund Estimates, No. 2, 1921-1922, £253,417 0s. 5d.;

Vote of Credit, 1923-1924, £2,500,000.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

QUESTIONS.

PURCHASE OF BUILDINGS FROM QUEENSLAND  
BUILDING TRADES GUILD, LIMITED.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"As in the report of the Department of Public Works for the year ended 30th June, 1922, appears an item of expenditure of £697 18s. for purchase of buildings, Queensland Building Trades Guild, Limited, will he state—

1. To what buildings did this refer?
2. Was the money actually expended?
3. If so, what benefit accrued to the State from such an expenditure?
4. What is the position in regard to these buildings now that the guild is apparently in liquidation?"

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

“1. Workshop situated at Milton.

“2. Yes.

“3. Coping with the problem of unemployment, and bringing about a reduction in the number of unemployed.

“4. The land and building are the property of the State, vested in the Public Curator.”

EMPLOYEES OF RAILWAY DEPARTMENT, 1916 AND 1921.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*), in the absence of Mr. Fry (*Kurilpa*), asked the Secretary for Railways—

“How many persons were employed by the Railway Department—(a) staff, (b) constructional workers, for the years ended 30th June, 1916, and 30th June, 1921, respectively?”

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

	30th June, 1916.	30th June, 1921.
(a) On opened lines—		
Staff employees..	12,205	14,358
Temporary ..	3,489	1,541
Total..	15,694	15,899
(b) Constructional workers..	1,620	1,398

EXPENSES OF ORGANISERS UNDER PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION ACT.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“1. What was the rate of (a) salary, (b) expenses, and (c) other allowances paid to H. McAnally (provisional organiser under the Council of Agriculture) from date of his appointment (19th June, 1922) to 31st July, 1922?

“2. What did these (a) expenses, (b) allowances, actually cover?

“3. What was the rate of (a) salary, (b) expenses, paid to H. McAnally for the month of August, 1922? What did such expenses actually cover?

“4. Did Messrs. Purcell, Harris, Flood Plunkett, Holt, Reid, and Dean visit Sydney and Melbourne in April last on the business of the Department of Agriculture and Stock or the Council of Agriculture?

“5. What amounts were paid to Messrs. Reid and Dean, respectively, in respect of such trip—(a) Salary; (b) expenses; (c) other allowances?”

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

“Eleven questions of a personal or hostile nature have previously been asked and answered concerning officers of the Council of Agriculture, therefore I do not intend to waste any more time over the hon. member's questions concerning the Council of Agriculture.”

GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE FOR WHEAT PRODUCED IN QUEENSLAND DURING 1920-21.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“1. Did the Government guarantee 8s. per bushel for all f.a.q. wheat produced in Queensland during 1920-21?

“2. Is he aware that an amount of 9d per bushel is still due to the growers under this guarantee?

“3. Is he prepared to arrange for the immediate payment of the balance due, and, if not, why is this money being retained?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

“1. No; but the Government guaranteed 8s. a bushel for wheat of prime milling quality.

“2 and 3. I believe the final payment for 1920-21 has not yet been made, because the State Wheat Board have not yet received final payment on oversea sales.”

CONSTRUCTION OF NANANGO-YARRAMAN RAILWAY.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“In view of the thousands of acres of land now being planted with cotton, lucerne, maize, and other crops on the Barker's Creek flats and other portions of the South Burnett district, and the urgent necessity of encouraging production by affording to primary producers every facility for the quick conveyance of their produce to the markets, will he bring before Cabinet for reconsideration the question of the construction of the Nanango-Yarraman railway link during this financial year?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“I regret the work cannot be commenced during the currency of the present financial year.”

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Commissioner of Police for twelve months ended 30th June, 1922.

Report upon the operations of the sub-departments of the Home Department.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Acts, 1915 to 1921, in certain particulars.

Question put and passed.

*Hon. W. N. Gillies.]*

## SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.  
RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Théodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the resolutions be now received.”

Question put and passed.

## ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The resolutions being taken as read,

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Théodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the resolutions be now agreed to.”

And hon. members indicating a desire to discuss certain resolutions—

Resolutions 1 to 3, both inclusive, put and passed.

Resolution 4—“*Legislative Assembly*”—

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*): Under this heading there was voted by the Committee a sum of £19,619 on behalf of the Legislative Assembly; in other words, on behalf of the Parliament of Queensland, because only one House now constitutes the Parliament. The position is such that it is only right that the attention of the electors throughout Queensland should be called to it. From time to time we have heard that finance is the basis of good government. Sixteen days are allotted for the consideration of the Estimates. When the expenditure from revenue of the country only amounted to £7,000,000 we had sixteen days for discussion, and now that the expenditure from revenue has reached £12,000,000 the time is just the same. The Premier, if I may be permitted to use the word, has “cribbed” twenty hours from the Committee.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. gentleman that we are now dealing with the resolution with reference to the Legislative Assembly. His remarks have no bearing on that resolution at all. The hon. member will have an opportunity later, if he so desires, of discussing this question.

Mr. SWAYNE: It seems that this resolution directly affects the Legislative Assembly, and I am now dealing with the actions of the Legislative Assembly. I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will permit me to bring the matter up here. We find that some of the time that is allowed for the discussion of the Estimates has been taken from us. Under the system in vogue this session the sixteen days have been reduced by twenty hours. As you know, the ordinary parliamentary day is six hours, which means that sixteen days of six hours each should be allotted for the consideration of the Estimates: but, through the system of sitting in the morning and cutting some of the time off the morning sitting, and counting that a whole day, and sitting again in the afternoon and cutting some of the time off the afternoon sitting and counting each as a whole day, something like twenty hours have been lost. Of the approximate amount of £23,000,000, representing the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and the Loan Fund, something like £16,000,000 went through without discussion of any kind. Amongst the votes that we had no opportunity of considering were the Department of Agriculture and

Stock, the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Mines, the Department of Railways, the expenditure from Trust and Special Funds, including the State Enterprises Department. I have a quotation which appeared in the “*Courier*” a few days ago, which I think emphasises the need for a full consideration of those subjects which we have been debating. It states—

“A very serious statement has been made regarding the State Enterprises in Queensland. The *White Mercantile Gazette*’ on Saturday last says: ‘The country has a right to demand an inquiry into the whole of the State Enterprises. We cannot regard the official figures as reliable.’

“This comment is from a writer accustomed to deal with the estates and to estimate the assets and liabilities of commercial affairs, and it certainly warrants very careful inquiry. It may be that the commercial mind and the official mind would have different standards in estimating the value of a business concern.”

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must know that he will have an opportunity of discussing the State Enterprises on the Trust Fund Estimates.

Mr. SWAYNE: I wish to point out there are not two hours left, and that we have been deprived of an opportunity of discussing something like £17,000,000. Previous Governments, in order that the different votes might be discussed, started one session at one end of the Estimates, and the next session at the other end, so that each vote was discussed at least every two years. I understand the Premier was asked by the leader of the Opposition to do something like that this year, and I understand that he refused. Why? Is not his action open to the construction that he has something to conceal? I wish to draw your attention to the manner in which everything in the way of deliberative discussion is now prevented in Parliament. During the last session, which lasted just over ten weeks, occupying about forty days, thirty-two Bills were put through. The Estimates occupied seventeen days of that time. The “gag” during that session was applied forty times, and on twenty-two occasions without any discussion being allowed. The degeneration, if I may be allowed to use that term, of Parliament is on the increase. We have now been in session about nine weeks, and the “gag” has been applied thirty-six times. The session is not yet over. I think the “gag” record of last session will be eclipsed this session—I hope not. The indications are that such will be the case. On ten occasions the “gag” was applied without any discussion being allowed, on nine occasions it was applied on the casting vote of the Speaker, and on fifteen occasions on the casting vote of the Chairman. The business has been so rushed that sufficient time is not given to the proper conduct of the business of the country. Three or four weeks ago, as secretary of the Country party, I approached the Premier, and asked if he would receive a deputation regarding certain resolutions in connection with the franchise, co-operative industrial enterprises, co-operative tramways, and the sugar industry?

The TREASURER: What did I tell the hon. member?

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

Mr. SWAYNE: So far the hon. gentleman has not had time to make a date, and the only conclusion we can come to is that he is so rushing business through that he has not got time to do his duty. We can only conclude that for various reasons—perhaps the Federal elections, and perhaps the risky and precarious condition of the Government—that the Government are resolved to forego all political decency and get into recess as soon as they can. The business of the country is sacrificed. We have not had an opportunity of deliberating on most important matters. Very often a question is put through by means of the “gag” before a speaker on this side has had an opportunity of discussing it. You must remember that all this is done by a Government representing a minority of the people. A majority of something like 20,000 people said that this Government were not to rule them. I would like to quote from “Burke’s Speeches” his opinion regarding the methods of carrying on Parliament and of what Parliament should be—

“But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and, what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate and another decide.

Further on he states—

“Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole.”

I ask hon. members, and I ask the country at large, how far the Queensland Parliament has degenerated from the very high standard laid down in that speech. It must be obvious what the country has lost in that regard. Hon. members opposite used to claim that Parliament should meet about July and carry on till the end of the year; but now, when they are in power, we have these rush sessions, and there is no time given for a proper consideration of the various matters brought forward. We know what study and research is required to get the full strength of the amendments brought forward in many Bills, but we have no time to give the Bills proper attention. It looks as if the time had arrived when the people should consider whether they ought to allow anything to be voted for the upkeep of a Parliament such as this Parliament has been debased into.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): We find hon. members opposite are quite willing to have a Parliament so long as they are in control of it. What they object to is a Parliament which is controlled by the workers or the Labour party. At one time in the history of the world the workers had no say at all in the government of a country; they had no power to elect representatives to [4.30 p.m.] Parliament: and Parliament was run by those who controlled the financial institutions and the big business of the country, who were able to do just as they liked. Hon. members opposite say that Parliament should not be carried on because they themselves have lost control of this Parliament. It is a good thing for the

people of Queensland that the Labour party have had control of Parliament during the past seven or eight years. It would be a case of God help Queensland to-day if Parliament had not been constituted during the past few years as this Parliament has been constituted. I am pleased that this vote is not so large as formerly, and that we are able to conduct the business of the country with one House of Parliament. The only complaint of hon. members opposite is that the business of the country is being conducted in a businesslike way, that it is not being retarded, and that the Parliament of Queensland is legislating in the interests of the people of the State and is carrying on the business of the country independent of those who would try to throw cold water upon the work of this Parliament. This Parliament has done a good work since the abolition of the Legislative Council. We do not want to go back to the days when Parliament was controlled by financial institutions—when Parliament was under the thumb of the big business organisations—but we want to keep Parliament representative of the people, and controlled by men who are elected from among the workers, and, while we do that, we shall be doing good work.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I want to advocate something that I have been advocating for a number of years—that is, that “Hansard” should be circulated free to all the people who make application for it. If ever there was a good illustration of what I am trying to get at, it has occurred during the present session of Parliament. If the bulk of the people of Queensland, instead of reading the garbled reports that appear in the Press, were to get “Hansard,” they would then know the weakness of the Opposition, and they would know how they have been exposed by members on this side of the House. In this vote we have £6,000 down for “Hansard” and other printing, and it would only cost an extra thousand or two more to let the people of Queensland know what is really happening in Parliament. There is no one who suffers more than we who represent the North, because, first of all, we are misrepresented in the Brisbane Press, and then we are further misrepresented when our speeches are telegraphed to the newspapers circulating in the North, and the people of the North know very little of what is happening in Parliament.

I want, also, to say a word of praise on behalf of the “Hansard” staff. I find very little to alter in the reports. At the same time, I often wonder how the members of the staff are able to report at all. We had an illustration a few moments ago, when the hon. member for Mirani was speaking. While I may be a little deaf, I am not so deaf that I cannot hear if a member speaks up a bit; and how “Hansard” is able to report the hon. member for Mirani is a mystery to me. I suggest to him that he should write out his speeches and hand them up to the “Hansard” staff. (Government laughter.) I have to take a lot of trouble to get to know what the hon. member for Mirani and other hon. members sitting on that side of the House may say, and what one or two members sitting on this side say, too, inasmuch as I have to read “Hansard” to get to know what those hon. gentlemen have said.

In reference to the degeneracy of Parliament, I had the pleasure or the pain—

*Mr. Collins.]*



whatever you like to call it—of sitting on the other side of the House for three years, and I say from my place behind the Government that Parliament is no more degenerate to-day than it was when I sat in opposition in 1909, 1910, and 1911. The only sign of degeneracy that I can see is in the present Opposition forces. When we sat on that side of the House as a Labour party, we had a programme, and we were able to place that programme before Parliament and before the people of Queensland in an intelligent manner.

Mr. MORGAN: You were not stifled then.

Mr. COLLINS: We were stifled just as much then as members on the other side have been stifled while the Labour Government have been in power. At any rate, we were able to put our views before Parliament and before the country at large in an intelligent manner.

I hope the Premier will give serious consideration to my proposal in regard to "Hansard." I do not say that "Hansard" should be sent out to every elector on the roll. All I ask is that it should be sent free to every person who makes application for it, because I believe in encouraging an intelligent public opinion outside Parliament; and, if there are people who do take an interest in the doings of Parliament, they should, if they so wish, have "Hansard" sent to them free. That is the only way we can get a healthy public opinion. As we all know—it is no use mincing matters—the Press of the Commonwealth is passing into the hands of a few persons, who seek to mould public opinion from their viewpoint, not from the viewpoint of the working-class movement, as we seek to mould it. There is no better place in which to mould public opinion than here in Parliament, and I hope that I shall live to see the day when the idea of sending "Hansard" free to every person who makes application for it will be carried out.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I think there is something in the argument adduced by the hon. member for Bowen that should commend itself to those hon. members who have a sense of fairness. It is very well known that the doings of Parliament are not fairly conveyed to the public by our newspapers. I am not particularising one section of the Press more than another; but it is true that the big interests opposed to the Labour party naturally control most of the newspapers. They practically have control of the daily Press of the Commonwealth, and for that reason the Labour party necessarily must be the chief sufferer. I would like to say in this connection that public opinion in Queensland to-day is controlled by one man—the editor of the "Courier," who is supposed to know everything from "A" to "Z" about the conduct of the affairs of the State, and everything else that happens within the State. His opinions are sent broadcast throughout the State and to practically every country newspaper in Queensland. The "Courier" is the chief centre from which Press telegrams are sent, and, consequently, only the opinions of the "Courier" are sent throughout the length and breadth of the State. If anything can be done in the way suggested by the hon. member for Bowen, it will give us an opportunity of combating the wild assertions and misstatements that are published in this way, I for one shall be very glad.

[*Mr. Collins.*]

With regard to the statement that Parliament is degenerating, I want to remind Opposition members that that is about the most dangerous argument they could use. They seem to be very much concerned about what they term the low standard reached by Parliament. In my opinion the quickest way to secure anarchy is to make Parliament—the tribunal of the people—ridiculous in the eyes of the people. Once the people believe that Parliament contains nothing but a collection of idiots, it will not be very long before the public will make an effort to get rid of it and substitute something else. I believe that Parliament, under our democratic system of government, is something that we should be proud of.

Mr. MORGAN: It would not be a Parliament of free speech if you had your way.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is another of those ex-parte statements which the hon. member makes. He was one who voted eighty-seven times, before this Government came into office, in one sitting of Parliament, to prevent Labour members from discussing various principles.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true.

Mr. POLLOCK: On the Elections Act Amendment Bill in 1913 the hon. member voted on eighty-seven different occasions one night for the "gag" and "guillotine" to stifle free speech by members of the Labour party who were then sitting in Opposition. The hon. member for Mirani and the hon. member for Toombul and other hon. members who are now crying out because the "gag" is being applied to them also voted eighty-seven times on the same occasion to stifle discussion by Labour members. The "gag" was not introduced into the Assembly by this Government. It was introduced by a Government which was supported by many hon. members opposite, and so was the "guillotine." Why do hon. members opposite cry out about taking their own medicine when it is not administered by their friends?

Mr. SWAYNE: Government members occupied a far greater portion of time in the debate on "Outdoor Relief" than members on this side.

Mr. POLLOCK: Opposition members become so obsessed with the fact that they are here to put their views before the country that they naturally become annoyed when Government members exercise their right to speak on any question. We have foolishly allowed Opposition members to control the pages of "Hansard" for the last four or five years. Night after night we have listened while they have made all sorts of statements, and it was very rarely that a member on the Government side felt it incumbent to make any reply. In the discussion on "Outdoor Relief," Government members gave hon. members opposite a gruelling. Although hon. members opposite were very loud in their denunciation of that vote, before the end of the discussion they were very glad to apologise for their opposition to it.

Mr. J. JONES: I never apologised.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member only spoke for about two minutes, so that he did not have time to apologise. Owing to the attitude of the newspapers and certain hon. members opposite, and of persons who want to get into the House, a report is being circulated outside that Parliament has degenerated. Parliament has not degenerated. Just for the sake of gaining a

temporary political advantage and of ousting this party from office, hon. members opposite and the Press outside are prepared to try and make the public believe that this Chamber has degenerated by the use of unfair tactics. That is a most serious and damaging statement to make. "May," in his "Parliamentary Practice," deals with this.

Mr. FLETCHER: He does not deal with a Parliament like this.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is the only Parliament that the hon. member has been in. I may say that the hon. member came here with a bubble reputation which has been very effectively pricked since. "May," twelfth edition, lays it down on page 294—

"It is obviously unbecoming to permit offensive expressions against the character and conduct of Parliament to be used without rebuke; for they are not only a contempt of that high court, but are calculated to degrade the legislature in the estimation of the people."

"May" lays down certain very definite punishments which may be inflicted by Parliament on any member who attempts to point out that Parliament is being degraded, and I hope that our Standing Orders will be very effectively used while I am a member of the House. It is a very dangerous thing, not only when hon. members attempt to degrade the status of Parliament, but when newspapers attempt to do the same thing. I believe that action ought to be taken by the Government severely to censure newspapers which say that Parliament is becoming degraded. If hon. members opposite were to be returned to power to-morrow, and hon. members of this party took their seats on the Opposition benches, the very same papers would say that Parliament had become a sane, democratic institution. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES interjected.

Mr. POLLOCK: Since I have been in the House I have noticed that most of the trouble comes from hon. members who have just arrived in the Chamber, and who have not a sense of the fitness of things.

Mr. VOWLES: We have ideals.

Mr. POLLOCK: On the question of ideals, I might say that hon. members opposite could do a little more to enable us to maintain the high tradition that Parliaments have attained in all parts of the world. I believe that the time is coming when members of the Opposition, as well as members of the Government party, will have to stand up and see that the character of this Chamber is protected, and I hope that that time is not very far distant. I think that the abuse of the newspapers and their action in attempting to make the public believe that this is an undemocratic institution should be effectively stopped.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The hon. member for Mirani raised the point that Opposition members and others were being deprived of the liberty of fairly discussing the Estimates of the various departments. He seemed to be labouring under the somewhat extraordinary delusion that he had been "gagged."

Mr. BRAND: So he was. We have all been "gagged."

The TREASURER: I believe that the hon. member for Burrum only arrived in this

House the year before last, and he sets himself up, when I am making a speech, to lay down high principles and give us the advantage of his parliamentary knowledge. I do not take any notice of the hon. member, because I do not think he is fit to constitute himself an authority. The hon. member for Mirani sat behind the Government which was in office when the number of days to be allotted for Supply was decided upon.

Mr. SWAYNE: The expenditure was not half as much then as it is now, and if there was not time to discuss the whole of the departments one year, we took them in a different order the following year so as to get a discussion on the departments which had not been discussed the previous year.

The TREASURER: If the time allowed for the consideration of the Estimates must be gauged in accordance with the amount of money appropriated, instead of the seventeen days now allowed in the Federal Parliament, where they appropriate £80,000,000 from the consolidated revenue, two or three years would be required. On the same argument, how much time would be allowed in the British House of Commons, where they appropriate £800,000,000 from consolidated revenue? As a matter of fact, last year the British House of Commons occupied four and a-half days in consideration of the departmental Estimates.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Standing Orders should allow so much time for each department.

The TREASURER: Why did not the hon. member suggest that? Hon. members opposite now find that seventeen days are not sufficient time for discussing the Estimates. As a matter of fact, hon. members opposite are real time-wasters. There are seventeen parliamentary days allotted, and sixteen days have already passed. Hon. members opposite talked three days on the Estimates of the Chief Secretary's Department, when practically all the speeches came from that side of the House. At any rate, the majority of the speeches came from the Opposition. I think that seventeen days are ample for the discussion of Estimates in a State like Queensland, having regard to the importance of the matters which come up here for discussion. That time is quite ample for the discussion of the Appropriation Estimates and other votes that come before Parliament.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, if you do not stonewall them.

The TREASURER: In the State of New York, where they have a population of 6,000,000 or more, the State Legislature is in session for only three months of the year, and in that period they consider Supply and all matters of legislation and administration that should come before Parliament. The Opposition want the Queensland Parliament to sit for nine months. They are mere time-wasters. They do not want Parliament to get on with business. I would not mind Parliament sitting for four or six months if we were doing business; but what the Opposition want is, not to do business, but to take up the country's time in slandering and blackguarding the Government and criticising the administration. Hon. members opposite wish to have a prolonged session, but have no desire to do any business. The idea of Parliament is to pass legislation. The policy of the Opposition has been to hold up all the Bills that have been introduced this

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*

session. They have held up Bills, discussed them, and divided upon them on every occasion that they have had the opportunity in this Chamber.

Mr. VOWLES: Name one Bill.

The TREASURER: The Primary Producers' Organisation Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: How did we hold it up?

The TREASURER: By making long speeches. Was not an amendment moved on the second reading of that Bill?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes.

The TREASURER: The Opposition are time-wasters, and no doubt there will be further time wasted by them. I think that, when we allot seventeen days for the Estimates, that gives ample time for the discussion of the Estimates of every department.

Mr. FLETCHER: Why not distribute the time over the different departments?

The TREASURER: That is in hon. members' own hands.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is not. It is in your hands.

The TREASURER: Hon. members opposite can speak on every vote, or let them go through. If they had adopted a wise policy, they would have divided the time over the different departments; but they took up an extraordinary attitude.

Mr. VOWLES: You started to stonewall.

The TREASURER: Hon. members opposite occupied four and a-half days on the Home Secretary's Estimates, and yet they allowed the Treasurer's Estimates to go through in ten minutes on Friday night. I just point that out to show how the departmental Estimates were discussed. This refractory attitude of the Opposition has only been a recent development. It is quite true that there were one or two departments that were not discussed last year; but in 1920 every vote was discussed except the Estimates of the Railway Department.

Mr. FLETCHER: No; we did not discuss the Estimates of the Trust Funds.

The TREASURER: The hon. member will get about forty minutes all to himself in a moment, so, if he will refrain from interjecting, I will finish what I have to say. I was pointing out that in 1920 we discussed every vote except the Railways, Trust and Special Funds, Loan Fund, and Supplementary Estimates. In 1921 the departments that were not discussed were Agriculture, Public Instruction, Mines, Trust and Special Funds, Loan Funds, and Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: Why?

The TREASURER: Because the Opposition unwisely wasted time on the earlier votes. Take the years prior to 1920, and you will find that for the six years prior to 1920 every vote was discussed.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: In 1914 every vote that was brought before the Committee was discussed; at least, I should say that opportunity was given for the discussion of every vote. The automatic operation of the Standing Orders did not prevent the discussion of any vote in 1914. Every vote was discussed in 1915, and opportunity was given to discuss every vote again in 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

Mr. VOWLES: Why don't you alter the order of the Estimates?

The TREASURER: I was quite prepared to alter the order of the Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: No, you were not. You refused.

The TREASURER: Not at all. The hon. gentleman interjected that he wanted to discuss the Trust Funds Estimates before we had completed the Revenue Estimates, and I was quite prepared to agree to alter the order in which the Estimates should be taken for the different departments. The hon. gentleman, however, wanted to discuss the Trust Funds before we had completed the Revenue Estimates, and I could not agree to that. I do not know of any occasion where the Trust Funds have been discussed and appropriated before the Revenue Estimates, and I could not agree to it. Ever since the time limit for consideration of Estimates was first introduced by the Kidston Government, the various votes have been discussed in this way every year. There are many hon. members opposite who supported the Kidston Administration and afterwards the Denham Administration. The leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Mirani supported the Denham Administration, and they never said anything about the operation of the Standing Orders in those days.

Mr. SWAYNE: We altered the order every year.

The TREASURER: In 1913 the balance of the railway vote, and the votes for the Trust and Special Funds, the Loan Fund, and Supplementary Estimates were put through under the "guillotine." In 1912 the balance of the Loan Fund and the Supplementary Estimates were put through under the "guillotine." In 1911 the balance of the votes for the Department of Justice, Chief Secretary, Executive and Legislative, Trust and Special Funds, Loan Funds, and Supplementary Estimates were all put through under the "guillotine."

Mr. VOWLES: You talked it out.

The TREASURER: Parliament talked it out. The Opposition of those days did not make any "grouch" such as the present Opposition are making just now, because the "guillotine" stifled them. Hon. members sat complacently in opposition at that time. However, the Opposition of those days did not foolishly waste their time. In 1910 the balance of the votes for the departments of Public Lands, Agriculture, Public Instruction, Mines, Railways, Trust and Special Funds, Loan Fund, and Supplementary Estimates were put through under the "guillotine." Prior to that under the old Liberal Administration, unlimited time was given for discussing the Estimates; and what happened? In all the years before 1909, when the time limit came into operation, the Governments got through their votes by sitting all night. Sometimes they also sat through the whole of the next day and the following night. When the Opposition of those days started to obstruct, the Government simply continued to sit all round the clock and put the Estimates through. That was a more effective "gag" than having seventeen days. In 1909 the seventeen days' time limit was brought in and agreed to by both parties. It was considered that with seventeen days there could be a reasonable discussion of the Estimates in reasonable hours. The old barbarous system of passing millions of money in the small hours of the morning was done away with,

and we now have a rational and reasonable way of carrying out that procedure. In the Federal Parliament millions are passed without five minutes' discussion. Night after night they sit for long hours, hoping to wear down the Opposition. It is nothing but an endurance test the way the Estimates are put through in the Federal Parliament. I say that we have a more rational way of doing things in Queensland. It is one

[5 p.m.] which hon. members will realise is reasonable, if they consider it impartially. In my opinion, if we want to get to real business and the consideration and passage of measures which are required by the country, hon. members will be content to take less than seventeen days on the Estimates. What does discussion on the Estimates amount to, after all? A weary, dreary debate, hour after hour, day after day, on one vote or one department. It does not lead to a fruitful discussion of the questions before the Committee; it is only stonewalling, time-wasting, and, to a large extent, it is unnecessary and useless and does not result in any good to the country or anybody else. If hon. members have reasonable grievances which they want discussed, they have ample opportunity in the course of the session to put their arguments before the Government and have them considered; but the tactics of the Opposition of talking futilely on almost all questions get them nowhere. They do not even wait for a reply. They put up speaker after speaker, who, with weary reiteration, repeat the same arguments, impressing nobody, but simply conforming to what is required of them by their newspaper masters outside.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Listening to the defence of the Treasurer, one is reminded of the hackneyed old saying that "A guilty conscience needs no accuser." He has told us that applications have been made to him by me for a certain arrangement of the business on the Estimates. If the hon. gentleman will cast his memory back, and if he will look at "Hansard," he will recollect that, when the Estimates were begun, I asked him what department he was taking first, and he said, "In accordance with the Estimates." I said, "It has been the practise to discuss in subsequent years those departments which were not reached the previous year." He said, "We are going to take the Estimates according to the order you have there," and away he went.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. gentleman forget that we took the Railway Estimates first last year?

Mr. VOWLES: Let me keep to the point—I can deal with that later on. Some days passed, and the hon. gentleman was sitting on the back bench opposite, and I asked him about the matter. I said that it appeared to me that there was a determined stonewall, and I asked him whether he would deal with the Trust and Loan Funds Estimates for the various departments as they came along, but he would not give me a definite reply. All he said was that the business was in our hands.

The PREMIER: Did I not say that we could make an arrangement as to the order of departments, but I would not take the Trust Funds before the Revenue Estimates?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I ask the hon. member to look up "Hansard." I saw no opportunity of getting to the important votes, involving huge sums of money, in

the Trust and Loan Funds Estimates, and asked that we might deal with those Estimates on each department affected as they came before us. Our Standing Orders make provision that an application may be made for an extension of time of three days for the discussion of the Estimates, and last session I made such an application. The State enterprises and various other important items have not been discussed. I applied to the Premier, in accordance with the Standing Orders, for another three days to debate those matters, but my request was refused. Everybody at various times during the discussion of these Estimates must have come to the conclusion that a determined attempt was being made by hon. members opposite not to allow the votes for the departments to go through in the stated time. I have seen members opposite get up one after another. It was all part of a scheme. Hon. members here were silent, waiting for votes to pass, but we have realised from the very beginning that we would be subjected to the same tactics as in the past, and that those items such as State enterprises, which are open to such a great deal of criticism, would not be permitted to be brought before the Chamber.

We are told that we are out of temper because our discussion has been stifled to-day. Just let us get back to what has happened this session. At the beginning of the session we had to review our Standing Orders because of the altered constitution of Parliament. One of the old-time rights of members of the Opposition, in fact of all members of the Assembly, was the right to have a discussion on the Address in Reply limited to one hour in the case of each member. The Government, by force of numbers, curtailed that right, and limited the whole discussion on the Address in Reply to four days, with the result that, in order to give every member the opportunity to speak, our speeches had to be cut down to something like twenty minutes for each member. When I complained, the Premier said, "You will have an opportunity to debate all the matters you want to discuss when the Financial Statement comes along." When we reached that stage, did the Premier stand up to his promise?

The TREASURER: You had ample opportunity.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman allowed the debate to go to a certain stage, and then he deliberately broke faith with a certain number of members on both sides, and applied the "gag." You put the question, Mr. Speaker, and the House then agreed to the Premier's word being broken by a vote of his own party. Members who, according to his promise, were entitled to certain privileges or rights of which they were deprived on the Address in Reply, again had their rights and privileges curtailed, but we were told that we would have the right to speak on the Estimates. What do we find? Just what we expected. It is all part of a plan that the Opposition will not be permitted to discuss various matters of very great public importance. We are told, by way of explanation, that the House of Commons in England gets rid of its Estimates in four days.

The TREASURER: It is done.

Mr. VOWLES: But has the House of Commons to deal with such an extraordinary position as we have in the State

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of Queensland to-day? (Government laughter.) The amount of money there is certainly bigger, but that does not matter. Have members of the House of Commons to consider whether the money of the community is being frittered away, and have they to do it when no particulars are given to the representatives of the constituencies? Here we are going through a survey of the departments, and what do we find in the way of reports? Very few have been laid before us. Some of the most important have been tabled to-day after we have finished the departments affected. When shall we receive the report of the Commissioner of Trade and the report of the Auditor-General in respect of all departments? About two months after Parliament has adjourned! For all we know, a new Parliament may be in existence by the time we get the report of the Auditor-General to enable us intelligently to review the subjects with which we should deal to-day. Why all this indecent haste?

The TREASURER: To get the business done.

Mr. VOWLES: The excuse in olden times was that we were getting to the hot weather—that it was too close to Christmas. There is no hot weather now—in fact, it is on the cold side—and there is no reason why we should have this indecent haste, and should not carry on in the ordinary way, sitting from half-past 3 o'clock in the afternoon till about 11 o'clock at night. Is it a fair thing to ask hon. members to put in thirteen hours a day, as we in opposition are supposed to do. It is easy enough for hon. members sitting on the Government side. From time to time a Minister comes in and takes charge of his department; but the rank and file have nothing to do unless they want to air grievances. The Opposition are in a very different position. We have to keep in touch with all that is going on, whether it be in connection with departments or with legislation; we have to keep a watchful eye on all matters. It is not a fair thing to keep responsible members of the Opposition in this building from 10 o'clock in the morning until after 11 o'clock at night on four days a week.

The TREASURER: It is the only way in which we can get business through.

Mr. VOWLES: They have not worn us down yet. If the hon. gentleman wants to sit into the night, we are quite capable of doing it. We know that the hon. gentleman has the faculty for getting business through. According to the Standing Orders, he cannot push this business through in any other way. If he could "gag" it, he would have "gagged" it long ago.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is wrong. Estimates can be and have been "gagged" before.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman cannot "gag" the seventeen days.

The TREASURER: What is there to stop me?

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to see the hon. gentleman do it. He has broken faith with members in every direction, but he has not gone that far yet.

The TREASURER: Hon. members have had ample opportunity to discuss all matters.

Mr. VOWLES: They say that they have not. By the time this session is completed,

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there will be hon. members sitting on the Opposition side who have not expressed their opinion on any subject.

Mr. GLEDSON: Perhaps they cannot do it.

Mr. VOWLES: I know they cannot—because they are not permitted to do it.

The TREASURER: What has prevented them?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman has—by the exercise of the "gag" in many instances. We have not been given the right to move amendments. Discussion has been blocked designedly in many cases in order that certain matters which the Government wanted to avoid should not be discussed. That is no way to carry on the business of the country. What have we been doing this afternoon? Listen to the figures! Are they not startling? In the votes which we were precluded from discussing huge sums of money running into millions of pounds are involved. Here are some of the amounts—£1,250,000, £700,000, £600,000, £253,000, £1,299,000, £4,732,000, £5,438,000, and £4,929,000. Not one of those items has been discussed. Is that a fair thing?

The TREASURER: It is your own fault; you have been wasting time on trivial matters.

Mr. VOWLES: It is simply the result of preconcerted action by the Government and their members not to allow us on any account to get down to certain votes because there would be unsavoury exposures, because there are explanations which could not be given.

The TREASURER: Let me assure the hon. member that his followers have taken up 500 pages of "Hansard" in considering the Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: If we have taken up 500 pages, I venture to say that hon. members opposite have taken up a considerably greater number. When we are dealing with departments, with a responsible Minister in charge who has everything at his finger-ends, surely it is the privilege of hon. members on this side to debate those Estimates, ask questions, seek information; and, surely, it is the duty of the Minister in charge of that department to be in a position to give the information that is asked for.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are wasting time now.

Mr. VOWLES: Surely I have the right to have my say.

Mr. GLEDSON: You have the right to waste it; but don't growl about it after you have wasted it.

Mr. VOWLES: No hon. member, during the whole of the discussion of the Estimates, has been more mixed up with the wasting of time than the hon. member who has just interjected. He was the leader of the obstruction on the Government side; anybody could watch him engineering the matter. We have seen the Treasurer going round amongst his followers, and we have seen them getting up one after the other.

The TREASURER: Oh, no.

Mr. VOWLES: We are not so blind that we could not see what was going on. We have been sufficiently long in this Chamber to know what the Government's tactics always have been. I want to enter a protest. I claim that we are not being fairly treated by the Premier, who is in charge of the affairs of the State. He has deprived us of our rights; he has done it designedly; and,

when he does a thing designedly, we can put whatever construction we like upon it. When we find that the hon. gentleman is not prepared to allow us to discuss certain departments; when we cannot get the information for which we have asked in connection with other departments; when the reports of the departments are held back from us, we can put only the one construction on it—that there are things in those departments which the Government are afraid of, and they do not want the criticism which must necessarily follow. When we cut down the debate on the Address in Reply we believed that the Premier would be magnanimous enough to give hon. members sitting on this side the right of speech to which they are entitled under our Standing Orders, and which in the past it has been customary to give them.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): When the Treasurer was speaking just now he referred to what he termed the opposition shown to Bills by members on this side of the Chamber. He stated that an amendment had been moved to the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill, and he regarded that as having been done with the express purpose of delaying the operation of the measure.

The TREASURER: Obstruction.

Mr. TAYLOR: We considered that that was an ill-digested, ill-considered measure, and that it should be further considered by the people before being brought before this Chamber. What happened? Twenty-two amendments were accepted by the Government in that Bill.

The TREASURER: That shows you how reasonable we are.

Mr. TAYLOR: Every amendment came from this side of the House.

The TREASURER: Nearly all were consequential.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman calls that "obstruction." It shows plainly that, when the Government introduced the Bill, they did not know what they were introducing. Since I have been in this Chamber the same attitude had never before been adopted in connection with amendments coming from this side: they were always treated with the utmost disdain and contempt; in fact, the "gag" has been applied while hon. members have been striving to insert amendments.

The TREASURER: You would growl if we had not accepted the amendments. Now you are growling because we did.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman growled because I moved that the Bill be considered two months from the time it was introduced. It would have been just as well had it been delayed twelve months for all the good it is going to do the people in the country. Why did not the hon. gentleman deal out to members on his own side a little of the castigation he has dealt out to us? He knows perfectly well that the members on his side have taken up as much time and have talked as much as—if not more than—members on this side. That has occurred during the whole of the discussion on the Estimates. My opinion is that seventeen days are quite enough for the Estimates. If hon. members on both sides would not indulge in the "parish pump" business, probably we would get on to the more important matters.

The TREASURER: I agree with you.

Mr. TAYLOR: Members on both sides are to blame for the way in which the "parish pump" is worked in connection with quite a lot of votes of an unimportant nature. If hon. members went to the Ministers they would probably get all the information they want; at all events they would get a good deal of it, and a lot of the frivolous talk which takes place in the Chamber during the discussion on the Estimates would be avoided. I would ask that Ministers give fair and plain answers to questions, so that we shall know exactly where we are. The other day I put certain questions to the Minister acting for the Home Secretary. He simply sidetracked them, although he could have supplied the information without the slightest trouble. The Minister, in his reply, said that he was preparing a report. I simply asked him what amount of money had been expended on outdoor relief for the months of January to August inclusive. I desired that information to compare it with the amounts set down on the Estimates for outdoor relief for this year. I suppose that report will come along when the session is over.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is on the table now.

Mr. TAYLOR: I was out of the Chamber when it was tabled. That is the only method or means we have of getting information, and we are perfectly justified in adopting those methods and means, and Ministers should be candid and straightforward in their answers to questions asked in this Chamber.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I think the speech delivered by the Treasurer this afternoon will be a very useful one for future Governments. He has created a precedent, whether it is right or wrong. He stated that, if he chose, he could use the "gag" on the Estimates. That is all that we can deduce from his remarks. One would not expect a statement from the hon. gentleman that is impossible of accomplishment. He is only opening up the door for the use of the "gag" by future Governments in a more extensive way than it has been used during this and past sessions of Parliament. The Government are very anxious to prevent discussion on those departments where criticism would be damning and injurious to them. It appears to me that the Government are very anxious to avoid discussion on the Trust and Loan Fund Accounts. They are just as anxious to avoid that as they are to avoid an election, because in each case they would fare very badly. Another department which should loom in prominence in discussion is State Enterprises. That department involves the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. As the Treasurer has laid it down that finance is the test of government, then these important votes should be the votes upon which the Government will stand or fall. The Government have taken every step available to prevent discussion on these votes. It is useless to argue that the time has been wasted by the Opposition. I admit that more criticism of the Government comes from Opposition members than from Government members, and consequently there is more discussion on the Estimates and more talk on the part of Opposition members than on the part of Government members. But that has generally been the case in all deliberative assemblies. The Government have reduced the time allowance for discussion of the Estimates from seventeen days by

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making them all double days. By that method the time allowed for discussion has been reduced by over seventeen hours. The Government have taken up the stand that they do not intend to allow criticism of their administration, that any criticism by Opposition members is waste of time, whereas any speeches in support of the Government by Government members are time well spent. Those are the tactics of autocracy and not of democracy. Hon. members opposite cannot complain, when they get into opposition, if future Governments adopt the tactics that they are at present adopting. It was an absurd contention on the part of the hon. member for Gregory to say that the editor of the "Courier" controls the public opinion of Queensland. That is an admission that the editor of his own paper has no power to control public opinion at all. I would not like to put any editor upon the pedestal that the hon. member put the editor of the "Courier." An editor is quite within his rights in wisely criticising a Government, in wisely commenting upon the leading questions of the day, and in directing the attention of the people to those matters. His remarks in connection with those matters would be acceptable to the educated members of the community. If the hon. member for Gregory desires that "Hansard" containing his contention should be circulated, he can do that. If "Hansard" were circulated free of charge, I am afraid that the Government bombast and mouthings would carry no conviction. Whilst hon. members opposite have been making absurd statements about the Opposition, the public would find, on reading "Hansard," that their statements were untrue, and the readers, being educated, would not pay much attention to them, and would place more confidence in the Opposition than in the Government. The Government have taken up more time in discussion than one would expect under circumstances where debate is limited. When the Government members are once again in opposition, they cannot complain if similar treatment to that which has been meted out to the present Opposition is meted out to them. They can only say, "We have no right to complain if we are not allowed to speak except in a very restricted manner." I do not think that Parliament should be conducted by a Government carrying on the business of the State in this manner.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I hope that if by any misadventure this party gets on the Opposition benches after the next election they will at least show some strategy and some leadership, and, if they have reason to criticise the Government, that they will not spend a great deal of valuable time in Committee in discussing votes which are practically unimportant, and allow the large amount of money allocated to the Trust and Loan Funds to go through without discussion. Hon. members opposite complain that hon. members on this side have taken advantage of their undoubted privilege, when in Committee, to discuss certain votes. Hon. members opposite in the past have been in the habit of getting up and discussing votes and taking advantage of the discussion of the Estimates to level all sorts of charges against the Government, and the Government members have sat in their places and have not attempted to reply. On this occasion they have—and rightly so, in my opinion—taken advantage of the rules of the House and of their privilege to reply fully to hon. mem-

bers on the other side, with the result that the Opposition got a good trouncing on every vote. The hon. member for Mirani com-

plained about waste of time; yet [5.30 p.m.] he gets up and raises a discussion at this stage, and repeats ad nauseam and reiterates for about the fiftieth time the same old statements he has been making since the session opened and has prevented the hon. member for Oxley and the hon. member for Port Curtis, who have been carrying speeches about in their pockets for the last two months, from speaking on the State enterprises, and criticising the unfortunate Secretary for Railways in regard to his administration; and both those hon. gentlemen have left the Chamber disgusted with the waste of time on their own side. I only wish that the Treasurer could have seen his way to allow a full discussion on the Trust Funds and Loan Fund, because I am sure hon. members opposite would have got on those two votes what they have got on every other Estimate that has passed through the Committee. They asked for the Railway Estimates last session, and they got them.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: What did they discuss? What did they get?

Mr. KIRWAN: The Minister in charge was quite capable of dealing with any criticism levelled at that particular department. The only thing the leader of the Opposition complained about in connection with the money spent on the railways was the question of an additional light being supplied on the Dalby platform. That was the great question that the leader of the Opposition sought to ventilate when the opportunity was accorded to him of criticising the administration of the Railway Department. The attitude of the Opposition generally, and their attempted criticisms of the Estimates, have become such a by-word that the "Daily Mail" last Friday was constrained to call attention to it. That journal criticised hon. members opposite, and pointed out that they had no method of attack, and that they had no leadership. If they had, then hon. gentlemen would have said: "We have a case against the Government in regard to the State enterprises," and they would have set out to make as much political capital as possible, as every Opposition is entitled to do, on that question, and they would have allowed discussion of the administration of the Railway Department, outdoor relief, electoral registration, and everything else to go by the board, until they got to that vote, and then they would have put their views before the people by an intelligent criticism of the administration. Instead of that, they wasted valuable time in discussing questions that had no significance at all, and now the hon. member for Mirani is whining, and, because, as he alleges, Government members have erected a stone wall, he complains about the "gag" and the "guillotine." What do we find in connection with the Federal Parliament at the present time? Mr. Poynton, who is an honorary Minister in the Hughes Cabinet, speaking at a dinner in the Commercial Travellers' Association in Adelaide, is reported in the "Daily Mail" of 21st August to have said that, if it was necessary to get through the business that the Hughes Cabinet intended to get through before they appealed to the electors, they would use both the "guillotine" and the "gag." Yet hon. members opposite talk about what they would do if they were returned to power. They

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would allow this discussion and that discussion, and the hon. member for Kurilpa has warned hon. members on this side that, if we come back and sit on the Opposition side, we will get the "gag" and the "guillotine." If we get it, we shall have done something to deserve it. We shall have taken full advantage of the forms of this House and the time allowed us to discuss intelligently any policy or any measure that the hon. gentleman, as a Minister in the prospective cabinet, may lay before this House; and it will not be very hard to capsize the hon. member for Kurilpa if he happens to be a Minister. Neither will it be very hard to capsize any other hon. member on the other side.

Mr. KERR: We will capsize you with the "gag."

Mr. KIRWAN: No doubt, the hon. member will use the "gag," and he will be quite entitled to use the forms of this House to get his legislation through. But he will find the Opposition of that day will display some intelligent leadership and some intelligent plan of attack whereby they will be able to score off the Government. So far as the "gag" and the "guillotine" are concerned, they are two weapons introduced by hon. members opposite, and I remember when I was in opposition in 1912, when the late Government "gagged" through the Industrial Peace Bill, when they "gagged" through the Elections Act Amendment Bill, and several other Bills. We told them the day would come when we would have the pleasure of using those weapons. That day has come, and hon. members opposite should take their gruel calmly. They should stand up to it like men. In connection with the discussion of the Estimates, members on the Government side of the House have been quite right in taking the gloves off and standing up to hon. members opposite. I hope that members of the Government will always do that, and will not allow members opposite to fill "Hansard" with their views and have them circulated amongst the people.

I want to say a word or two in connection with the statement of the hon. member for Bowen about our treatment by the Press. I do not worry a great deal about that. I do not expect any compliments from the Press, and, if I did get any, I would be in the position of a leading member of the House of Commons, who, on one occasion, said he would examine his conscience if the Press said anything favourable about him.

I desire to pay my meed of praise to the "Hansard" staff. I know of no more efficient staff, and I know of no more conscientious body of men who perform their duties under greater difficulties, and I say that knowing perfectly well the difficulties they do work under, and I think, generally speaking, the "Hansard" staff is to be complimented on the correct reports which they give and on the services they render to members generally in this House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: Some of us would not show to very great advantage if we were reported verbatim, and I hope, when some hon. members complain about incorrect reports, that the "Hansard" staff will report them verbatim, like a certain newspaper did the speeches of a certain gentle-

man who sat on the Opposition benches at one time. When he complained about the reports, they reported him verbatim, and that was the end of him. (Laughter.) If some hon. members in this House were reported in the same fashion, it would be the end of them. I think the House is to be congratulated on having such a capable and efficient body of men in the "Hansard" gallery, and I trust they will be long spared to serve this House in their present capacity.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): It is very unreasonable on the part of hon. members opposite to object to members on this side availing themselves of the privileges of the House to put their views before the people. We have a right to express our opinions on all matters that come before this House, the same as hon. members opposite have. For the first two or three sessions that I was in this House it was the fashion of hon. members on this side not to avail themselves of their rights in this respect, and hon. members opposite then used to fill "Hansard" with their speeches, and, when these "Hansards" were sent out to the public, they gave a one-sided view of the political situation and what this Government stood for. I am glad the hon. member for Bowen has seen fit to bring forward the suggestion that "Hansard" should be sent out free of charge to any elector who applies for it. That would be a very good idea if carried out. The electors outside have a right to know the true facts of the case, and they have a right to know just what members in this House say and not just what the conservative Press wish to convey. The hon. member for Kurilpa took exception to what the hon. member for Gregory said regarding the "Courier" controlling the Press of Queensland. To some extent that is true. I know that the "Courier" supplies with reports through a Press Agency a number of papers outside Brisbane, and telegraphs a report of part of what takes place here in a very garbled form to those newspapers. On the occasion when I brought forward a resolution in connection with the new States movement, I was told that an hon. member opposite went up to a "Courier" reporter and suggested that he should telegraph to the country Press a report of the debate calculated to disparage me and to suit my opponents. I found afterwards that my remarks were not correctly reported in the Press; but something was sent which was calculated to discredit me in the eyes of the people. Tactics of that kind are most unfair, and sometimes Tory newspapers, acting as agents for Tory newspapers in the country, send press messages of that description. Country people have then no opportunity of getting the true facts put before the House by hon. members on this side unless they read "Hansard." That is why I support the request of the hon. member for Bowen that "Hansard" should be sent free to any elector who applies for it. I am tired of hearing hon. members opposite say that the Government is degrading Parliament. If anyone is degrading Parliament it is hon. members opposite and their friends outside. I do not believe in this kind of propaganda going on, because it reflects on Parliament generally. I will quote what a Tory newspaper outside says in regard to Parliament: this is what the propaganda of hon. members opposite leads

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to. The "Western Champion" of 3rd September, 1921, dealing with what happened in this House, said—

"Vowles as a leader is positively useless. Taylor's deficiencies are so apparent to himself that he would gladly give away the leadership for a sewing machine or a pound of tea. Both leaders rolled into one would nearly reach the level of Jim Tolmie, and we all know what he was. With all Elphinstone's undeniable ability as a public man, and his training as a business man, he does not seem to catch on either with his party or the bulk of the Brisbane electors."

That sort of propaganda goes on, to degrade Parliament. Hon. members opposite show an example to Tory newspapers outside; but Tory newspapers like the "Western Champion" express their opinion on those hon. members. Labour members very rarely get fair treatment from some of the conservative papers in Southern Queensland, but in Central Queensland we have the fairest Press in Australia. The Rockhampton "Morning Bulletin" and "Evening News," the Gladstone "Observer," and the two Bundaberg newspapers, are exceedingly fair in their comments. I have nothing to say against them. They may write us down in a leading article, but a public man must be fair-minded enough to expect that, and, as long as they report fairly what we have to say, we cannot find any fault if they write leading articles against us when their policy is anti-Labour. The Central Queensland newspapers have the courtesy to report fully the speeches of hon. members on this side when they visit Rockhampton; but, when they have to depend on the garbled reports sent by the Tory Press in Brisbane, there are very often misleading statements published. Hon. members opposite keep saying that the good name of this State has been ruined by the Government, and the statements are published in the Press and sent in a garbled form to the southern newspapers, and do a lot of harm. When Sir Joynton Smith, of "Smith's Weekly," came to Brisbane and made inquiries for himself, he was horrified about the misleading statements which had been circulated about the State. He said—

"Queensland is a State that is suffering in a marked degree from gloomy propaganda. Queensland is used as the awful example by the old brigade in politics."

The gloomy propaganda indulged in by hon. members opposite has the effect of degrading Parliament to some extent. Parliament is what we make it, and we as parliamentarians should strive to uplift it. Then we find that "The Producers' Review" said—

"The gloomy propaganda respecting Queensland is the root cause of our present day troubles."

The gloomy propaganda which emanates from hon. members opposite and goes out through the Tory Press is used to mislead the electors and gives a wrong impression outside. It is a bad thing for Queensland, and should be discontinued. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, after reading the southern newspapers, said on his arrival here—

"I never expected anything like the welcome I received in Queensland. I was led to expect that Queensland's

welcome would be different; and yet it has equalled anything I have met with in any part of the world."

The SPEAKER: Order! I trust the hon. member will connect his remarks with the question under debate.

Mr. FORDE: Yes. As I was saying, if people could have "Hansard" free of charge, they would have an opportunity of reading our speeches as they are delivered, and of seeing the salient and effective points made by hon. members on this side, when they could see for themselves the inferiority of the speeches of hon. members opposite in comparison with those delivered by hon. members on this side. As one hon. member on this side said this afternoon, every time hon. members opposite have taken on members on this side in debate—leaving out members on the Ministerial bench—they have been well trounced. We have availed ourselves of our rights, and have given the true position to the people. We, on this side, owe that duty to the people who sent us here, and I am going to exercise my privilege and duty.

I want, before I conclude, to compliment the "Hansard" staff on the good work they have done. The members of the "Hansard" staff have a very irksome duty to perform, particularly when Parliament is sitting double shifts, and it is a wonder to me how they can hear the speeches of hon. members, owing to the interjections which continually go on. They are doing their work very accurately.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORDE: If the accurate reports of our speeches are sent out to the people of Queensland free of charge, the people will get a true report, and will see exactly what the Government are doing, which they cannot see in the Tory Press of Southern Queensland.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It seems to me that what the hon. member for Rockhampton wants is a gramophone. If the hon. member would only get his voice recorded on a gramophone, and have the records sent through the country, there is no doubt that the Government would not be long in office. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARREN: To my mind, there has been an unfair curtailment of the privileges of hon. members on this side. I for one consider that the Premier made a definite promise that members who had not spoken would have a chance to speak. I think that at least once every session a member has a right to state his views. So far as the question of "Hansard" being circulated in the country districts is concerned, I am afraid that the copies which now go out are not used as much as they should be. What is wanted is fair Press representation. I do not think that all the papers are fair. I am not going to say that one side is not fair and that the other side is fair. But I do think that better representation is wanted so far as the Press is concerned. I do not stand for unfairness of any description and, if there has been any unfairness, it should be cut out. Anyone reading the three daily Liberal newspapers in Brisbane must admit that the Labour Party is represented in their columns quite as much as members of this party. I do not think that those papers stand for unfair representation. But hon.

[*Mr. Forde.*]

members want their speeches to be sensationalised. They want to take full possession of the papers. It is not a fact that the Liberal side will not represent the side of the Labour party, but it is a fact that the Labour papers do not return the compliment. The Labour papers do not give this side as much representation as the Liberal papers—or what are called the Tory papers—give to Labour members. Members of the Government party should be fair. If they stand for fairness, why is it that they have occupied so much time this session? It seems to me to be a downright, wilful, deliberate attempt on their part to capture “Hansard” for the session. They do not want the views of members on this side to be heard at all, because they know there is something coming in the future. I know perfectly well that, if we had had an even run, we would have had more speaking this session. I do not say that seventeen days are not ample for the discussion of Estimates. They are ample; but we want some better method of distributing the time, because there is a lot of Estimates that have not been discussed at all.

I would like to say a word in favour of the “Hansard” reporters. The reporters must have wit and intelligence that very few men have. I think it is wonderful the way the reporting is done, because, when we get our proofs, we always find the speeches are a little better than what were delivered in this Chamber. I compliment the reporters. I do not think the Press have been fairer to one side than the other.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I also think that the Press have been very fair in their reports.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about two on one side? (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Minister who has just interjected would keep his Bills to be discussed in this House before giving them to people outside, there would be less need for discussing matters that we are discussing this afternoon. We know that the hon. member has given Bills outside this House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I just want to prove that Bills do not come here first, but are sent outside. When I was connected with the previous Government, all Bills were presented to Parliament first.

Mr. STOFFORD: No. A Bill was published in the “Daily Mail” once before it was introduced here.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Under the previous Government we used to have a full discussion on the second reading, and then the Bill would be laid aside for a week before we went on with the Committee stage. That gave the people interested a chance to see what legislation was being dealt with, and they could suggest amendments.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: What Bills do you refer to.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Bills that now go outside for consideration.

Mr. W. COOPER: What Bills go outside for consideration?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can tell you if you want me to do so; but I certainly object to that practice. We know that everything that appears in “Hansard” is not correct. For instance, the Secretary for Railways this

afternoon made strong attempts to mislead members of the Committee.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, I will read what the Secretary for Railways said. He said that the Government were remitting taxation. They are not remitting it at all. They are simply deferring it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government have remitted some taxation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Attempts were made by the Secretary for Railways this afternoon to give a wrong impression of what the leader of the Opposition said. All that goes into “Hansard,” and, when it goes out, it gives a wrong impression altogether. That is why I think it is good for us to have the Press to correct these things. I am willing to pay a tribute to both the Press and “Hansard” for the correct view they give of proceedings in Parliament. It is a good thing for all of us that they do not report things in this House exactly as they happen. (Laughter.) Some of us would look very sorry sometimes if we saw the way some things were said in this House. (Laughter.)

Resolution agreed to.

Resolutions 5 to 17, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution No. 18—“Health”—

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miram*): When the “Health” vote was before the Committee, I drew attention to a form of sickness which appeared in my electorate, and which I am informed by medical men has also appeared in several places in the North. My object in speaking now is to get a reply from the Minister, because he failed to reply to my question when the Estimates were being discussed. I want to know if the local authorities have got to stand the whole of the expense in connection with the investigations which now are to be made into this matter in my electorate. If the local authorities

have to stand the whole of the expense, it is most unfair, because [7 p.m.] the sickness is not confined to my electorate, but has also appeared at Mosman, the Johnstone River, and other districts. It is thought that, instead of being typhoid fever, it has nothing to do with typhoid, but is some other fever altogether. As bearing out my contention, I would like to quote the following extracts from the report of the local health officer, Dr. Kay:—

“All that was recommended by the Commissioner in 1917 was done, and your council issued specific instructions in all matters of sanitation. I have recommended prosecution in cases reported by your inspector where defects were found, but he has always informed me that the default was remedied on his demand.”

“If defects have been found, the residents have been eager to conform to any regulation for the betterment of health.”

“Still, it is not a typical typhoid fever. There has always been among the residents at West Plane Creek a feeling that the disease was something more than typhoid.”

Again, Dr. Telford, who was recently sent up by the department to investigate, said—

“The newspapers had called it Sarina

*Mr. Swayne.]*

or West Plane Creek fever, but he did not think that was a fair thing to apply to the township, because, first of all, there were very few cases in Sarina itself, and secondly, as far as West Plane Creek was concerned, whilst certainly the majority of cases had occurred there, it was not confined in Queensland to West Plane Creek alone. The disease was evidently fairly common in the North around, he thought, Port Douglas, where Dr. Clark, the medical officer of health, reported before the war about 1,435 cases of glandular fever."

In view of those statements, I do not think the department is justified in seeking to attach the blame to the local authorities. They have evidently effected great improvements, and the conditions there compare favourably with country conditions anywhere else. If it is the policy of the Government to make the ratepayers—that is, to a large extent, the farmers—foot the whole of the bill in this connection, they will be adding another discouraging factor to those which, unfortunately, are so numerous at present and prevent young men from going on the land. If they find when they go on the land that they are burdened with all sorts of charges which really benefit the rest of the community, they are not likely to feel encouraged to assist in primary production, and I think that in such cases the whole of the community, who are more or less interested, should bear the burden, particularly as the people are evidently suffering from a tropical disease, which bears on the whole question of North Australian settlement. The whole of the research and investigation of such a disease is largely for experimental purposes, and should not be made a charge on the local authorities there, and I hope that I shall find that that is not the intention of the Department of Public Health.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): The hon. member for Mirani endeavours to prove that I made a charge against the local authority in his electorate regarding their inaction when an outbreak of fever took place there. The hon. member forgets that it was he who made the charge against the department, and accused the department of inaction in the matter.

Mr. SWAYNE: I said they had been guilty of a great deal of delay.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Away back in 1917 the department took action by sending Dr. Moore, the Commissioner of Public Health, to the locality.

Mr. SWAYNE: That was ineffective.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What becomes of the hon. gentleman's charge that the department had not taken action in the matter? I defended the department when the hon. member made his charge, because I had the facts before me. The Government certainly took action in that matter. The hon. member again seeks to prove that the department is to blame in that matter. Regarding the question of expense, the local authorities are charged with certain functions, and they have certain obligations with regard to health. He may rest assured that the Government will not neglect their obligation; and they will see that the local authority do not neglect theirs, but will see that they do everything possible to cleanse even the hon. member's electorate.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremser*): In Committee I made a few remarks about the

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

inaction of the Home Department or whoever was responsible for the destruction of mosquitoes and flies. Since I made those remarks I have made one or two inquiries, and I find that I was, perhaps, somewhat unjust in putting the whole of the blame on the Health Department. It is only fair to say that mosquito and fly destruction is controlled by Orders in Council, issued under the Health Acts, 1910 to 1917, and the responsibility is practically placed upon the shoulders of the local authorities. Unfortunately, the Orders in Council are so drawn that there is no cohesion, no working together, between the local authorities that are concerned in the one area. I think it would be well if the Minister looked into this matter and made some alteration in the Act, whereby, say, a city like Brisbane—which has more than one local authority operating within its boundaries—can be made one authority in the matter of mosquito and fly destruction. The same thing might apply to areas where the local authority boundaries are, as they are to-day, very unnatural. Local authorities coming within natural boundaries might be grouped under the one authority, and this matter might be given into the hands of that one authority. The powers under the Act are ample. The unfortunate part of it is that there are certain factors which hamper the work. The main factor is the unnatural division of local authorities. The second factor is that the duties are generally given to inspectors who are already overburdened with work, and often are unfamiliar with the technical details. It is very necessary that the inspectors should have some knowledge of the work that they are called upon to do. Unfortunately, very often it is otherwise. They have no particular knowledge of the work, and, consequently, it is not done as efficiently as it might be.

Speaking in the Committee, I mentioned that I was in Toowoomba at Easter, and had killed three mosquitoes in five minutes in a certain part of the city.

Mr. BRENNAN: You must have taken them there in a matchbox.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I did not take them in a matchbox. I am pleased to say the health authorities of Toowoomba were so alive to the situation that before I got my "Hansard" proof I received a letter from the health inspector in Toowoomba asking me to give him information as to where I stayed in Toowoomba, so that he might trace the locality where the mosquitoes were bred. That showed that the Toowoomba municipal authorities were alive to the position, and were very keen to suppress any outbreak that might occur. I wish that all the local authorities, particularly those in charge of our seaside resorts, would be similarly active. Generally the cry of the local authorities is that the extinction of the mosquito is a very expensive undertaking. Dr. Price, of Toowoomba, in a little pamphlet that he wrote upon this matter, said very clearly that mosquito suppression could be much easier carried out by local authorities, and would cost less than the money expended to-day in the destruction of the mosquito. By an imposition of 6d. per head of the population, Port Said was able to clear the mosquito from that place, and I believe the mosquito was cleared from Mauritius at a less expense. A computation which has been made and checked, and which I believe to be a perfectly true

computation, is that Queensland spends £50,000 yearly on mosquito nets, and, in addition to that, Chinese joss sticks, volatile oils, and suchlike nostrums entail a further expenditure of at least £5,000, and the amount of energy expended in raking a certain matter which burns in a slow way, and gives off a rather distasteful odour, would certainly bring in a good income if expended in another direction. I hope the Health Department will give some attention to this matter, and that the Home Secretary will have the Health Act amended in the direction I have indicated to give those who are interested and anxious to rid the community of one of its greatest pests an opportunity of doing so. Why we tolerate the mosquito, and scratch ourselves to death because there is a flea within a hundred yards of us, I cannot understand. I am reminded by the Minister that it is the way the flea makes his living that is objectionable. I do not know, as I live in a flea-clean area. If we made some decent attempt to give those people who are interested in this matter an opportunity of dealing with it, I believe that they would do whatever was considered necessary. We are threatened from the surrounding country with a disease that is brought about by the mosquito. There is no question that the dengue fever is brought about by a certain species of mosquito, and the amount of money expended when there is an outbreak of dengue fever would more than cover the total cost of the extinction of the mosquito in Queensland, to say nothing of the irreparable loss through death and inefficiency which arises therefrom. I hope the Health Act will be amended in the direction I have referred to.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolutions 19 to 35, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 36 agreed to.

Resolutions 37 to 39, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 40—"Electoral registration"—

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): I want to take this opportunity of answering a few remarks which were made when this matter was being discussed in Committee. Mr. Garbutt changed the venue of the meeting place of the graziers from Townsville to Longreach. Mr. Garbutt is the president of the Northern Country party, and he attended at a meeting of the graziers held in Longreach in 1921, and roll work was one of the first things discussed at that meeting. It was a two days' meeting, and a good many matters of a political nature were dealt with, but the first matter was that Mr. Garbutt, president of the Northern Country party, moved—

"Any political association claiming and receiving assistance from this association be requested to submit a report every three months to the United Graziers' Association showing—

(a) The number of names removed from the roll."

I want to emphasise that in this House—that the first thing to be reported to the United Graziers' Association was—

"(a) The number of names removed from the roll;

"(b) The number of voters on the roll;

"(c) A general outline of the work done."

What sort of work? The work of tampering with the rolls of Queensland. Mr. Garbutt is Northern President of the Country party, and this statement made by him at a meeting of graziers definitely links up the Country party with the Graziers' Association, and also with this dastardly attempt to interfere with the rolls of Queensland. At this meeting, also, a further motion was moved and carried, which shows where the money is coming from to carry on this work. A large sum of money is involved, and I wish to show definitely where the money is coming from, despite the protest made by the leader of the Opposition that the Country party have no funds. Personally, they may not have any funds, but the junta controlling them have got funds, and the House can see where they come from by the motion that Mr. Garbutt had carried. The motion was sent down from that meeting of graziers at Longreach to the Graziers' Association, and was finalised by the Primary Producers' Union in January this year at the meeting which the leader of the Opposition admits he attended, and at which a number of other parliamentarians opposite also attended. That motion was definitely put through at that meeting, and I want to show where the money is coming from to finance this matter. Mr. Garbutt also said, "We must work with the Nationalists." Then, we have that famous telegram that Mr. Edkins sent to Dr. Earle Page, in which he said, "You must support the Nationalist Federal Government."

Mr. MORGAN: What did Earle Page say about that?

Mr. PEASE: It is not what he said. What did he do? The Labour party are quite prepared to stand up to anything we do.

Mr. MORGAN: Where do you get your fighting funds?

Mr. PEASE: I have got my own funds and a few pounds that the Labour battlers subscribe. The railway navvies—the people you talk about—are good enough to subscribe a certain sum of money. What happened to Edkins's wire? He sent a wire, and Earle Page sent him a camouflaged reply. What did Edkins do? What did the Country party do? Several motions have been brought forward in the Federal House to destroy the Hughes Government, but every time a division took place a convenient number of the Country party were away. The Country party stand throughout Australia as a camouflaged party, who are not game to stand up to anything they do, or to stand up for anybody behind them. Like many other people, they have no hesitation in repudiating everything they do. Hon. members opposite talk about what Earle Page did in the Commonwealth Parliament. Everybody knows that Earle Page got a number of members to remain away and the motion of Mr. Charlton, the leader of the Federal Labour party, was defeated. The hon. member for Oxley, according to a local paper, said—

"The Country party are trying to get unanimity and to bring about the allying of forces inside the House as well as outside the House."

The hon. member for Townsville said that the Country party was not a sectional party. If so, why is there all this cry for unity? I am going to connect up this unity cry with the meeting of the graziers which took place

Mr. Pease.]

in Longreach last year. At that meeting, when roll work was dealt with, Mr. Geary moved—

“That the executive of the United Graziers' Association be urged to make it obligatory on all political organisations claiming or requiring political support from the association's funds to advise specifically the territory for which support is required for organising purposes, with a view to economy and the prevention of overlapping of administration so frequently responsible for three-cornered contests, and that the executive be requested to withhold all funds until provision is made for co-operation.”

That motion was carried at Longreach, ratified at the meeting of the United Graziers' Executive Council in Brisbane, and sent on to the Primary Producers' Union meeting, at which the leader of the Opposition and hon. members sitting behind him were present. They now say, “Let us have unity.”

Mr. VOWLES: I was not there.

Mr. PEASE: You were there with the graziers and the Primary Producers' Union people. I know what happened. If you do not stand up to the people outside, they will withhold all funds until provision is made for co-operation. That is why the hon. member for Oxley is going outside pleading for unity. He knows that, if unity is not secured, he may possibly not get the funds he requires. That is why we have this cry for unity all the time. Again, at the annual council meeting of the United Graziers' Association in August, 1921, Mr. Walker moved and Mr. Butler seconded, and it was carried—

“That a levy of 7s. 6d. per 1,000 sheep and 500 cattle and horses be called up for political purposes.”

I am linking this up with the question of the funds which are provided to do this roll work. The assessments and levies collected in 1921 totalled £24,517.

Mr. FLETCHER: Nonsense!

Mr. PEASE: It is all very well for the hon. member to laugh. He was at that meeting, and he knows as well as I do that a fund of £24,517 was collected to defeat Labour. That was the amount shown as the proceeds of this levy for one year.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the chair.

Mr. PEASE: It seems a strange thing that the Labour party are able to hold any seats at all in Queensland when you consider the work that is going on—the deliberate attempt to tamper with the rolls, and the amount of money that is behind these people. Every hon. member on this side has to depend for his election expenses on the labourers of Queensland, who have very little money. We are not ashamed to acknowledge that. Every member on this side is controlled by a local Workers' Political Organisation. Any roll work is done voluntarily by these men. We have not got the money to put an army of men in every centre of Queensland. As I pointed out, this work originated in the North, where the Country party had a fund of over £3,000 to do it with.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What has that got to do with roll work?

Mr. PEASE: It has this to do with it—that the rolls may be tinkered with. Mr. Garbutt said that the first thing to do was to have

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names removed from the roll. Hon. members on this side have only a small body of workmen to depend on to enable them to get into this House. When you consider the great amount of money that is controlled by the Opposition, it is astounding to think that any Labour man can get here at all. I can only put it down to the fact that the people have awakened to the truth.

Mr. FLETCHER: We don't know where this money is.

Mr. PEASE: You know where the money is all right. Hon. members opposite make out they are political purists, and come here and wash their hands of everything. The hon. member for Townsville said that, if we could prove that Garbutt and Bradley have been doing this sort of thing, he would resign his position. I consider we have clearly proved it. We have proved what is going on in the North. We know that Garbutt went to the Central district, and then he came to the South. We know the circular sent out to the squatters asking that ticks be placed against the names of their employees who were supposed to be Labour. That completed the chain. The whole chain was started in the North. It was started at the by-election in Herbert, when thousands of pounds were spent to win the seat. One of the supporters of hon. members opposite went right through the electorate with the designation of “Rolls Officer.” The Attorney-General stated that a deliberate attempt had been made to corrupt the roll. I do not want to weary the House, but I want to drive home the corrupt state of the junta controlling the hon. members opposite with the main object of getting rid of the Government. Members opposite have got the money, and we know that their organisers outside are engaged in taking names off the roll. Every member of the Government party has to fight his election with the help that he can get from his own Workers' Political Organisation, because he cannot afford to pay anybody. We are quite prepared to leave the roll work to officers of the Crown. The Labour party believe in putting every name on the roll, and we have always done that. We never strike names off. I have been associated with Federal and State elections for years, and I have often been seated at a table in Cairns and put the names of men and women on the roll, no matter what their political opinions were. We knew they would not vote for us, but we filled in their forms for them. Yet hon. members opposite talk about fighting with the gloves off. They will not stand up to anything they do at all. If members opposite are going to do these things, it is just as well we should let the people know what is going on. There is a big power out to destroy the Government, and I want the people of Queensland to know it. If attempts are made to interfere with the electoral rolls while we are in power, what will they do next? We want to make a fair appeal to the people, and we want the people to know what the money power is doing. The supporters of the party opposite try to load the dice every time. They are out to destroy the Government because of what we have done for the benefit of the people. If we had neglected our duty to the people, why find all this money? It is only because we have done our duty that all this money is raised to try and defeat us. The supporters of the party opposite resort to these tactics because we have fearlessly done our

duty by the people of Queensland. The Premier has refused to ally himself with the enemies of the people. When the time comes and we decide upon it, we will have an election. We will go to the people when we say so, and when we put our case before the electors they will sweep the party opposite off the face of the political field.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): It is quite evident that we were in Committee last Friday, because otherwise I feel [7.30 p.m.] sure you, Mr. Speaker, would not have allowed the hon. member who has just resumed his seat to be guilty of such tedious repetition as having the same speech put into "Hansard" to-day that was put into "Hansard" on Friday last.

Mr. PEASE: That is not correct. I never mentioned one word about Longreach on Friday.

Mr. MORGAN: The fact that he repeats it seems to show that he thinks that by saying it often enough it may carry some special weight. As a member of the Country party I am very sorry to say that we have not all the funds the hon. member talks about. I only wish we had. I wish I could obtain from the party £300 or £400 to assist me in fighting my election. Up to the present time I have had five contests, and I have paid the money they have cost out of my own pocket; and, so far as I know, every member on this side of the House has done the same. I can honestly say that I do not know of one shilling being placed in the hands of any member of any party on this side for the purpose of fighting his election campaign.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did you ever get any money from Mr. J. P. Peterson?

Mr. MORGAN: I have never known Mr. J. P. Peterson to have any money to give to any member. Every one of us is sorry that he has to pay so much out of his own pocket. I am sure members on the Government side have more of their expenses paid than we do, and it costs them less to fight an election than it does members on this side.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: I have been informed more than once that Labour candidates in the Murilla electorate have received £50 at the commencement of the campaign with which to fight the contest, and that the Workers' Political Organisations in the different portions of the electorate have defrayed the candidates' hotel expenses, cost of hiring motor cars or coaches, and advertising. In fact, on more than one occasion I have known a Workers' Political Organisation supporter, perhaps the secretary, to take round a subscription list, and I have contributed. It is a well-known fact that candidates who go into a particular locality receive the whole of their expenses; and, if there are a few shillings or a few pounds over, it is handed to them before they go on to the next little centre. The Minister cannot deny that Labour candidates receive £50 from their organisations to commence with, and perhaps a great deal more. Primary producers, whether they be graziers, wheat-growers, or butter producers, have the right to contribute to a fund to assist candidates who are prepared to support platforms conducive to their welfare. I am not ashamed to admit that, if the producers in my electorate were prepared to contribute to a fund

to assist me in any way, such as by hiring motor cars, I would willingly accept it. In one portion of my electorate some of the people meet me with motor cars and take me here and there, and I am not expected to pay, but that is all the help I get in the country. I welcome that assistance, and I am proud of the men who offer it. It relieves me, as a candidate, of expense, and I say that no candidates should be so much out of pocket by fighting an election as we on this side are. The hon. member for Gregory knows that if he had to pay all his own expenses it would cost him a considerable amount of money. He cannot get on a penny tram if he wants to go to a meeting, nor give twenty-four hours' notice of it: he has to give a month's notice. Suppose there is a levy on sheep and cattle for political purposes. There is no disgrace in that. I am not going to deny that such a thing exists. I would be only too pleased to be able to handle some of that money and have it go to assist other members on this side. Do not the Labour party make compulsory levies on unionists? Did they not make a levy of 10s. on the unionists throughout Australia for the purpose of establishing Labour newspapers? Was that not part of their political propaganda to get members into Parliament, and to enable them to win seats from the other party? What is the hon. member for Herbert complaining about?

Mr. PEASE: I am complaining about "monkeying" with the rolls.

Mr. MORGAN: I am with the hon. member in saying that nobody should attempt to get any man or woman off the roll; but, whilst we ought to see that every person who is eligible gets a vote, we ought also to see that no person is eligible to vote three times, once in each of three different electorates. We have a right to see that dead men and women do not rise from their graves and cast votes. There is such a thing as having dirty rolls, and we have them because people are on more than one roll. It is possible for a man to be on a dozen rolls if he so desires. The only way by which he can be removed is by notifying when he comes into a new electorate that he has left his old electorate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are quite wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: I could give instances in my electorate and produce my own roll to show that men who have been out of Queensland five or six years have still got their names on the roll. I supplied the electoral registrar with a list, but he said, "We cannot put them off until they put in applications to get on other rolls." At the last election one of my supporters who had gone away to New South Wales about two years before happened to be in Miles on business with his brother and found that he was on the roll there. Both men were my supporters and the one who had come back from New South Wales recorded his vote. The scrutineer of the Labour party objected to his vote, but the returning officer said, "I must give him a vote because his name is on the roll." He knew that he had been away, as they knew each other by the names of "Bill" and "Jim" in the same town.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Was he a resident of Miles when he recorded the vote?

Mr. MORGAN: He went away to New South Wales and did not apply to get on

*Mr. Morgan.]*

any other Queensland roll. The result was that his name was not taken off the Murilla roll.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When he voted, how long had he been in Miles?

Mr. MORGAN: Several weeks. He was entitled to vote because his name was on the roll. He was a resident of Queensland when he first got on the roll, and the fact that he was away for two years would not have disqualified him had he arrived back only the day before.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did you send for him?

Mr. MORGAN: That is a sensible question. I must have a lot of money to send all that distance for the sake of getting one vote at a cost of £20 when I knew that I would win by a majority of 500 or 600. That is just like the Secretary for Mines; he handles so much money that a few pounds here and there are nothing. He spends money like water in the State mines. He is always going to get it back, according to him. He has the miner's gambling instinct—digging and digging, fossicking and fossicking, always expecting to get gold. Unfortunately, it is not his own money but Government money that he is spending. I hope he does get results for the good of the State.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must deal with the vote.

Mr. MORGAN: With all the disclosures that the hon. member for Herbert made in respect to these particular matters and with all his quotations from documents which came into possession of his party in a very questionable manner, can it be said that we have no right to have political funds? We have every right to protect ourselves against the people opposite, who are out to cripple us. In the process they are crippling the capitalists, who give employment, and the worker. We have a right to protect ourselves first of all, and to protect those who are depending upon us for their living. The man who employs 5,000 men is a benefactor. He is of more use to the country than the agitator who endeavours to get those 5,000 men to go on strike. That man deserves encouragement and assistance. He has a right to protect his industry, his property, his wife, and his family. If he can do that by subscribing to an organisation, he has a right to do it. There is not a member on the other side who goes out and fights an election and comes back more out of pocket than the members on this side. (Government dissent.) A question was asked in this House recently in connection with the manner in which "Liberty Fair" funds were disposed of. This question related to the "Liberty Fair" being held in Toowoomba. No doubt, the same thing obtains wherever "Liberty Fair" goes. A certain amount of the proceeds goes to a local charity, but the big bulk of it goes to the men who promote this gambling institution. It was shown that 15 per cent. went to the local band and 15 per cent. to the Trades Hall Board. What is the Trades Hall Board? It is a political institution.

Mr. BRENNAN: No.

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. member did not have upon him the brand of the Trades Hall he would not be able to stand as a candidate for Toowoomba. (Disorder.) The hon. member for Bowen also is branded; he is not a "clean-skin" in that respect. Let

[*Mr. Morgan.*

us see where the balance of this money went—30 per cent. went to the Brisbane "Daily Standard." Was not that for political purposes? Why is the "Daily Standard" depending upon profits from gambling to enable it to keep going? Is it not a part of the political propaganda used by the Labour party to enable them to remain on the Treasury benches? Hon. members know perfectly well what it is. I have no complaint to make against the "Daily Standard." It generally puts in the meaning of what I say. I do not wish to say that it does not report me fairly in respect of all matters, so far as their space permits. They say I am a Tory, but that does not matter. But I noticed that in Saturday's issue, after certain matters had been ventilated on Friday in connection with proprietary racing and those connected with it, the report of the speeches was omitted entirely from the "Daily Standard." The "Daily Standard" and I at one time were one in connection with proprietary racing.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. MORGAN: I am endeavouring to do so. I want to show the great power which the "Daily Standard" possesses in connection with educating public opinion at election time, and to point out that the "Daily Standard" left out completely the remarks made about proprietary racing, although that paper used to be with me and others against the monopoly of proprietary racing. I hope it still is of the same opinion, but it looks very peculiar that nothing was said in connection with those remarks. The answer to this question also shows that 40 per cent. of the proceeds went to the owner of the plant. That shows how the Labour party will endeavour by all means—whether fair or foul—to obtain funds for political purposes. I do not blame the Labour party. Let us be fair. I do not object to funds being subscribed for hon. members opposite for fighting purposes, if it is so desired. I recognise that they have to have fighting funds. Those funds were in existence in politics long before I or any other hon. member in this House was born. Perhaps for hundreds of years funds have been raised by different parties to assist their candidates in connection with elections. No matter what may be said, while party politics remain so those funds will continue. I think that, if a man has the ability to represent a party, the least he should expect is that his expenses be paid. Unfortunately, that has not been so in my case; I have always been out of pocket to a certain extent. I believe the organisation would be only too pleased if their funds were such as to allow them to pay the whole of the candidates' expenses, so that, when the contest is over, whether we win or lose, we shall not be out of pocket. There is nothing wrong with that. There is no necessity for making a big mouthful, as the hon. member for Herbert did. If the pastoralists raise funds for the purpose of protecting their interests, they would not be doing their duty if they did not raise those funds. The wheatgrowers or the butter producers would not be doing their duty if they did not subscribe something to a fighting fund to help their candidates to win so that they would have as representatives men who would see that they got a living wage, the same as the worker does. It is a cowardly thing to expect a man to go out and fight the battles of other people and not receive any expenses. The Labour party believe that

a candidate should be paid for his work. I am not ashamed of the fact that our party has funds, but I am sorry that the figures quoted by the hon. member for Herbert are not true.

Mr. PEASE: I quoted from the Primary Producers' Union balance-sheet.

Mr. MORGAN: If that organisation had those funds, we would have heard about it. I have never heard about it.

Mr. PEASE: Your leader knows all about it.

Mr. MORGAN: I am sorry to say that the funds do not exist. The hon. member has found a "mare's nest." Can the Minister show that names of persons who should not be on certain rolls have been removed? I can point to names on the Murilla electoral roll that should not be there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I can show the hon. gentleman.

Mr. MORGAN: I will only be too pleased if the Minister will show how a person's name is removed from a roll after he has been out of the district for twelve months or more. Will the hon. gentleman explain to the House how it can be done?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Was the hon. member not here the other night when I did so?

Mr. MORGAN: No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman can read my explanation in "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I am afraid that it cannot be done.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): The hon. member for Murilla sneeringly referred to Government members being connected with the Trades Hall. What is the Trades Hall? The Trades Hall is simply a building belonging to the trade union movement of Queensland, where the different unions meet to do their business. I am proud of being connected with the Trades Hall. The hon. member also said that members of the Government got a heap of money in order to tour electorates and win campaigns. I have been paying my own expenses.

Mr. MORGAN: Does the hon. member say that he received no money at all?

Mr. PAYNE: For a considerable time I have been paying my own expenses. In certain electorates there are organisations which contribute to a fund. We had formerly what was known as the Workers' Political Organisation, but which is now called the Australian Labour party. That body raises funds by some kind of sports or some kind of gatherings of their own. Does anyone object to that? The workers, very often at great inconvenience to themselves, give more money, comparatively, to their funds than do the friends of hon. members opposite to their political funds. There can be no objection to an honest fund for an honest purpose.

Mr. MORGAN: Why does the hon. member object to our funds?

Mr. PAYNE: I will tell you directly. The Labour party are not hiding their views. The Labour party's platform has been published in the newspapers year in and year out, and the party's political history is well known. The funds are raised for one purpose only—that is, to help the endorsed candidate to win his seat. I am very proud to be con-

nected with people who do a great deal of self-sacrificing work, and who go out of their way to work in an honorary capacity to try and better the masses by returning men to power who are pledged to the Labour platform and to introduce humane legislation. The hon. member for Murilla asked why I objected to their funds. I object because they are used for an improper purpose. It is a well-known fact that for the last two years the Country party has had an organiser out receiving, I believe, £12 a week, travelling the Barcoo, Mitchell, and other electorates. Those organisers have handed to the electoral registrars in those centres many names for removal from the rolls. Is that not evidence of what the funds are being used for?

Mr. COSTELLO: You do the same thing.

Mr. PAYNE: We do nothing of the kind. We have not one man in the Labour movement belonging either to the industrial or political side who goes to an electoral registrar's office to try and have names erased from the roll. I challenge hon. members opposite to prove that we have.

Mr. MORGAN: You allow dead men to be on the roll.

Mr. PAYNE: The hon. member for Murilla talks through his hat. I admit that the organisers have carried out their functions and have put names on the roll that should be there, but they have never attempted to erase any names from the roll. It is well known by the whole of the intelligent portion of the Labour movement that the organisers endeavour to get the name of every man and every woman on the roll, because eighty out of every 100 in every electorate in Queensland are workers either by hand or by brain, and we only want to have all the names on the roll, because by so doing the workers will become so class-conscious and so well organised that there will be no necessity to spend any money in order to return a Labour Government in Queensland. The hon. member for Herbert is very fortunate indeed in having unearthed all this evidence which he has put before the House. I endorse all that he has said. I knew that it was going on, but I was not able to get any facts dealing with the matter. We know that for the last two years the political organisations of hon. members opposite have spent a good deal of money in the pastoral districts of Queensland. Just imagine £24,000 being obtained from the pastoral industry and sent to North Queensland for one year's pay! In three years the sum would be nearly £80,000. In face of what is happening to-day, all I shall say is that there is a tremendous lot of money being raised in Queensland for a particular purpose. I have known the Labour party ever since 1882, and I have never known the officials, either political or industrial, to stoop to anything I would call dishonest. If I did, I would not belong to the movement. Mistakes may have been made; but if I found in the working-class movement the undercurrent, the whispering, and the undermining tactics that have been adopted by the Opposition and their supporters outside this House, I swear to you I would not come into this House. We have only to carry

[8 p.m.] our minds back over the last three years. It is only a case of history repeating itself. We know what was done years ago before Labour was efficiently organised in this State. We know that,

*Mr. Payne.]*



when the Tory party were sitting on the Treasury benches, the laws of the land were so tyrannical that Labour could not lift up its head. We know what was done with the rolls at that time, and the party opposite are attempting to do the same to-day. Although I know that the Minister in charge of this business is alive to his duty, I want to tell him that he cannot be too much alive. I have been travelling a good deal through Queensland, and I have seen a great deal that I do not care to speak about here. The only hope that the Opposition and their supporters have of ever gaining the Treasury benches is through the power of the capitalistic Press, by doping the workers of this State, by faking the rolls, and by seeing that as many of the workers as possible are struck off the roll. The Government are not active enough. Having been connected so long with the working-class movement, I know the unscrupulous methods adopted by the capitalistic class of this State. They will stop at nothing. I am not accusing members of the Opposition individually. There may be some decent men among them; but the people they represent will stop at nothing to get this Government out of power, and, when I say that, I say a good deal. It behoves the Government and the leaders of the organisations outside to be wide awake to all the unscrupulous and unmanly tactics that have been adopted to wipe out the Labour Government. As I said before, I do not stand for stuffed rolls. I do not believe in men or women being on the roll unless they have a perfect right to be there. The hon. member for Murilla gets up in this House and makes most extravagant statements.

Mr. MORGAN: Very true.

Mr. PAYNE: He got up to-night and said something about "dead men's votes" and about men voting in two or three electorates. Every member in this House must remember that there was an exhaustive inquiry made a year or two ago into the charge that was made with regard to plural voting, and the Principal Electoral Registrar stated that there had been no plural voting.

Mr. MORGAN: Every member over there gets a certain number every election.

Mr. PAYNE: You don't know your electoral laws.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. PAYNE: I am glad that the Government have wiped out the postal vote. Any man or woman can vote at any polling-booth in Queensland to-day, but some provision should be made for a sick person. It is all moonshine for these people to talk about the enormous amount of money that the working-class movement has got. Whatever money this working-class movement has got, it has been obtained from the workers. It has not been taken from the great big money-bags of this State to do dirty work. It has been obtained from the workers in a legitimate way to do legitimate work—to advance this great working-class movement that one day—perhaps not in my time—will sweep the Commonwealth of Australia and every other part of the world.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Brammer*): I believe, generally speaking, that the elections in this State are conducted in a very decent way. The majority of the returning officers are

[*Mr. Payne.*]

thoroughly competent, and they do their work very decently; and I was particularly pleased that the hon. member for Murilla should have made an appeal to us to be fair. That is a very decent appeal, and one to which we may respond. I would like to suggest to the Minister that he instruct his officers to do the same as the Federal people do in regard to their officers. All Federal officers are instructed to inspect the State rolls and claims for State enrolments, and that any applicants for enrolment on the State rolls who have not applied for enrolment on the Commonwealth rolls shall be immediately notified of the defect and be supplied with cards and notified that, if they do not comply with the notification, they may be summoned. Our State officers might reasonably inspect Commonwealth applications for enrolment and get our rolls decently perfect. The Commonwealth officers evidently have the right to use our officers, and we might ask them to return the compliment by allowing us to see their applications for enrolment. The hon. member for Murilla made an appeal to us to be fair, and he also said that there was no use denying there were such things as party funds, and I am very pleased he said there was no use denying it. We all know there are party funds, and it is no use denying their existence. I wonder why they disguise the source of their funds. I have in my hand copies of some interesting documents. As a matter of fact, they are copies of balance-sheets and receipts and disbursements of the Primary Producers' Union and of the Graziers' Association covering the period to the end of December, 1919, and, in the case of the Graziers' Association, up to the 31st March, 1921. The receipts and expenditure of that organisation show that during the year an amount was collected as assessments and levies for political purposes totalling £24,517 14s. 9d. One or two of the items of expenditure are very interesting. One item is "Political levies distributed other than to Brisbane offices, £3,450." It also shows an amount of "United Graziers' Association, £12,816 7s. 2d." That shows one of the sources from which these funds are obtained. Now, the Primary Producers' Union's statement of receipts and expenditure from 1st February to 31st December, 1919, discloses that the receipts included a subsidy of £3,000 from the United Graziers' Association of Queensland. The other amounts that they received are most enlightening, so far as the total is concerned. They received £3,000 from the United Graziers' Association; from the Queensland Farmers' Union, £126; from the United Canegrowers' Association, £14, and from members' fees £6 10s. They received one or two further amounts. From the Queensland Farmers' Union they received £459 7s.; but they took very fine care to refund to the Queensland Farmers' Union—it shows on the other side—a sum of £430, so that they really received from the Queensland Farmers' Union an amount of £29. They also received as a donation from the Queensland Graziers' Association, to "The Returned Soldiers and Citizens' Political Federation, £200." I fancy I have heard that name before.

Mr. FORDE: That is a Nationalist organisation.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The Returned Soldiers and Citizens' Political Federation received £200 from the Graziers' Association

for the same purposes—for enrolment purposes and the payment of organisers to get some people on the roll and to get others off the roll.

Mr. PAYNE: The graziers are the source of supply.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: They are the source of supply so far as the Primary Producers' Union is concerned. If you go through the balance-sheet, you will find that the Pastoralists' Association handed over a small donation—perhaps, £20,000 or £30,000—to the United Graziers' Association. All these organisations I have mentioned are bound together to protect the big interests, which, as the hon. member for Murilla pointed out, are badly in need of protection. He said that, if these people did not want to hand in contributions to the political funds, it was pretty rough to be expected to protect their interests if they did not subscribe. These funds are justifiable, and I say with the hon. member for Murilla, "Let us be fair, and not only own up that we have political funds, but state where they come from and what we do with them." It is a very decent plea which the hon. member for Murilla makes, and I hope that he will act up to it in the future and let us know the source of all these funds. There are some quotations which I dare say the hon. member for Maryborough will put me right about if I am wrong—"By their works ye shall know them," but I know nothing truer than this. "That by the source of their funds shall ye also know them."

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I do not think this resolution should go through without further comment. I am pleased that the hon. member for Murilla admits that some funds have been subscribed for his party—including the £24,000 subscribed by the United Graziers' Association, without mentioning what the insurance companies, the tramway company, and other big combines operating in Queensland have subscribed. The hon. member said that he got nothing, and why should he be paid? Hon. members are here to do the business of their masters. The organisers of hon. members opposite go out and pluck the rolls, taking names off wherever they can. We know from what the Attorney-General has said that once the roll is plucked you can keep the feathers in the bag. The members of the Opposition remind me of the fruit-barrow battlers we see in the street who keep their good stuff on the top of the barrow. It is all very well to want to rush these resolutions through to a certain stage, but the purification of the rolls is a vital question to the people of Queensland, who should be warned of the danger being caused by the organisers who are going round, supported by the funds of the capitalistic class. There are six organisers in Northern Queensland working in different electorates, and Mr. Bradley says that they have had 2,000 names taken off the roll in the Burke electorate alone. The workers have to be shown these things. We know that there is a danger lurking in the backdoor policy of the alleged Farmers' party. I think it would be well for the Attorney-General to send out a circular warning the people to be very careful when they move into a new electorate to see that their names are put on the roll. People here give political agents their applications for transfers, believing that they are going to be registered in the new electorate, but at the next election they have found they are not

on the roll. The Opposition cannot win the election honestly and by straight-out methods. They say that we on this side represent a minority of the electors in the State, and, if they knock 2,000 names off the roll in each electorate besides the Burke electorate, it will be one of the greatest dangers we have to face. I would like to see every hon. member on this side voice his protest at the conduct of the Opposition in regard to this matter. Hon. members opposite say that we do not know what our party are doing. We know what the party of the hon. member for Warwick were doing at the 1907 election in that constituency, when £2 was being paid for a vote. The hon. member for Warwick himself did not know of it, but there was an election petition over it. A candidate should be responsible for these things; but, before that is decided upon, we should warn the people, and the Electoral Registration Office should see that these malpractices are discontinued. The organisers of hon. members opposite are not out to get names on the roll but to get them off the roll, and £5,000 a year is being expended for that purpose by the organisations of those hon. members. They say that we collect funds for political purposes, and we are pleased to say that we do so. The hon. member for Murilla says that they are collecting funds, but how are those funds being used? There is not a paid organiser in the Labour party to-day who is putting names on the roll and taking them off, all roll work being done in an honorary capacity, but hon. members opposite are spending thousands of pounds a year in that work. We find in the Federal arena that, when Mr. Hughes had money subscribed for the purpose of dealing with the rolls, some of it was used to purchase Senator Ready. They bought Senator Ready and induced him to get out so that Senator Earle could take his place.

Mr. FRY: Those are improper remarks that you are making. If a member of the Federal Parliament made those remarks concerning you, you would say that they were improper remarks.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BRENNAN: The little gentleman will be finished in a minute. (Laughter.) I was pointing out that Senator Ready resigned his seat in the Federal Parliament, and that Senator Earle took his place. That is one way that they spent the party fund instead of spending it on electoral rolls. We also know that Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister, got £25,000 out of that fund. Why should they give £25,000 to one man?

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will connect his remarks with the question before the House.

Mr. BRENNAN: I intend to come back to that. It is a dangerous innovation. We want to know why this money is being subscribed. In the case of Labour candidates it is a question of £50 or £100 that we get towards our election expenses, but in the case of hon. members opposite hundreds of pounds and thousands of pounds are subscribed. Their organisers do all the dirty work before the election comes on. They pluck the roll before the election comes on. I say that the Attorney-General should be alert, and take all possible means to give advice to the people of Queensland as to what these organisers are doing.

Resolution agreed to.

*Mr. Brennan.]*

Resolutions 41 to 56, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 57—“*Department of Public Lands, Chief Office*”—

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): When the Estimates for the Chief Office of the Department of Public Lands were going through Committee I was inquiring from the leader of the Opposition as to the policy of the Opposition on the question of the extension of leases. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that not so long ago a meeting was held in the Union Bank Chambers in Brisbane, and at that meeting certain resolutions were carried by the Country party executive to the effect that members of the Country party would be pledged to support the principle of either giving compensation to the men who had been forced to pay a fair rental for their country under the Labour party's Land Act Amendment Act or else they would be given a quid pro quo in the way of an extension of lease. Now, as a citizen of this State, and a representative of the people, I want to know definitely where the Country party stands on this question.

Mr. BRAND: You will get it in our platform.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have no doubt that the Country party intend to give back the money paid by their supporters in respect of rentals, or else they will give them an extension of leases as compensation in another way; but not one member of that party is sufficiently courageous to say what they are going to do. Their leaders are very dumb on this question. I asked the leader of the Opposition to make a statement this afternoon, and he said he was prepared to give consideration to the matter of either giving compensation in the way of an extension of leases, or else by giving back the money that was subscribed in retrospective payments. He made it very clear that he did not turn down the proposition for extensions of leases in some cases. In view of the statements that appear in the Northern Country party's manifesto, to the effect that these concessions will be asked of the Country party members who are standing for election, I want to know from the Country party members in this House, and certainly from the leader of the Country party, where he stands on the question.

Mr. CLAYTON: I can answer that. The intentions of this party will be made known in due course. (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: That means, of course, after the election. What we want to know, and what the public outside are entitled to know, is whether they are going to take any definite stand on this question before the election? I will tell you what I think about it. In 1920 the Government passed an Amending Land Bill, which gave to the Land Court the power to fix what they considered a fair rental value for the big pastoral leases and for the small grazing selectors. Prior to the passing of that Act, the Land Court had the power to fix the rentals of these grazing selectors at what they thought was a fair rental, but they never had the power to deal with the bigger holdings of the squatters. There was always that 50 per cent. limitation in the way, beyond which the rents could not be raised at each reappraisalment every ten years. Both the lessees and the selectors have now been put on an equal footing. Nothing has been done by the Government to say that

[*Mr. Pollock.*

the Land Court should charge a higher rental for one class of leases than for another. The Land Court is merely given the power to charge rents based upon the economic value of that land, which is based upon what experienced persons were likely to pay for the land in the same locality and of the same quality. That being the case, many of the big pastoral lessees who were not paying a fair rental or a rental anything like that which the smaller selectors were paying, were forced by the Land Court to pay a fair rental. The result is that many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been paid into the revenue of the Department of Public Lands by persons who for many years escaped that just taxation. The Country party's executive have in no unmeasured terms laid it down that their nominees for election at the forthcoming elections will be called upon to pledge themselves either to give these big pastoral leaseholders an extension of lease as compensation or else hand back to them the money paid in retrospectivity. It is a fair question to ask what hon. members opposite are going to do—whether they are going to kick these people out of their ranks and conduct the policy of their party on their own, or whether they are going to do as they are told by their masters.

Mr. SIZER: They will do as they think fit, irrespective of the people outside.

Mr. POLLOCK: Then why is there such a silence on this question? Have the Opposition nothing to put before the people? The people have the right to get this information.

Mr. SIZER: There is no silence. The leader of the Opposition made it perfectly plain.

Mr. POLLOCK: The leader of the Opposition did not make it plain. I raised the question, and the leader of the Opposition said that he would give consideration to it.

Mr. SIZER: Yes; he said he would consider it on its merits.

Mr. POLLOCK: A party who will go to the country, at any rate, in October, 1923, should be honest enough to say to the people what their land policy is—that is, if they have one. What is their policy [8.30 p.m.] regarding the handing back of the retrospective payments or the extension of leases? There seems to be a very expressive silence on the other side. I cannot get one hon. member of the Opposition to say that he will refuse to give back this money, or that he will refuse to extend leases. I ask the hon. member for Pittsworth through you, Sir, if he is prepared to tell the squatters that he will not give them compensation for the passing of that Act? He, too, is silent. I ask any member of the Opposition if he is prepared to tell the squatters that he is going to come here and vote as an independent person, or whether he is going to give way to this pastoral junta outside?

Mr. HARTLEY: They are all in the bag.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are looking for information.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am, and I am quite prepared to pause to allow any hon. member to say like a man what he will do.

Mr. KERR: Why are you stonewalling?

Mr. POLLOCK: Stonewalling on an important question like this! I will end the

stonewall here and now if one hon. member on the other side will declare his attitude on this question—if one member of the Opposition is prepared to say what he is going to do, without consulting his bosses outside. One could not make a fairer offer than that.

Mr. EDWARDS: It took you a long time to make up your mind when they asked you that question in the markets. (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: There seems to be a lack of decision on this question. Is it through fear that they will not get their fighting funds subscribed by the Pastoralists' Association, about which we have heard so much? The obvious inference is that the fighting funds provided by the pastoralists of Queensland are collected and are available, and that hon. members of the Opposition are afraid to say anything that will offend the pastoralists, for fear that they will not get their share of those funds. From now until 1927, 150 selections in fairly good sheep country will be available throughout Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS: Tedious repetition.

Mr. POLLOCK: I had not the opportunity of finishing my remarks this afternoon, and hon. members of the Opposition are apparently very much incensed that I am completing them this evening. According to the same estimate prepared by the Lands Department, from 1927 to 1932 very few more selections will be available in sheep country. For every sheep selection which is of any use for selecting purposes there are up to 1,500 applicants. Every one of those individuals must have the necessary capital, or the necessary backing, from someone who has the capital to launch out. That shows that there is a demand for sheep country. Can hon. members of the Opposition say that they are in favour of closer settlement and the small man having a chance? If they are going to give an extension of leases to the big pastoralists, they are going to prevent those selections from being opened for ballot. From now until 1932, at the very outside 200 sheep selections will be available. If that country is tied up by an extension of leases given by members of the Opposition—if Queensland is so unfortunate as to have them returned to power at the next election—what opportunity will there be for anybody but the present mutton barons to remain in full possession? What opportunities will there be here for men who come from other States with capital, as we hear so often urged from the Opposition benches as necessary to make this State the great State it should be?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They are not coming now.

Mr. POLLOCK: They are coming now. A majority of those who are now balloting for the big sheep station blocks in the West are men and women from the other States, who are bringing capital with which to settle in Queensland. The crime for years in Queensland has been that these areas have been tied up, although we have hundreds, and even thousands, of men and women who are prepared to settle on them. I am asking, as a matter of public interest to every man and woman in Queensland, and many outside Queensland, that the party who are accused of standing for the tying up of those leases for a longer term shall say definitely that they have no such intention. The inference is obvious that they are in the payment of the Pastoralists' Association. They will not be

able to give back the £500,000 or £600,000 which has been collected in retrospective rents. What they will be able to do will be to give some concessions by way of extensions of leases. I still have not been able to draw any member of the Opposition to say that he will or will not do this. I remember that at the last election the Northern Country party published in all the Northern papers a statement to the effect that the Northern Country party candidates were pledged to the repeal of all repudiatory legislation. They classed the Act with which we are dealing as repudiatory legislation. The other day, when the executive of the Country party met in the Union Bank Chambers, they definitely decided that they would further pledge their North Queensland candidates to vote to wipe out repudiatory legislation. Somebody asked where the money would come from which they would have to give back, and the chairman, Mr. Peterson, pointed out that it was rather a tall order to give back half a million of money, and somebody suggested that the next best thing would be to give an extension of leases. Since then there has been quite an expressive silence on the part of hon. members who will be pledged by that body as to what they intend to do.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: How do you know that they have been pledged?

The TREASURER: Garbutt said so.

Mr. POLLOCK: I know that, just as the Labour party come into Parliament pledged to a definite platform—

Mr. SIZER: You do not carry it out, though.

Mr. POLLOCK: A platform created by the representatives of the workers, so do the Opposition come in here definitely pledged to their platform by pastoralists and those who support them. There is no doubt about that. The hon. member for Townsville will not deny that, if he does not do as he is told and take the pledge, there will be opposition to him in his plebiscite. The hon. member for Townsville was present at the meeting of the executive when the extension of leases was proposed.

Mr. GREEN: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. POLLOCK: Did he raise any objection to it? The minutes show the hon. member to have been in attendance.

Mr. GREEN: The minutes are false in that respect. (Government laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: I would like to know if in any other respect the minutes are false. It is a very difficult thing for me to imagine that those minutes are false only in so far as they refer to the attendance of hon. members of the Opposition.

Mr. GREEN: I can prove my statement, if you want it.

Mr. POLLOCK: We shall be very glad to listen to the hon. member. We also will be very glad if the hon. member, on behalf of the Northern Country party members, will tell us that he will not repudiate or will not wipe out the Land Act Amendment Act; also, that he will not agree to an extension of leases, and will not give back any of the money collected in retrospective rents.

Mr. GREEN: I will tell you at the right time.

Mr. SIZER: You say where you got the minutes from, and I will tell you what our attitude will be.

Mr. POLLOCK: The minutes very definitely point out that at this meeting it was said—

“In addition to our increase in strength by the Northern members, Messrs. Green and Jones, joining the party, Messrs. Peterson, Elphinstone, and Fletcher have also linked up; and I desire to take this opportunity of extending to them all a hearty welcome, and trust the primary producers will have the benefit of their services for many years to come.”

The parliamentarians present at the meeting were Messrs. Vowles, Warren, Corser, Costello, Walker, Swayne, Brand, Cattermull, Deakin, Logan, Clayton, Peterson, Fletcher, and Elphinstone. That was a meeting of the Country party. The meeting of the Country party executive had Mr. Green as an attendant, because he is reported as having moved and seconded various motions during the course of the discussion. There is not any doubt that he was there. I appeal to him again to get off the fence in this matter, and tell the House and the people outside—his people and my people—just what he intends to do. I say unhesitatingly that I would be ashamed to sit in the same Chamber with a party who would give back retrospective money collected in respect of those rentals. I would not, under any circumstances, associate with any party who would give, as a quid pro quo for what has been done by the Labour party in this respect, a renewal or extension of lease.

Mr. JONES (*Kennedy*): I would like to hear from the Minister why certain pastoralists have been exempted from the operations of retrospective rents; why they have not been treated in the same way as I have been treated. I will give one case in particular—

“Brisbane, 28th July, 1922.

“Department of Public Lands,

“Sir,—Referring to your interview with me yesterday on behalf of Mr. Adam Black, of Pajingo, in connection with the rent of Wambiana and Wambiana North holdings, North Kennedy district, I have the honour to explain that the rents of these holdings for the second periods of the leases were determined by the Land Court in May, 1919, at the greatest amounts then legally permitted—namely, 35s. 9d. and 36s. 9d. per square mile, these rates being 50 per centum in excess of those paid during the first periods of the leases.

“Towards the end of 1919, an arrangement was made between the department and the lessee, whereby the holdings were amalgamated under section 167 of the Land Act of 1910, one of the conditions of the amalgamation being that the rent to be paid for the whole area up to the 30th September, 1925, should be 35s. per square mile, that being the average rent according to the court's determination made a few months before with respect to the individual holdings. The leases of the holdings then existing were surrendered and a new lease issued providing for payment of rent in accordance with the arrangement just referred to.

“When the question of the rents of Wambiana and Wambiana North came before the Land Court in December, 1920,

[*Mr. Pollock.*

for consideration under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, the court being of opinion that the rates previously fixed by it—namely, 35s. 9d. and 36s. 9d. per square mile—were less than sufficient rents, determined the rents afresh at 60s. and 40s. per square mile, respectively. In view, however, of the issue of the amalgamated lease and of the provision therein as regards rent, the fresh determinations although indicating the court's opinion of the fair rental values, could not be given effect as regards the rents payable for the consolidated holding.”

That shows that those people were exempted. I held two holdings, and I could have amalgamated them and have been exempt from the operation of the “Repudiation Act.”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Koppell*): I think that the letter read by the hon. member for Kennedy is self-explanatory. As the letter states, the action taken was the result of an amalgamation of leases. It was a conditional amalgamation, and the rents had been determined in respect of the individual holdings a few months prior to the amalgamation. What has been done for any other section of the community or any other person would have been done for the hon. member for Kennedy in similar circumstances if he had made a similar application. By his reading of the letter, the hon. member has given the reply to his question. If he desires to take action under the section of the Act to which he refers, it is quite open to him to do what other selectors have done. The vote for the Chief Office went through without discussion. The other Estimates were discussed very fully this afternoon, but the hon. member did not raise the point at that time.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I think that the Minister might tell us the reason why the matter went to the Land Court. If an arrangement had been made with these particular lessees just prior to 1920, for what reason was this particular holding taken to the Land Court and an assessment made higher than the agreement previously made?

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The court is the proper judicial tribunal to deal with cases of that kind. A very considerable amount of money depends on a decision of the court. One of the chief justifications for the Government's action in amending the land legislation affecting pastoral leases is that the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 does not allow the Government arbitrarily to increase rents as hon. members opposite so frequently imply. What that Act does is to allow the court the unrestricted right to fix what they consider a fair rent. If the court's decision fixed a rent that is now proving to be a hardship in some districts because of the slump in the price of cattle, each case is considered by the Government on its merits. Neither the Government nor the court are responsible for the slump in the price of cattle. It is the result of force of circumstances.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Government have appealed against decisions of the court.

The TREASURER: The Government have appealed in many cases, which shows that the court's decisions are arrived at in an impartial manner, and not under direction

from the Department of Public Lands. The court acts quite independent of the department, and is quite impartial, so far as I know. When the matter was being discussed this afternoon, some hon. member on the other side suggested that the Government were wringing out of the landowners not only the full amount of rent, but a 10 per cent. penalty as well. They are not the full facts of the case.

Mr. J. JONES: The Government did that last year.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is now shifting his ground again. As head of the Government I have stated publicly in Rockhampton and Mackay where the question was brought under my notice, and also on deputations, one of which was introduced by the hon. member for Murilla, that each case of hardship on the part of landholders who find it difficult to meet the rents now charged would be considered on its merits. Time will be given, and payments will be remitted in deserving cases, either by reducing the interest charge on the deferred balance or by making no interest charge on the deferred balance. Each case has been carefully considered on its merits. I have pointed out on a number of occasions that it would be unwise for a Government to adopt a policy of remission of rent even in cattle country, notwithstanding the state of the market. That would mean a tremendous concession to some who are perhaps not entitled to such concessions, and it would mean that everyone would be placed on the same basis, although some are in a position and ought to pay their rent. It must be recognised by everyone who is acquainted with cattle-raising that some of the cattle-raisers, especially the small men, and more especially those who have come into the industry recently, are harder hit than those who have been in it for many years, and who hold much larger areas. That is why the department uses its discretion in making concessions with regard to the rent due. There is no desire on the part of the Government to screw out of the struggling selectors and cattle men impossible rentals or impossible penalty conditions. I am sure that everyone who has faith in the future of Queensland hopes that the industry will expand in a few short years, and will become fully re-established again. It will be recognised that it is a very short-sighted policy on the part of any Government to base upon the depressed conditions of 1922 a policy to continue for the next twenty or thirty years. A Government in five or six years might seriously regret having adopted such a policy. As a matter of fact, many of our difficulties regarding rent from pastoral holdings arise from the fact that panicky legislation was passed in drought time or times of depression, which has practically led to the disparity between the rentals of pastoralists and those of grazing farmers under the Land Act of 1902 and the subsequent Act of 1905. The large holders were able to work up a considerable amount of more or less false sentiment in 1905 as compared with the years preceding 1905, and, in consequence, the Government of the day gave away concessions which ought never to have been given. I have often pointed out, and I assert now, that the concessions given by Parliament in 1905 were not in the nature of contracts as the hon. member for Logan mentioned just now, but were in the nature of concessions that could be terminated by

the same authority which gave them, and which were terminated by that authority in 1920. It is true that some of the lessees under the 1910 Act, and who we now know are in a bad condition financially, were forced to pay a higher rent. We ought to endeavour to meet their positions by giving them extensions of lease in cases where real hardship exists. I quite acknowledge that. But by far the larger majority who have come under the operation of the increased rental ought to pay the rentals that are fixed. Why should not the body of men who carry on sheep raising pay the rents that are fixed? All the arguments that can be used at the present time in favour of a reduction or remission of rent in regard to pastoral rents apply really to those who are running cattle, and not to those who are running sheep. The major portion of the rent paid to the Crown comes from the sheep country, and I think it is a pertinent inquiry on the part of the hon. member for Gregory when he asks what is the policy of the Country party in this House in regard to that question.

Mr. VOWLES: In regard to what question?

The TREASURER: The question as to what is to happen if the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 is to be repealed. Are all the increased rents to be repaid to those who have paid them?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I stated that before, and I believe the hon. member for Gregory has attempted to mislead the House on that matter during the last quarter of an hour.

The TREASURER: This is a very important matter, and, if the hon. member has been misrepresented in his attitude on this question, he must blame those who control his own organisation.

Mr. VOWLES: No.

The TREASURER: It was distinctly stated at a meeting of the Country party executive, which was held in June, by authoritative members of that party that there would be a refund of the rent that had been paid.

Mr. VOWLES: No; it was a recommendation.

The TREASURER: It was clearly stated by Mr. Garbutt, who represented the Northern section of the party, that the Northern Country party members would be pledged to see that the whole of the amount was refunded. One of the most influential members on that executive, Mr. Edkins, admitted that, although he agreed with Mr. Garbutt, he thought it was wise to keep it out of the front window of the party. There was no repudiation or suggestion on the part of Mr. Edkins except that he wanted it kept in the background. One member of the executive, evidently representing the small man, and not the big pastoralist, was horrified that the whole amount of the rent should be paid back to the squatters. He said that the small men took a very drastic view of the suggestion. Then it was suggested that they could accomplish what they wanted by toning down the resolution for public consumption. At the end of the meeting a resolution was carried on the question of whether the other resolutions should be published, and it was thought that it should be left in the hands of the president and the secretary of the Country party to exercise their discretion as to whether it would be wise even to publish the watered-down resolution.

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*

Mr. MORGAN: Didn't the hon. gentleman try to water down communism in his party?

The TREASURER: I am not pledged to communism, nor do I believe in communism.

Mr. VOWLES: It has been thrust on the hon. gentleman.

The TREASURER: No. Hon. members opposite, instead of expounding their own principles and advancing honestly and straightforwardly their own principles, distort the Labour party's platform by making out that it is a communistic platform, and they call socialisation communism.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman calls socialisation communism.

The TREASURER: I have never said that. I made a protest against some of the advanced forces of the Labour party going in the direction in which they seemed to be tending. I said that, if they went solely in that direction, it would be communism. Fortunately, with others supporting me at that conference I was able to prevent that trend towards communism. (Opposition laughter.) I notice much hilarity. (Interruption.) I [9 p.m.] notice much hilarity and great happiness on the part of the Opposition so soon as I get away from their own platform, but I will come back to it now. The leader of the Opposition said to-night—and his is the sole voice which has spoken on it or attempted to speak on it and defy Garbutt and Edkins—that he is not going to refund the money.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Quite right.

The TREASURER: I quite agree with him in that. But is there any reservation in his remarks. Is it his intention to make any bargain with these people? Does he intend to give any extension of lease? That is a matter that any Government in Queensland are up against now, and will be up against for the next two years. What is the position that exists now? There is a paucity of land suitable for close settlement in the sheep area. The Lands Department has issued a number of reports pointing out the few holdings that are falling due for either partial or for total resumption during the course of the next few years, and during the next ten years only a handful of selectors can be placed on land within a reasonable distance of a railway. One hon. member opposite interjected when the hon. member for Gregory was speaking that we have quite a lot of land under occupation license. That hon. member ought to know that not any of this land suitable for close settlement or for sheep raising adjacent to or within a reasonable distance of a railway is under occupation license. It is all held under pastoral holdings, and the Government cannot get it until a portion or the whole of it falls due for resumption. It will be nothing short of a crime to the people of Queensland to give these large holders an extension of their present leases—that is, an extension of their present holding—

Mr. FLETCHER: You can give an extension of a portion of the holdings.

The TREASURER: The hon. member says he would give an extension of portion of the lease.

Mr. FLETCHER: It may be justified. Each case can be dealt with on its merits.

Mr. KING: Could they not continue on a yearly tenancy?

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

The TREASURER: Under an occupation license the Crown can get possession by giving six months' notice; but there is no occupation license in sheep country suitable for closer settlement near a railway. There are occupation licenses away down near the South Australian border and in the Gulf country. If there were occupation license country suitable for closer settlement within a reasonable distance of a railway, then the department would be worthy of censure for granting such occupation licenses. As the hon. member for Gregory has pointed out, for every resumption that has been thrown open for closer settlement in suitable sheep country—in Mitchell grass country or Flinders grass country—there are as many as 1,000 applicants.

Mr. MORGAN: We would be able to settle a lot of people on your State stations?

The TREASURER: I hope we shall be able to do so, but the hon. member knows that stations like Van Rook and Wando Vale are not in sheep country. Few of the State stations are in sheep country.

Mr. MORGAN: Dillalah.

The TREASURER: Dillalah may be suitable for sheep. There is no doubt that closer settlement on Dillalah, when the necessity arises, will be considered. There is a tendency on the part of those who have an undue sympathy for the large pastoral holders to push the small grazing selector out to the back of beyond, hundreds of miles away from railway communication. That is an unreasonable policy of land settlement. We ought to exercise every right of resumption that we have, and acquire new rights of resumption, if we can get them, in order to bring about closer settlement nearer in, where men have a certainty of making a success of it, and whereby the country will benefit. It ought to be clear and well defined as to what attitude will be taken on this question by any party which assumes the responsibility of government. What are they going to do in the matter of a land settlement policy as affecting land at present held by large lessees in Queensland? We know that in past years the pastoralists—the squatters as they were called—always exercised an undue influence in politics. They were always able to exert more than their due influence, because, after all, the large pastoral holders number only 4,000 or 5,000 in the aggregate, yet their influence in public affairs in Queensland has always been tremendous. They have always been able to get a policy adopted by past Governments which suited their own interests.

Mr. BRAND: They have no influence to-day.

The TREASURER: It is quite evident to me that they are now attempting to exercise the same influence over the Country party, and they speak through the mouths of Garbutt and Edkins—men who are prepared to pledge the Country party members to disgorge half a million in favour of these well-favoured landholders against the interests of the country.

Mr. BRAND: You know what Garbutt said about you.

The TREASURER: Yes; and I know what Garbutt said to me, and I gave the House the benefit of it. In the attempt of hon. members on the other side to hide this doubtful policy of theirs, they carefully

overlooked this fact—that, whatever the Act of 1920 did—which they call a repudiatory Act—it equalised rents as between the grazing farmer and the squatter; and all the complaints that have come from that side of the House since the depression in the price of cattle have been in favour of the large pastoralist, and not in favour of the small grazier. They are all in favour of giving rents back to the large landowners—those whose rents were affected by the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920. Not a word is said with regard to the small graziers who were paying large rents beforehand.

Mr. FLETCHER: You know that is not true.

The TREASURER: Has the hon. member for Port Curtis ever said anything in favour of reducing the rent that was paid by the small grazier before 1920? All he says is, "Repeal the Act of 1920." They would give rents back only to those who were benefiting by the 50 per cent. limitation. The stockraiser who previously had his rent fixed at the full economic value, because he was not protected, is to get back nothing. All that this party has done is to carry out the policy it has advocated since 1907, when it was first put upon the Labour party's platform—the policy of the party to equalise the pastoralists' and selectors' rents. That is what this party has done. I speak for every member on this side, therefore, in saying that no concessions will be made to the large pastoralist, whether he be a sheepman or a cattleman, which is not equally extended to the small selector, and that is a policy we can very well justify.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It is very evident that the Treasurer sees the writing on the wall. (Government laughter.) He is very concerned to try and get a slogan for the next election. He tried to raise a slogan to defeat the Country party and mislead the pastoralists and the grazing farmers as to what is the policy of this party. There has been a determined attempt all day—I was not here in the morning—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why?

Mr. VOWLES: Because your trains are too slow. (Laughter.) As soon as I arrived this afternoon I found the hon. member for Mount Morgan, who knows a great deal about mining, trying to pose as an expert in connection with land matters. He tried to show that in some mysterious way the platform of the Country party was to give back to the pastoral lessees, and nobody else, a huge sum of money—something in the vicinity of half a million.

The TREASURER: That is the general opinion.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member based that charge on the fact that certain members of the organisation outside who are pastoralists have made certain recommendations through the executive which have not come to the Country party, and which are not a portion of the Country party's platform.

The TREASURER: The hon. member overlooked the fact that the hon. member for Townsville was there.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I wish to make a personal explanation. I say that I was not present at that meeting. When those resolutions were discussed I was in the train on my way to Gladstone.

Mr. VOWLES: There is an attempt to force upon the Opposition the responsibility for opinions which have been expressed by certain people outside, who no more control the doings of the Opposition parliamentary party than the Labour conference which sat in Brisbane a little while ago controls the Treasurer. It is a case of "God help you from your friends." We cannot help what enthusiastic individuals do outside our party, any more than the Treasurer can help what enthusiastic people who preach certain extreme doctrines do outside his party. There is on the other side a body of extremists just as there are certain influences behind us. I gave an explanation this afternoon, which the Treasurer will find in "Hansard."

Mr. POLLOCK: Will you give an extension of lease?

Mr. VOWLES: I said this afternoon that there was evidently a desire on the part of the Government to give concessions. The Treasurer said that, in his opinion, where hardship was inflicted, there should be a concession in some direction.

The TREASURER: Remission and extension of time.

Mr. VOWLES: Is not that exactly the same thing? An extension is what the Government object to us giving. The Treasurer stated that we were going to give them concessions which they were not entitled to, and in the next breath he turns round and says that there are cattlemen, big and small, who require consideration. We know it. What did I say this afternoon? I said that we have no idea in the future of returning money to the people who have already paid these increases in rents. I said that, if injustice has been done in the past, the question of compensation by an extension of leases will be considered.

The TREASURER: You admit that? You could not understand me to say that we were in favour of an extension of lease.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You said so.

Mr. VOWLES: It is no use the Treasurer trying to sidestep the question. He said that he would give them an extension of lease if the position demanded it.

The TREASURER: We would give them an extension of time to pay the rents.

Mr. VOWLES: The Treasurer knows that, if extensions of leases are given, they are not going to be given by parliamentary authority. They will be given by the authority of the Lands Department, and he must know that any arrangement of that sort must be confirmed by the Land Court.

The TREASURER: Any action will have to be confirmed by Parliament.

Mr. VOWLES: It will have to be confirmed by Act of Parliament; but, if we give remissions, they will have to be settled by the gentlemen who are dealing with this rental question, who, the hon. gentleman says, are above suspicion and are outside parliamentary control. That is ordinary justice. We say that these men have been done an injustice. The Treasurer admits that the legislation of the Government has been oppressive. They say that some of these men are suffering great hardships, that some of them are down and out, and that many of them are not able to borrow sufficient money

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on their improvements to pay the retrospective rents. In many cases rent has gone up by 300 per cent., and is retrospective for eight years. That means that a man is asked to pay in one year the equivalent of twenty-four years' rent. He cannot do it on account of the drought. He has not got an accumulation of funds to do it. His financiers are unable to lend on the security he has got. These are the men who the Treasurer says should improve their properties. I tell the hon. gentleman, and all his satellites, that this stunt they are trying to put up to-day will not hold water. I tell them publicly—I tell everybody now—that it is not the intention of the Country party to grant any remission of payment of money that has already been paid.

The TREASURER: Would you repeal the Act?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes.

The TREASURER: If you repeal the Act, does not that mean that you will have to give them concessions?

Mr. VOWLES: No, because the payments have been already made. The Treasurer knows that no funds can be used to pay off moneys that have been paid to previous Governments.

The TREASURER: I know what they want.

Mr. VOWLES: It does not matter what they want; that would be impossible.

Mr. POLLOCK: You have not said whether you would give extensions of leases.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member was here this afternoon, and heard what I had to say.

Mr. POLLOCK: I was not here then.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member should have taken the trouble to find out. He is misrepresenting what I have said. He said that my party were prepared to make arrangements with the big pastoral companies in Queensland to give them half a million of money.

Mr. POLLOCK: I ask you now.

Mr. VOWLES: If the hon. member wants to ask me that question, he must ask me at the proper time. The Treasurer referred to what happened in the 1902 drought. He said that special legislation was passed. It was passed, and for a special purpose. He says there was no contract between the Crown and the tenants not to alter their leases. I agree with him that that is technically correct, but that is the case as far as any other Act of Parliament is concerned. If we pass legislation to-day, there is no part of it that cannot be amended in future. Although legislation was created in 1902, special concessions were given, because it was only on account of those concessions that financial assistance could be got to carry on the pastoralists.

Mr. PAYNE: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. VOWLES: You do not know very much about anything.

Mr. PAYNE: The 50 per cent. limitation was not in the 1902 Act.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about the special arrangements—I never mentioned the 50 per cent. limitation. I said that special arrangements were made to enable financial advances to be obtained. Those advances were got. A three-cornered contract was entered into between the financiers, the tenants, and the Crown. The lease spoke for

itself. The rents have been increased to such an extent now that it is not reasonable.

Mr. PAYNE: You say there was no reference to the 50 per cent. limitation?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes; but Parliament subsequently passed that provision. The pastoralists entered into arrangements with financiers to obtain advances. When an increase of rent comes along like this, you do not expect financial institutions to pay those rents if there is no prospect of the money being earned. If ever there was a time when the Treasurer ought to realise his position with regard to that legislation, it is to-day. The cattle men in particular require special legislation to assist them.

The TREASURER: The cattle man is getting every consideration.

Mr. VOWLES: I understand that is so in some cases; but if a man does not know the privilege he is entitled to now he has to suffer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has been made public through the Press.

Mr. VOWLES: Last year we had a deputation to the Treasurer with respect to the smaller tenants—the agricultural farmers and prickly-pear selectors. We pointed out the way the drought was playing havoc with the farmers. The Treasurer was courteous and listened to our story, and sympathised with the hardships of the people we represented. He said that, if he could not give us any substantial or immediate concession, he was prepared to deal with individual cases on their merits. I have in my pocket a letter which was received from a gentleman at Brigalow, and attached to the letter is a paragraph appearing in one of the Brisbane papers stating that we had waited upon the Treasurer and made certain recommendations. He showed me a letter which he wrote to the Department of Public Lands on the strength of that deputation. He also showed me the reply. The reply was not that it would be considered on its merits. He received a reply from the Department of Public Lands saying that the Minister was precluded from granting the remission of the 10 per cent. penalty because the law did not permit it.

The TREASURER: I would like to see the particulars of that case. I do not know whether that is so or not.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that the practice has been altered since. The law, however, has not been altered. When a proposal was made in this House to amend the Land Act in certain particulars, we asked for leave to strike out the words "in certain particulars" so that we could review the question of the 10 per cent. penalty. We considered that it was time the question was reviewed by this House, but we were not allowed to discuss the matter. The Minister in charge of the Bill at that time would not consent to the amendment. Surely to goodness, if the Treasurer and hon. members opposite have any desire to get rid of the 10 per cent. imposition, which, they state, was put on the statute-book by a previous Government, they had then an opportunity of doing so.

The TREASURER: It was put on the statute-book by the Kidston Government.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman had a chance of amending it, because we made

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several suggestions, and they were all rejected.

The TREASURER: The 10 per cent. penalty was warranted at that time.

Mr. VOWLES: The Treasurer and hon. members opposite were always referring to the 10 per cent. imposition as something that was undesirable, and mentioned that it was put in the Act by their predecessors and by the Tories, who had ruled Queensland for over forty years.

Mr. POLLOCK: You were supporting that Government.

Mr. VOWLES: I was not in the House in 1910.

Mr. POLLOCK: There are six members over there who were in the House.

Mr. VOWLES: The present Government have had an opportunity on many occasions to bring about an alteration of the law in that respect, but they refuse to do it, every time. I hope we shall hear no more about the £500,000 being returned to the pastoral lessees.

Mr. HARTLEY: You have not said that you will not extend the leases.

Mr. VOWLES: I said that every case will be dealt with on its merits. It will be necessary to amend the law in the first place, and whatever arrangements are made with the tenant will have to be sanctioned by the Land Court.

The TREASURER: The Land Court will have no say in granting extensions of leases.

Mr. VOWLES: If there is an arrangement made between the Department of Public Lands and the Crown tenants, the Land Court has got to sanction it.

The TREASURER: It can only be done on the authority of Parliament.

Mr. VOWLES: I say the authority of Parliament has got to come first. The law has to be repealed. If an arrangement is then made between the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Lands and the Crown tenants, then the Land Court has got to sanction it. The Land Court will not do it pro forma. The Land Court will make inquiries and ask for evidence. What can be better than that? That is what we propose to do. The Premier admits himself that concessions should be made.

The TREASURER: Rent concessions—not extensions of leases.

Mr. VOWLES: What did the hon. gentleman mean by a remission? He said "remissions and extensions." I can only put one interpretation on that, and that is that the remission referred to money and the extension referred to leases.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): The leader of the Opposition has not told this House whether he is going to give an extension of the leases or not, although he did not hesitate to say that he would repeal the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920.

Mr. VOWLES: That is our policy. It is an unjust Act.

Mr. PAYNE: With all due respect to the hon. member, he was talking about Land Acts, and he knew nothing about them.

Mr. VOWLES: You are an authority. You were nearly on the Land Court once. (Laughter.)

Mr. PAYNE: The leader of the Opposition is supporting the great big pastoral companies of this State. That is quite plain, because the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 refers only to the big companies' holdings in Queensland.

Mr. J. JONES: Do you call me a big company?

Mr. PAYNE: No. The 50 per cent. limitation which was removed by the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 only applies to the holdings that were taken up prior to 1902.

Mr. MORGAN: It included a lot of small holdings.

Mr. PAYNE: There were very few small holdings.

The TREASURER: There were 1,200 small holdings and 2,700 large ones.

Mr. PAYNE: There is a number of grazing selections in the Mitchell electorate, but not 10 per cent. of them came under the 50 per cent. limitation in rent. When the 1920 Act was introduced, fully 90 per cent. of the graziers in my electorate were subject to the decision of the Land Court. What is the use of talking about the small grazing selectors being affected by it? Out of fifty-nine big company holdings in the Mitchell land district fifty-six of them were protected by the limitation in rents of 50 per cent. The leader of the Opposition rises in his place and talks about the land laws. I think he talks about them knowing he is wilfully wrong, because he must know that what he says is wrong. The leader of the Opposition says that he is going to repeal the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, and, seeing that that is the Act which wiped out the 50 per cent. limitation, there is no doubt who is behind the hon. gentleman.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: The big companies are behind the hon. gentleman, because they have been trying to get every member on this side, directly or indirectly, to agree to an extension of leases. I know four big holdings in Central Queensland—Aramac, Bowen Downs, Mount Cornish, and Darr River Downs—and it is worth at least £1,500,000 for the companies owning those stations to get an extension of fifteen or twenty years in their leases. It has already been said here that there are from 600 to 1,500 applicants for a decent grazing selection on sheep country at every ballot. I gave an illustration myself where there were 600 applicants for each block on Albilbah and Ruthven. The rent was 2d. and 3d. an acre. I claim that any party in this House, no matter where they sit, who would encourage the holding of those millions of acres by big companies are disloyal to Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: It is a criminal act to give an extension of leases to those big companies, when there are hundreds and hundreds of the best young men in Queensland, the native-born, who have grown up in the pastoral industry, and who know it from A to Z, who are hungering to get a grazing selection for themselves. I know young men have been trying to get land for the last eight, ten, or fifteen years.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: I am satisfied that the removal of the 50 per cent. limitation in

*Mr. Payne.]*

rent has removed an anomaly from our statute-book. No such anomaly exists in any other State of the Commonwealth. I am satisfied, after the remarks of the leader of the Opposition and those who support him, that all this big money is not being spent in the interests of the grazing selector. If the grazing selector has put his money into it, then he did not know what he was doing. I am quite prepared to go to my electors in the Mitchell electorate, and let no one vote except the people on the land. I am prepared to let them vote on the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, and I will guarantee that I will come back to this House by a majority of two to one. The grazing selectors out there are not Labour men at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are honest men. (Laughter.)

Mr. PAYNE: I say that seven-eighths of the grazing selectors in Central Queensland are behind this Government in every act they have done in connection with cutting out these big company holdings and [9.30 p.m.] throwing them open for closer settlement. Many of the people out there have very fine young sons, and they have had applications in for such land year after year, but it is like going in for a "Tattersall's sweep." I guarantee that, if the whole of the big company holdings in the Mitchell district were cut up into decent living areas—not starvation areas—

OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting,

Mr. PAYNE: Perhaps I have forgotten more about the pastoral industry than the whole of hon. members opposite ever learned. Considering everything—rent, distance from the railways, possibilities of improving the land by water supply, character of the country, and so on—I take my stand for nothing less than 10,000 acres of the best land out there not far from the railway as being large enough for a man to settle down and make a decent living on.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is not the opinion of the Government.

Mr. PAYNE: It is the opinion of the Government. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. He is talking through his hat. The Government have proved that that is their opinion, because the leases of a lot of the best land out there in 10,000-acre blocks have expired, and they have given the holders priority in applications for new leases. That proves that the Government do not think it would be worth while dividing them.

Mr. DEACON: What is the country worth per acre?

Mr. PAYNE: I do not know, but I would be very sorry to give more than 10s. an acre for land out west for grazing, because, if you capitalise that at 5 per cent., you are paying 6d. an acre for all time, and I do not think it is worth it; and I am talking as a man who has been there for forty years.

Mr. FLETCHER: You are very conservative if you say that you want 10,000 acres of the best country out there. You can do well on some country with 5,000 acres.

Mr. PAYNE: Men on 10,000 acres not far from the railway line have done well and reared nice families, and do not owe the banks any money. They have not raced about the country in motor-cars, of course, from

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daylight to dark. They have lived as reasonable human beings, and I am satisfied that a great many of them are not hard-up to-day. I am satisfied, from what has been going on for some years, that these great big companies are behind the Opposition. The small grazing selectors have been muzzled by some of these "big guns," but there will be a rumpus before long; there will be a split, and you will find the small selector supporting straight-out Labour men rather than men who will lend themselves to giving these big companies any extension of their leases and wiping out the 1920 Act. (Opposition laughter.) This is a serious matter to me. The hon. member for Kurilpa, who laughs, does not know the A B C of what I am talking of. It is serious, because I have been in a pastoral district for just on forty years and I know the genuine hunger there is for land among our own people. I know the great rush from other States for land. Go to a ballot booth, as I have done off and on for years, and run your eye down the list of applications, and you will be surprised at the hundreds of people from Victoria, New South Wales, and every other State in the Commonwealth who are putting in applications for our best sheep country in Central and Northern Queensland, more particularly in the Barcoo and Thomson River districts. I cannot help repeating that any party in this House who will lend themselves to giving these companies extensions of leases are criminals to the community.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The Premier stated that the Government who were responsible for introducing the 50 per cent. limitation on increases of rents had passed panicky legislation. Whether it was panicky legislation or not, I think we should all give the Government of that day credit for doing what they believed to be in the best interests of the State. We know perfectly well that a terrific drought was devastating practically the whole of Queensland, that the pastoralists in every direction were being forced to relinquish their holdings, and that quite a number were going to the wall. In order to prevent them from leaving their holdings and to induce financial institutions to assist them to remain on them, that legislation was introduced. It is not a question of whether the pastoralist was able to pay the rent or not, or whether he was getting his land more cheaply than the grazing selector. The question we have to decide is whether a contract was entered into between the Government and those individuals. The Premier says there was not. He remembers perfectly well that, when he was in London, correspondence took place between himself and Professor Keith in the columns of the London "Times," which I quoted last session, and I am prepared to accept the opinion of Professor Keith in preference to that of the Premier. He said distinctly and emphatically that it was repudiation.

Mr. STOPFORD: The High Court disagrees with him.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier knows that what I am stating is perfectly correct, and I am prepared to accept the verdict of a great constitutional authority like Professor Keith. The making of the rents retrospective for so many years, as has been done in the reappraisements by the Land Court, showed the injustice of the whole proceedings. I am given to understand that, in a number of

instances, transfers have been made, and the later tenants find that they are compelled to pay heavy retrospective rentals, which they have probably not been able to recover from the men from whom they bought. I am not blaming the Land Court. They are simply carrying out the duties for which they were brought into existence and fixing the rent on the evidence before them. I believe that they do it to the very best of their ability. I do not question them, but I question the Land Act Amendment Act, which brought about what has been termed the repudiation that has caused the loss of the State's credit, and to a great extent accentuated the difficulties that we have had financially during the last few years.

Earlier in the evening I asked for some information with regard to Wambiana and Wambiana North holdings. The Treasurer does not satisfy me in connection with that matter. The rentals of these holdings were determined by the Land Court in May, 1919, at 33s. 9d. and 36s. 9d. per mile respectively, those rates being 50 per cent. in excess of those paid during the first period of the lease. About six or seven months after the renewals were fixed by the Land Court an arrangement was made between the department and the lessees, whereby the holdings were amalgamated under section 167 of the Land Act of 1910, one of the conditions of the amalgamation being that the rent for the whole area up to 30th September, 1925, should be 35s. per square mile. That was a fair average on the assessment made to the Land Court in May of that year.

The SPEAKER: Order! Did the hon. member not speak earlier on this resolution?

Mr. TAYLOR: I asked a question with regard to Wambiana holding.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member rose?

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes.

The SPEAKER: I called the hon. member, and I have a note that he spoke.

Mr. TAYLOR: I certainly rose to my feet.

The SPEAKER: I must rule the hon. member out of order, as I gave him a call.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): To me, the leader of the Opposition made the position worse in relation to the attitude of the Country party in regard to the reappraisal of rents which has taken place under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920. He made two points—first, that, while they would not pay monetary compensation because of the retrospective rent, yet every case would be considered on its merits; and, as compensation for the increase of rent above the 50 per cent. limitation fixed by the previous Act, they would be prepared to concede an extension of the lease. That, to me, seems to be a very bad principle to lay down in regard to any legislation of a preceding Government.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say that should be done in every case.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say the hon. member did. I said he would consider each case on its merits for an extension of lease as compensation. That is the important point. On what grounds would the hon. member base a claim for compensation except

that the original holders of the lease had been assessed at a higher rental than had been previously determined under the Act of 1905 and the later Act of 1910?

Mr. VOWLES: I said where it had been shown that an injustice had been done.

Mr. HARTLEY: According to the hon. member's contention, the lessee of every holding in the schedule of exempted holdings under the 1905 Act would be considered to be suffering an injustice by the increase of rent.

Mr. VOWLES: Not necessarily.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is the widest interpretation. It is the logical interpretation to be placed upon the hon. member's statement. He also made the statement, in reply to the hon. member for Mitchell, that he would repeal the Act of 1920, as it was an unjust Act. That is worse than saying that they will return the money that has been paid as rent over the 50 per cent. limitation. The main principle of the 1920 Act was the removal of the limitation of 50 per cent. in respect of holdings which were previously held under an agreement that the increase on the reappraisal of rent should not exceed 50 per cent. If that Act is repealed, it means that all those holdings will go back to the position they were in previously. The Land Act of 1910 will apply to them, and the areas mentioned in the schedule will not be able to be assessed to a greater extent than 50 per cent. above the previous reappraisal. That will naturally raise the question of compensation for the rent which has been paid by reason of the action of the Land Court during the past three or four years. In my opinion it would be a greater hindrance to land settlement than the old Act. The legitimate land settlers and developers of the country would far prefer the policy of this Government in land settlement to any Act which would give back to the old squatter class the tremendous grip that it had on the land administration before the 1920 Act was passed. It should be borne in mind by every sound thinking Queenslanders who desires to see a closer land settlement policy inaugurated in the State that the Country party stand for the repeal of that Act and the putting of the whole of the country in the hands of squatterdom again.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): There is not the slightest doubt that the leader of the Opposition put his finger on the point when he said that it is quite obvious that the Government realise in their dying days that it is necessary to find some ground on which they can raise a catch-cry to rehabilitate themselves in the country.

Mr. COLLINS: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. SIZER: There has been a most deliberate attempt all day to distort the remarks which have been made from this side of the House on that question. Mention has been made of a certain organisation. I know nothing whatever about it, and its influence over me is nil. If they sent all the resolutions in the world to me in this House and I did not agree with them, I would not support them. That is the position in which I, and the party to which I belong, stand. When we do gain the Treasury benches the members of the party—and they only—will decide the policy.

*Mr. Sizer.]*

On the question of the attitude laid down by the leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Gregory seems to be the champion on the Government benches. He asked a question on several occasions which, I maintain, has been answered, and now he accuses hon. members on this side of refusing to answer. If we take a guide from the Government as to the way to answer questions that are put to them in their official capacity, there is no need for us to open our mouths.

Mr. POLLOCK: How does the hon. member stand in connection with the matter?

Mr. SIZER: I am quite prepared to state my views if the hon. member is prepared to state where they stole the minutes from and who was the agent they paid to get them.

Mr. POLLOCK: I got them from the hon. member for Herbert. Now you answer my question. (Laughter.)

Mr. SIZER: I said that, if the hon. member for Gregory would say where the party got them from, I would answer his question. The hon. member for Townsville has contradicted one portion of the minutes.

The TREASURER: He said he was not present when that resolution was carried; so how can he contradict the minutes?

Mr. SIZER: An attempt was made to connect the hon. member for Townsville with something that hon. members opposite said they had official documents to prove, and the hon. member for Townsville said he was not there. The whole of the document could very easily be a "fake," just as one portion was pointed out to be wrong by the hon. member for Townsville. Those documents belong to the Country party. They were the private documents of that party.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. SIZER: They must have got into the hands of the Government by some devious means. In connection with pastoral leases, we will take the case of a holding under the 1920 Act which has changed hands once or twice, and which was covered by the retrospective section of the 1920 Act. It was sold in good faith and bought in good faith, and was held by the new tenant for twelve months before the passing of the new Act. That man sells out again to another man—

The TREASURER: That does not happen.

Mr. SIZER: It does happen. The holder of that particular land would be called upon to pay the whole of the retrospective rent.

The TREASURER: There have been sales, but not two or three sales.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Yes—three sales.

The TREASURER: There are no such cases.

Mr. SIZER: Take the case where the land changes hands once. The original holder would probably enjoy nine-tenths of the benefits of the old Act, but the new man, who is in occupation, would have to pay the whole of the retrospective rent, because he is the lessee for the time being.

The TREASURER: How far does the retrospective rent date back?

Mr. SIZER: In some cases six years. The new tenant would only have a moral claim against the man from whom he bought.

The TREASURER: It could not go back six years if the holder bought in 1920. If it

was bought in 1920, it was bought before the Act was passed.

Mr. SIZER: I said that in some cases where the man bought before the Act was passed the retrospective rent would apply. If he bought it after the Act was passed, it would not apply. Take the case of a man who bought a holding twelve months prior to the passing of the Act. He would be called upon to pay retrospective rent without enjoying the full benefits. I think it is only fair and just that that man should be recompensed in some reasonable way.

The TREASURER: How would it be done?

Mr. SIZER: It is impossible to suggest that the rent should be handed back. Anyone outside Parliament who suggests or contemplates that that should be done does not possess a correct view of matters.

The TREASURER: Edkins and Garbutt proposed it.

Mr. SIZER: We are accused of following men of that mentality. Those men know that it is impossible, and no one would be bound to such a ridiculous proposition.

The TREASURER: The Country party are pledged to it.

Mr. HARTLEY: The members of the Country party are pledged to repeal that Act.

Mr. SIZER: No.

Mr. HARTLEY: Does the hon. gentleman say that he is not pledged to repeal that Act?

Mr. SIZER: Hon. members opposite state that on the advent of any new Government there would be a wholesale extension of leases. That is not so. In cases where, perhaps, the annual rental is £50 and a man has paid £100 where he has not enjoyed the full benefit of that rental, it would be reasonable to allow him a further two years' lease. That would be the view that I would take on the question of an extension of leases. To meet the excessive amount paid in rent, I would be prepared personally to consider such a proposal; but I certainly do not think for one moment that it is the intention of this party to grant a wholesale extension of leases, and hon. gentlemen opposite have not been able fairly to connect such an intention with this side of the House.

#### RESOLUTIONS PASSED UNDER OPERATION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 307.

At 10 p.m.,

The SPEAKER: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, dealing with "Days allotted for Supply," I shall now proceed to put the balance of the resolutions.

Resolution 57 agreed to.

Resolutions 58 to 69, both inclusive, put and passed.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

##### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, Chillagoe): I beg to move—

"(a) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1922-23, a further sum not exceeding £5,641,242 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys

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standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1922-1923, a further sum not exceeding £2,914,365 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1922-1923, a further sum not exceeding £3,279,660 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(d) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1921-1922, a supplementary sum not exceeding £135,168 10s. 8d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(e) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1921-1922, a supplementary sum not exceeding £116,100 9s. 9d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(f) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1921-1922, a supplementary sum not exceeding £253,417 6s. 5d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(g) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1923-1924, a sum not exceeding £1,200,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(h) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1923-1924, a sum not exceeding £700,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(i) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1923-1924, a sum not exceeding £600,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### RECEPTION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

On the motion of the TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), the resolutions were received and agreed to.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 2.

##### FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced, and read a first time.

##### SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): We have not had very much opportunity this session of dealing with the Trust and Loan Funds.

Upon their wise investment the prosperity and progress of the State depend.

The TREASURER: Surely the hon. member is not going to raise that point on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill. He should have raised it in Committee of Ways and Means. (Laughter.)

Mr. FLETCHER: We did not have the opportunity in Committee of Ways and Means of dealing with these funds. Last year it was on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill that we had the opportunity of dealing with them.

The TREASURER: The hon. member should have taken the opportunity in Committee of Ways and Means, and he could have discussed it all night, or he should deal with it on the Committee stage of the Bill. (Laughter.)

Mr. FLETCHER: We must expend our loan money wisely. If it is expended injudiciously, the burden of taxation becomes so heavy that trade is injured and it becomes impossible to pay wages. The reduction of wages which has taken place is due to unwise expenditure of loan money in the past. The loan money to be appropriated for this year is set down at £4,926,660, and the Trust Funds expenditure at over £5,000,000. There is a lot of trust moneys advanced in connection with cotton trading, sugar mills, State enterprises, and the like. In connection with the expenditure of loan money we are entirely dependent upon the security of the State. In connection with State enterprises, in which vast sums of trust money have been expended, we must in the near future write off something like £1,000,000. That will go to the Loan Fund, and we shall have to pay interest on it year by year. We have to write off certain sums in connection with Inkerman, Chillagoe, and soldiers' settlements, etc., but we shall have to pay interest on that money and have nothing to show for it. The Treasurer estimates a deficit for this year of £576,000. I contend that it does not reflect the true financial position of the State, because there are considerable losses on the State enterprises and other investments of the Government, which have not been taken into account at all. There have been huge losses on the State stations, amounting to some hundreds of thousands of pounds, and there are also losses amounting to £170,000 on the other State enterprises for last year. I contend that to get the true financial position of the State you must take these losses into consideration. Instead of the prospective deficit being £576,000 it is more likely to be well over £1,000,000.

The TREASURER: You have already agreed to this in Committee, so why refer to it now?

Mr. FLETCHER: We have spent huge sums of money under the day-labour principle, which has been responsible for a great deal of waste. We know that £35,000,000 have been spent by this Government at high rates of interest, running to 5½ and 6 per cent., and the consequence is that our interest bill for this financial year will amount to £3,582,000, or an increase for the year of £282,000. We have had no commensurate return for the money we have spent, because we are spending a great deal of our money on enterprises that do not return any interest. The result is that the interest has to be made up by other forms of revenue. If we review the position we shall find that in two years it will present a very serious state of affairs. Our interest

*Mr. Fletcher.]*

bill at the present time is £3,582,000 per annum. We have loans amounting to £25,000,000 falling due in the next two years, and they will have to be renewed. If we can renew them at 5 per cent.—and that is a conservative estimate—it will increase our interest by £300,000 a year. If we borrow £4,000,000 next year, our interest bill for the year ending on 30th June, 1924, will be increased by another £200,000. If we borrow £4,000,000 in 1925, our interest bill will be increased by a further £200,000, and interest on State enterprises losses written off will absorb another £50,000. That means that on 30th June, 1925, our interest bill will amount to £4,332,000, or an increase in two years of £750,000, and in three years an increase of over £1,000,000. We shall have no material increase in our revenue to meet this interest bill. The reason for that is that the revenue has been collected by unsound means. The sum of £600,000 has been collected in retrospective rents under the Land Act Amendment Act, and is now finished, and huge taxation has been imposed upon the people. The taxation has increased 300 per cent. from all sources until to-day £3,500,000 is collected from taxation. That is a most retarding influence on our progress. It has restricted enterprise, and has prevented revenue coming into the Treasury from proper channels. The revenue has had to be augmented by these unsound means, and in the end that will be disastrous to the State. There is no natural development taking place. The expenditure of loan money absorbs the unemployed. The revenue has not been increased through this expenditure of loan money each year. This year a record loan expenditure is foreshadowed, amounting to £4,929,660. By this means it is intended to absorb the unemployed and create an air of prosperity. It is a purely fictitious prosperity, because in the long run we shall have to pay for all this heavy expenditure of loan money, which does not return any revenue at all. The Government have started the building of the Burnett railway from three different points just because it suits them politically to do so. They propose to build the railway from Baralaba in order to put the hon. member for Normanby in difficulties. They propose spending further loan money there, notwithstanding the fact that the irrigation area will not be ready for, perhaps, three years. There is certainly no necessity to start the railway until the irrigation area is well under way. Even if it is only twelve months before the irrigation area is ready, it means that we are paying interest unnecessarily for twelve months. These railways are being built all over the country to suit the political exigencies of the moment and capture certain constituencies, and we shall be paying interest on the money without any return for it. We must face the prospect of very heavy deficits for the next two or three years. We have to pay for the wanton and iniquitous extravagance of this Government, for the expenditure of these millions and millions of money. I say it is not right to tell the people that the finances are in a sound position, to bolster them up and make out that everything is all right. The prosperity of Queensland thus created is fictitious. One never hears of the sale or transfer of a cattle or sheep run at the present time. In the country of which the hon. member for Mitchell was speaking practically no stations are being sold, principally because nobody has any confidence in

[*Mr. Fletcher.*

this Government. (Government laughter.) No one is going to bring capital here when they do not know what to expect next. The Government have done nothing to cut up those areas into small blocks and get small men to occupy them, and without that I do not see how we are going to augment our railway revenue on those Western lines. It is impossible for us to retrieve our position until we remove the stigma of repudiation, and it is going to be impossible for us to make arrangements to renew maturing loans and secure further loan money advantageously until we do remove that blot. We shall have to go to America and pay higher rates there, or we shall have to pay heavier rates in England than we should.

What we need in this country is population, and we are not going to get people to come here with enterprise and capital until they feel that their enterprises will be safe. That is what the Government fail to see. They have certainly derived a certain amount of revenue from the "Repudiation Act," but I contend that indirectly they have lost ten-fold. The Government have lived during times of plenty. During the war prices were very high, and a lot of money was made, and the people had profits which were taxable. The Government therefore actually benefited by the war, although they say that it was financially disastrous for them. Their revenue has increased from £7,000,000 to £12,000,000 odd in seven years, and during the same period they have spent £35,000,000 of loan money, although in the previous sixty years only £55,000,000 were spent. It is the wanton, wasteful expenditure that is causing the trouble to-day and that is going to cause trouble during the next two or three years, when a most difficult position will arise. The Government have lived on loan money, not by developing the country by natural means, but by creating a fictitious prosperity. One would not mind if this expenditure of loan money—£5,000,000 this year and £35,000,000 in the seven years—were well spent. The more money we spend the better, provided it is well spent, but when it is wasted it becomes absolutely disastrous. It is our children who are going to suffer because of this huge wasteful expenditure. The Government have become callous in regard to criticism, and anything we can now say regarding the finances will not have any effect upon them. But the people should know, and it is our duty to let the people know, the true state of the finances. Although on the surface they may appear to be all right, they are in a deplorable condition, due entirely to the wasteful and injudicious expenditure of loan money and unsound collection of revenue. I suppose any one of a hundred things which this Government have done would have exterminated any previous Government. The public have become thoroughly disgusted with the whole position. In face of the financial position alone, quite apart from anything else, it is altogether impossible for this Government to be returned and to allow the drift to go on and the position to become worse and worse. The Government alone are responsible, and they will have to take the responsibility for the heavy deficits that are bound to occur during the next two or three years.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): One of the first things which strikes one on reading this Appropriation Bill is that Parliament is being asked to pass millions of pounds, and

there is no indication of where the money is to come from. This is to be an appropriation of money which we do not anticipate receiving. The Government expect to have a deficit of £576,000, and we are thus being asked to appropriate more money than we are likely to receive. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite may laugh, but that is the fact. We were supplied to-day with a copy of the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1921-22, showing an expenditure of £135,163 from revenue, £116,100 from Trust Funds, and £253,417 from Loan Funds—a total of £504,685. That money was spent by the Government before being appropriated by Parliament, and they are now seeking the parliamentary approval. It has been a habit for this Government to spend millions of pounds without referring the matter to Parliament until a late date.

Mr. KING: It is not a habit; it is a gift. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: Perhaps it is a gift. In the hands of this Government it has developed into a habit, and is becoming second nature with them. In seven years the Government have spent over £5,000,000 which was not appropriated at the proper time. Their action has been aggravated by the fact that there have been heavy deficits at the same time. The previous Government in a period of seven years spent, on an average, £200,000 less than that amount for each of the seven years. We know perfectly well that in New South Wales they had a Royal Commission to inquire into the very same thing. In Queensland, apparently, it is not thought necessary to have a Royal Commission. The Government should adhere to the appropriation by Parliament. I hope that during the coming year they will revert to the practice of keeping strictly to the money appropriated by Parliament, and not go on recklessly spending millions of pounds.

Mr. COLLINS: What portion would the hon. member cut out?

Mr. KERR: There are hundreds of portions that could be cut out. A large expenditure of loan money in connection with the State enterprises could be cut out. The amount spent in connection with the Commissioner of Prices could be cut out.

Mr. COLLINS: Would the hon. member cut out the £40,000 to be spent in erecting wheat sheds?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman can pick out single cases. In 1920-21 the estimated revenue was £12,182,000, and the actual revenue was £12,601,000. That left really £419,000 for the Government to play with. All that money was not obtained through the ordinary channels of taxation, but £300,000 of it was obtained through exorbitant taxation. The only surplus that the Government could show was a surplus of £10,000. In 1913-14 there was an excess of revenue over expenditure of £175,000, and the Government of the day showed a surplus amounting to that sum. In 1900-1901 the excess of revenue over expenditure was £200,000, and the Government of the day placed £150,000 to the credit of the trustees of the Public Debt Reduction Fund for the purpose of decreasing our public debt and relieving revenue from paying the interest on our public debt to that amount. The Government also showed a surplus of £48,000. This Government have never attempted to reduce our public debt. I am certain that an incoming Government will tackle this question. Prior to this Go-

vernment coming into office there was placed to the credit of the Public Debt Reduction Fund a sum of approximately £53,000 annually for the reduction of the public debt. During the seven years of office of this Government they have reduced the public debt by approximately £60,000.

Mr. W. COOPER: And no sale of Crown lands.

At 10.28 p.m..

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

Mr. KERR: By way of Crown rents the Government have received £1,500,000, whereas in Victoria the Government receive only £500,000; but in the latter State they are able to balance their accounts and have no sale of Crown lands. We are at the present day looking for directions in which to economise. We find that the expenditure in connection with the various departments amounts to £12 17s. 11d. per head. Yet in 1914, when the population was 10 per cent. less, it only cost £7 5s. 10d.—a difference of 44 per cent. The cost of the public service is greater in Queensland than in any other [10.30 p.m.] State with the exception of Western Australia, and there it is being reduced under a National Government. It may be argued that the salaries are higher in Queensland, but that argument will not hold water. It is because of the communistic policy of creating various sub-departments in connection with State enterprises. The revenue per head to-day is £12 1s. 4d., and in 1914, when the Government were able to balance accounts, it was £9 4s. 4d. If you take the then purchasing power of the sovereign, you will find loan money giving a return of £13 per cent.; and one of the most regrettable things that the Government are responsible for is the expenditure of huge sums of loan money on unproductive works. I pointed out on the Estimates for the Department of Public Works that in 1914 the Government spent on buildings a sum of £190,438 out of revenue, and the present Government have reduced that expenditure to £95,000. While the larger amount for expenditure on buildings was provided out of revenue in 1914, to-day it is provided out of loan.

Mr. COLLINS: Why don't you put up somebody who understands finance?

Mr. KERR: Because the hon. member for Bowen visited the Queensland Club and came out with a very satisfied smile on his face, it does not say that he is a critic on finance. At the present time the people of Queensland are compelled to pay heavy taxation in order to make up the losses incurred from the unwise expenditure of loan money. I have here an extract from a book by Otto Kahn, an American banker, which reads—

“By the opiate of taxation which apparently touches them but very little, or not at all, the masses of the people are apt to be lulled into a sense of relative indifference to governmental wastefulness; but the facts remain at work and inexorably at work, and their working means, and has always meant, that governmental extravagance is visited, not upon one class but upon all the people. Wrong economies, however well intentioned, have been more fruitful of harm to the people than almost any other single act of government.”

My contention is that we should be able to do that. While the Government are hitting

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the wealthy man in their taxation, they are indirectly hitting the man whom they commonly refer to as "our class." They are hitting the members of the general community. There are many items in the Budget that could well be wiped out. During the debate on the Financial Statement hon. members on this side pointed out several votes that could be dispensed with, and, if the Trust Accounts and Loan Account had been discussed, many instances could have been pointed out where a saving could have been effected.

I want to deal with the transfer of the State Savings Bank to the Commonwealth in connection with the public debt. Certain sums have been added to the public debt which should not have been added to it. The transfer of the State Savings Bank to the Commonwealth was very regrettable. At that time there was a sum of £2,289,334 at current account with the Queensland National Bank, in addition to which there was a sum of £1,000,000 unsecured in the Treasury, making £3,389,334. That money, which we received at  $\frac{3}{2}$  per cent. interest, was added to the public debt. Many principles were sacrificed in the handing over of that money. For instance, it was supposed for the purposes of the Commonwealth to be at call; but, when withdrawals were greater than deposits in any one quarter, we had to find the difference. In the first quarter the withdrawals were £373,000 more than the deposits; and, instead of getting that money at  $\frac{3}{2}$  per cent., we had to pay 5 per cent. on the money. There is a sum of £3,085,000 representing assets in connection with the Workers' Dwellings and the State Advances Corporation Branch. That money has also been added to the public debt. That £3,000,000 odd we got at  $\frac{3}{2}$  per cent.; but, under the agreement with the Commonwealth, we had to pay an additional  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on it. That means that every succeeding year we have to pay over £15,000 extra from a revenue for interest on the public debt. The Trust Funds account at the end of 1921 showed a credit balance of over £1,000,000; but, if this money had been included, there would have been a debit balance in the account of over £2,000,000. There is another aspect of the question. I want to deal with the Workers' Dwellings, in which we have invested £1,134,000. The net profit per annum amounts approximately to £9,000. If we take the extra  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. which we have to pay, instead of having a profit of £9,000, that profit will be whittled away and there will be a smaller margin upon which to work.

At 10.40 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. KERR: That will be another enterprise which has no opportunity of making good. For a number of years—in fact, ever since it was created—the Workers' Dwellings Fund has paid its way, but on the higher rate of interest there is not going to be any profit, and it is turning a paying department into a non-paying one. The same thing applies to the Advances to Settlers Corporation. There was a profit of £9,900 per annum there, but the extra  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest has reduced the profit of £9,000 to a profit of only £1,000. There was also standing to profit in the 'ast account an amount of £83,000. One naturally asks where these huge sums of money have gone. Instead of

keeping them as a standby to this institution, we find that that money has been paid into revenue. The Workers' Dwellings Board and the State Advances Corporation have lost control of that money. There is another amount which I might mention, as it is an important matter for this State. The State Savings Bank was the holder of £7,800,000 in debentures. The interest on those debentures amounted to £300,000 per annum, and it has been paid over to the Commonwealth Government, for the simple reason that the debentures were transferred and that interest goes with them. That money used to be used for workers' dwellings, and also by the State Advances Corporation, and it is now lost to the State. The Trust Funds also show the losses in connection with a number of State undertakings. These losses include—Closer Settlement Board, £1,000,000; Harbour Dues Fund, £725,000; Stock Diseases, £50,000; and State Enterprises, £589,000. The State Produce Agency borrowed £1,642, and last year showed a loss of £27,000. The Fish Supply Account borrowed £42,000, and last year showed a loss of £25,000. That means loan money going up into the air. In addition, the Government are paying their ordinary commitments out of loan money. When the Government anticipate a deficit of £576,000, they issue debentures for that amount. That amount of money is added to the public debt, and we are everlastingly paying interest on it. If you cannot balance your revenue accounts by £576,000, and you have, therefore, to raise debentures at a high rate of interest, you are merely utilising loan money to meet your ordinary Revenue and Trust Fund commitments. For that reason I would like to see an amendment made in this Bill that the amount appropriated shall not be more than the amount which is received, and not £500,000 more. I hope that next year the Government will not bring down Supplementary Estimates covering £504,000, as they have done this year, but that every effort will be made to keep within the appropriation made and to make the loan money which is to be expended pay interest, that we shall have a balance of revenue to hand to the trustees of the Public Debt Reduction Fund, and that no extra taxation will be introduced to balance accounts.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): We are asked to-night to make appropriations totalling £21,500,000, and anyone having a knowledge of the financial administration of the Government during the past seven years and four or five months and the extra taxation which has been imposed on the people of the State naturally asks himself why. The Treasurer, in his Financial Statement a short time ago, forecast a deficit of £576,840, and gave the House to understand that the Estimates in every department had been cut to the bone, and that, so far as he was able to judge, it was impossible to reduce them any further. Having in view the fact that this year we have been asked to vote a sum of £135,000 from consolidated revenue on the Supplementary Estimates, and assuming that the corresponding amount we shall be asked to vote next year is anything like that, the deficit will be £711,000 instead of £576,000. So far as one can judge, there seems to be every prospect of that amount being realised. It is most unfortunate that at a time when our revenues are so buoyant Queensland will be faced at the close of the financial

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year with the biggest deficit in her history. Yet we are told that the Government and the Treasurer are heaven-born financial geniuses, and have a thorough control of the financial situation. Do the figures in any way prove to us that the Government are making good financially? We know perfectly well that the punch is being taken out of the people of Queensland by the staggering burden of taxation which exists at the present time. We are very proud in this Chamber and outside whenever the occasion arises of telling people of Australia that we have the finest State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. COLLINS: It is the finest State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. TAYLOR: I believe that we have the finest State; but I think it is a disgrace that it is the most heavily taxed. Having the best State, we should have been able so to direct our activities during the last seven and a-half years that we should not be in the financial position that we are in.

Mr. COLLINS: We had better tax the wealthy a little more.

Mr. TAYLOR: The wealthy have been taxed sufficiently, and the working people are suffering on that account. These reputedly wealthy people are simply pouring money into the coffers of the State, to be wasted by the present Administration. Is there any justification for the wasteful extravagance that has been associated with State enterprises? Was it not pointed out to the members of the Government what was likely to result when they were taking on those particular ventures? Were they not told time and again what was going to happen? Have those things not happened? The losses in that particular direction need not have been incurred if the money had been put in reproductive, developmental works. Go through the Estimates, and what do you find in connection with the railways? There is to be another loss of £1,400,000 for the year ending 30th June, 1923, which will bring the total loss during the period the Government have been in office up to nearly £10,000,000. Yet hon. members opposite say, "Hear, hear!" They call that developing Queensland, when they have taken out of the taxpayers of this State, to make up the losses on the railways, about £10,000,000 during the time they have been in office.

Mr. COLLINS: To assist the primary producer.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is a shame and a disgrace to any Government to have to acknowledge such deplorable financial inefficiency.

Mr. COLLINS: The cheapest freight rates in the Commonwealth.

Mr. TAYLOR: And the biggest losses in the Commonwealth. Put one against the other. I am not prepared to accept the hon. member's statement that we have the cheapest freight rates in the Commonwealth. I doubt it very much. I do not believe in the system that we have been adopting of building railways at such an enormous drain upon the taxpayers. How is it that one section of our railways—that from Northgate to Gympie—was paying at the time the last report of the Commissioner was issued? It pays exactly the same rate of wages, has to bear exactly the same interest and other charges, as any other section of the railways. Yet it pays. Closer settlement along that line is the reason it pays. What are the Government doing, what have they done since they have been in office, to endeavour to promote closer settle-

ment along existing lines of railway? They have not done a single thing in that direction to turn into a paying concern what should be our greatest asset. We talk about our railways being an asset. I am prepared to admit that they are.

Mr. COLLINS: They are very useful.

Mr. TAYLOR: Especially when you get a free ride on them. We do not want our railways to be under political control; we want the men who are directing them to have a free hand. I believe that, if they were perfectly free from political control, we should not have to face the enormous loss that we have at the present time. If we had to build them at the present time they would probably cost 50 per cent. more than they did. Surely that is a greater reason why they should be paying at the present time. The Treasurer and Mr. Fihelly at one time issued a celebrated pamphlet stating that finance was shrouded in mystery, and that it required a man with special ability and knowledge to penetrate the maze. They said that the ordinary individual could not penetrate the maze. Have they succeeded in the financial administration of the State?

Mr. RIGORDAN: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman is very easily pleased. I do not care what Government are in power, I have sufficient faith in Queensland to know that it must go ahead. At the present time the State is suffering from financial maladministration, and, although we are having some difficulty in carrying on successfully, I am prepared to say that this State must progress. We as Queenslanders and Australians have every reason to be proud of our State. It is a great pity that, notwithstanding our huge area of undeveloped lands, we have to distribute so much of the earnings of our people in the way of charitable doles to the unemployed. I can understand unemployment existing in the large cities in Great Britain and Europe, where the people are solely dependent upon the manufacturing industries for their living, and where a slump or depression in trade may cause a great amount of unemployment, but I cannot understand it existing in our country, where we have huge undeveloped tracts of land waiting for the application of capital and men to develop it. I recognise that in the ordinary course of events taxation must be increased in Queensland. We cannot progress unless we have sufficient money to carry on the development of the State, and therefore an increase in taxation in a country like this is an absolute necessity. All the squandering of money raised by way of taxation on doubtful State enterprises such as mining and other Government activities ought to be cut out. The sooner the Government realise on [11 p.m.] the State stations and quite a number of other activities and cut the loss that they will make, the better it will be for the State and for the finances of Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and negatived.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): It is extremely unfortunate for the country that there is again evidence that the Government have not hesitated to launch the State into ventures and expenditure which are going to add to the burdens of the people. One is almost astounded when he goes through the

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figures to find what some of the items amount to. If we take the State enterprises, we find the enormous sum of £773,950 is again put down for this purpose. Surely with the experience of the past there was sufficient evidence to warrant some brake being put on expenditure of this kind? Are we to continue from year's end to year's end along the road to ruin and show no disposition whatever to reduce expenditure? If the Government continue their present policy, they will discount the country's position with the capitalists abroad whom our friends opposite despise, but to whom they go cap in hand in order that the necessary money might be forthcoming. I refer in these remarks to the millions of money that will have to be provided in the near future. Are we likely to obtain an easy renewal of these loans if we show no inclination to curb our expenditure?

The very best evidence we can give to the people abroad that we are worthy of being trusted, and that the loans should be renewed, is that we are wisely controlling the affairs of the State; but, if we go on in the prodigal way we have been doing for years, and show no financial reform, and give no evidence of our ability to conduct our affairs, how can we hope to succeed when the crucial moment comes to renew our loans? We know that the Premier went to England some years ago to raise £9,000,000, but met with a rebuff.

Mr. W. COOPER: On account of the delegation which you sent over.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The delegation had nothing to do with it. Long before the Premier went home, his predecessor in office had met with a rebuff. It is a scandalous thing to find that no check is being put on expenditure in connection with State enterprises and other matters. We have presented to us in this callous manner a proposed expenditure of £773,000. Then there is the matter of outdoor relief. Why should the Government, instead of directly giving money in relief, not have tried to find work for the unemployed, which would have helped the unemployed to make men of themselves and tended to the development of the State?

I would like to refer to the proposed expenditure of £40,000 in connection with the erection of grain sheds on the railways. No doubt I will be accused of opposition to that expenditure, which may be very worthy, but I do not think it is in the wisest direction. It is well known that you cannot hope to store grain, such as wheat, oats, barley, and other cereals, in iron sheds for a prolonged period.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are suggesting that the Wheat Pool Board do not know their job.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is self-evident by the way they are doing their job. There are men who more than two and a-half years ago planted wheat and delivered it to the board, and they have not been paid for it to-day. How would any man like to feel that his wages had been deferred for two and a-half years? The hon. member for Toowoomba might have been paid for the wheat he produced on his farm, but no other man on the land has been paid for the wheat produced in the year 1920-21. The Wheat Board did not know their business, and it was owing to their maladministration that that wheat was not paid for. My own company gristed 14,000 bags of wheat at 5s. 6d. per bushel,

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and it should never have been allowed to get into the condition that made it necessary to sell it for 5s. 6d. The wheat was railed to Brisbane, then railed to Warwick, and made into flour, and the produce sent to Sydney, so that there was a loss to the farmers on that item alone. It is easy to see where the bad administration came in as regards wheat. In Queensland we require 4,000,000 bushels of wheat to meet our requirements, yet the conduct of the Wheat Board is so extraordinary that they are sending wheat away from Queensland at a lower price than the local millers are prepared to pay for it, to say nothing of utilising the local wheat and keeping men employed. There has been abundant evidence that the Wheat Board has been a failure. Ministers accept the statement that good service has been done for the farmer. I was talking of the erection of iron sheds which are not necessary. People who understand the trouble caused by the weevil would not think of storing their wheat in that way. The miller or the grain merchant might store their wheat, but it is not possible to store tremendous quantities of wheat in that way without incurring tremendous loss.

I am now speaking in the interests of the men whose wheat will be received into these sheds. If it is a permanent service we are doing for the country, then I say we should have erected silos, and, indeed, it would be wise to consider doing that.

What about this item of £328,340 in connection with the Chillagoe mines? The thing is an outrage. To think that we are again considering involving ourselves in the expenditure of huge sums of money in connection with doubtful ventures of this kind! The Minister the other day failed entirely to give any information as to what had been expended, and we are now merely asked to vote another huge sum of money for them. No sane man would do this in his own affairs. Indeed, would any sane man in this House undertake any one of these ventures? Then, why should we, as the managers of this country, involve ourselves in an expenditure which will never be returned? We are simply following the way of the prodigal, and, unless we reverse the order of things, we must come to grief. I think it is a very sad day when the Government come down with an Appropriation Bill of this magnitude, especially when it follows the failure of their administration in many directions. It shows callousness and indifference. The only idea that the Government seem to have is the expenditure of money right and left in the hope that, by this extravagance, their term of service may be prolonged.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

(Mr. F. A. Cooper, Premier, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, the schedule, and the preamble, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

#### THIRD READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 11.20 p.m.