

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY 1923

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WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY, 1933.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Marce*) took the chair at 10 o'clock, and said: I shall now proceed to Government House, there to present myself to His Excellency the Governor.

The Speaker then left the chair.

On the House resuming at three minutes to 12 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: I have to report that I have this day presented myself to His Excellency the Governor as the member chosen for the high and honourable office of Speaker, and that His Excellency was pleased to congratulate me upon my election.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

At noon His Excellency the Governor came in state to Parliament House, was announced by the Sergeant at Arms, and received by the Speaker (Hon. W. Bertram) at the bar.

The members of the Assembly being seated,

His Excellency read the Opening Speech, as follows:—

"Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,— I welcome you as members of this new Parliament which has met under the guidance of my old advisers.

"Since the dissolution of the last Parliament I have again visited the North and West of Queensland, and once more satisfied myself that in these parts of the State a white population can live and flourish. At the same time, I realise that they suffer from certain inconveniences and want of amenities not experienced in cooler climates and in more settled parts. The inconveniences due to climate are largely surmountable by improvement in housing and other conditions. But this means, at any rate for the man on the land, higher cost of living in most of Queensland than is entailed in Southern countries for the same standard of comfort, and therefore requires every man's industry to be more remunerative. The cure for lack of amenities is no doubt closer settlement, which brings with it improved roads and other communications, and more agreeable social conditions. With closer settlement, more closely binding communities together, and the industry of individual producers sufficiently rewarded to ensure health and comfort, I have no doubt of the great future of the North and West of Queensland.

"The Parliament which has just been elected is faced with the task of dealing with many problems of great moment to the people of the State.

"A number of important industries have suffered severely from drought conditions, and, owing to the unremunerative prices which are ruling for certain products in the world's markets, others are labouring under disabilities.

"Notwithstanding these difficulties, the outlook for Queensland is by no means discouraging. Queensland's ability to make rapid recovery from seasonal adversity; the

expectation of improved market conditions for the products of our industries; the celerity with which new areas of land are being prepared for settlement; and the prospects of the cotton industry: all indicate for the future a condition of profitable industrial and commercial activity for the State.

"With a view to accelerating closer settlement in the grazing areas of Western Queensland, it is the intention of my advisers to provide for the resumption of some of the pastoral holdings, and their subdivision into grazing farms.

"The losses suffered by owners of live stock during the recent dry season acutely demonstrate the necessity for a more extensive system of fodder conservation, and the provision of more adequate water supply facilities for settlers in the dry areas. My advisers hope, after consultation with the Council of Agriculture, to submit measures dealing with both of these subjects.

"The sugar industry has been faced with a very critical position, owing to the tardiness of the Commonwealth Government in declaring its intentions toward the industry on the expiration of the sugar agreement. The proposal eventually put forward by the Commonwealth, although wholly inadequate to stabilise the industry and ensure fair prices to the producers, has had to be accepted, as the only alternative would result in an increased control by the refining interests, uncertainty as to prices and conditions, and difficulty in financing the present crop.

"One of the undoubted difficulties with which the soldier settlers have to contend is the over-capitalisation of their holdings. In most cases, the improvements on the holdings were effected when costs were unusually high, and as a consequence the improved blocks to-day do not, in many instances, represent a value commensurate with the indebtedness attached to them. It is the intention of my advisers to order a revaluation of the holdings with a view to reducing, where it is necessary, the capital liability of the settlers.

"The British Empire Exhibition will be held in England next year. Queensland is participating in this venture in co-operation with the Commonwealth and the other States. My advisers are doing everything possible to ensure that this State's products will be creditably represented at the exhibition.

"During the next two years loans aggregating £25,196,634 will mature. Arrangements for the conversion of these loans must shortly be made, and a Bill to grant the necessary authority will be introduced. Authority also will be sought to raise additional funds to carry on the ordinary loan services of the State.

"The financial position has continued to occupy the serious attention of my advisers. Although the deficit for the year just ended was smaller than was estimated in last year's budget, my advisers recognise the necessity of continued economy. The Estimates for the current year are being prepared with due regard to the exigencies of the situation.

"Among other proposals which will be brought before Parliament, you will be asked to consider the following:—

A bill to deal with the Burnett and Callide Valley lands, which will shortly be opened for selection;

A Bill to provide a Scheme of Development for the Palmerston area in the vicinity of Innisfail;

An Amendment of the Main Roads Act to enable the Main Roads Board to undertake the construction of developmental roads in areas about to be settled;

A Forestry Bill;

A Scheme to provide better water supply facilities in agricultural districts;

An Income Tax Bill;

An amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act, principally to enlarge the scope of the existing measure;

A Greater Brisbane Bill;

A Liquor Act Amendment Bill;

A Hospitals Act Amendment Bill;

A Bill to provide for the better supervision of insurance companies;

A Bill to provide encouragement for oil prospecting, and to protect the public from the operations of "wild-cat" companies;

An amendment of the law relating to juries;

An amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act;

A Bill to make better provision for co-operative companies;

A Bill to provide for the adequate control of the cotton industry;

A Bill to provide a more liberal scheme of financial assistance for settlers;

A Bill to provide for the conservation of fodder;

A Railway Act Amendment Bill;

A Loan Bill.

"To these and all other matters which may be brought before you I invite your earnest consideration, and I pray that the blessings of Divine Providence may attend your labours."

His Excellency then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER left the chair at 12.11 p.m., resuming at 3.30 p.m.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH.

The SPEAKER said: I have to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to issue a Commission under the great seal of the State empowering me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to such members as may hereafter present themselves to be sworn, which I now direct the Clerk to read to the House.

The Clerk read the Commission.

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. H. F. WALKER.

Mr. H. F. Walker, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Cooroola.

Hon. W. Bertram.]

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

JUDGE FOR 1923.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from His Honour the Chief Justice intimating that His Honour Mr. Justice Shand would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the year 1923.

DESTRUCTION OF BALLOT-PAPERS.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received from the Clerk of the Parliament a letter reading—

“Legislative Assembly,
“Brisbane, 1st November, 1922.

“Sir,—I have the honour to report that in pursuance of the resolution of the Legislative Assembly dated 27th September, 1922, all ballot-papers, the period for the safe-keeping of which had expired by law, were duly destroyed by fire this day.

“I have the honour to be.

“Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“C. A. BERNAYS,

“Clerk of the Parliament.

“The Honourable the Speaker,
“Brisbane.”

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN.

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I hereby nominate the following members to form the panel of Temporary Chairmen during the present session:—

- Frank Arthur Cooper, member for the electoral district of Bremer;
- Thomas Dunstan, member for the electoral district of Gympie;
- Reginald MacDonnell King, member for the electoral district of Logan;
- George Pollock, member for the electoral district of Gregory; and
- Harry Frederick Walker, member for the electoral district of Cooroora.

PAPERS PRINTED DURING RECESS.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that the following papers were ordered to be printed and circulated during recess:—

- Report of the Royal Commission on the most suitable locations for sugar mills.
- Twenty-second annual report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.
- Report of the Auditor-General on accounts of central sugar mills for the year ended 30th June, 1922.
- Thirty-seventh report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, Building Societies, and Industrial and Provident Societies.
- Report of the Auditor-General upon accounts of State enterprises for the year ended 30th June, 1922.
- Report of the Commissioner for State Enterprises for the year ended 30th June, 1922.

[*Hon. W. Bertram.*

Annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for the year 1921-1922.

Statistics of the State of Queensland for year 1921.

Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane.

VACANCY DURING RECESS.

ROCKHAMPTON BYE-ELECTION.

The SPEAKER: In order to place it on record, I have to report that following upon a vacancy in the representation of Rockhampton in the last Parliament, caused by the resignation of Francis Michael Forde, a writ was issued for the election of a member to fill the aforesaid vacancy, and that it was duly returned with the name of George Pritchard Farrell endorsed thereon.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY DURING RECESS.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to lay on the table of the House copies of the “Government Gazettes” containing public notifications of the following changes in the Ministry, which have taken place since the close of last session:—

“On 6th October, 1922, I resigned the office of Secretary for Public Works, and the Hon. Wm. Forgan Smith was appointed to that office in my stead. The Hon. James Stopford was, on the same date, appointed a member of the Executive Council.

“On 2nd July, 1923, the Hon. Wm. McCormack resigned office as Home Secretary, and the Hon. John Harry Coyne resigned office as Secretary for Public Lands and as a member of the Executive Council; the Hon. Wm. McCormack was appointed Secretary for Public Lands; the Hon. James Stopford, Home Secretary; and the Hon. Frank Tenison Brennan was appointed a member of the Executive Council.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PAPERS.

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

Regulations under the Public Service Act of 1922.

Despatches respecting permission to certain gentlemen to retain the title of “Honourable.”

Despatches conveying His Majesty's assent to Acts passed during the session of 1922.

Proclamation under the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1920.

Also copies of “Government Gazette” containing the public notification of certain changes in the Ministry.

Additional Regulations under the Diseases in Plants Act of 1916, viz., 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 (later rescinded), and 57.

Additional Regulation, No. 30, under the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Act of 1918.

Regulations under the Primary Products Pools Act of 1922, and additional Regulations Nos. 38, 39, and 40.

Regulations under the Primary Producers' Organisation Act of 1922.

Regulations under the Fruit Cases Acts, 1912-1922.

Also report of the Advisory Committee appointed to investigate matters concerning the usefulness of the Queensland Agricultural College.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Supreme Court Act of 1921;

The Magistrates Courts Act of 1921;

The Succession and Probate Duties Acts, 1922 to 1920; and

The Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1921.

Regulations under—

The Elections Act of 1915;

The Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1921; and

The Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act of 1922.

LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I desire to inform the House that at a meeting of the Queensland United Party I was elected leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Oxley being elected deputy leader, and the hon. member for Kurilpa "whip."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

LEADERSHIP OF COUNTRY PARTY.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I desire to inform the House that I have been elected leader of the Country party, and Mr. B. H. Corser, the hon. member for Burnett, deputy leader.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that His Excellency the Governor this day delivered to Parliament an Opening Speech, of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy. I presume hon. members will take the Speech as read.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*), who was received with Government cheers, said: I beg to move—

"May it please Your Excellency,—

"We, His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the throne and person of Our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

"The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other

matters that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration, and it shall be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State."

Sir Matthew Nathan while occupying the position of Governor of Queensland has shown an interest in the resources and prosperity of this State. He has also shown a keen interest in the housing problems of the people in the far northern and far western portions of the State. He referred to this in his Speech this morning, and in the course of my address I will also touch on matters that were contained in the Speech of the Governor.

I am pleased, as a supporter of a Labour Government, to have the honour of moving the adoption of the Address in Reply.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: Many amusing and futile reasons have been given by the Press for the success of Labour during the elections. Those reasons are futile and beside the point. The success of Labour arises from the fact that the Labour movement, first of all, is based upon sentiment—a sentiment that is supported by the whole of the human race. Every man and woman who is listening to me to-day at some period of their lives has had ideals of what life could be and of what life should be. That sentiment crystallised into principles, and those principles gave birth to a platform. In 1915 on that platform Labour was successful in securing the reins of government in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: At a later date, when they were successful in abolishing the Legislative Council—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: They were enabled to place many splendid enactments on the statute-book.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: Labour's majority at the last election amplifies the appreciation of the people of the legislative action based on that Labour platform, and ably interpreted by our Premier, Mr. Theodore, assisted by his colleagues. It also constitutes a censure of the actions of the Opposition, and the supporters of the Opposition during the last session of Parliament. As we demand a high moral tone in the individual lives of those people who form our social structure, we must demand a high moral tone, particularly, in our Parliament. Though I do not connect hon. members of the Opposition directly with those actions, I certainly say that they are the only party who could possibly have benefited by the success of those actions. Therefore, to some extent, they must carry that blame. I trust, when I am in this House for a longer period, I will find that that high moral standard that I would expect to meet in Parliament will be maintained by every individual in this House.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: This standard is one that must be maintained by the Legislature, and one, I reiterate, which I hope will be maintained.

Mr. Bruce.]

At the last election the State was faced with a critical position owing to the lack of loan funds, due to the operations of certain interests in preventing this Government from securing the necessary loan money to carry out the policy of the Labour party. This information, perhaps, is old, but it is worth reiterating. These are facts that the Labour movement should not let the public forget, and I am perfectly sure some hon. members in this House would be only too happy if the public could clear that matter from their minds for all time, for in taking that action at that time they not only hampered the Labour Government but they also discredited the State which they represent. But the Labour Government were able to secure loans on the money market of New York. As usual, the Tory Press of the time accused Labour of being disloyal because they went to New York in preference to Great Britain. But, had they kept in touch with the times, they would have known perfectly well that many hundreds of millions of pounds had been borrowed in America by the mother country prior to the State of Queensland going to the New York market. That sort of stuff was used, and I suppose will continue to be used, in order to defeat Labour, if possible; but I am perfectly sure that, with the increase of educational facilities, the time will come when there will be no opposition at all to Labour. (Opposition laughter.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: Some hon. member has suggested that that will be after some of the Opposition members are dead. Well, as some of the Opposition members are very genial chaps, let us hope that that will be so; but let us hope, also, that Labour will remain in power for the benefit of the people of Queensland.

The attempted bribery case requires reference. Never in the history of Australian politics had such a thing occurred before, and let us all sincerely hope that never will it occur again—(Hear, hear!)—for, when you strike at the Legislature or at the Government of the country, you are striking at, perhaps, the most vital thing in our social life; and every man and woman inside and outside of Parliament should discourage, and, as far as possible, prevent such actions, and, if they have information of such business, for the benefit of the people of Queensland let that information be made public.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: One of the leading visitors in this Chamber to-day when His Excellency was delivering his Speech was Judge Macnaughton, and, seeing the high respect in which Judge Macnaughton is held in Queensland, it will be as well to recall what he had to say when dealing with the bribery case. I doubt very much if there is a member of this House who does not know what His Honour said on that occasion, word for word; but in order to do away with this kind of thing, in order to kill it effectively, we must have it read again. Some hon. members may have missed a word or a line of it; therefore, I shall have much pleasure in reading it, as I believe it will be for the benefit of the people of this State in the future. Addressing the men who were convicted on the charge of bribery, the presiding judge said—

“The offence of which you have been found guilty is a very serious one indeed.

[*Mr. Bruce.*

Corruption of the Legislature strikes at the root of the whole system of Government. It is quite clear that there is somebody behind you as to money. Neither of you are in a financial position to find £5,000 in bonds and £200 in cash.”

It may be said that, if the hon. member for Toowoomba had accepted the bribe that was offered, he would have been a rich man. He did not accept it, but he is rich now in the appreciation of the people of Queensland, and in the fact that he is a member of our Cabinet, and I have no doubt he will prove a capable member of that Cabinet.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: The Government have been particularly interested in social reform for country workers. The Labour Government are first and foremost a humanitarian Government. They have been criticised to a large extent in regard to their

[4 p.m.] financial operations, but the basis of the Labour Government is humanitarian principles. They have established maternity homes for bush women, and, as a man who has been in the far Western parts of Queensland for the last fifteen years, I strongly urge the necessity for maternity homes. I have known women in maternity cases to be compelled to travel from 20 to 30 miles outside Cloncurry to a railway station, and I have known of some of them dying before they reached the railway station. In other cases I have known of women being compelled to bring children into the world under circumstances that it is almost impossible to believe would exist in a civilised country. Being in close contact with these matters one feels them more perhaps than those who are not in contact with them, and I for one consider that the attempt of the Labour Government to establish maternity homes is perhaps one of the finest things that they have done. (Hear, hear!)

I have followed mining as an occupation since I was a youngster, and the miner's phthisis pension established by the Government has been particularly attractive to me. Under the conditions of mining to-day the average man, who takes on mining at an early stage in life—as they usually do—at perhaps forty or forty-five years of age, when he should be in the prime of life, finds, by the doctor's verdict, that he is suffering from miner's phthisis, one of the most awful diseases suffered by mankind. A strong healthy man, when he is told that he has contracted this disease, knows that he will probably die within the course of a few months. Prior to Labour having established a pension for those suffering from miner's phthisis the sufferers not only had to bear the physical suffering entailed by this disease, but they had also the mental suffering brought about by the knowledge that they were unprovided for and that their wives and children were also unprovided for. To-day, while the pension does not relieve the physical suffering, the mental suffering is relieved; and for that reason alone those hon. members who have mixed with these miners, who are a splendid type of men, as I have done, and know what the miner's phthisis pension means to them, should join with us in congratulating the Labour Government on having passed legislation providing for a pension to those suffering from miner's phthisis.

In places outside the legislature of Queensland the question of immigration has been largely discussed. The Labour Government take up the stand that, as a Government, they must first of all provide facilities for the employment of our own people who are at present unemployed; and, by opening up the resources of this magnificent State of Queensland, we can not only find employment for our own people, but can then say to the people of Great Britain and other parts of the world "Come to Australia" and help us to keep this a 'White Australia,' and build up a virile splendid race that some day will be built up in Queensland and in Australia under proper government and properly managed." If we do not allow the degradation that already exists in the older countries to come into existence in Australia, then we shall have a hand in establishing probably the greatest race that the world has known. We have all the facilities in Queensland. Everything that mankind desires or may desire is to be had in Queensland, and, if we see that our people get a correct distribution of the wealth of Queensland, then we shall build up a people of whom we may be proud. The experience of the late war has shown that Australia already has established a type of manhood equal to anything in the world. The only other soldiers who could compare with the Australians were the Canadians and the Americans, who were brought up under somewhat similar conditions. That an immigration policy is sound no one with any common sense will deny. We require a larger population, and later on, when I am dealing with the sugar industry, I will stress the necessity of a white population.

The Labour Government have also extended the provisions of the Workers' Dwellings Act, or rather they passed a new Act in the form of a Workers' Homes Act. Right throughout the North of Queensland—and I take it the same position exists in the South of Queensland—there is a shortage of homes for the people. That shortage of homes is creating a nomadic population. The people who come from the southern States of Australia to engage in the seasonal occupations in the North of Queensland in connection with the primary industries that are flourishing there, return to the southern States when the season's work is finished, largely owing to the fact that there is not sufficient housing accommodation to enable them to bring their wives and families and settle down in the North of Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: You have made buildings too dear.

Mr. BRUCE: We all understand that every commodity required to-day is much dearer than it was prior to the war. The present dearth of buildings, or the present dearth of any other commodity, would not have existed to-day in Queensland had it not been for the greatest crisis with which the world was ever faced in the recent war. Not only that, but perhaps some of the timber merchants can explain to us why these homes are so dear.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What about royalties?

Mr. BRUCE: It is typical of the Opposition that, while they can see nothing wrong in excessive profits in connection with private enterprise, if the Government place

a tax on the commodity for the benefit of the people or in order to develop the country, they immediately seize on that particular matter, as is shown by their interjection, "What about royalties?"

Mr. MORGAN: That does not encourage cheap homes.

Mr. BRUCE: We do not want cheap homes. We want sound homes, and well-built homes. Immediately this question is referred to, we find members of the Opposition jumping up and saying, "We want cheap homes for the workers." That shows their lack of intelligence. As I said before, there is hope for the people of Queensland in the increased educational facilities that the Government intend to introduce. Whether the homes are costly or not, they are necessary, and the monetary expense will be easily overbalanced by the benefit to Queensland through getting strong and capable children who will grow up into the manhood and womanhood of Queensland, and develop its tremendous resources.

I have in my hand some notes dealing with the new sugar-mills. I find there the following:—

"It is the determination of the Government to erect a new sugar-mill in the vicinity of Tully River, which will necessitate the dealing with sugar lands in that locality. It is hoped that the mill will be erected in time to have a short crushing season in 1925, and a full crushing campaign in 1926."

That is an extract from the Premier's policy speech, and it brings me to the question of sugar, which I am particularly interested in, because the electorate which I represent is composed wholly of those engaged in primary and secondary production in regard to sugar, and of some of the people who were in Mr. Green's electorate before the redistribution of seats. That reminds me that the papers were very keen in pointing out that Mr. Green had lost the Townsville election owing to the effect of the redistribution, but they failed to point out that the electors who were cut out of Mr. Green's electorate were put into the Kennedy electorate, which was also won by a Labour man.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: To get back to the question of sugar, which is a very serious question for the whole of Queensland: Referring to the Labour Government's activities in regard to sugar, in 1915 the Government acquired sugar at a price arranged with representatives of the industry. We entered into an agreement with the Fisher Commonwealth Government, which was the forerunner of the agreements which have continued to this day. We passed the Cane Price Boards legislation, which has been instrumental in protecting the canegrowers in Australia, and has done so much to make the industry a permanent and profitable one for those engaged in it. Now, there are two phases of the sugar industry; first of all, the business of North Queensland and Australia, and, secondly, the maintenance of a white Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: I will deal first of all with the business side of the question. Under the agreement fixing the price of sugar at

Mr. Bruce.]

£30 6s. 8d. per ton, which during the war enabled the consumers of Australia to receive their sugar at a price far below that paid by other people in the rest of the world, the sugar industry in North Queensland was a profitable industry. The farmers who were established—those who had the capital to put into the sugar industry—were doing well, and in doing well they were also benefiting the district, because the workers were doing comparatively well, and the small business men in the sugar towns were also doing well. We were not only doing that, but many workers were enabled by thrift and care to lease a block of land, and later on to purchase it, and we were, by medium of the sugar industry, establishing people in primary productions under a natural method. No method that man can bring about, no proposition we may have, will be better than the natural method of settling the land, the natural method of making it a worth-while proposition to a solid, steady, and thrifty worker. That is what was occurring under the agreement of £30 6s. 8d. per ton. The jam and sugar manufacturers during the period of the war made large profits out of Queensland sugar at that particular price. Soon after the signing of the armistice, for a short period the parity of the world fell slightly below that of Australian sugar, and then we had the spectacle of the jam and sugar manufacturers using the profits they had made out of the Queensland sugar-growers and Queensland workers to establish a Press campaign throughout Australia against the primary production of sugar in the North of Queensland, or against the prices received for our Queensland sugar.

Mr. BRAND: Have you got any proof that the sugar manufacturers did that?

Mr. BRUCE: You have only to read the Southern Press to see that. (Government laughter.) When the Southern Press devotes column after column to any particular subject, they are getting well paid for those columns. They do not do it to sell their papers. I happened to make a visit to Victoria a few years ago. I went through several parts of that State where there is a large amount of fruit grown. I found that the housewives were not worrying about the price of sugar at all. If any individuals worry about the sugar bill for the table, how much more will they worry about the meat bill for the table, and congratulate the Labour party for instituting and establishing State butcher shops?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: Sugar does not worry the ordinary householder. There has been a Housewives' Association, something like the associations which are established throughout Australia and other parts of the world to oppose Labour politicians in their good work. The real housewives in Australia are not worrying about the price of sugar. I am sure that my friend opposite who interjected did not notice that sugar was costing very much until he read it in the Melbourne "Argus." (Opposition laughter.) The propaganda in the "Argus" was financed out of the profits of the jam and sugar manufacturers who made these huge profits during the war. While other countries were allowed to get the highest price for their commodities during the war, we have Australia to-day in the position that money which should have been made out of our primary production to develop the resources

[Mr. Bruce.

of Queensland is not here, because in many cases prices were fixed, and we could not get the correct prices for our products. The sugar industry has been attacked by my namesake, Mr. Stanley Melbourne Bruce—a member of the firm of Paterson, Laing, and Bruce, the wealthy Flinders lane firm of importers, and the soul of the free trade movement. If you looked around to find the birthplace and subsequent living place of the free trade movement, you would find it very near Paterson, Laing, and Bruce's establishment in Flinders lane.

Mr. MORGAN: The Labour party believed in free trade once.

Mr. BRUCE: I am not saying that the Labour party may not at one time have been in favour of free trade, but the Labour party are intelligent; and if they find a thing is not good for the country, they will change their opinions and do what they think is best for the people they represent. If some of our friends opposite would cease to adhere to principles which are wrong—and some of our friends have wallowed a long time in the mire of ignorance which surrounds them—it would be better for this country. It is perhaps no fault of theirs that they have been doing so in the past, but it is their fault that they will not get out of it now. We must take a larger view of these things. Getting back to Flinders lane—not to my namesake, Stanley Melbourne Bruce—but going there in mind, and trying to draw attention to the people there, how could we expect a man brought up in surroundings such as those to have any knowledge of the Queensland sugar industry, or any desire to assist it? Then we come to the policy of a White Australia. When I was a youngster I conceived the idea that the danger to Australia did not arise from any European country, but that it arose, if anywhere, from Japan, and if that is correct—and I still believe it to be correct—the forefront of our defence would be North Queensland. It is time that the people of the world realised that wars should and could be done away with.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: Every sensible man having a horror of war should devote the whole of his time, in whatever sphere he moves, in the direction of doing away with it; but at the same time, if war is not done away with, a man is not worth calling a man who will not stand up and say that he is prepared to defend the land in which he is born. (Hear, hear!) The land in which I was born, and in which other people have made their homes, is Queensland and Australia, and if that attack came, as it possibly may come in our time, I certainly believe that every man, no matter what his opinions are, should be prepared to take his part in protecting the land of his birth.

Mr. MORGAN: They should be made to.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member talks about making people defend their country. We have never yet been called upon to protect the land of our birth. I am perfectly satisfied that, if we are called to defend this land, very few Australians and very few who have known the freedom of Australia will refuse to do so. In order to do that, we must have a virile white population, and we must have the stamp of man that we have already got; but we must have him in increased numbers. This is not a question

of politics, but a question of vital interest to every man and woman in this country; and the only primary industry that will establish throughout North Queensland that virile population that we so much desire is the sugar industry. Apart from the aspect of finance, the question of establishing that population should be taken into consideration by the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments, and they should make it a practice and a principle to protect that industry, if for that purpose alone. The sugar industry in North Queensland to-day makes available hundreds of thousands of pounds to the Southern States per medium of the purchase of machinery and the purchase of foodstuffs and in making those purchases helps to build a population in the South. That also has the effect of building up secondary industries, which are so much required in Australia. I think the actions of the Commonwealth Government call for censure by any man who has any interest in the sugar industry. I have lived amongst the sugar people for years past and I find that the farmers and the growers in that industry are without exception a fine type of man. They are a type who are creating real wealth in this country. It is not fictitious wealth represented by so much paper money or so many sovereigns, but it is real wealth that is added to the world's wealth, and therefore those people must be encouraged. I feel perfectly sure that the actions of our representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament will call for their defeat at the next Federal elections. During the Federal election campaign we had members of the Commonwealth Government promising definitely to the sugar-growers and workers in North Queensland that, if returned to Parliament, they would move for the continuation of the sugar agreement for a period of five years, and, if that continuation was not granted, they would cross the floor on that particular subject. Since their return they have not mentioned one word about the sugar industry, and have not lifted one finger in defence of the people interested in that industry. They have not taken into consideration the White Australia policy, and they have not taken into consideration the question of the defence of Australia, which is so much wrapped up in the sugar industry; but at the same time they are prepared to spend millions of pounds in building war boats and military machinery, whereas, if it was spent on the sugar industry, we could develop the country, which would build up and carry a magnificent white race and achieve the ultimate object—the defence of this country. I particularly ask every hon. member to keep in mind the importance of the sugar industry, and, to the best of their ability, to do all they possibly can in their different spheres towards the maintenance of that great industry of Queensland. After all, if we can only get the individual man to realise how short life is, and what it means, we perhaps could get better results. The position would be better if man would only realise that the only thing he can do in this world is to benefit his fellow man. When we look at the pictures and statues of men who have passed away and we see in our midst men growing up in years who must soon leave us, we recognise that the only thing we can live for when we have reached the apex of success from a material point of view is the betterment of our fellow men. If man would only realise

that, and do all in his power to assist the human race, then he would not be doing much harm. It would not matter very much what political party he belonged to or what strata of society he belonged to, so long as he kept that in front of him in his actions throughout life.

The Labour party also put forward the scheme of establishment of rural credits and the extension of co-operation in agriculture. I know of the necessity for such schemes. I know men who have placed the little money that they had and all the energy of themselves and their wives into land under conditions that are not quite suitable to Queensland, and have left that land through the want of assistance to enable the work to be successfully carried on. With a little assistance granted by the Government they would have been able to carry on and establish themselves and families of Australians which would have been a credit to Queensland.

The Labour party have often been criticised with regard to their railway deficit, but the Labour party take this point of view, that they are not legislating from year to year or from one Parliament to another, but that the legislation is for the benefit of the people of Queensland in the generations to come. I was very closely associated with the building of the Bowen Coalfields line. That line, which was built when the cost of construction was high, undoubtedly cost a lot of money; but, when you take into consideration that that line taps a source of wealth that will return to the people of Queensland millions of pounds for the use of future generations, then there is every justification for the railway deficit. There are seams of coal in the Bowen coalfield area which cannot be beaten for quality or for size, and will supply coal for years to come. The building of that line made that coal available. The fact that that coal existed was known to members of past Governments, whose interests are now represented by hon. members opposite, but the area was not developed on behalf of the people of this State. The fact that that line has made that coal available to the people of Queensland will more than compensate the people indirectly to the extent of ten times the railway deficit. The North Coast line was for many years left uncompleted. The people of the North who required a visit to the South for health or business reasons were charged by the private shipping firms for their passages South, and in that way more money was spent than would have built the line ten times over. That money will now be returned to the people of Queensland. The line will open up fresh lands, which will be developed, and we can settle a population on them, and so go on with our policy of immigration which is so much talked about by Nationalist members in the Commonwealth Parliament and the Parliaments of other States. The Nationalist members in the other States desire to bring people to this country and throw them on the labour market, without giving them any protection or any chance to develop the country and at the same time earn a decent living.

[4.30 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed under the Standing Orders.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bruce.]

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I appreciate the honour of being chosen to second the motion so ably moved by the hon. member for Kennedy. I also desire to take this opportunity of thanking the electors of Bulimba for imposing upon me the great honour of representing Bulimba in Parliament.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT: They have, by way of a change on this occasion, decided to send a Government representative to this House.

I am fully conscious of the splendid record of legislation achieved by the Labour Government in Queensland. No other party has done more for the general well-being of the people of Queensland, nor has any other party in the world done more for the general well-being of the country of which it has had control, than the Queensland Labour party.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT: It is not surprising to me, therefore, to find the seating accommodation on this side of the House, at any rate, fully availed of on this occasion. The good sense of the electors of Queensland made itself strongly manifest on 12th May last. It cannot even be now argued that the Government do not possess the confidence of the electors of the whole State. There is no room for any division of opinion on that particular score, and I think that my hon. friends sitting on the Opposition side of the House will be ready to agree with me in those remarks.

It is pleasing to me, Mr. Speaker, that the Government have decided upon a well defined policy of land settlement. This question, to my mind, is one of national importance. I came into this country eleven years ago with a pressing desire to go on the land. I was not the only person either, Mr. Speaker, for I represented one of a family of eleven, all of whom came to Queensland at that particular time with the desire to take up residence on the land, and work as agriculturists. On arrival in Queensland we found, despite the great advertisements that the Queensland Government at that time had caused to be distributed throughout Great Britain, that there was nothing prepared in order to assist us in choosing any particular farm or in assisting us on that farm. It is pleasing to me to know that the Government have decided on a well defined policy of closer settlement.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT: I am more than pleased that not only are the new-comers to Queensland to be welcomed to take up land, but that the natives of Queensland are going to be given an opportunity to take up an agricultural occupation and make a living for themselves on the land.

It gives me much pleasure also to know that in the Governor's Speech there is provision for a Forestry Bill. I hope that measures will be taken by which the wholesale destruction of our forests in Queensland will be stopped. Nothing attracts the notice of a visitor to Queensland more than this wilful destruction of our valuable timbers. I have not travelled much throughout Queensland, but in the few miles I have travelled I have noticed quite a considerable

amount of wilful destruction of very valuable timbers. I hope that measures will be provided which will not only conserve, but tend to extend the growth of the valuable timbers of this State.

I wish now to refer to a matter of which I have a more intimate knowledge. I refer to the proposed introduction of a Greater Brisbane Bill. As a member of a metropolitan local authority, I say that the introduction of such a Bill as is forecast in the Governor's Speech is one of very great importance, and it is of urgent necessity if this city is going to progress on modern municipal lines.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT: In the metropolitan area at the present time, and for several years past, we have been suffering from a multitude of governing bodies—city, town, and shire councils, in addition to boards of numerous descriptions which have been established at some time or other during the past quarter of a century. The boards have been established of course to control some particular utility in particular areas. This state of affairs to my mind is out of date. It is proving far too expensive, and it is yearly increasing the burden of taxation on the population, or residents of the metropolitan districts and suburbs. I realise that under our present system of local government in Brisbane it is necessary, owing to the lack of co-operation in the various metropolitan authorities. Perhaps I might be more correct if I said that such a condition of affairs has been brought about by the absence of a proper conception of the responsibilities of municipal government, or a sense of their communal responsibilities. I realise for those reasons that it has been from time to time necessary to create certain boards in order to control utilities such as water and sewerage, bridges, electric lighting, health, flying fox and marsupial destruction, and to deal with many other matters. Otherwise, without the creation of such boards, it would have been impossible to carry out the various utilities successfully, owing to the concerted action that was necessary, which was not displayed by most councils.

To substantiate my remarks I need only refer to the present state of affairs in connection with electric light in the city suburbs. There are, first of all, the suburbs of South and North Brisbane—the shires of Hamilton, Windsor, and Sherwood, which are each operating in their respective areas, each with their respective staffs, and thus causing increased cost of administration. The Metropolitan Electricity Board stands out, perhaps, as the biggest success of all those undertakings in the metropolitan area. That is chiefly because it contains a number of areas. It contains the towns and shires of Wynnum, Balmoral, Coorparoo, Toombul, and Sandgate. The Board itself is an argument for the Greater Brisbane Bill, and it is now supplying electric light to the suburbs mentioned cheaper than in any other area outside its operations. I affirm that a comparison of the more sparsely populated areas with the more congested areas of North and South Brisbane is not reasonable. I will just take several shires to show what I mean. In the Stephens shire the rate is 7d. per unit, and the meter rent 1s. 6d. In the Hamilton shire the rate is 6d. per

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unit, and the meter rent 1s. 6d. In addition to that they have a loan rate of 1d. in the £1 on the valuation of that area. The Metropolitan Electricity Board's rate is 6½d. per unit, with a meter rent of 9d. It has been enabled, through the co-operation of the shires in the formation of the board, to reduce the rate charged from 7d. per unit to 6½d. per unit, and to bring about a 50 per cent reduction in the meter rent—from 1s. 6d. to 9d. It can easily be seen, and I think I have made it quite plain, that if, instead of the many governing bodies, there was one single authority in control, such as the introduction of the Greater Brisbane Scheme suggests, the burdens of the residents of the metropolitan area could be greatly minimised so far as taxation is concerned. It has been suggested by various persons, and I believe the hon. member for Logan in a letter in the "Daily Mail," made this suggestion—that the Minister in charge of the proposition should forward confidential copies of the proposed Bill to the representatives of the local authorities concerned. The idea is to hold a conference so that uniformity might be obtained. I for one, as a member of the local authority, am totally opposed to that idea, and I can claim to have had some experience in regard to local authority conferences that have met Ministers in connection with proposed Bills. Such a conference would be of no assistance to the Minister owing to the many diverse views held by the different local authority representatives. I feel sure that the Secretary for Public Lands would be quite prepared to substantiate my remarks, as during his term of office as Home Secretary, before introducing the Tramway Trust Bill, he adopted a suggestion such as this, and placed confidential copies of the proposed Bill in the hands of the local authority representatives in the metropolitan area. As a councillor, I attended the conferences that were held, and was gratified to find so little opposition to the Bill. In fact, with perhaps one exception, the whole of the representatives of the local authorities present expressed themselves as being in favour of the Bill. Some of the leading local authority representatives spoke strongly in support of the Bill, and they went so far as to congratulate the Minister on his practical method of dealing with a difficult proposition. It would be interesting to know what actually happened between the time of the conference and the time the Bill was actually presented to this House, for we find that the very local authority representatives who were loudest in their commendations of the Minister for having the courage to bring such a Bill before them were the very gentlemen who were loudest in condemnation when the Bill was placed before this House; and it would be interesting to know just what led them to change their opinions in such a short time. I am not alone in being opposed to the idea of a conference of local authorities on the question of a Greater Brisbane. I wish to quote from a paper written by Mr. Nelson, the present general manager of the Brisbane Tramway Trust, which was prepared with the assistance of some colleagues, and read before the Australian Town Planning Conference in Adelaide in 1917. The paper was entitled "Greater Brisbane," and Mr. Nel-

son, to my mind, very properly sums up the position as follows:—

"The existing multiplicity of governing bodies introduces so many indeterminate factors into the problem that it would be practically hopeless to look for general acceptance of even the best scheme that could be devised by the most skilled town-planners."

I feel sure that the Minister will take the advice that I have offered, and will refuse to meet the representatives of the local authorities in connection with this matter. I believe that he will be able to present to this House a much more satisfying Bill without a knowledge of the diverse ideas of the members of a conference of that kind.

In one portion of his Speech His Excellency says—

"A number of important industries have suffered severely from drought conditions, and, owing to the unremunerative prices which are ruling for certain products in the world's markets, others are labouring under disabilities."

I take it that one of the industries that is labouring under the disabilities referred to is the cattle industry. Perhaps my friends opposite may want to know what I know about cattle. But I do know that practically the whole of the treatment works of southern Queensland are in my electorate, and therefore I have no apology to offer for referring to the cattle industry. Many of the electors of Bulimba have been hard hit through the depression in the meat market in Australia and abroad. The meat industry, when in full working order, finds employment for many hundreds of people in the metropolitan area, and the greater proportion of those people are resident in the Bulimba electorate. In order to place the industry on a successful footing, more attention will have to be given to breeding, feeding, treatment, and marketing. First take the question of breeding. I have as a youngster in days gone by been wrapped up in the question of breeding, particularly in the breeding of cattle. Like some of my friends opposite, I have had a good deal of experience in this connection, the only difference being that my experience has been in connection with the breeding of one or two, while their experience has been in connection with the breeding of thousands; and the probability is that I have been taught to adopt scientific lines in the breeding of one or two, while they have been breeding their thousands in a slipshod manner. In the "Daily Mail" of 4th May last, Mr. E. Baynes, chairman of the Royal National Association, is reported as having made the following statement in connection with the breeding of herds:—

"One would think that the beef industry was down and out. There was never a greater mistake made in this State than to say that that was the case. Certainly at the present time we are under a cloud, but in a great measure the breeders themselves are responsible."

Continuing, Mr. Baynes said—

"The breeders have been breeding through inferior bulls for a number of years, and when they are faced with the wonderful beef from the Argentine they have to take second place. A good deal has been said about the inferior dressing

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of the beef, and no doubt in the past that might have been so, but I am glad to say that most of our beef going to London to-day is of high-class dressing. There never was a time, in my opinion, when we should more resolutely start to improve our herds than at present. We have seen these slumps before, and I hope we shall never see them again, but the breeders must recognise that they must breed from bulls that produce early maturity."

Then there is the question of feeding, which also needs to have some attention paid to it. I realise that in a State like Queensland it is a very difficult matter to talk of the question of a systematic method of feeding; but we have to remember that we are competing against meat which is produced on a much quicker basis than Queensland meat, due to a cooler climate, and more so because the stock have to be artificially grown and fed. To explain more fully the position from an expert point of view, I want to quote a few statements made by Mr. L. F. Swift, president of Messrs. Swift and Company, the world-famed Chicago meat packers, who paid a visit to Sydney in May last. He wrote a letter to Mr. J. B. Cramsie, chairman of the Australian Meat Council, in which he made the following significant statement, as published in the "Brisbane Courier" of 28th May last:—

"First, I should say that as a whole an unduly large proportion of third-grade beef is being produced, and it is absolutely necessary to get cattle fat and marketable at a younger age, say, three years old on an average, instead of four and mostly five years as at present. To do this the cattle must be properly fed and forced."

"When asked, 'What can we feed them on?' he replied—

"The best natural feeds, and then find something, either alfalfa (lucerne), maize, cotton-seed meal, roots, root-tops, and so forth, to top them upon. This plan will extend the season for killing a longer period. Cattle can be killed earlier in season, also later in season than heretofore, thus making the closed season of meatworks of shorter duration. Of course, these suggestions may require irrigation of farms and considerable change in the manner of fattening live stock, but it is all possible and necessary to the development of your country, and in the end will prove most profitable, as it has done with us."

That is a very significant statement from a man who knows the beef industry from A to Z. Then, with reference to oversea methods, Mr. Swift had this to say—

"Look at the English and American farmers. By forcing the feeding they can sell their beef cattle at between one and two years old for baby beef and realise, say, £20 per head, at least, alive; while in Australia, cattle of five years old, steers, slightly heavier in the carcass, can be bought at £3, and so poor that they are not fit for export. Look at the Argentine. They market their beef at three years old, and realise a greater price per head than if held until four or five years old."

And when the possibility of the frequency of

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droughts was pointed out to him, he replied—

"That is all the more reason why we must change our present policy, and find something that will offset this disadvantage."

Coming from such an authority as Mr. Swift, I personally think that the suggestions are worthy of serious consideration. I realise the difficult nature of the proposition—that is, of artificially forcing our cattle to maturity at an earlier period.

Finally, there is the question of marketing, and it is this particular matter of which I wish to stress the importance. I was much struck some months ago with the suggestion of Mr. Fihelly, our Agent-General in London, to establish an overseas market by building and opening retail shops in the provincial towns of England, and to enter into direct competition with the retailer. That scheme, besides involving us in a very heavy initial outlay, would be, to my mind, a somewhat risky undertaking. At the same time, there is no denying the importance of retailing, provided the distribution is placed on sound lines, and that is the point we must stress the importance of. Considering the gravity of the situation from both a national and industrial point of view, and as the representative of an industrial electorate, I am going to be bold enough to make to the Government this afternoon a proposal which I think should be acted upon, to see if there is a chance of anything resulting from it. I would suggest that negotiations might be opened up with the representatives of the co-operative societies of Great Britain, with a view to supplying them with the best Queensland beef for retailing in their own shops to their members, and also the general public. To give hon. members some idea of the growth of co-operative societies in Britain, and also to give them a better conception as to what my suggestion would mean to the beef trade of Queensland, I quote the following from the "Daily Mail Year Book" and "Whittaker's Almanac," for 1923—

"Co-operative societies established: 1884.

"Statistics placed before the Congress of Co-operative Societies, June, 1923. show as follows:—

1,300 branches; membership nearly 5,000,000.

Wholesale trade, 1921: Sales to the value of £60,000,000.

Retail trade, 1921: Sales effected amounting to over £219,000,000.

Net profit: £17,744,613."

Hon. members are now in a better position to realise the importance of the suggestion. They will have noted that the main business of the co-operative societies in Great Britain is distribution, and surely that is a principle with which practically all hon. members of the House are in accord. At any rate, hon. members on this side of the House are, I feel sure, in favour of the principle.

Mr. COSTELLO: So are hon. members on this side.

Mr. WRIGHT: The distribution by the societies is as near to perfection as human beings could possibly make it, and, further, what is of greater importance is the fact

that the great percentage of the members of those societies are wage earners. They are the very type of people in England who to-day are finding it difficult to buy the best beef, or the best of anything that England can produce, and consequently they have to resort to something cheaper. There is a possibility that in the near future—much nearer probably than some of us imagine—there will be a working class party in power in the House of Commons, and then they will be in a better position to obtain the best that is grown in England, as well as the best that is imported. At the present

time they are forced through [5 p.m.] economic pressure to find the cheapest market and that is where the importance of my suggestion comes in. I believe that it would be possible for this Government, or the representatives of the beef trade in Queensland, to approach the co-operative societies in England and say to them, "We are prepared to guarantee so many tons of best Queensland beef at any stipulated port in England." I believe that a price could be arranged which would bring a reasonable return to the grazier and the workers in the meatworks, and would enable the co-operative societies to pay the costs with a little profit for themselves. If an arrangement could be made, we would be providing for the consumption of meat for a big population of Great Britain. At the present time, when Queensland beef reaches the ports of England, it is so badly managed by the distributing agents that by the time it is placed on the table it is very hard to discern what it is. By the scheme I have suggested the responsibility for the distribution of the beef would pass out of the hands of this country into the hands of the distributors at any particular port mentioned, and it would be distributed to the tables of the consumers in the best possible condition, and by that method would be creating an advertisement for Queensland beef in England, which advertisement we feel is very necessary. In the "Daily Mail" of 9th June last, Mr. Angliss, the Australian meat magnate, is reported as having told the War Office that—

"Australian firms were prepared to guarantee the meat for three years. He opposed the establishment of Australian retail meat shops in England, as it would result in other traders refusing to stock Australian meat. A better way of improving the demand is by more advertising, and the payment of bonuses to shops selling the greatest quantities."

There is no doubt that the Queensland Government would be prepared to guarantee a certain supply of beef. I wish to lay emphasis on the last paragraph of the statement by Mr. Angliss. It may mean that money could be spent in protecting the trade through the co-operative societies as I have outlined. If we were successful, I believe it would be the means of providing a great amount of assistance to the cattle industry of Queensland, and also to hundreds of the electors of Bulimba and of this State.

Of late there has been an agitation in the metropolitan Press for another bridge. You, Sir, have probably noticed reports by expert engineers as to the state of the structure of Victoria Bridge. I have a proposal by an engineer which refers to something more substantial than a bridge—I refer to the

question of a tunnel. That question is of vital importance to the electors of Bulimba. I believe that the Bulimba electorate fronts a longer stretch of the Brisbane River than any other electorate in the metropolitan area, and, if a tunnel was constructed, it would have to be constructed close to the waters of the Bulimba electorate. Mr. Hyde, a civil engineer, in the Brisbane "Courier" of 28th June, recommended the construction of a tube with tunnel approaches under the Brisbane River in the vicinity of New Farm. Coming from a country that is more advanced in this particular matter, I believe it is absolutely nonsensical to talk of erecting another bridge over the Brisbane River, because, if one was erected, we would have to go nearer the mouth of the river, and in doing that we would be causing an obstruction to shipping. The uninterrupted passage of ships into this port is of more importance to Brisbane and the State than the question of having another obstruction in the shape of a bridge in another part of the city. I trust the Government will interest themselves in this matter even to the extent of taking soundings along the river towards its mouth and select a site with the ultimate idea of constructing a tunnel. I wish now to deal with the question of the Belmont tramway. Some years ago the Government very rightly raised the embargo placed on farmers in Queensland with regard to the construction of certain railways.

Mr. VOWLES: And put it on the Main Roads Board.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am not concerned where they put it. (Opposition laughter.) The Government decided to remove that embargo because it was an unjust burden. If the Government thought fit to remove that embargo from the farmers, then the same consideration should be shown in connection with the Belmont tramway. I understand the tramway was built on the advice of some of the friends of hon. members opposite. If the people were induced to take on a "white elephant" which is more than they can carry, then they should be given some assistance. The tramway is situated in a metropolitan district, which district is capable of carrying thousands of people, and is a splendid residential area. The Government saw fit to raise the embargo off the farmers, and they should now relieve the people of the Belmont district of the heavy burden they are now bearing. In conclusion, I wish to express pleasure at the attention that hon. members of this House have given me, and I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 3 o'clock p.m. to-morrow."

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 5.12 p.m.

Mr. Wright.]