

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 17 JULY 1923

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WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS AGAINST
STATE INSURANCE OFFICE, 1917-1922.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Attorney-General—

“ Will he state the total amount paid in lump sums in settlement of claims in the Workers' Compensation Department of the State Insurance (including miners' phthisis (14B) and pneumonic influenza) as at 30th June of each of the years 1917 to 1922?”

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

“ The total amount paid and estimated in lump sum settlement of workers' compensation ordinary and household workers' claims amounted to—

	£	s.	d.
1916-1917	66,102	14	5
1917-1918	93,473	7	2
1918-1919	91,922	8	8
1919-1920	131,637	5	10
1920-1921	117,567	12	1
1921-1922	140,211	15	8

Total £640,915 3 10

No lump sum settlements are made in connection with miners' phthisis, pneumonic influenza, and/or other industrial diseases.”

GOWRIE HOMESTEAD BORE.

Mr. MORGAN, in the absence of Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“ 1. At what date was the bore commenced alongside Gowrie Homestead?

“ 2. Has it been completed yet? If so, when?

“ 3. To what depth has it been sunk?

“ 4. What is the cost to date?

“ 5. Has an adequate supply of water been secured?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

“ 1. On 16th September, 1922.

“ 2. Yes. On 29th June, 1923.

“ 3. 337 feet 2 inches.

“ 4. £682 17s. 10d.

“ 5. Yes. At least 400 gallons of water per hour certified by Government Analyst to be suitable for stock and all domestic purposes.”

TUESDAY, 17 JULY, 1923.

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

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. T. DUNSTAN.

Mr. T. Dunstan, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Gympie.

QUESTIONS.

CATTLE AND SHEEP RAILWAY TRUCKS BUILT
SINCE 1914.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“ 1. What is the number of new cattle wagons built by and for the Department since the year 1914?

“ 2. What is the number of new sheep trucks built for and by the Department since the year 1914?”

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

“ 1. 320.

“ 2. 38. Live stock traffic is not now so heavy as in 1914.”

PAYMENT OF £400 TO MR. RANDOLPH BEDFORD.

Mr. KERR asked the Premier—

“ In view of the fact that no connection existed between the visit of Mr. Randolph Bedford and the State American loans, will he state in what direction the payment of £400 to Mr. Bedford was warranted, and in what way the State was advertised?”

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

“ Mr. Bedford conducted a publicity campaign for Queensland through the medium of a considerable number of journals in the United States of America.”

BOY IMMIGRANTS.

Mr. KERR asked the Premier—

"In reference to boy immigrants,—

1. What are the conditions under which these boys are hired out to farmers?

2. Have any inspectors or persons been appointed to supervise the conditions and the treatment of the boys? If not, is it proposed to take any steps in that direction?

3. What is the financial obligation of the State in connection with these boy immigrants; and, if any, the amount and how apportioned?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. I lay on the table a copy of the agreement entered into between a boy immigrant and his employer, and a copy of an indenture between the boy immigrant and the Immigration Agent.

"2. No; but the clerks of petty sessions and officers in charge of police in the districts to which the boys are sent to employment have been requested to look after the welfare of the boys. The branches of the New Settlers' League in the various districts also watch over the boys' interests.

"3. None."

Whereupon the Premier laid upon the table of the House the agreement referred to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Before addressing myself to the motion before the House, I would like to refer to the fact that the coal strike in New South Wales is virtually over, and that, I understand, an arrangement has been made between the employers and employees. I think we must all regard that fact with satisfaction when we realise that, as a result of this strike—one of many unfortunate strikes in Australia—somewhere in the vicinity of 3,000 families have been practically on the bread line for the last three or four months. I refer to this matter more or less for the purpose of directing attention to the unfair representation of the case which has been made—without any possibility of jurisdiction in the matter by Parliament—by various newspapers in Queensland. It is a matter on which we all here must feel concerned, because, according to figures of the Commonwealth Statistician of recent date, something like £26,000 in wages was lost to the workers under a Labour Administration during the first three months of this year.

Mr. KIRWAN: Quote the New South Wales figures.

Mr. KERR: Unfortunately, under the Dooley Labour Administration in New South Wales, there was also a loss.

Mr. KIRWAN: Quote the figures under the Fuller Administration.

Mr. KERR: I wish to draw attention to the unfair representation of the matter, calculated to engender discontent in the minds of the people, by certain headlines and assertions in daily papers, and I want to be fair to certain newspapers in Brisbane on the matter. I shall quote first from the

[*Mr. Kerr.*

"Brisbane Courier" of the 21st June last—at a time when the negotiations were at a very delicate stage, and when many of the families of those on strike in New South Wales were visiting the coal dumps to collect small pieces of coal to keep their fires burning. Later on I shall refer to another instance of what can happen in an enlightened community under a Labour Administration, who make the claim that under their rule everything is all that can be desired, and point out that it is an occasion for using the words of the present Home Secretary himself when he moved in a matter of privilege in this House with respect to the Press, and said that certain of their actions were degrading Parliament. I say that some of the newspapers of to-day are degrading the intelligence of the people, and I shall refer specially to one paper in this city which is doing more to make these people eke out their troubles and prejudice a proper understanding of them. (Government interruption.) I shall quote first this fair comment on the question by the "Brisbane Courier," headed—

"PROSPECTS BRIGHTER.

"THE COAL STRIKE.

"Coming Conference.

"Miners Sick of Conditions.

"Cessnock, June 20.

"The intervention of the Acting Premier (Mr. Oakes) in the coal dispute has lifted the community out of a slough of despond. The announcement of the approaching conference between the parties has given rise to hopes for an early settlement of the trouble."

We find in the "Daily Standard" of about the same date, under very thickly inked headlines—

"COAL BARONS BEATEN.

"THROWING UP THE FIGHT.

"Tory Premier Calling Parties Together."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: I venture to say that that is still the claim of hon. members opposite. They say, "Hear, hear!" They say that that is fair comment at a time when the livelihood of 3,000 families is at stake! In any court of justice no comment is allowed when any matter is *sub judice*. Yet we have in our city a paper which is under no control of any description, and which is allowed to inflame the minds of the people and prevent them from coming to a settlement of their dispute. The Home Secretary, when speaking last year on a question of privilege, said that such a thing was "gutter journalism." I venture to say that that "gutter journalism" to-day in that publication is doing more harm than in any other way in Australia. If the Home Secretary thought it was necessary to control the newspapers in one respect, it is necessary to step in and control them in another. I will now leave that question.

Mr. RIORDAN: You will want to get off that question. Your argument is very weak.

Mr. KERR: I desire to draw attention to the wording of the motion now before the House. It says—

"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."

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: There is nothing wrong in that.

Mr. KERR: No, there is nothing wrong in that. I subscribe to those sentiments along with hon. gentlemen in this House, but I take exception to what is being done to-day by hon. members opposite.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is being done by hon. members of the Opposition.

Mr. KERR: It is not. The assurance of "affection towards the Throne" is a mere formality of Parliamentary procedure. While hon. members opposite subscribe to those sentiments, they at the same time take the chair at a public meeting in Queensland and vilify and permit the vilification of the Representative of the Throne in the person of His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. RYAN interjected.

Mr. KERR: If the cap fits the hon. gentleman, well and good. The quicker we recognise our loyalty to Great Britain the better it will be for us. The sooner we make it possible to stamp out this disloyalty and prevent the villainous attacks on the Representative of His Majesty the King, the better it will be for us.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would the hon. gentleman shoot the disloyalists?

Mr. KERR: If it is necessary for us to deport from Australia those who are disloyal, then it is necessary to deport those who are instrumental in furthering that disloyalty.

The Governor's Speech caused no surprise to this House. We know that the Government have a majority of representatives.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: We recognise that fact, but I venture to question whether they have a mandate to carry on in this House. (Government laughter.) The hon. gentlemen may laugh; but, if they will examine the figures in connection with the last State elections contained in the returning officers' declarations, they will find that the Government have a minority of something like 14,000 votes in Queensland.

Mr. RYAN: They have a majority of fourteen seats.

Mr. KERR: And, after allowing a deduction for the electorates which were not contested by Labour candidates, they have a minority of something in the vicinity of 10,000 votes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your figures are wrong.

Mr. KERR: The figures are taken from the returning officers' declarations. They may not be absolutely up to date—(Government laughter)—but the small returns still to come along will not materially affect the result. Hon. gentlemen opposite know that. They also know that in Southern Queensland, and in the Federal division of Capri-

cornia, where proportional representation has obtained, the United Party and the Country Party have a majority of four seats. In that area the United Party and Country Party combined have a majority of four seats with approximately a majority of 30,000 votes. That is equal and proportionate representation, in my opinion. If you turn to the other part of the State—the Tropical North, the Peninsula and Gulf, the North-west, the Central West, and the South-west—you will find that the Government in those areas have a net majority of eighteen seats; that 36,000 people are represented by two seats on the Opposition side of the House, whereas 52,000—just a few thousand more—are represented in the Government by twenty seats. There is no proportionate representation there. This has been brought about by the adoption of boundaries which are not fair boundaries, and, further, the Act itself has also been departed from. It is practically useless for this Parliament to lay down a quota when that quota is departed from by the Government. The Premier, in his electorate, has not the minimum representation laid down by the Legislature of this country of 20 per cent. below the quota.

The PREMIER: I had when the boundaries were fixed.

Mr. KERR: I venture to say that the large number of electors below that minimum could not have left the electorate in the few months that have elapsed since the redistribution. If the Government to-day intend to do the right thing in regard to the legislation, they should adhere to the law. More particularly should they adhere to it, so far as the representation of the people is concerned.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You want a redistribution every year.

Mr. KERR: Perhaps it would be better: perhaps it would be wise. The Government had also paid the redistributors, or the people who mapped out the redistributed areas, a certain sum in addition to their salaries. I do not know for what reason they did so, because they were only doing their work as officers of the Public Service for which they drew their salaries, in addition to which they were paid a bonus by the Government.

The PREMIER: We simply followed the precedent laid down in the past by your party.

Mr. KERR: If there is anything the Labour Government are noted for it is wiping out precedent; yet, when they are taken to task, they use the old belated argument.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Precedents are all right when they are good ones.

Mr. KERR: Quite right; but that was a bad precedent, and the Government have followed it. In my own electorate I have well over the maximum of 20 per cent. over the quota.

The PREMIER: Let us have another election.

Mr. KERR: Quite a good idea, with redistributed electorates.

Talking in regard to the Address in Reply, we know perfectly well it is a wonderful work of dissimulation. It is, possibly, the

Mr. Kerr.]

shortest Address in Reply that we have ever had in this House.

Mr. KIRWAN: You don't know what you are talking about. I was here and heard it in 1912.

Mr. KERR: There was no Governor's Speech, as we know, at the beginning of last Parliament. We all know that it is the result of the Premier's keen penetration of judgment. It shows certain things which we all knew before the Speech was read. Everything is aboveboard, and you could see what the Government are going to bring before the people but not carry out, because they have not got the money to do so. There is a good deal in the Address which is secret, and a number of half lights. I have here a quotation from Bacon's Essays on "Simulation and Dissimulation," which I shall read. It is right to the point in regard to the Governor's Speech that has been presented to this House. It says—

"The advantages of simulation and dissimulation are three: first, to lay asleep opposition and to surprise; for when a man's intentions are published, it is an alarm to call up all that are against them; the second is to reserve to a man's self a fair retreat; for, if a man engage himself by a manifest declaration, he must go through or take a fall."

Everyone knows that the Government are bound by the decisions of the Emu Park Convention. I think in regard to the policy to be put by the Government before the House that there will be negotiations between the two parties on that side; but the Government cannot come before Parliament expressing a desire to carry out a certain programme and then carry out an entirely different one. I know them well enough to know that there are extremists on that side of the House who are not going to sit idly by and allow the Government to carry out the sum of their expressed intentions. There are extremists on that side who will not bow down to any proposal to give the man on the land a fair price for his products and then let the consumer pay a fair price in his turn. They are the masters on that side, and they are not going to allow that. That is why I say—

"The advantage of simulation and dissimulation . . . is to reserve to a man's self a fair retreat."

Everyone knows that the Premier is a moderate man, and that he is looking into the future for a fair retreat. The quotation continues—

"The third is, the better to discover the mind of another."

We are prepared to give the Premier our assistance on every matter that is for the advancement of this State. There is nothing to hide, and I hope that he will carry out and pay a good deal of attention during the coming Parliament to many things that will be put before the House by this side.

The question of immigration has been omitted entirely from the Governor's Speech. It has been the policy of the Government for many years to refer to it in a veiled way, but on this occasion they have absolutely ignored the immigration question. I think it is right for a State like Queensland, with our large area of land, to take our share in settling the white population of the world. It is an absolute essentiality for

[Mr. Kerr.

many reasons that Australia, and Queensland particularly, should take its part in this question. We have men such as H. G. Wells and Bertrand Russell, great men of thought, to-day advocating birth control. If you like to read what they have to say about the teeming yellow population, you will find the only solution where they have several hundred people to the square mile is the birth control of those nations. They are next door to us, and we have the Government of this country attempting to put land into use and yet bringing no immigrants into the country. It is one of the foremost needs in a country like this to bring in a population. Now in regard to the white population of the world, I find that in the last Teachers' Conference—to tell you how things are happening in Queensland to-day—in regard to Japanese and Chinese students, they want Regulation 130, reading—

"Children who are otherwise eligible as pupils shall not be refused admission to any school on account of race or colour without a special direction of the Minister"—

to be deleted and the following inserted—

"Children of alien descent are not to be admitted to State schools; but, where there is a sufficient number, they may be taught in an alien school administered by the Home Secretary's Department."

Mr. Edmunds, of the Northern Tableland, when proposing the above motion, stated—

"There had been a great influx of Chinese, Japanese, and other alien pupils into the Northern schools. These people in most cases did not live under the same healthy conditions as the white children. They entered a strong protest against alien children entering the schools and using their materials."

It will possibly be said that this is a Commonwealth matter. If it is a Commonwealth matter, it is happening in our own State, and it is right that the Queensland Government should bring these matters before the proper authority. We [4 p.m.] have had immigrants coming into this country with slips of paper stating that they are looking for work, and they are unable to speak one word of English. Our laws to-day in regard to the educational test are absolutely absurd and useless for the purpose.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is a Commonwealth matter.

Mr. KERR: If that is the way that sort of thing is to be treated by the Government—that it is a Commonwealth matter—the quicker we get another Government in to attend to the requirements of our own State the better. The hon. gentleman who has interjected is a Minister of the Crown, and, although these things are happening in our own State, he says it is a Commonwealth matter. It is purely a State question. Let us go back a few years and see the amount of money spent by previous Administrations on immigration. In 1912-13, out of revenue, the Government spent £54,000 on immigration. In 1913-14 the Government spent £60,000 on immigration. While on financial matters, let me say that the Queensland Government are the only Government in Australia to-day who have not been able to show a surplus at the end of the financial year. They are the only Government in Australia who, by the unwise expenditure of

money, show a deficit when balancing their accounts. That in itself is sufficient to call for a stocktaking on the part of every member who has a knowledge of the questions before the country, and shows that some alteration should take place. In five years, 1918 to 1922, from revenue the present Government spent the small sum of £4 on immigration. In 1884 the Government of the day, in order to populate this State, went to the extent of spending £400,000 of loan money and £750,000 from revenue, making a total for the year of £1,150,000 on immigration. In 1889, in order to bring immigrants to this country, the Government spent £250,000. In 1890 the Government spent £200,000 on immigration, and in 1913 the expenditure amounted to £975,000. When you look back into the history of Queensland, we find that the State was able to pay those large amounts out of revenue and out of loan money in order to populate this State, and it must be remembered that in those days, owing to the wise expenditure of loan money on reproductive works, sufficient revenue was received to pay the interest. To-day loan money is not paying its way, and there is no loan money being spent to bring immigrants into this country. The change of policy in that regard has been detrimental to the country. Let hon. members turn, say, to Mackay, Gympie, Charters Towers, or other places, and they will find that the population in those centres has decreased. In Charters Towers the population has decreased probably by 50 per cent., and in Gympie by 50 per cent., and we find the people flocking to the city. The number of people coming to the cities is making the unemployed question one of the greatest problems that Queensland probably has ever been asked to attack. This position has been brought about by the expenditure of loan money in wrong avenues. This is a serious question, and one that demands a good deal of consideration.

The secondary industries to-day, in which many members on the opposite benches are interested, are not receiving proper consideration. Not one paragraph in the Governor's Speech deals with the secondary industries of this State. There is another question for consideration in connection with the secondary industries. There is a good deal to be said in regard to the conservation of water, the conservation of fodder, the opening of lands for settlement, the building of railways, and irrigation. They are all necessary to the country, but it is useless, in connection with them, to borrow millions of pounds, overcapitalise the land, and not give the farmer a chance. It is much better to give the men already on the land every opportunity of becoming successful. It is not a question of new men coming into this country and going on to these lands; we have thousands of men going on to the land, staying there a short period, and then coming off again. We can solve this question of keeping men on the land by giving a decent, attractive tenure. We have not done that under a Labour Administration. There is no decent tenure for land to-day. The Labour Government wiped out the only decent tenure in regard to our lands—that is, the homestead tenure. That has been abolished. It is impossible to get freehold to-day. Many millions of pounds were borrowed from the Commonwealth for the specific purpose of buying freehold land and turning it into Government land, and the interest on the

money borrowed was charged to the returned soldiers. They should never have been asked to foot the bill in that regard. I do not know how the Government are going to overcome the difficulties in regard to making advances. I have gone to the trouble of taking out the figures in regard to settlement. Between 1902 and 1922 the number of freehold applications in that period totalled 5,646, and the amount advanced against freehold totalled £1,788,000. Now, if we take the leasehold tenure, we find in the twenty years the number of applicants totalled only 692, and the amount advanced totalled £104,000. I venture to say that the wiping out of the freehold tenure, which provides security for advances, is going to cripple the primary production in Queensland. Unless we find another system to give security for advances other than the leasehold system, we are not going to make progress in Queensland. The only thing on which you can get an advance to-day is on the improvements you put on your property, and that is insufficient when you want about 50 per cent. security. Some other scheme must be adopted, and there is nothing outlined in the Governor's Speech that is going to help the men already on the land. When we had the cattle market slumping badly, what did we find? When cattle were coming down in price the Price Fixing Commissioner fixed a price for the consumer. Cattle were falling and the distributor was buying cheap meat, and in that way the State butcher shops since 1917 have made the enormous profit of £200,000. They have only done it in one way. They made that profit when cattle were slumping and the Price Fixing Commissioner fixed a price for beef. He made the consumer pay a higher price than was necessary, and gave an extra profit to the distributor. And this was under a Labour Administration! There was no encouragement given to the cattle industry in any shape or form. Then there is the matter of the fixing of the price for flour. Hon. members opposite know perfectly well that flour was being sold in Queensland at a lower price than was charged for bran and pollard. When flour was £12 10s. per ton the farmer who used bran and pollard had to pay £13 10s. per ton for it—£1 per ton more.

When I went to the Price Fixing Commissioner with a deputation asking him to bring down the price of bran and pollard, so as to give a decent price to the farmer, he said it was question of policy on the part of the Government—these are my own words—to give the consumer cheaper flour. But, at the same time, they never considered the man on the land and gave him cheaper bran and pollard. He was charged a higher price.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you read what the Commissioner said about the operations of the Wheat Pool Board?

MR. KERR: No; I have not.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It would be interesting to you if you did.

MR. KERR: The hon. gentleman mentions the Wheat Pool Board. I have something to say with regard to the cotton industry, more particularly with reference to ratoon cotton. The farmers of Queensland have been sold lock, stock, and barrel to the cotton combines in England. If any hon. member wants to see them, I have twelve samples of the cotton produced in the mills of these delegates at home.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Kerr.]

Mr. KERR: Hon. members can inspect them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have no right to make a statement of that kind.

Mr. KERR: I will prove the truth of my statements.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that subject as he has a notice of motion on the business paper dealing with it.

Mr. KERR: In the Governor's Speech there is a Bill promised in regard to the control of cotton, and that control is going to be handed to vested interests—to company promoters who came out to Australia when the Government had not sufficient money and were not prepared to establish cotton gins. The Government were not prepared to establish the cotton ginneries, but they gave the control to vested interests in the old country. The Government will never be able to carry out the agreement they have made with the "cotton barons"—as they call them—in the old country.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing a motion of which notice has been given.

Mr. KERR: In the Governor's Speech there is a suggestion to bring in a Cotton Control Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is discussing a notice of motion which will come on later. He cannot anticipate the discussion which will come on subsequently.

Mr. KERR: I have samples of ratoon cotton here which I can show hon. members. The leader of the Country party, when speaking the other day, said that the present Government had claimed practically every piece of humanitarian legislation brought forward in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: Hon. members opposite say "Hear, hear!" I say that the Government have practically brought no humanitarian legislation forward.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Don't be silly.

Mr. KERR: I want to point out where things are leading in regard to premiums under the Workers' Compensation Act. The State insurance monopoly to-day is collecting premiums from youths of from fourteen to twenty-one years of age who are working, and, if they are killed, no compensation is paid other than funeral expenses. The State Insurance Department allows a maximum of £50, while in other States of Australia they allow a maximum of £100. Parents bring their children up and clothe them up to fourteen or fifteen years of age, and it is not logical to claim a premium for those boys between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, and then, if they meet with a fatal accident, to turn them down and give them no compensation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is not true.

Mr. KERR: It is true. I can give the case of a boy who was fatally injured, and, notwithstanding that for a number of years the employer was paying his premiums to the State Insurance Department, on his death his people only received the funeral expenses, or something like £27. That is the action which the State Insurance Department takes.

[Mr. Kerr.

It is not honest to claim premiums and not pay compensation. I say also that it is not justice, when a man meets with an accident, that he should have to wait three days before any payment is made to him, more especially when you consider that the Workers' Compensation Department has made over £200,000 since it started to operate. It should make some allocation of that money. The principle of insurance demands that a man should receive compensation from the day he is incapacitated.

Mr. FOLEY: It used to be fourteen days under the old Tory measure.

Mr. KERR: Women used to work in mines at one time. We do not want to go back to the Middle Ages. We are advancing, and evolution makes more changes in this country than all the talk of revolution which comes from the opposite side. In regard to the weekly payments under the workers' compensation scheme, Queensland is again behind. Queensland pays 50 per cent. of a man's earnings; in New South Wales they pay 66⅔ per cent.; and there are other concessions in the New Zealand Act which are not contained in the Queensland Act. I hope that, when the amending Bill comes before the House, a greater concession will be given to the workers of Queensland than is being given under the Labour Administration to-day.

There is another thing I want to mention, which is not in the Governor's Speech, and that is in regard to the War Service Homes. I regret very much that the Ministry have not considered the advisableness of bringing the War Service Homes under the control of the State. I believe they have examined the position, but have not come to any agreement. I think the Government could very well bring down a scheme based on the principles of the present Commonwealth Act, and take over all future buildings and War Service Homes paid for with money borrowed from the Commonwealth. I am a believer in decentralisation; I am not a believer in centralised authority. I do not believe we are getting a just deal from the central authority in Melbourne; it is too far away, and Government officials like to keep as much as possible in Melbourne. There are other matters in regard to War Service Homes which I consider are deplorable. It would be impossible, unless an equitable arrangement were made, to take over the existing homes. There are thousands of people in Queensland waiting for these homes. We ought to be tackling the question of future homes, and at some subsequent time we may be able to come to some arrangement to take over existing homes. I place the suggestion before the Government for their consideration. In South Australia they have taken over the War Service Homes, and also in Victoria, and in Western Australia the Government act as agents. Tasmania and New South Wales, together with Queensland, have declined to do so up to date. I would very much like to see this State take them over and bring them under the jurisdiction of the existing workers' dwellings administration, which could very well handle them. I would not for a moment advocate the taking over of these homes except on a system based on the present Commonwealth Act—I mean particularly with regard to freehold land. I particularly stress that. I would not on any consideration support a Bill which

wiped out the freehold provisions of the Commonwealth Act. I also want to tell the Government that, from my experience in regard to workers' dwellings—and I have had a good deal of experience in connection with the War Service Homes—the group system under the Workers' Homes Act is, in my opinion, altogether a mistake. You will never get satisfaction under the Workers' Homes Act so long as you purchase considerable blocks of land and build houses in groups—houses of the same design running in parallel streets, no matter how much you may alter the veranda or other little details. If the Workers' Homes Act is to be a success, let us purchase land in an established locality, so that all the houses will not be of the same design, or likely to be of the same design.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Alter the logs.

Mr. KERR: The Government need to alter some of the logs in the houses erected by them—they are so wide apart that you can practically walk through them. The worker's home of to-day is not satisfactory at all, and something has got to be done to make it so. I would suggest to the Government that we follow the lines of New Zealand in this branch of legislation—as we have done in various other branches—and so arrange matters that the worker can get a freehold home by paying a deposit of £10.

Mr. GILDAY: We do better than that.

Mr. KERR: The Government do not give the man his land. If they do better, and give the man his land, I say well and good, but the workers' homes are not going to be a success for many years to come. I am going to show that, if they adopt the principle of the Workers' Dwellings Act passed by a previous Administration, and give the man his home on a freehold basis on a deposit of £10, they will be justified, as there are only small arrears of less than 1 per cent. outstanding under that measure. Almost any man in Queensland can put down £10, but in the last four years the present Government have spent only £655,000 on workers' dwellings, whereas for four years under the previous Administration almost double that amount, or £1,242,000, was spent. If those figures indicate anything, they indicate that the people are not satisfied with this Government's legislation. Furthermore, in the two years prior to the advent of this Government, 3,177 workers' dwellings were erected, as compared with only 790 during the last two years of this Administration—another proof that their actions are not acceptable to the people. There is evidently something wrong with their system, and I urge the Government to introduce a Bill under which the worker can build his home on freehold land upon a deposit of £10.

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

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): The hon. member who has just sat down intimated to this House that a certain member ought to be deported because he used his ordinary citizen's rights. He went on talking about loyalty. I think we heard enough of that during the war. There is no man in this House, or outside it, who has more respect for the honest loyal man than I have, but I am sick and tired of the lick-spittle loyalty of which we heard so much in the streets of

Brisbane during the war. Why, the people who talked so much about it were going to give the men to whom they appealed to enlist almost the whole of the State. What has been done? What have the hon. member for Enoggera and the class he represents actually done for the returned soldiers? I know full well what has taken place. I know that numbers of young, able-bodied men left fairly good billets in this city to go to the war, that they got badly wounded, and that, when they came back, their employers did not re-employ them. I am sick and tired of this lick-spittle loyalty that I hear from hon. members opposite, and I hope that all reference to the war and loyalty will—unless there be special occasion to refer to them—be wiped out of the debates of this House.

The leader of the Opposition the other evening said that he visited the Mitchell electorate, and intimated that, if he did so often enough, he would be able to persuade the electors of Mitchell to return a candidate of his class. I do not know what facts he has to guide him in saying that, because at the last election I got 100 more votes than at the previous election, although I lost a considerable number through various causes. For one thing, three or four sheds were shearing in the Barcoo electorate at the time of the election, but no provision was made for polling booths, and a pretty big percentage of the men working there were Mitchell electors, who did not have the opportunity of recording their votes. Then again, on the day of the poll, there were races in Blackall, and some forty or fifty residents of Longreach attended them, and they, too, had no opportunity of recording their votes. I can only tell the hon. member that, if he lived in the Mitchell electorate all the days of his life, he would not get a majority of its electors to vote for his candidate.

The Governor, in his Opening Speech, pointed out that he had again visited the northern and western portions of this State, and found the residents there suffering great inconvenience because of the class of houses in which they are compelled to live. Any one of us who has travelled through the northern and western parts of Queensland knows full well the class of house in which many women and children are forced to live—dwellings built of iron, with very low walls and roofs not very high—and we can understand the discomfort which they involve in a temperature in summer time of anything from 110 degrees to 115 degrees. But I am pleased to say that the Workers' Homes Act passed by this Government last Parliament has already done a great deal to relieve the situation, by enabling people in the country, as well as in other parts of Queensland, to erect decent homes for themselves, which otherwise they would not have the opportunity of getting.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: In my own electorate, more particularly in Longreach and the bigger towns, that Act is doing good work, and I trust the Government will not be stingy in the sum they place upon the Estimates to meet the demands under it.

Mr. ELPINSTONE: How many workers' homes have been erected in Longreach?

Mr. PAYNE: Half a dozen workers' homes are under way in Longreach now,

Mr. Payne.]

and I am satisfied that, if sufficient money is put on the Estimates, the people will avail themselves of it during next year to a very great extent. Anyhow, I am satisfied that the people who are receiving benefit from the measure will not forget the present Government.

The Governor also referred in his Speech to the intention to resume some large holdings for subdivision as grazing selections. I see that the Government have already given notice for the resumption of three big holdings—Saltern Creek, in the Mitchell electorate; Marathon, on the Flinders; and Charlotte Plains, in the Cunnamulla district. I think it would be in the interests of grazing farmers if the Government resumed only those holdings which have short periods of lease left to run. Saltern Creek falls in 1927, Marathon in 1931, and Charlotte Plains in 1934. There are millions of acres of land in the Mitchell land district falling in 1927 and 1928. I have a list of those places, and it will be just as well to remind the House that they are well fitted for closer settlement in the form of grazing selection. I have taken only the very best holdings, that are not too far from our railways and are free from the dog pest.

Mr. MORGAN: What area does the hon. member suggest?

Mr. PAYNE: A lot depends on what is a living area, but I should say that not less than 10,000 acres of the best land, not too far from our railways, is little enough. The holdings that will revert to the Crown in 1927 are—

	Square miles.
Lerida	463
Mount Cornish	626
Rockwood	322
Stainburn Downs	73
Tower Hill	139
Aramac	310
Bowen Downs	714
Coreena	302
Culloden	114
Lammermor	345
Landsborough	88

Those figures disclose a total area of 1,438,000 acres. The holdings that will revert to the Crown in 1928 are—

	Square miles.
Kensington Downs	247
Rodney Downs	59
Barenja	177
Beaconsfield East	75
Beaconsfield West	134
Cameron Downs	133
Darr River Downs	418
Evesham North	195
Green Hills	123
Highfields	60

According to those figures there is a total area of 1,198,520 acres. Those figures disclose a total acreage of 2,636,520 acres [4.30 p.m.] of really good sheep land which will revert to the Crown in 1927 and 1928, hence I think it is unnecessary to resume any land the lease of which will expire later than 1928. I understand that the Government have already given notice to some of the holders. The compensation, which will be decided by the Land Appeal Court, has caused a good deal of discussion. There seems to be a good deal of difference of opinion as to how the compensation will be arrived at. Speaking as a layman, it appears to

me that the first paragraph of section 145 of the Land Act contains the exact indication as to how the compensation is to be assessed. I do not think that the basis of compensation will be the amount of wool that can be grown on a holding. I cannot see how any court can decide what quantity or quality of wool can be grown on a particular holding. The basis will have to be the value of a lease to an incoming tenant. If the court decides that the compensation, in addition to the rent which the grazing farmer will have to pay, is too great, then that shows conclusively that the lessees are not paying sufficient rent to the Crown at the present time. It appears to me that the value of the land must be taken at what a person would be prepared to give at the present time. These are questions that will have to be settled by the court. I hope the Government will push on with the resumption of these big holdings, and I am satisfied that, if they succeed in cutting up that country into decent living areas, they are going to meet the wishes of 90 per cent. of the people living in those districts. The whole of the people living in those districts depend on the pastoral industry. They depend on the growing of wool and the rearing of cattle for a livelihood. Every individual who lives out there who is not the owner of a large holding is in favour of having those large holdings cut up.

Mention is made in the Governor's Speech of the proposed amendment of the Main Roads Act. I hope, when the amending Bill is introduced, that it will contain provisions forbidding the building of any main roads parallel to our railways, and that the roads will be built in such a way that they will act as feeders to our railways. In travelling about the country, both in a private capacity and as member of the Public Works Commission, I have given a good deal of attention to this matter, and I am satisfied that, if the Main Roads Board adopt the sensible idea of constructing roads as feeders to our railways, the railways will be in a position to return more than they have returned in the past.

It has been said by a good many people that a Government has its life to run, or, in other words, that the public get sick of any particular brand of politicians. I do not agree with that. The present Government have proved the reverse in this case. They have been returned to power four times in succession without altering their policy. No other Government that Queensland ever had have been returned three times in succession without altering their policy. This Government are unique in this respect, that they are the only Government in the British Empire that were in power when war broke out, and still retain the Treasury benches. They are the only Government in the British Empire with sovereign rights carrying on the government of the country with one House of Parliament. These things may seem small to some people, but I see no reason why a Labour Government should not be in power in Queensland for all time. I am satisfied that, if the Labour Government go on in the way they have been going—passing legislation that is lifting the man on the lowest rung of the ladder higher up than he ever was before—if they can succeed in settling people on our Western lands on decent living areas, and if they continue to

[Mr. Payne.

bring in humanitarian legislation, then the people of this country will recognise their worth, and they will be here for all time.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I desire to support the motion before the House, and also join in conveying to His Excellency the expression of "our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our most gracious Sovereign." Let me preface my remarks by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the honourable and important position which you occupy to-day. During the previous Parliament you and I occasionally came into conflict, but I found then that you always possessed a good sporting spirit, which you displayed when we agreed to disagree in regard to matters between us. I trust that, when the Parliament assembled concludes, we shall be able to say that you carried out the Standing Orders of this Assembly to the satisfaction of all concerned. I would like to impress upon you, as was done by the leader of the Country Party, the hon. member for Aubigny, that under the altered conditions of the Standing Orders to-day, and the fact that we have a unicameral system as against a bicameral system in the past, greater attention must be given by hon. members to matters before the House, and therefore it is urgently necessary, in order to obtain the best results in this House, that time should be given for mature consideration of every matter that comes before this House and before Committee.

Mr. COLLINS: Give us some intelligent criticism.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like the hon. gentleman to give us some intelligent criticism. I have listened to him for twelve years, and I have never yet heard him give any intelligent criticism. I think the Governor's Speech itself is more remarkable for what is not in it than for what it contains. In the past we have been accustomed to find a good deal of padding and a good deal of political propaganda in it, and I venture to say, on an occasion like this after a general election has been determined, even in a small Speech such as this is, that the Governor's advisers should have found it necessary to go in for a little bit more of propaganda and a few less gibes at the Commonwealth Government. They have found it necessary to introduce the sugar question—a subject over which we have no jurisdiction at all, but a matter in regard to which we all desire to see an agreement brought about that will be acceptable to the growers—an agreement on the lines of the old one which has just expired. I think it is regrettable that the Government should indulge in these little gibes, and say—

"The sugar industry has been faced with a very critical position owing to the tardiness of the Commonwealth Government in declaring its intentions towards the industry on the expiration of the Sugar Agreement."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is very mild.

Mr. VOWLES: It may be mild, but it is quite unnecessary, because it is not a matter in the discretion of this Assembly. While we are on the subject, perhaps the Secretary for Public Works might tell us why there is this delay in letting the contract in connection with the new sugar mill which it is proposed to establish on the Tully River.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no delay whatever.

Mr. VOWLES: I think it has been postponed twice already.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You will be told all about it in due time.

Mr. VOWLES: It is something like the houses which the last speaker told us about that were being erected and the wonderful benefits that have accrued under the Workers' Homes Act; but, when I asked him how many, he said there were none. The same thing applies in regard to that sugar mill.

The PREMIER: You must give us fair time to consider it.

Mr. VOWLES: I think there have been three postponements already. The Government at the outset should have allowed sufficient time for the English tenders.

The PREMIER: Do you think it is necessary that we should get English tenders?

Mr. VOWLES: I think that matter should have been considered at first. The only thing is that the postponements may go on and on, and may result in nothing being done at all.

Mr. BRAND: They want English tenders, especially when they want a loan in 1925.

Mr. VOWLES: I am going on the experience of our friend, the hon. member for Mitchell, about the wonders of the Workers' Homes Act and the benefits conferred by it up to the time of the election.

A great deal of exception was taken the other night by the hon. member for Herbert when the leader of the Country party said that the sugar industry was a spoonfed industry.

Mr. PEASE: He called it a pampered industry.

Mr. VOWLES: The fact remains that it is a subsidised industry. It all depends on what construction you put on the words "pampered" or "spoonfed," but it is placed in a better position than any other primary industry in Queensland. You must realise the compact made many years ago in connection with federation when it was agreed that certain States should receive certain benefits. The transcontinental railway was one benefit one State was to receive, and I regret that the Premier is now prepared to flit that right away from that State, because he thinks that is in the interests of Queensland. The sugar industry of Queensland was an industry which was to receive special treatment on account of its being for the protection of a White Australia, and for that particular reason it was to be placed in a different position to other industries.

Mr. HYNES: It received no consideration until the advent of the Labour Government.

Mr. VOWLES: I say it did. If you like to trace the history of the sugar agreements and follow up the utterances of the present Premier and the then Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Lennon, you will find there that, when the sugar-growers suggested there should be an increase from £18 to £21 per ton—an increase of £3 per ton—they were told that it was an unreasonable price, and that they were opening their mouths too wide.

The PREMIER: It is not true, and you ought to know it.

Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: It is on record that they said it was unreasonable, and that they should not open their mouths too wide. (Dissent.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Produce the record.

Mr. VOWLES: I can go on tracing up the history of the sugar industry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Everything done for the sugar industry has been initiated by this Government.

Mr. BRAND: Not at all.

Mr. VOWLES: We know very well that the best results that the sugar-growers ever got out of the industry were when they got a guaranteed price of £30 6s. 8d. per ton and we know that very nearly fell through because of the neglect and delay of the Queensland Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Nonsense.

Mr. VOWLES: We know that the then Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, had to take certain steps to bring about finality. The Government at that time was being dominated by industrial organisations outside, and they were not in a position to consent to the proposals of Mr. Hughes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Tell us something about Knox's proposal.

Mr. VOWLES: It is all very well for the hon. member for Herbert to talk. He gets away up in the Herbert electorate, and tells them whatever he likes, but, when an hon. member on the floor of this House is dealing with public problems, we expect him to deal with them fairly and that political capital should be eliminated.

Mr. HYNES: You connived at the shelving of the Sugar Cane Prices Boards Act of 1913.

Mr. VOWLES: I never did anything of the kind. I was one of those who voted against it, but I subsequently voted in favour of it.

Mr. BRAND: And the Government had to amend it later on.

Mr. COLLINS: And the electors nearly amended you.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not think it is necessary for the hon. member for Mitchell to apologise for his return to this House even if he got an increased majority. No one neglected his electorate more than I did during the recent election, and no one was more pleased with the result than I was.

The Governor's Speech also contains the following paragraphs:—

"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."

That being so, it strikes me as very strange indeed that the Government should consider this an opportune time to introduce legislation, notice of which was given this afternoon by the Secretary for Public Works, for an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act, with a view to bringing all classes of workers within the ambit of the Act and bringing about what is known in the country as the rural workers' log.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You cannot deal with that now.

[Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: Why cannot I? Surely I can anticipate any legislation forecast in the Governor's Speech, and surely I can do so without taking directions from the Secretary for Public Works as to what I shall deal with or what I shall not deal with. It seems as if the hon. gentleman does not wish his department to be criticised. My point is that, if these industries are suffering from disabilities—more particularly the dairying industry—the present is not an opportune time to introduce legislation which, to my mind, is going to hamper those industries and bring about a decrease of production.

Mr. DUNSTAN: It may help them.

Mr. VOWLES: And it may not help them. I would like to remind hon members opposite that, when they were dealing with other industries, they were possibly dealing with those where prices could be artificially created, where you could assist wages by imposing import and excise duties. In those instances the increased wages could be provided for and a price created which would return a fair margin of profit; but in this instance you are dealing with commodities, the sale price of which we cannot control. When the world's markets decide what the price is going to be to the producer, then I think you would create an artificial wage; and it would be altogether wrong to attempt to create artificial wages in those industries until we are satisfied that the persons primarily engaged are able to get a living wage for themselves and the members of their families who are engaged in that work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: According to your contention, the workers in those industries are not getting a living wage now.

Mr. VOWLES: We hear about the wonderful results got from time to time by dairy farmers for one year, but, if you go into the business of any dairy farmer for one year, you find that, if you charge up interest on the capital that is invested in the enterprise, if you charge the farmer's wages against it at Arbitration Court rates, and if you charge the labour of his family at the same rates, very few of them are making a profit at all. Handsome profits are made during some seasons of the year, but for the year round on a proper business basis 99 per cent. of the cases would be found to be carrying on at a loss. It would be to their advantage if they and the members of their families, instead of having capital sunk in the enterprise, were to work on neighbouring farms at the ruling Arbitration Court wages.

Mr. DUNSTAN: All those things are taken into consideration by the Court.

Mr. VOWLES: I know they are, but the reason I refer to this is that, if the Emu Park Convention has decided that the Government have got to do this, then one of the first acts of legislation must be the alteration of the Industrial Arbitration Act, bringing all workers within its ambit. You have got to realise that, when faced with the same position, Mr. Justice Higgins, in the Federal Arbitration Court, said that, if an industry cannot afford the wages, that industry must go down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: When did he say that?

Mr. VOWLES: He said it in one of his decisions. If the hon. gentleman wants all

this information I will give it to him later. He is like another gentleman I met during the election campaign who asked me if I could tell him the various surpluses of the Commonwealth and of the various States and of all the countries in the continent of Europe. However, I want to impress these matters upon the House. I say that, if you are going to start interfering with these industries, you are going to stop production; and, if you are going to stop production, you will stop development, and, instead of creating employment, you are going to increase unemployment and send people out of the country.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You said the same thing about the sugar industry.

Mr. VOWLES: That is quite a different matter. In the sugar industry you have a price put upon the article produced, which enables the grower to pay decent wages, to make a handsome profit, and which also makes provision for the miller and the refiner. But in the other cases it is suggested that you are going to create an artificial price through Government pools, or you are going to do something which is going to ensure a man who puts wheat into the ground that, first of all, he is going to get his own wages, or that he is going to get back the wages later on in some other direction to recoup him. It is a very big problem. I say that workers in agricultural districts, in proportion to the hours they work, do not receive wages equivalent to the wages received by persons working in the city. You have to take into consideration also the workers' disabilities. Every person who makes up his mind to go into the country has to suffer some disability, from the fact of living there, whether it be in the form of wages or in the form referred to by His Excellency the Governor when delivering his Speech to the Chamber, when he said—

“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.”

If you analyse that statement, you will find it is all right; but closer settlement is a question of degree. I live in an area which is supposed in some parts to be closely settled, as every acre of good ground has been selected under some form of tenure. But the “amenities” to which His Excellency referred and the standard of comfort have not been provided by the Government in the form of education for the children and in other directions. People even in closely settled areas have found it necessary to leave their land and go away and join the big numbers who are living in the cities at the present time. The advisers of His Excellency speak about the deficit of the year's budget, and they go on to say—

“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.”

The Premier finished up the last financial year certainly with a smaller deficit than he anticipated; but you have got to realise that he had a record revenue, and Queensland, with a rising revenue year after year, is showing a series of deficits. When you take into consideration that we are the only State in the whole of the Commonwealth which on the 30th June last showed a deficit—all the other States showed surpluses—then does it not make us wonder whether the finances of this State are being handled in the way that they should be?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The electors must have been satisfied.

Mr. VOWLES: They were not satisfied. You have got to judge a Government on its finances. Every other Government in the Commonwealth was able to carry on with a credit balance. Queensland was the only one with a deficit. It sets one thinking, and one is rather apt to ask himself what is the reason. Is it good business management? Is it sane administration; or is it the fact that we are continuing experimental legislation, going in for business which is not an ordinary good business risk? Knowing these things to be failures, we are perpetuating them and accumulating deficits when an ordinary business man would cut them out. Now Queensland has added to its deficits £184,979, whereas New South Wales has a surplus of £805,000; Victoria one of £50,000; South Australia one of £11,000; Western Australia one of £225,000; the Commonwealth one of £1,266,158; and New Zealand one of £1,315,683. Queensland—the one State which is experimenting—is the Cinderella State as far as finances are concerned. It is up to the Premier and Treasurer to go slow in this matter, and study our financial [5 p.m.] position, realising that we have a large accumulation of deficits and large loans which are maturing, and which have to be renewed very shortly.

Just immediately prior to the general election I noticed from the public Press that the Treasurer was selling bonds over the counter at the Treasury. Huge sums of money were being invested by companies in the South, and the hon. gentleman gave it out to the public that we were in a prosperous condition and that our securities were being sought after. But he did not tell the people that he was offering at that very time a higher rate of interest than any of the other States, and that people were taking the bonds because they were a gilt-edged security, and as a pure matter of business, because they were getting a higher rate of interest, and the bonds were free of income tax as well. The Premier was not playing the game to the Commonwealth when he was selling these Treasury bonds at a high rate. He was creating a fictitious value for money, and, when the Commonwealth loan was floated, it was not fully subscribed, and the Commonwealth, of which we are members and have to do the paying, is being penalised because a high rate of interest is being required. I venture to say that we are going to get it in the back of the neck when the time comes to renew our loans. We have established what we consider is a fair rate for our money, and it will be a very high rate—as much, probably, as 2½ per cent. more than the money we have borrowed has cost on the average—that we shall have to pay when we come to renew

Mr. Vowles.]

our loans. We are up against this increased interest bill merely from the fact that our own Treasurer came into the market, and for electioneering purposes—he was short of cash and had to carry on important works at election time—created a high value, and we are going to be kept up to that value in the future.

I heard somebody the other night make a remark which, if it was not parliamentary, at any rate was very expressive; he referred to someone talking about “stinking fish.” During the election there was a report of a speech of Mr. W. Cooper, the hon. member for Rosewood, in the Brisbane “Courier” of 16th April, and which has never been contradicted. These gentlemen on the other side who speak about “stinking fish”—I have heard them very often referred to as the “Stinking Fish party”—probably will be able to explain what actuated Mr. Cooper to make these remarks. The report says—

“Mr. Cooper asserted that in being practically bankrupt the present Government was in no different position to any other Government in the world at the present time.”

Did you ever hear any member on this side of the House say that Queensland was bankrupt, or practically bankrupt?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes!

Mr. VOWLES: It is a regrettable thing when a man, who is coming before the public as a member of the recent Parliament and seeking their suffrages for the future, gets up and tells the people straight out that Queensland is practically bankrupt. Probably he is in the know; he is a member of the Government party, and has inside knowledge which perhaps the Opposition have not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He may not have said that.

Mr. VOWLES: The report has been referred to on many occasions, and it has never been contradicted.

Mr. BULLOCK: Such is fame.

Mr. VOWLES: I propose to go a little further in regard to that speech. It brings to my mind certain statements which were made in this House during last session in respect to the Commission which was responsible for the Government being returned at the last general election—that Commission which altered the boundaries of the electorates, and, when we referred to it, we were told we were taking an unfair advantage of individuals by attacking them when they had no opportunity of replying. At the time it was suggested, to use a sporting term, that they were “in the bag,” and were doing what they were told to do, and, when that suggestion was made here, the Premier rose in high dudgeon and asked us was it a manly thing to make such a suggestion. Let us hear what Mr. W. Cooper had to say on the matter. This is what he said—

“The elimination of certain electorates was done so as to give greater representation to the metropolitan areas, and the fact that no Socialist electorates were cut out was to be accounted for by reason of the fact that it was not natural for any Government to reduce its own strength in the country.”

What a commentary that is on the honour and integrity of the men who composed

[Mr. Vowles.

that Commission! And what a charge against the Government by one of their own followers when he tells you, “It was not natural for any Government to reduce its own strength in the country.” We heard so much about that Commission during the last session that I would not have referred to that statement to-day were it not for the fact that it is not the creation of any member on this side of the Chamber; it is not a fabrication. It is a direct statement made to his own electors by one hon. member who, presumably, is “in the know,” because the boundaries of the electorate of Rosewood were altered very materially, and a very large industrial vote was taken away from the Ipswich electorate and placed in Rosewood.

Now, getting back to the Speech—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear; and laughter.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You don't like it.

Mr. VOWLES: There are some matters which are foreshadowed in the Speech which I trust this time will see the light of day. High up on the list I notice there is a Forestry Bill. I sincerely trust we are going to have forestry legislation in Queensland. Quite recently I was asked to bring a local matter before the Premier. It was in the nature of relief work for the selectors in the Jandowae district. I was asked to bring this matter before the Premier as a relief matter, because the people in that district have suffered very, very severely as a result of the drought which still exists in that district, and in some other districts. There seems to be a feeling abroad in the city that the drought has broken. I wish to goodness I could say that that was so. But I can assure hon. members that the drought to-day in the Dalby district and districts adjoining is worse than it was in 1902.

The position, so far as the selectors in these districts are concerned, is that in many cases they have lost the whole of the stock on their dairy farms. They are honourable people who do not want to take rations; they want work. I asked the Premier—and I regret to say that I have had no reply yet—to provide them with relief work in building an extension of the present Jandowae Railway to what is known as the Forty-five Mile peg out in a forest where some of the best timber in Queensland is growing.

Mr. BULLOCK: Is this in your own electorate?

Mr. VOWLES: It is in my electorate, and close handy to a mill, which is in a suitable quarter for railway purposes. What I have asked, and still ask, members of the Cabinet to consider—more particularly the Secretary for Railways—is that the Commissioner for Railways should consider this line in the same way as he did the Chinchilla-Barakula line, and that he should work it as a departmental line for the benefit of the timber which he is going to get for his own purposes and for the purposes of the general public. I am told that there are 80,000,000 feet of hardwood there suitable for any purpose at all. Beside that, there are other timbers in huge quantities. If that line were constructed—and it is a line which could be put down at a minimum of cost—it would serve a treble purpose. It

would give those selectors a light line, which would suit their purpose so far as their cream and other produce are concerned. The people were promised this line fourteen years ago. It would give them relief work in the meantime, and help to maintain themselves and their families, and open up those vast areas of land which must sooner or later be opened up, and it will be of great advantage to the Railway Department in particular.

I wish to refer to another little matter which affects my own electorate. It is only when we have a drought that the urgent necessity for some communication between the Northern Downs and the Burnett district is brought home to the people who live on the Northern Downs. In ordinary times maize which is grown at Kingaroy has to be brought all the way round by Theebine to Brisbane, thence to Toowoomba, and then to Dalby, and when it is landed at Dalby the freight is more than the maize is worth. We have asked the present Government to consider that matter, and it has gone so far that the Public Works Commission has reported favourably on a connection between Bell, in my district, and Booeene, which is across the range, in the electorate of the hon. member for Nanango. During the election my opponent, who was standing in the interests of the Government, made the open declaration that he had the authority of the Premier for the statement—and I believe the Premier himself has confirmed it—that one of the first lines in the country districts to which they would pay attention would be that connection, and that it would be made almost immediately. I regret to say now the election is over, and things did not turn out as the Government or their nominee expected, the further consideration of this matter has been deferred for another twelve months. The number of stock which have been lost during this dry spell, which could have been brought across country if there had been railway communication between those two points, would have paid for the cost of construction.

The hon. member for Mitchell spoke about resumptions this afternoon, and I could not help thinking that the Government should remember that there are areas of land in the Burnett district, in the Nanango electorate, and South Burnett, and in the northern portion of my electorate adjoining the Bunya Mountains, now used for grazing purposes, and eminently suited for agriculture. Where this extension is being asked for there are about 180,000 acres of high-class agricultural land, which at present is being held under grazing tenure, some of which falls in this year, and the balance next year and the following year, so everything is favourable for going straight ahead with that railway.

Mr. CARTER: You are working the pump handle.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not a matter of the pump handle. If the hon. member will read the evidence taken before the Public Works Commission, he will see that it does not refer most to Dalby. It will certainly materially benefit the town of Dalby, but it is the stock-owners from Roma and St. George right down below the extension of the proposed Tara line who will be able to utilise it and save their stock in times of drought at a minimum of cost.

I will not continue very much further.

I did not intend to say as much as I have done when I got up, because, like the majority of speakers, I am a little weak as the result of influenza. I notice that most of the measures that are coming forward are in the interests—or supposedly so—of the man on the land. We have seen that before, but we have always found that, when we got the legislation before us, there were certain things which were very desirable in it, but there was also tacked on to it something which was not wanted. When we see the various Bills during the session, I hope we shall find that the Government have a straight-out bonâ fide desire to do what they told the electors they proposed, and that the legislation is not going to be loaded like it was in the past.

Mr. KIRWAN: Did you not publish a column advertisement in the "Daily Mail," saying that you would support the Primary Producers Bill?

Mr. VOWLES: The records of "Hansard" will show what we did with the Primary Producers Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No one who read your speech in "Hansard" understands where you stood.

Mr. VOWLES: What I said was on behalf of the Opposition as its leader at the time. I told the Government that it was our intention to support the Bill, and to make it better, if possible. Surely there is nothing that you cannot understand in a statement such as that. At a later stage, when an amendment was moved to defer the consideration of the Bill, I said, on behalf of the Country party, that we did not propose to support the amendment. The records will show that I, and many members of the Country party, voted with the Government. Does the hon. member say that is not supporting the Bill? When we got into Committee we showed the Minister, who is interjecting, that he did not know anything about his own Bill, and we made a Bill of it for him. It is the only time on record where we brought twenty-three amendments forward, nineteen of which were accepted, yet the hon. gentleman has the temerity to turn round and say that we were pretending we were out to support the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that.

Mr. VOWLES: I would advise the hon. member for Brisbane to look up "Hansard" for last session, page 364, where he will find my speech, and he will see that we kept to our undertaking with the Government.

Mr. KIRWAN: I will get a few extracts from your speech.

Mr. VOWLES: We supported the measure and made it a better measure, and if anybody can claim any good that is to be got out of it it is not the Government, because it was contributed to by every hon. member in the Chamber. If there was one member in the Assembly who did not know anything about the Bill or its contents, it was the hon. gentleman who was in charge of it. (Government laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I desire to congratulate the Governor on his nice little Opening Speech, and, before proceeding with my general remarks, I desire also to congratulate the hon. member for Warrego

Mr. Morgan.]

upon his prospective appointment to the Land Court. (Hear, hear!) I have had a great deal to do with the Department of Public Lands during the last few years, and I can say that, as Secretary for Public Lands, the hon. gentleman has shown himself generally sympathetic towards the man on the land, although, unfortunately, the land laws of Queensland are often very drastic and have prevented him from using his own judgment and displaying that sympathy which he would otherwise have been able to exercise. I feel sure that, as a judge of the Land Court, the experience he possesses of the trials and tribulations of the man in the country will lead him to be sympathetic in dealing with the matters that come before him.

There is one clause in the Governor's Speech which I desire to quote—

"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."

But the Speech does not contain any suggestion for remedying these things. I certainly think that, knowing as they do that some very important industries in Queensland are "down and out," it is the duty of the Government to move in the direction of trying to bring about a more satisfactory state of affairs. What have the Government done to try to place the cattle industry, for instance, on a more solid foundation?

Mr. CARTER: What have the cattle people done for themselves?

Mr. MORGAN: The cattle people are endeavouring to do all that it is possible for them to do, but, without the sympathy and assistance of the Government, they can do nothing. The Government have the power to do; the cattle people have the right to suggest what they shall do. They have made their suggestions, and they are endeavouring to right the industry, but the Government are not showing that sympathy with the industry which they ought.

Mr. HYNES: They have reduced railway freights.

Mr. MORGAN: Does the hon. member know that in 1914 railway freights were 60 per cent. lower than they were a few months ago, before the Government made a reduction? Certainly since then they have reduced them by 30 per cent., but they are still much higher than they were in 1914, when the industry was flourishing.

Mr. HYNES: The freights in Victoria are 55 per cent. higher than they are here.

Mr. MORGAN: The cattle industry has not suffered in Victoria, and the Victorian cattle industry can well afford to pay higher freights. In Victoria and right throughout the South the cattle producers were getting twice the amount for their cattle that we were getting, and to-day in Victoria they are getting from £3 to £3 10s. per 100 lb., whilst we are getting from 12s. 6d. to £1. We could well afford, and we would not object to pay, high freights if the prices of our cattle were high.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What suggestion do the cattle men make?

Mr. MORGAN: I have made scores of suggestions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The industry has been a failure.

[Mr. Morgan.

Mr. MORGAN: Not in Australia. The cattle industry is not a failure in New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia, and the unfortunate part about it is that we in Queensland have the finest fat cattle in Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. MORGAN: I do know what I am talking about.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Every cattle man admits that they are too late in maturing and they are badly bred.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not think the hon. gentleman understood what I said. I said that we had the finest fat cattle in Australia. What State can produce better fat cattle than Queensland? It is a well-known fact that at shows in Brisbane Queensland produces the finest fat cattle of any State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They do not mature early enough.

Mr. MORGAN: We have been getting reports from Victoria, from every other State, and from England, and we have as early maturing cattle as they have in Victoria and New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But other places which compete with us overseas have earlier maturing cattle.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member is referring to Argentina. I am not talking about Argentina. We have to look after our own markets. Why is it, simply because we export 19 per cent. of our cattle, that 81 per cent. should be given away—not to the consumer but to somebody else? During the last two years the butchers of Brisbane have been buying the best of our fat cattle—that is, their weekly supplies—at an average from 12s. 6d. to 15s. per 100 lb. at Enoggera, or 1½d. to 1½d. a lb., with hide and by-products given in. I defy the State butcher shops or the private shops to deny my statement. But what have they been charging over the counter? Who has been getting the benefit of those low prices? How have the State butcher shops made £200,000? By exploiting both the producer and the consumer of stock!

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: And they have been assisted by the private butchers of Queensland, who have made more money since the State butcher shops have been in existence than at any time during the carrying on of their business. That cannot be denied.

The HOME SECRETARY: What suggestion have you to make?

Mr. MORGAN: I have a suggestion into which I am putting my money. Within the course of a day or two the people of Queensland will be asked to support co-operative meatworks, and until we get our co-operative meatworks, so that we can control the profits and give them back to the producer of cattle, I do not know what we can do.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not acquire one of the privately owned meatworks?

Mr. MORGAN: There is one of the privately controlled meatworks which has been coining money—not merely making profits—I refer to Borthwicks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because they organise their customers.

Mr. MORGAN: The reason why the other companies have not been making money is that they work for three or four months with perhaps a thousand cattle and expect to make a season like that pay for a costly staff and an interest bill of perhaps half a million pounds on their works.

Mr. CARTER: You know they make more than that.

Mr. MORGAN: If Borthwicks can do that, why can they not do it?

Mr. CARTER: Why do you not do it?

Mr. MORGAN: We are going to do it.

Mr. CARTER: You are waiting for the Government.

Mr. MORGAN: I admit that I have said that it is the duty of the Government to assist us, but, unfortunately, we have not had from the Government in the past that help which they ought to give us. If the Government find us as cattle men only hopping along, as it were, they should help us to get along faster. Instead of that, they have done nothing to assist the cattle men. They have only made money out of the unfortunate people engaged in that industry. Why did the Government not reduce the

[5.30 p.m.] rentals on our cattle holdings?

They increased the rentals by 50 per cent., 100 per cent., and 200 per cent. when the industry was profitable, and we did not complain. The moment the industry ceased to be profitable why did the Government not come along and say, "We will reduce your rentals during the depression"? That would have been of some assistance to us. Why did the Government not reduce our other taxation in the industry?

The HOME SECRETARY: Is it not a fact that under your form of organisation you paid a man £3,500 a year for political propaganda?

Mr. MORGAN: I am not connected with that organisation. I wish now to deal with the question of closer settlement in Queensland. I am going to deal with the matter from a non-party point of view. I recognise that this Government will be in power for three years, and evidently there is going to be a considerable area of land thrown open for settlement during that period. I have had experience of land settlement in this and other States. In my electorate there are large and important areas of land that are going to be resumed for closer settlement. I do not in any way find fault with the Government for resuming that land. It is the policy of the Country party to resume land, both freehold and leasehold, along the existing railways. If we had been on the Government benches we would have resumed land for the purposes of closer settlement along the existing railways. We would have resumed only the land which was suitable for that purpose. The land in my electorate to be resumed to which I refer is in the Goondiwindi district—Welltown, Callandoon, and other holdings—both leasehold and freehold. If you look at the records of the Department of Public Lands for the last twenty years, you will find that, no matter what Government have been in power, generally speaking, every resumption, whether of freehold or leasehold land, has proved a failure. There may be isolated instances where holdings have been successfully resumed, but, generally speaking, the resumptions have been a failure, and the people who

have been placed upon those lands have not had a fair opportunity of making a living.

Mr. BULCOCK: They paid too much for them.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly. I do not know whether the officials of the Department of Public Lands or the Ministers were to blame, or whether pressure was brought to bear on the Ministers; but, unfortunately, in almost every case the failure of the resumptions has been brought about by the fact that the areas for settlement were too small.

Mr. COLLINS: These resumptions were made when the hon. gentleman sat behind the Government.

Mr. MORGAN: I am trying to deal with this matter from a non-party point of view. We know that in the Goondiwindi district, one of the finest wool areas in Australia is going to be resumed. The wool grown on Welltown is equal to wool grown in any part of Australia. If that land is to be utilised for any other purpose than producing wool, it will not be a success. It is at the present time producing a commodity that returns the greatest possible value. Australia produces 60 per cent. of the fine wools of the world. We have a monopoly in that respect. That is the only commodity that Australia produces with which we can dictate to other parts of the world. With organisation we can, if we so desire, dictate to the rest of the world. We can tell the rest of the world just what they will have to pay for our wool. If the Government are going to cut up the Welltown area into 1,280-acre blocks, which areas are only suitable for dairying and agricultural purposes, it is going to mean ruin to the district and to the people on that land. That land cannot be put to a better use than woolgrowing. I hope the Minister will see when it is resumed that it is not cut up into smaller areas than 5,000-acre blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why should you want 5,000 acres to grow wheat?

Mr. MORGAN: The land is not suitable for wheatgrowing. It is only suitable for woolgrowing. If it is put to any other use, then a great injury is going to be done to Queensland and Australia. It produces the finest wool in Australia, and you are going to make a mistake if you are going to allow the land to be used for agricultural, dairying, or wheatgrowing purposes. It is not suitable for those purposes. If it was suitable for dairying, the amount of money that could be obtained from that land for butter would be vastly exceeded by the amount of money that could be obtained for wool. If you endeavour to use the Goondiwindi country to produce wheat or butter when the land is suitable for wool only, you are going to do an injury to the revenue of Queensland. The land will grow good wool. It will grow nothing more profitably. Let me take the case of a grazier in a small way with 2,000 sheep. He can make a decent living with 2,000 sheep. In good seasons probably the country will carry a sheep to the acre, but you must take the adverse seasons into consideration also. To run 2,000 sheep in season and out of season it is necessary to have 5,000 acres. It is far better to have fifty men on that country who can make a decent living, pay their way, and educate their children in the way they should be educated, meet their bills to the storekeeper as well as to the Government, than to have 100 men who are continually going to the Government

Mr. Morgan.]

asking for their rentals to be reduced to enable them to pay their storekeeper, meet other liabilities, and give to their kiddies the education that they deserve. What are the Government going to do? For the sake of putting a number of men on small areas, are they going to turn away from the production of wool, for which that land is eminently suitable, and which is practically the only thing that particular locality is suitable for?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does the hon. gentleman say that the Goondiwindi land is not suitable for wheatgrowing?

Mr. MORGAN: It is not suitable. A great part of this land that is proposed to be resumed is subject to periodical flooding.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Some of it is. Is not some of it good wheat land?

Mr. MORGAN: There may be some areas on the high ground suitable for wheatgrowing; but, if you cut this land up into 5,000-acre blocks for the purpose of growing wool, it is necessary to have some high land to which sheep can be shifted in time of flood. If you had a wheat crop 2 feet or 3 feet high, and the McIntyre River overflowed, all those crops would be covered, and would be washed away. If you get proper warning, you can shift sheep. Wheat can be grown in some parts of the Goondiwindi district, but, generally speaking, it is not a profitable crop to grow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What time of the year do the floods occur?

Mr. MORGAN: The floods occur at all times. Two years ago they had three floods within eight or ten weeks at Goondiwindi. That was in July. Generally speaking, the floods come in the summer season. I would advise the Minister, before anything definite is decided upon, to create a board in the Goondiwindi, Maranoa, or other district in which it is proposed to resume the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The trouble with local boards is that they are just as likely to be jaundiced as anybody else.

Mr. MORGAN: My idea of the creation of a local board is that you would, first of all, appoint a man in a particular district who has been a successful grazier, one who understands the business from A to Z, and not a man who has been spoon-fed; then pick for your next member of the board a member of Parliament—a man who has engaged in mixed farming.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have already had brought under my notice the cases of some big men who have urged the throwing open of these small areas so that they would be able to purchase them.

Mr. MORGAN: In addition to your practical grazier and practical farmer I would, as the third member, appoint your Land Commissioner. These men should be an advisory board. They should be instructed to go over the land, take evidence if necessary, and then advise the Government for what purpose the land should be opened.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The main thing is, what should be the size of agricultural farms or pastoral areas.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have a pretty good knowledge myself of what is a living area. That is, outside of whether it is pastoral or agricultural land. That is where all the trouble has arisen.

[Mr. Morgan.

Mr. MORGAN: Don't you think that a local board created in the locality is best suited to determine that? They would take evidence, inspect the land, and then advise the hon. gentleman whether it is suitable for pastoral or agricultural purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We won't make the mistake in the case of pastoral lands of cutting up the land into too small areas.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government should adopt the policy straight away not to open any land for selection until permanent water is first placed upon it. If there is no water on the land proposed to be thrown open for selection, the Government, through its Water Supply Department, should make that provision by sinking a bore, locking the creeks, or making tanks. My idea is that, if it was intended to open up land for selection as an agricultural farm under perpetual lease—although I do not believe in that tenure—at a rental of 10s. per acre without any surface water, and the cost of obtaining water was 3s. per acre, it would be more in the interests of the country and the selector if selection was deferred until that water was secured and then open the land to selection at the original rental plus the cost of obtaining water. The Government then would receive interest on its outlay over a period of ninety-nine years. You are then putting the interest on to the selections, and offering the selector a block of land on which he might possibly make a living.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not going to do it that way; but by another way which will have the same result. The land will have the cost of obtaining water charged against it, either individually or collectively.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not particular as to the method of distributing the costs, so long as the water supply offered is sufficient for the block. If there is a selector to-day who has not a water supply sufficient for the purpose of working his land, I think the Government should, on application, endeavour to obtain that water in accordance with the plans and specifications of its officers and add the cost to the rental.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are going to do that, even on land that has already been settled.

Mr. MORGAN: I am glad to hear that statement. That is what I have advocated for years, and what I advocated right throughout the election.

Mr. COSTELLO: They have all our policy.

Mr. MORGAN: I also wish to deal with another matter that is of vital importance—that is, the condition of a number of selectors throughout Queensland who are down and out. It is no use saying one thing and meaning another. The unfortunate men have got nothing. Some of these men owe the Government two or three years' rent. I quite appreciate what the hon. member for Dalby has said—that the drought has not broken. As soon as a shower or fifty points of rain falls in the western districts that are affected by a drought, the metropolitan Press come out with black headlines, "Drought broken," and people believe it has broken. Those in the drought-affected areas are suffering severely to-day, and have done so for the last twelve months.

We have had some relief rain, but not sufficient. I want the Secretary for Public Lands to listen to this. If the drought were to break to-morrow, the selectors would be unable to go back and work their selections if the Government immediately asked them to meet their back rents. Any cattle or stock which they had saved would have to be sold to meet those liabilities, and they would be left without any stock. Would it not be better if the Government capitalised that rent and spread it over the remaining term of the lease?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a limit to extending the capitalisation.

Mr. MORGAN: I quite realise that. Supposing a man owed £20 in rent, instead of calling upon him to pay that amount at once I would suggest, if the lease had a further twenty years to run, that the £20 be spread over that period, which would mean he would be called upon to pay £1 a year more. He could then meet that liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I find already that the rental question is not a very important factor in the success or non-success of carrying on on the land.

Mr. MORGAN: Land rental may not be a very important factor in good seasons, but if the seasons happen to be adverse, and he gets two or three years in arrears, it is a very important factor.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The want of water is a very much more important factor.

Mr. MORGAN: I admit that. I am dealing with those unfortunate people who have got behind, and who are behind to-day and are not able to meet their responsibilities. I appeal to the Secretary for Public Lands to try and make some amendment to the Act to provide that, where in his judgment these men are deserving of some assistance, he can capitalise the back rental, and by so doing enable these men to carry on and make a living. The Government by this method would not lose anything, and these men would be kept on the land.

The PREMIER: Would not any sane Government do that?

Mr. MORGAN: I am asking the Government to do that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a limit to writing off.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not believe in writing off. I am not asking you to write off any arrears of rental, but to capitalise the arrears and add them on to the remaining term of the lease—ten, twenty, or thirty years, whatever it may be. I also wish to point out in connection with matters appertaining to land that the Government should offer liberal terms to convert those lands which are not being used as such now into sheep country. In Queensland a great area of land eminently suitable for raising sheep is still being used for cattle purposes, and if something is done in the nature I suggest the desired end might be brought about.

I also wish to refer to the promises made by the Premier during the election campaign. While the hon. gentleman was in my electorate he made promises to the people there that, if returned, the Government would spend about £1,000,000. I remember the condition attached to the fulfilment of those promises was the return of

the Government. I am very doubtful, now that he has been returned, whether he will fulfil them.

The PREMIER: Where did I make that promise?

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman made that promise in his speeches right from the time he entered my electorate at Chinchilla till he reached Yeulba at the other side. The hon. gentleman promised that, if returned, where it was necessary to lock a creek he would do so, or where it was necessary to put down artesian bores he would see that they were put down. All those promises were made on the understanding that the Government were returned.

The PREMIER: I remember one request I had was to declare an open season for opossums in order to give relief to the selectors in that district.

Mr. MORGAN: And the reply the Premier gave was that he would not. The Government intended to open the opossum season, and I knew it, and I told a great number of people so, and that the Government did not want to open the opossum season until after the elections, because, if they did so, a great number of their supporters would get away into the bush and would not record their votes. They made use of the opossum to get their votes, and after they got their votes they opened the season.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: If they saved their own skins they also saved the opossum's skin. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: The opening of the opossum season was very opportune to a great number of people in my electorate, who were absolutely on the verge of starvation, and, had the season not been opened, I do not know what would have happened. The unfortunate thing is that the Government would not open the opossum season when they should have done in order to give these men relief work. In my electorate a great number of people wanted relief and were hard up against it. It would afford those people relief; yet the [6 p.m.] Government will not go on with that railway work. These people are hard up against it. Because they do not come in large numbers to Brisbane, create a demonstration, rush the Government offices—as the unemployed do here and cause a disturbance with the police—the Government are not doing anything for them. I ask the Premier to initiate relief works in those localities. There is severe distress there. I hope the Government will not penalise those unfortunate people. If the electorate was represented by a Labour man, they would go on with relief work. I hope they will recognise that the circumstances are deserving of recognition. Railway work was commenced on the Tara-Surat line prior to the elections. I was very pleased at that, notwithstanding that it was on the eve of the election, and I congratulated the Premier at the time for going on with the construction of that line. Men who were down and out, who did not know where the next bag of sugar or flour was coming from, were afforded relief. But they were not on more than a fortnight before an organiser came along. He went around to those workers and demanded £2 from everyone of them—

Mr. COLLINS: £1 5s.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: He demanded £2, and he succeeded in getting it. I was told by one of the secretaries of the Workers' Political Organisation that the organiser got that money under false pretences. Anyhow, he got it. The men were working only a fortnight at the most, and had to pay up. Other men who came with their swags were given relief work, whilst many settlers remained idle. The organiser told those men that until they paid the £2 they could not have their names placed upon the call roll. They paid the £2, although they were not guaranteed work, to have their names placed on the call roll and to have their chances considered when work was available. Some men had to borrow the money from the storekeeper or the butcher in order to pay the organiser of the Australian Workers' Union the £2. The work was not only started as relief work, but it was started for political purposes. However, I again congratulate the Premier for commencing that work, notwithstanding the fact that it might have been the means of my defeat, and I hope he will continue the work. I hope the Government will link the line with the rich grazing areas around St. George, because, in my opinion, the St. George and Surat districts should both be served by that line. It will become one of the chief lines in Queensland and will open up rich grazing lands. It is the most direct route to both these important centres, and I hope that fact will be remembered, and that the construction of the line will not cease until it reaches both Surat and St. George.

I want to refer to another matter, and that is that the game was not played in that locality at the elections. Whether the officers connected with the construction of the line had instructions from the Government I do not know, but this is what happened. Although the Saturday on which the election took place was a public holiday, the men engaged on that line—the greater part of them settlers who would have left on Friday night and spent Saturday and Sunday at home—were told that, if they did not attend the roll call on the Saturday morning, and voted anywhere else, they would be dismissed on Monday morning.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who told them that?

Mr. MORGAN: They were told that by the organiser. The roll was called on the Saturday morning, and those men, after answering the roll call, were marched down to the polling place like a regiment of soldiers to register their votes. (Government dissent.) They were prevented from voting elsewhere because they were afraid of losing their jobs. I know what I am talking about, because my son was sent to that particular polling place to act as my scrutineer. He addressed the men and told them that he was surprised to think that men who had fought for the liberty of the country should allow themselves to be marched like a regiment of soldiers up to the polling booth.

Mr. COLLINS: You got a bad vote there.

Mr. MORGAN: I got a bad vote there because those men were informed that it would be known how every one of them voted, and, if they voted against the Labour Government, they were going to be dismissed on Monday morning. They told both my son and myself that they considered their wives and families of more importance to them than recording a vote for me. They

were down and out, and I could not say anything at all against them. That is what happened in my electorate, and there is no denying the fact. I have evidence—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where is it?

Mr. MORGAN: It is the evidence of my own son and of myself. At any rate, I am making the statement publicly, and I say that that was not a fair thing to do. It did not make any difference, but I think I would be doing a wrong to my district if I did not expose the tactics that were used in connection with that particular matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did the men complain?

Mr. MORGAN: They complained to my son and to myself. They would have gone away to their homes, where they could have voted as they liked. Again, when the returning officer was gumming down the voting papers, it was found that nine out of ten had not sufficient gum, and the returning officer had to get out some gum to make the adhesion satisfactory. The men saw this, and they told me that their votes would be recognised, as there was not sufficient gum on the ballot-papers. That was true, and I suppose it can be verified in every other district.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): Mr. Speaker, I wish again to congratulate you on your appointment to the high office of Speaker of this Assembly without a contest. I am sure that during the last ses-

[7 p.m.] sion of Parliament you gave each party in this House a fair go, and some hon. members had a fairer go than they could have expected.

In regard to the loss of the "Douglas Mawson," which took place in March of this year, I want to offer my condolences to the relatives and friends of those who were lost with that ship. No doubt those who go to sea to help feed the people who are pioneering in the Gulf district deserve every consideration, and one and all, I am sure, deeply regret the loss of the "Douglas Mawson."

I desire also to congratulate the Secretary for Public Lands on his appointment to one of the most important departments in this State—the Lands Department. This is a department that gives opportunities to any young man taking up politics as a business. Our friends on the other side often refer to members on this side as professional politicians, and we are quite prepared to accept that designation. Members who do not make a profession of politics in this State are not going to get very far.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: If we are paid to carry on the business of this State, we should attend to our duties and devote the whole of our time to the job we are paid to do, and not be conducting two or three second-hand businesses in Queen street. (Laughter.)

I had no intention to speak on the Address in Reply, but the hon. member for Murilla has raised one or two very important questions that deserve the very serious consideration of this Assembly. The hon. member referred to the pastoral industry. At the present time there is a great slump in the pastoral industry. It is practically "down and out." Men engaged

[Mr. Morgan.]

in that industry at the present time have no market for their stock, and to-day are not in a position to meet their obligations to the State or to anyone else. Unlike the hon. member for Murilla, I am not going to blame the Government for the position the cattle-growers of this State find themselves in. The cattle-grower himself is just as responsible, and probably more so, than any other person in Queensland. If there is one fellow who makes the "going good" when the market is good, it is the cattle man, and during the last seven or eight years he has been having a great feast, and common or ordinary beef was not good enough for him. He made the champagne flow while the going was good, and to-day he wants somebody else to carry the burden for him. The question of what the cattelman has done during the last eight years is not what we should take into consideration here to-night. The position in regard to this industry, as I said at the outset of my remarks, deserves serious consideration, as it is one of the most important industries in Queensland. The market difficulty will be adduced as a cause of the present position. There are many causes, and the market difficulty is one of them. I admit that there are no sales oversea on account of competition from the Argentina meat companies. No doubt Argentina is putting a better article on the market than Queensland has been doing. We all know the position of the meat industry at the cessation of the war. Our meat had been kept in the cold stores during the war, and, when the war finished, it was not fit for consumption. It would have paid the meat industry at the cessation of the war to dump all meat on hand in London at the time, and start on a fresh basis. Australia consumes 80 per cent. odd of her own production of meat, and yet to-day we find that the cattle-grower is unable to find a market even for that 80 per cent. at a price that would enable him to grow the cattle. I say that the consumer is paying the price that would enable him to grow the cattle, but through the lack of organisation, he is suffering through the middleman coming in and getting what rightly belongs to the cattle-grower. At the present time the industry is asked to carry a Meat Council. The Meat Council have been operating for some considerable time, and, if I am not mistaken, the hon. member for Murilla is a member of the Council. I want to know what the Meat Council has done since it has been established. That is a fair question, seeing that the hon. member is asking the Government what they have done. The Council say they are trying to get the industry back to a solid and self-supporting basis. What action have they taken? I notice that they are continually making trips to Melbourne and meeting there without much result. The Commonwealth Government control a line of steamers. Has the hon. member for Murilla, or have his friends on the Meat Council, approached the Commonwealth Government and asked them to man their ships which are lying idle, and to load them with beef and endeavour to find a market for it? Have they endeavoured to get the Commonwealth to take meat to the London market to be sold in competition with Argentina meat? According to press reports, the Council do not appear to have made any approach to the Commonwealth Government in that regard. They asked the Commonwealth Government to subsidise the industry, and the worker to accept a reduction of

wages. The worker immediately accepted a reduction, although, when the profits were good in the industry, the worker only on one occasion got an increase from the Meat Council without having to fight the issue in the Arbitration Court, or take direct action. Yet, as soon as the industry gets into a little trouble, the Meat Council call upon the people of the Commonwealth to support it by way of subsidy. I think that our meat can again be put into the London market in competition with the Argentina meat, if the Commonwealth Government are prepared, by way of subsidy, to man the Commonwealth ships and take the meat to London.

I suppose that the cattle men are about the worst organised body in the Commonwealth. The extreme wing of the pastoralists during the last eight or nine years has struck a levy of so much per 1,000 sheep or per 100 cattle for the purpose of trying to gratify the large leaseholders in their desire to get on to the Treasury benches of this State—that has been the whole object behind their organisation. The smaller men were getting good prices, and were prepared to contribute to any fund without making any inquiry. The case was not stated to them. The only case they have had put to them was that put by the paid Press, controlled by the meat money in Brisbane. During the last eight or nine years these people have continually spent their money in an effort to get on to these Treasury benches, with no other idea in their minds than that of obtaining an extension of leases for the large pastoral leaseholder, and squeezing out the small man.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It cost them a few thousand pounds last year.

Mr. RIORDAN: Yes; we know how desperate they were during the last session when the Government had a majority of only one. Knowing that they had faced the electors on two occasions, and that another appeal to the people would be fatal unless they could get into power by hook or by crook before it took place, and pass a Bill limiting the franchise, they tried every possible means to defeat the Government. Did they try to bring about their ends by propoganda, and by letting the people know all about it? No. They tried to do it by bribing members of this Legislature, and seeking them out in their homes in the dark hours of the night. If they are getting along well—making 40 per cent. or 50 per cent.—no crime is too great for their class.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: Now, I think the small cattle man is getting wise to those who are in receipt of £3,000 a year, and is going to make an effort to organise himself in the meat industry. He realises that individual effort of the Edkins type is never likely to get the cattle industry or any other industry anywhere, but that organised effort by those actually engaged in cattle raising is likely to get them for their cattle what they are justly entitled to. The hon. member for Murilla has told us that the cattle men are unable to get more than 1d. or 1½d. per lb. in the markets here, but if you go to any butcher shop you will pay 6d. and right up 10d. per lb. for your beef. Those figures show that there is something wrong in the distribution.

Mr. KERR: Do you think that the Commissioner of Prices should fix the price?

Mr. Riordan.]

Mr. RIORDAN: If the hon. member gives notice of his question, I will answer it to-morrow. (Laughter.) If the consumer has to pay up to 10d. per lb. for beef, then the cattle man who is raising the cattle is not getting a fair deal.

Mr. KERR: Why does the hon. gentleman not advocate that in caucus?

Mr. RIORDAN: My attitude in caucus is just the same as my attitude on the public platform. If the hon. gentleman does things in secret and with a simple mind, it is not for me to discuss that matter. The Government have endeavoured to do something to assist the cattle industry. In 1922, Messrs. Angliss and Kerr were very anxious to go on with the erection of meatworks in the Gulf country, where there are a million head of cattle within a radius of 200 miles of Karumba. They approached the Premier and said they were prepared to establish up-to-date meatworks at that place if the Government were prepared to assist them. The Premier told those people at the time that, if they would erect an up-to-date plant at Karumba, he would be prepared to assist them on the pound for pound basis, or he would go further, and, if they could find the money to erect the works, he would put anything up to £100,000 into the development of the Norman River to enable boats to get up to take the meat away. At that time Messrs. Angliss and Kerr were most eager and most keen on that proposition, but there were big interests in Townsville. The Americans have large meatworks there, and the Q.M.E. also have large meatworks there. Either pressure was brought to bear, or something moved Messrs. Angliss and Kerr, and they got cold feet in regard to the proposition, and they were not prepared to go on with it. Since then the smaller men have shown their desire to establish smaller works, thinking they could finance the scheme, and thus enable them to get rid of their stock where it is grown. During this season the Townsville meatworks were offering 16s. per 100 lb. for first-class beef and 12s. per 100 lb. for second-class beef. The cattle have to travel somewhere about 700 to 800 miles in being removed from the Gulf into the Townsville meatworks. During the droving trip and the railing the cattle lose anything up to 1 cwt. in condition, which, in the case of a first-class bullock, makes it a second-class bullock on its arrival at the meatworks. The droving and railway charges would cost anything from 16s. to 17s. per head to get those cattle to the works. When the cattle-grower gets his cheque for his bullocks, more than likely he will be in debt as the result of his first-class bullocks having to be graded as second-class because of the condition they lost in the droving and railing. The Government promised to support canning works at Normanton, on the pound for pound basis. It was thought that the erection of the works would cost somewhere in the vicinity of £30,000. The Premier promised a company or any co-operative undertaking that, if they liked to get the business, he would finance the scheme on a pound for pound basis up to £15,000. The "Daily Mail" of 15th July says—

"CANNING WORKS.

"THE GULF SCHEME."

"Government help.

"Meat-canning works on a co-operative basis are proposed for the Gulf country. It is proposed to raise a capital of

[Mr. Riordan.

£60,000 to start the works, which will be established at Karumba, at the mouth of the Norman River. The State Government has already promised assistance to the extent of £15,000.

"Questioned on the subject yesterday, the Premier (Mr. Theodore) said that a larger advance was desired from the Government by those behind the movement. This request was now receiving consideration."

In regard to the request made to the Government, I made a request to assist the scheme on a pound for pound basis to the extent of £60,000, and they were not clear as to whether it was to be a purely co-operative concern. They were not prepared to take on that scheme. I made a further request that the Government should increase the capital to £20,000. This they have promised to do, but in doing so I am afraid that two of the clauses in their agreement will make the condition of the industry at present very difficult. The cattle men are unable to put money in, and, in order to get their cattle treated by works there, they would first have to find the money to take up shares in the company. I am sorry that the two last clauses in the letter received from the Minister in charge of State Enterprises will have a pretty bad effect on the decision to establish these works. As he states in the last part—

"No part of such advance to be paid to the company until the company has to the satisfaction of the Government erected buildings and installed the necessary machinery and plant to the value of £30,000."

In regard to that, if the proposal, instead of going to be a co-operative affair, was to be a joint stock company, there would be no great difficulty in raising the money. We want to make the scheme a purely co-operative one, and issue to the cattle raiser his shares at a very reasonable price—one-third on application and one-third on allotment, payment to be made by deduction from stock when treated at the works. That was the idea of the Government to get these works going. The working capital required after the works were erected could easily be financed by the cattle-grower with his stock on thirty days' sale. Under the stipulation to find the money which I have just quoted I think the scheme, as a co-operative one, will be a very difficult proposition to those who are desirous of establishing the works there. I am not prepared to argue that meatworks in the Gulf district would be a 20 per cent. proposition for investment, but I am prepared to say that the undertaking would be a profitable one. As stated by the hon. member for Murilla, Borthwicks have made a profit at their works. Littles, who were prepared to handle all stock treated at the canning works in the Gulf, have a market, say they could get rid of the canned meat, and the chilled meat could be taken from the Gulf and put on the Victorian market at a more reasonable figure than what cattle brought from New Zealand fetch. Their cost landed from New Zealand is £45 per head. I venture to say that the cattle raiser in the Gulf could put cattle on the Victorian market at a more reasonable figure than New Zealand, and give the consumer his beef at a price more reasonable than he has to pay to-day. I would be sorry to see

any scheme such as this fall through because of any hard-and-fast rule the Government might impose. The Government should be sympathetic. This proposal has to be looked upon from the point of view of a developmental policy. The Gulf has time after time been promised assistance. Rents have been collected from that area, and taxation imposed and collected; and what has been spent in return in the Gulf during the last fifty years? Thirty years ago, when those people took up land, we had a weekly boat service there—a pretty decent service. To-day we have a monthly service to the Gulf. The Gulf has gone back. The starting of an industry of this kind will lead to some other industries operating there. If the Government could see their way to assist the cattle raiser to this extent, his meat—which is to-day classed as second-class when it goes into Townsville meatworks—when killed where it is grown would be worth 16s. per 100 lb. It loses 100 lb. going to the Townsville works, which makes it worth there only 12s. per 100 lb. He would get the full weight in Normanton, and the bullock would be worth anything up to 30s. to £2 more if killed where it is grown instead of taking it to Townsville as is done to-day.

There is another aspect from the grower's point of view that gives food for thought to the cattle-raiser throughout Queensland. If I took up a holding during the war period, when breeders were selling at £6 per head, and stocked up a place at that cost, the place would be at once over-capitalised. My rent would be fixed for ten years by the Land Court. The position is changed altogether. When I selected there I selected under war conditions, under boom prices. Immediately the prices come down, what happens to all the men there? It is impossible for them to purchase at £6 a head and to sell to-day at £3 or £4. If the Government are not prepared to assist further, the payments of rent in the Gulf country should be waived for one year to small cattle-growers. I know that every small man who has taken up land there recently has been unable to sell any of his stock, and I know the Secretary for Public Lands has been generous with every application that has come forward for an extension of time without a penalty. He has granted every request, some of them being three or four years behind with their rent. When there is a recovery of the market, it will take some time to make up the back rent. As the Secretary for Public Lands said to-night, the rent is only a secondary consideration. If the industry is flourishing nobody quibbles much about the rent; it is a secondary consideration; but it is a very big consideration when you are unable to get a market for your cattle and are unable to meet the rent due. If you are holding the land and the Land Commissioner forfeits it, you have no place to take your few head of stock to. Now take cattle railled to Townsville. Cattle sent from Boonmarra, after being treated at the works, brought 24s. per head to a man who had grown them. A week or so after he had sent the cattle in he ordered a side of leather from Townsville, and it cost him £5. When he got the leather back he discovered on it the brand of one of his bullocks. He got only 24s. for the bullock; somebody tanned the hide, and charged him £5 for it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why don't you rectify it?

Mr. RIORDAN: Who were the men who tried to rectify it by means of a political levy on the cattle-raisers during the last eight or nine years? I ask him what he has done. I have made genuine efforts. I am with the Government who granted an extension of time for payment without any penalties. Who gave a reduction of 30 per cent. off the carriage of cattle? Did they race around at the time when cattle were bringing £13 or £14 per head to raise the wages in the industry? No, they had to contest every inch of the ground [7.30 p.m.] for any rise they got. My friends opposite ask me, "What have I done?" I have made an effort to organise the smaller cattle man to help himself. I am not worrying about the class that keep members opposite in Parliament—the class of pastoralists that finds the election expenses of my friends on the other side. These people do not worry me, because they bought in when the market was somewhere about £1 a head, and if they sold their stock at £5 a head they would be making a very good profit. I am worrying about the man who got land under this Government, and who bought in when cattle were at a high price. That is the man I am moving for to-night. There is a move on the part of the Secretary for Public Lands to write down the value of the soldier settlements. That is a very good idea. The soldier settler got in at the same time as the man for whom I am offering a plea here to-night. I do not suppose that one pastoralist out of ten would give me a vote, but I am not prepared to see an industry worth millions a year go to the wall simply because somebody may not vote for me. I am not looking at it from that point of view at all. The establishment of canning works in the Gulf country would mean the culling out of the mongrel stock up there, and the introduction of a better class of cattle.

Mr. WALKER: You cannot sell them in the South.

Mr. RIORDAN: We are consuming over 80 per cent. of the beef, and we are charging the public up to 10d. a lb. for it. The canning works are showing a profit, and only 20 per cent. of the beef is being canned.

Mr. WALKER: The canning works are not working half-time.

Mr. RIORDAN: Borthwicks are working, and one of your own supporters said Borthwicks were reaping a handsome profit—that they were making a fortune out of the industry.

Mr. WALKER: The canning people are not working half time.

Mr. RIORDAN: Borthwicks work all the year round. Reputable firms state that, if works were established in the Gulf, they could find a market. They have their market organised, and, with the establishment of these works in the Gulf, they could dispose of our meat. I have already referred to cattle being imported from New Zealand and sold at £45 a head. If we killed our meat and sent it to Victoria, we could put it on the market and sell to the consumer at a lesser price than that.

Mr. WALKER: They won't eat frozen meat.

Mr. RIORDAN: They will eat frozen meat in preference to "pulped" beef—the class of stuff they get from New Zealand. The handling of stock there is almost as crude as the handling of stock on the railways in the Commonwealth. There has been

Mr. Riordan.]

no consideration given to that phase of the question. To-day cattle for export are railed in a most crude manner. From eight to ten truckloads of cattle—somewhere about 200—are put into the one yard. They are chased round by half a dozen men till they get sixteen or eighteen in a truck. Then they close the truck up, and go through the same performance again. This is repeated for a couple of hours until the cattle are all placed in the trucks, and the last few truckloads are so bruised and knocked about that it is almost impossible to drag the cattle into the trucks. The trucks should be filled from the end of the train, which should have a race right through, with doors in the centre. There is no necessity to knock the cattle about in the way they are at present. Also showers could be placed on every railway tank in Queensland, such as the one placed by Mr. P. J. McDermott at Alma-den. After the engine takes water the shower is pulled over the train, the train drawn up, and the shower goes over the cattle. Four or five showers of that kind on a hot day are as good as a drink of water to the stock.

Mr. MORGAN: We placed all that before the Government over twelve months ago.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member has not been here to listen to what I have said, so I will go on with the business.

I am very pleased to see that the Government are not adopting a system of camouflaged resumptions such as was advocated by our friends during the elections, when they said that the pastoralist was willing to let go half his run if we gave him an extension for the other half. In my own electorate alone, if the policy advocated by hon. members opposite had been adopted by the Government, we would have got 1,082 square miles, whereas there are 3,800 square miles due for resumption, and the pastoralists would have had the best of the deal for the next five years to the extent of 2,718 square miles. I am very pleased to see that the Government are making a test case in regard to some of these resumptions. Some critics say the right thing has not been done, but the Government are taking these holdings, and I congratulate the Premier and the Government on being courageous enough to tackle this proposition.

Our opponents are continually criticising the Government for not making a success of the railways. It will be impossible to make our railways pay while we have these large holdings all along the Western railways. We have 500 miles of railway in the West with a population of 300 or 400, when we ought to have 10,000 people settled there.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: What is the good of all this camouflage? Hon. members opposite are responsible for the position in which this State finds itself to-day in regard to closer settlement. Our railways will never pay under present conditions. The most cheerful optimist could not expect them to pay unless a policy such as that suggested by the Government is adopted, and the land along the railway lines resumed for closer settlement. I am very pleased to see that the Government have started out in this matter.

With regard to the suggestion for the appointment of boards, the Secretary for

[Mr. Riordan.

Public Lands is in the best position to find out the carrying capacity of the different holdings and what is a living area. I know good practical men who would give information to the Secretary for Public Lands in regard to the country around their own little area. The settlers on these 10,000-acre blocks will tell, without any hesitation, what they are making off them. One man in the Richmond district told me that, after paying his taxes and rent on a 10,000-acre block, he was making a clear £1,500 a year.

Mr. MORGAN: That is sheep country.

Mr. RIORDAN: It is sheep country. That is what we are resuming, and that is what all the discussion is about now. That is a pretty fair guide, and I can see no necessity for the appointment of boards. We have heard the braying of the hon. member for Enoggera in regard to land settlement. We had him juggling with figures all the afternoon until he was practically snowed in and did not know what he was talking about.

I am very pleased to be able to congratulate the Minister and the Government in putting the Water Supply Department under the same head as the Land Settlement Branch. It is most necessary that water should be provided on any land before any effort is made to put people on to it, and by the sinking of bores in suitable localities, three or four of these selections could be watered from the one bore.

The Government's policy in regard to dog netting is another matter that is worthy of serious consideration.

We know that on the plains around Marathea the dingo will not come in until starved. From the thickly timbered country and along the river the dingo is creeping in and eating most of the selectors out on that boundary. As an instance of that, one selector's lambing has dropped from 70 to 30 per cent. this year, and his sheep have gradually gone back. In regard to back rent, I am sure that the Government, as one of the landerds in regard to land settlement, are not going to be too hard on those selectors for their back rentals, and, when the time arrives for repayment, will give favourable consideration to the matter and make the repayment as easy as possible. Nobody knows that that will be done better than the selectors who voted by two to one in favour of this party.

With regard to the Gulf lands, I would suggest to the Secretary for Public Lands, as I did when speaking on the Financial Statement last session, that those who are prepared to go to the Gulf as pioneers and raise sheep should be allowed a concession. If a man is prepared to establish a new industry in the Gulf, he should be allowed to have the land rent free.

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

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): This is the first time I have had the honour of addressing the House. I consider it a great honour, and I also consider it a great honour to represent such an important constituency as Nundah.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: I feel a little disappointed that I happen on this occasion to be the only new member on this side of the House. Hon.

members opposite may not be sorry, but I personally regret the absence from the House of one or two men who would have been of great assistance to the House in the debates. Hon. members opposite are always insisting that they represent the wishes of the electors of Queensland—but I would reiterate what has been said this afternoon—and I am certain that hon. members on this side will continue to reiterate it—that they do not represent a majority of the electors of Queensland. (Government laughter and interjections.) I think it is rather a compliment when I can get hon. members opposite to interject. I have figures here compiled from the records of the returning officers. They show that for the twenty-nine members on this side 198,131 votes were recorded, and for the forty-three members opposite 184,562 votes. (Government dissent.)

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: A minority representation.

MR. KELSO: That represents a minority of 14,569 votes. I am well aware that there are still a few figures to come in, but I do not think the figures will be altered very much. I take this opportunity, as a new man, of complimenting the hon. member for Kennedy on his speech. He made a very fine speech from his point of view. He said that the people in the electorates were being educated, and that when they were fully educated to all the benefits which the Labour party will confer on the State, then the whole of the House would be Labour.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KELSO: I am quite with the hon. member in his statement that the electors are being educated. His premises are right, but his conclusions are wrong, because, as the electors get educated, they will see through the hollowness of the policy which hon. members opposite wish to bring into operation, and the result will be that, instead of a House composed of Labour men, we shall have one composed of members of the party at present in Opposition. Hon. members opposite should remember that there is not another Labour Government in Australia. The Labour party in Queensland represents a minority, and is not that a sign that the electors are waking up? Some little time ago the Labour party was in power in Western Australia and New South Wales, but the electors have reversed their decision, except in Queensland, and even here, as I propose to show later on, the Labour Government are in a minority. Hon. members opposite have been taking credit for the fact that during last session, when they were in a minority of 17,000 votes on the total poll, they abolished the Legislative Council. We know that on the occasion when a referendum was taken the people said with no unmistakable voice that they wanted the Legislative Council to remain. I do not think that any credit can be taken by the Government for abolishing the Upper House during the last Parliament, because, practically speaking, they had not got a mandate from the people to do it.

Last session some curious things happened. First of all, we had the redistribution of the electorates. I may say here, quite independent of what has happened in years gone by or of what particular Government was in power, that it is very unfair to appoint as redistribution commissioners men who are public servants. We had three Commissioners appointed, and two of them lived in Brisbane.

I am not going to mention their names—we all know who they are—but I ask hon. members if it is fair to put any public servant into that position?

MR. GILDAY: Were you looking for the job?

MR. KELSO: I was not looking for the job.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Kidston appointed public servants.

MR. KELSO: It does not matter what happened in the past; I am giving my individual opinion in the matter, because up to the present I have no political sins.

THE PREMIER: No parliamentary sins.

MR. KELSO: No parliamentary sins.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you suggest?

MR. KELSO: The Secretary for Agriculture asks me what I would suggest. It is possible to get in Queensland an impartial body of men of different opinions to go into a matter of that description. It is not a matter which should be left to three public servants. It is natural that public servants should lean towards those who are in office, and, without imputing any motives, it is nearly impossible for men in that position to give an unbiased decision in the matter of redistribution of the boundaries of electorates.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: You would not have been here but for that redistribution.

MR. KELSO: Yes, I would. If the hon. gentleman has any designs on the Nundah electorate, he had better put it out of his mind, because he will never get there. When these Commissioners started on their duties they had to divide the electorates according to a stated quota, with a margin of one-fifth more or one-fifth less. The number of electors on the roll was 468,946.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not at the time of the redistribution.

MR. KELSO: The maximum margin of allowance was 7,817, and the minimum 5,211. I have taken out some of the figures in order to buttress my argument, and it is a peculiar thing that the maximum is exceeded mostly in electorates represented on this side of the House, whilst the electorates which fall short of the quota have chiefly returned members on the other side of the House. The electorate of Enoggera has 7,971 electors, Logan 8,089, Oxley 7,965, Toowong 8,029, whilst Charters Towers has 4,752, Chillagoe 4,834, Cook 4,689, Flinders—the smallest of the lot—3,767, Queenon 4,746, and Townsville 5,096. Now, I suggest to the hon. and learned Attorney-General—I bow to his superior knowledge—that he go into the question of whether the gentlemen representing Charters Towers, Chillagoe, Cook, Flinders, Queenon, and Townsville have been legally elected to their seats. I doubt, myself, whether they have.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KELSO: It is, of course, unsatisfactory to us that gentlemen sitting on this side should be elected by a surplus of electors, although it is perfectly legal; but I believe that, if the matter were gone into in a constitutional way, it would be found that those elected by electorates containing less than the legal quota are illegally in this House. If the legal decision is against them, it will, of course, be a matter of great regret to the House that they will have to go up for election again.

Mr. Kelso.]

It has been mentioned here before that the Governor's Speech is probably one of the shortest on record. Somebody has said that language was invented to enable us to conceal our thoughts, and upon thinking over the matter I have wondered whether the Premier had not that saying in his mind when he suggested this very short Speech. I presume that the remarks are meant to be a reflex of the ideas of the Government, and so we have to consider what reason has prompted the hon. member to have such a short Speech, with very little in it to enable one to criticise it—almost nothing more than a long list of Bills without any indication of what they mean. I used, as an elector, to take great interest in the Governor's Speech, and, if my memory serves me rightly, long before the list of Bills at the end came along we practically knew what was to be contained in those measures. But this time we have a very formidable list and nothing else, although, upon reading the Speech again, I discover a very nasty little expression which may be loaded—I do not know—possibly because I am new at this business—which says, "amongst other proposals" which will be brought before Parliament we are to be asked to consider the measures I have already indicated. It will be very interesting to me, at any rate, to discover whether any revolutionary measures are sprung upon the House during the session under cover of those three words. On thinking the matter over, I have come to the conclusion that the Premier—and we give him credit for great tact—sees the necessity for bringing forward a programme for this session which, to put it in a nice way, will be mild and innocuous. No doubt—and I give the hon. gentleman every credit for it—he is remembering that next year is coming along, and that next year he has to approach the London money market, and that, if he approaches it with a revolutionary scheme such as would please his followers who are always condemning the "money bags" in Lombard street, the London money market will look at his loans very differently from what it would if the hon. gentleman had placed before the country a programme which was mild and had nothing revolutionary about it. It may be wise to consider the matter again. As an ordinary elector, I have followed the actions of the Premier for some considerable time, and—as a new member, I am sure he will not think I am endeavouring to flatter him—we must agree that he has very conspicuous ability.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are making him blush.

Mr. KELSO: If I have done so, I shall always remember the fact with pleasure; but I hope that the hon. gentleman, if he is blushing, is blushing from modesty and not from shame.

Mr. KIRWAN: Remember the Greeks bringing gifts.

Mr. KELSO: I told the House that in this particular regard I was quite serious. In looking at the matter again I remember that, when the Premier addressed the country at Cairns in his policy speech, he talked about humanitarian legislation—which, I think, is common to all States in the Commonwealth. I do not think the Labour party has a mortgage on humanitarian legislation, and I can refer hon. members to humanitarian legislation in other States; it is only in keeping with the times. I recollect that at Cairns the hon. gentleman stressed humanitarian legislation—stressed it again

[Mr. Kelso.

and again—till one began to wonder where the practical part of it was; and then he finished up something like this "The rest of the platform of the Labour party is too well known to need reiteration." Apparently the hon. gentleman wanted to conceal the fact that he had something which he would rather not talk about. When the Emu Park conference took place I wondered why the hon. member was so quiet. There was an ominous silence. When the socialisation of industry came up and we were anxious to know what was going on behind those doors where something was being hatched, we admired the silence of the hon. member for Chillagoe, and we were informed to our astonishment by the Press representative who handed out a daily report that "everything was most harmonious." I wondered if I might discover the result of that silence. As the hon. gentleman went on his tour I found that in the Western districts he told the electors, "I am not a communist; I am a socialist," and I thought that the Premier was getting a little political education. When he came to the metropolis he told them here, "I am a true democrat." (Opposition laughter.) I began to see that the hon. gentleman was being educated at an accelerated rate, and I made up my mind that, had the election campaign only been extended for another fortnight, he would by that time be quite qualified to join the United party. (Renewed Opposition laughter.) We are pleased that for one session the legislation is not to be of a very extreme nature.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Possibly it will be like all the other legislation—it will be loaded.

Mr. KELSO: If the Premier gets all his proposals through, next year we shall be able to see whether it is loaded

[8 p.m.] or not. The Governor in his Speech says, "My advisers recognise the necessity of continued economy." The gentleman who wrote that was somewhat humorous. When he wrote it he evidently had his tongue in his cheek, because the history of the finances of the party opposite is certainly a most amazing one, and, as has been pointed out this afternoon, this is the only State that failed to show a surplus at the 30th June. It is claimed that this is a State where economy has been exercised. We find that in 1915 the taxation per head was £1 8s. 2d., and in 1922 it was £4 15s. 10d. The expenditure per head in 1915 was £10 12s. 9d., and in 1922 it was £16 4s. 8d. If hon. members opposite can claim that they are economical, I am afraid that their ideas of economy and ours are very different. The taxpayer is beginning to find out these burdens of taxation. The Premier in 1915 said that the taxes ultimately fell upon the people as a whole. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman. That was the frame of mind and his political education at that particular time, because he happened to be in Opposition, and he was criticising the Government then in power. He absolutely told the truth, and I believe that he believed it at the time. When he was delivering his policy speech at Cairns, he told the people that the taxation was so nicely adjusted that it fell on the shoulders of those who were best able to bear it. How can he justify those statements? The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that it is an economic truth that all taxes ultimately fall on the whole of the people, and, if you put taxes on the

shoulders of those who appear the best able to bear them, the inevitable result is that they will pass them on, and, in the passing on from one to another, it gets a little bit like a snowball, and, when there is the opportunity, a little is added on during the process of the passing on, and in the end it is far more than it ought to be. The hon. gentleman must know that that affects the workers, and has been affecting the workers for a long time.

The Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about the cost of living?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That does not worry the hon. member for Toowoomba.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member for Toowoomba will have an opportunity later on when he will be able to enlighten this House with his views upon the cost of living. We want to know why there has been so much extravagance. Where has the money gone to? As one hon. member said this afternoon, if the Government had not wasted a lot of money in State enterprises, but had put it into productive works, the possibilities are that we would be better off than we are at present.

We have heard a lot about the State butcher shops. We have heard that they saved the situation, and we heard this afternoon that they have made £200,000 since their inception. This is an extraordinary sum to make. When they were started we know perfectly well that they were able to sell cheap meat because they took it from the graziers at a price less than they charged the Imperial Government, which, in effect, meant that they robbed the producers of an amount represented by the difference between the price they paid and the price they charged the Imperial Government. Now things have changed. We find now that in the open market the State butcher shops cannot do as well as the private shops can do. It is all a question of distribution. When the State takes a hand in distribution in competition with private enterprise the State will go down every time.

Mr. GILDAY: The hon. member knows nothing about it.

Mr. KELSO: I am very sorry if I know nothing about it. I suppose the hon. member for Ithaca is an absolute authority on the matter. I suppose now he will expect me to hold my tongue. I know that on the general question of Government trading it is absolutely impossible for a Government to run a business as satisfactorily as private enterprise, because with Government control there are no responsibilities, no incentive behind it, and absolutely no control.

I will now deal with the question of the State iron and steel works. I saw in the paper the other day a very humorous statement that Mr. Brophy, who was appointed manager of the State iron and steel works, was leaving Australia, and that his contract had not been renewed. I think that is a huge joke. For the last five years that gentleman has been receiving a salary of £1,500 per annum under contract with the Government, and the Government could not get rid of him.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What has the hon. member for Bowen to say to that? (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Bowen will speak in his turn.

Mr. KELSO: What can we say of a Government that could not size up the situation sufficiently far ahead to see that it was absolutely impossible to start steel works on a payable basis? They have learnt those things since.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is a State enterprise, and it does not matter whether it pays or not.

Mr. KELSO: Apparently State enterprises are started for political purposes, and are not intended to pay. I will spare the feelings of hon. members opposite, and will not refer to the State stations or the State fish shops.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Do not touch the fish—that is for the Premier.

Mr. KELSO: The policy of hon. members opposite apparently is—this may be one of the loaded things that we are anticipating—that, because there happens to be a big loss on State enterprises, they are going to make them payable by extending their activities by establishing four or five more. That reminds me of a man who owned a restaurant. Someone told him that, although he was doing a good business, on going into the figures it was found that where he only charged one shilling for each meal he could not possibly produce it for less than 1s. 2d., and he was losing 2d. on each meal. The restaurant-keeper said, "Yes, but it is the number that pays." (Laughter.) Apparently hon. members opposite have come to the conclusion that the best way to make State enterprises pay is to start a whole lot more, and they will make up the loss somehow.

In dealing with the question of State saw-mills, it was stated that the price charged for State timber was less than the price charged for timber supplied by private millers. I would remind hon. members that, if they know anything about the activities of the Workers' Dwelling Department, when contracts are offered there are alternative items whereby the contractor will tender to erect the house; but, if he erects the house with State timber, the price is always in excess of the price which is charged when he uses timber supplied by private enterprise.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Why?

Mr. KELSO: I cannot tell why.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Because it is a combine against the State. You know that.

Mr. KELSO: All I know is that he cannot purchase the timber from the State enterprise mills on as good terms as he can from private mills. If a man wants to build, he has a choice of taking State timber, but he knows that in doing so he will have to pay more than if he used timber supplied by private enterprise. We were talking about private enterprise, and we were talking about the State butcher shops, and of the question of day labour as against contract labour. I would, in this connection, like to point out that some years ago it was decided to erect a public building here, and the Works Department decided to build it by day labour. It was brought to the attention of the Minister that the project would cost less if done by contract, and he produced figures showing that in a large number of cases the work had been done cheaper by day labour and the Government had saved a certain amount of money. At last the contractors asked to be allowed to tender and that the Works Department also tender, and the result was that the private tender was more favourable than the tender of the

Mr. Kelso.]

Works Department. That shows that, when it came to a test, the Department could not stand up to its figures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: When was that?

Mr. KELSO: Many years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How many years ago? Give us the name of the job concerned.

Mr. KELSO: The Secretary for Public Works had better give notice of the question, and I may answer it.

Mr. GLEDSON: You made an allegation, and you should give particulars.

Mr. KELSO: There is one point I want to speak about.

Mr. WILSON: We still want you to prove your case regarding that contract.

Mr. KELSO: I will do so in due course, and most conclusively. In my electorate there is a soldier settlement called Highlands Soldier Settlement. Some little time ago I was up there and had a conference with a number of the soldier settlers. I was very disappointed with the deplorable state of affairs existing. They said they had tried to get relief. I admit that at the twelfth hour the Government have come in with a measure of relief in the direction of having the soldier settlements revalued with a view, if they are overvalued, to having them written down to the market price. At the same time I say it is a pity that these men have had to suffer for some considerable time without redress. I can say that at the Highlands Settlement I was shown one farm of 80 acres occupied by a soldier settler. Of the 80 acres 50 abutted against a mountain, and the remaining 30 acres available were very poor land. I saw another case where 80 acres were given to a man for the purpose of dairying. He tried to "make a do" of it, but he could not keep going. At length he wrote to the Department, and asked that an expert might be sent up in order to tell him what the land was good for. It was a fruit expert who was sent. He went to the settlement, dug holes here and there on the farm, and told this man, "Your land is no good for anything; it won't grow anything." After he had dug a few inches down he struck a hard clay pan. That is the sort of land that has been handed out to the soldiers. I went along to another soldier, and, pointing to two bags before us, he told us that that was the total crop of five acres of cotton. He had been told by an expert that it was not suitable for fruit, and to try cotton. You see also, the lamentable state of affairs existing at Beerburum. It is public property that the soldiers should not have been settled on that land.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: The least that any Government can give to a returned soldier is freehold land, more especially as we are told and realise that Queensland has as rich land as any other State in Australia. At the beginning of the war I heard the Right Hon. Andrew Fisher, the then Labour Prime Minister of Australia, say in Market Square that nothing was too good for the soldiers. If these men fought for us, the least thing we can do for them is to give a freehold to every one of them who is desirous of settling on the land.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: There is nothing to stop large landowners doing that now.

[Mr. Kelso.

Mr. KELSO: With leasehold, if he wants to get an overdraft, or financial accommodation of any kind, he cannot get it. I do not think that the Government would advance as much against a leasehold as against a freehold. If we are going to redeem our promises even at this late hour, and even although the money may have to come out of the consolidated revenue, and the whole of the costs be charged as a debt on the people of this State, we should put the soldiers in the possession of freehold farms. We ought to be proud of what the soldiers have done, and nothing ought to be too good to give to them. The state of affairs at Highlands is disgraceful, and the soldier there has to hang on in the face of adversity, even though he may not want to remain, because he has been told that the Government would not let them go. A soldier there who wanted to leave the settlement and go in for freehold was told that if he did so the Government would follow him there.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not true.

Mr. KELSO: It is.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not.

Mr. KELSO: It is no good interjecting that it is not true. I am quite prepared to accept the statement of a man who was there, and who went through this terrible experience. Some of those Highlands settlers have to go out and work for other men because of their inability to develop land which is absolutely unfit for any settlement whatever. What I want to get at is this: Why is it that these men have been put on land which was not suitable? We are supposed to have experts to examine and advise in regard to land. I will admit that, so far as the Government are concerned, they have to rely on their experts' advice, and possibly you cannot lay any blame on the Government; but it is a great pity. If the experts sent to look and report upon the lands were not experts, and these soldiers were misled accordingly and have broken their hearts on this land, the Government should have stepped in long ago and done justice to these soldiers. The best solution of the problem is to wipe out the settlement altogether and form another settlement on land fit to grow something. That is the only remedy, and a further remedy I suggest is to give them the freehold if they prove their bona fides by five years' residence.

Mr. POLLOCK: And at the end of five years not ten in 1,000 would have the freehold.

Mr. KELSO: There is one other matter I would like to touch upon, and that is the absence of any mention of immigration in the Governor's Speech. The land has to be settled, and presumably our own people here are going to settle on the land, but I hold that one man on the land will keep eight in the town. Does it not then seem a sensible thing to bring people out from the old land to settle on the land? No elaborate preparation is needed. We have the very best of the manhood and womanhood of Great Britain who are prepared to come in here in thousands, and it would not be long before they were absorbed in the communal life of this State if they did so. I think we are hanging back too much to make farms for farmers. We can have the farmers, but we can have so many farmers that there are not sufficient people to eat their produce.

Would it not be better to have co-ordination, and to make provision for the industries at present here, and manufacture our raw products instead of sending them down to the Southern States? We have been faced with an unemployment problem for some time. If we had mills here to absorb men out of work, there would be prosperity all round. I have to thank hon. members at my first appearance for the very attentive hearing they have given me, notwithstanding a few interjections.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): At the present time we are embarking on a new era so far as this State is concerned. In whatever direction we may look, and from whatever viewpoint we may seek to investigate this question, we must be convinced that the State of Queensland is trembling on the verge of big things. Whether these things, as we confidently anticipate, will be for the benefit of the State or not is a question that cannot be answered save by taking into consideration the years that are yet to come. If the policy that was enunciated by His Majesty's representative in this House last week is given effect to and the logical sequence of events follows, then we can confidently look forward to an era of prosperity unprecedented in this State of Queensland. The question arises, when we see pronounced activities, socially, educationally, commercially, and agriculturally, what is the foundation upon which this is based? It is clear that the foundation is, in the main, the governmental activities that have prevailed during the period the Labour party has been in power. There has been no greater period of industrial and agricultural expansion than during the eight years a Labour Government has occupied the Treasury benches. One member of the Opposition suggested this afternoon that there was a grave decrease in the agricultural areas under occupation at the present time. If that hon. gentleman had consulted authoritative figures in this connection he would have found that during the time the Labour party have been in power the value of the agricultural products of Queensland has increased threefold. Does not that indicate that there must have been some sympathy, some understanding, for the man on the land, emanating from the Government that is for the time being administering the destinies and the industries of this State? Our hon. friend who has just concluded his speech—

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He made a very good speech.

Mr. BULCOCK: I will admit that he made a good speech in many ways and from his point of view—that is, from the point of view of the Opposition—he is bitten with the virus of the Opposition. He made a speech that was a credit—I was almost going to say a better speech than many on that side of the House are capable of making. Nevertheless, it was rather an anomaly, when speaking on the question of soldier settlements, roundly to condemn many of the areas that have been settled by our returned men. He suggested, both straight out and inferentially, that they were worthless. Then, as a main solution of the problems that he was placing before this House, he suggested that, if the soldier remained on the land for five years, he should be given a freehold title to that land.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BULCOCK: "Hansard" will prove that that was what he did say. I would suggest that those remedies are not going to carry us very far. The remedy, contrasted with the remedy that is being offered by the Government, enhances the value of the Government's offer very considerably, so far as the solution of this problem is concerned. While on this question of soldier settlement, we have to remember that we are embarking on an era of big settlement, of a big venture—a venture that the agricultural future of this State is inseparably bound up with—and, if we fail in this direction, we can be quite convinced that our agricultural development is going to suffer a severe set back for several decades at least. Therefore, we have to be abundantly clear on what we are going to do. The hon. member for Nundah suggested that mistakes were made in connection with soldier settlement. It is the first experience of its kind that we have had. There is no question but what the settling of large bodies of men on aggregations of land scattered throughout the whole of the State—and more especially in a big State like Queensland—is a very difficult proposition, and one that is bound to show a percentage of failures. Then there is the personal element that you cannot escape from. There is the element of the man being temperamentally and physically unfitted to go on the land. I believe, from my knowledge of the land, that mistakes were made in the selection of the land. I believe those things, but I believe also that, if we profit by the experience that we have had in that particular direction and guard against a repetition of those experiences by preventing a recurrence of the circumstances that led to them, then we shall make a success of the land settlement policy that we are embarking on. Land settlement is unquestionably the most vital question that concerns us at the present time. Many of our hon. friends opposite think that we desire to make agriculture the handmaiden of industry; but we do not. There are men on this side of the House, as on the other side, who do not desire to see either one the handmaiden of the other; but we believe that, with the development of an agricultural policy—a sound policy—the industrial life of the State will be very considerably enhanced, and the benefits accruing through agricultural prosperity will mean benefits through industrial prosperity, which, of course, has a very good reaction on the financial position of the State.

The hon. member for Nundah inferred that we were not embarking on any vigorous policy of immigration. That may be so, but while we are not spending huge sums of money on bringing immigrants to Queensland, a perusal of the census returns shows that the population of our State is increasing and continues to increase very considerably and very satisfactorily, proving conclusively that, while we do not have to spend large sums of money to attract immigrants, they naturally gravitate to Labour-governed Queensland, in consequence of the fact that they can get social and industrial advantages greater than those in any other State in the Commonwealth.

We know that, whenever a Government has embarked on a vigorous policy of land settlement, and there has been every prospect that that policy is going to be successful, and we begin to boom our prospects, and

Mr. Bulcock.]

people from the other States are attracted, then the harpy steps in. I have [3.30 p.m.] no hesitation and offer no apology for saying that I can readily conceive that within the next year or two every futile acre of ground, every sour or waste sterile piece of ground on the coastal belt that is in the hands of exploiters and alienated from the Crown, and perhaps has been lying idle for years and years, will be termed first-class cotton country, and you will find that the exploiter—the man whose business it is to sell land and not to induce settlers to go on the land, to unload land with profit to himself—will be making all sorts of misrepresentations and placing all sorts of half-truths before the people who are prospective settlers. Let us look at the type of people whom we hope to settle on the land in consequence of our vigorous settlement policy. I take it that the man who is tired of working for wages, and who sees an opportunity of getting off the wages market, will be a valuable settler, and will be the individual who will be readily forthcoming to select some of the small areas that are to be thrown open. The other type of settler that we may reasonably expect to be attracted to Queensland is the son reared on the farm in the closely settled fertile districts of the Commonwealth, but whose parents' financial circumstances do not permit of him purchasing land in the immediate vicinity of his home place. He will gravitate to Queensland and take up freehold in our State if it is at all possible. There is a tendency, I know—and the tendency is more pronounced in those States where they have not had experience of the leasehold system—to sneer at the existence of that system in Queensland, and therefore the harpy who is going to throw open freehold land will find a ready opportunity amongst those people who will come from the Southern States enamoured of the freehold tenure in opposition to the leasehold tenure of land settlement. Even in the vicinity of Brisbane we can see the dawn of this charlatany in operation already. I have in my mind an area of land that I know fairly well, and it was mixed up with some very comprehensive land scandals many years ago. This land is situated not a very great distance from Brisbane, and is, in the main, within my own personal knowledge, second and third-rate and waste land. In the main it consists of scrub and sour country. At the present time it is being subdivided and designed with the idea of throwing it open for cotton blocks, and I venture to say that, instead of growing two bags per farmer, as the hon. member for Nundah suggested a little while ago, the whole 16,000 acres of it would not grow two bags of satisfactory cotton. This is being designed, and it is going to be called beautiful cotton country. We owe a duty to our prospective settler. We have to realise that the difference between the State offering an inducement to the selector and the vendor of land offering an inducement to the selector is this—the State desires to put a man on the land for the benefit of the individual and for the benefit of the State; but the land jobber—the landmonger or vendor—only desires to put a settler on the land for the personal advantage of the vendor.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: And settle him.

[Mr. Bulcock.

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes, and settle the settler. We have had experience of that in the past. Look at the Keudenup Settlement in Western Australia. That was a glaring instance of specious propaganda, inducing individuals to settle on land only to court failure. I realise that failure will not be an impossibility under our system of land tenure, but I realise too that, if these harpies who are beginning to operate in our midst are to be allowed to continue, then success will be problematical amongst the people who settle on their land; consequently we have to review this question from every point of view. We have to guard against this, and to see that the individual who comes to Queensland has a fair chance of success. We do not want to jeopardise the small capital that he will have, nor do we want failures, because in proportion to our success will depend the final success of our big cotton ventures and other ventures that involve the State in the expenditure of millions of money. I would suggest, therefore, that when land is thrown open by private vendors who desire to boom their land, and call it best cotton land or first-class cotton land, or land capable of growing fruit and all that sort of thing, the Lands Department, which has a survey of all the lands in Queensland, be asked to supply the papers with details of the land that is being thrown open, or else, as an alternative, require people who desire to throw the land open to publish a departmental report on the quality of the land, on the possibilities of the land, and on the possibilities of the climate. If people take up worthless land under those circumstances, they will only have themselves to blame; but the plausible land seller—these "Go-getters," as they are called—these people whose function it is to sell land irrespective of anything else, can often induce the weak-minded individual to take up land that is absolutely worthless. We have seen cases of that in the past, and we shall have to guard against a repetition of them in the future.

When the ex-leader of the Opposition was addressing this Chamber he made some reference to the Federal loan. When the hon. gentleman resigned his position as leader of the Country party, some of us thought that perhaps he might have resigned or shed the mantle of Maligner of the State or Distorter of Truth in Chief, or whatever position he occupied by virtue of his position as leader of the Opposition during the last session of Parliament. The hon. gentleman made some reference to Federal loans and the Federal loan that is at present before the public, and he suggested that this Government had not treated the Commonwealth Government very well by virtue of the fact that we sold bonds over the counter returning a greater interest than was offered under the loan that was floated by the Commonwealth about that time. That is not true. The Queensland issue did not in any way prejudice the Federal issue, nor did it enhance the interest on the Federal loan that is on the market at the present time. The Federal issue which is on the market at the present time carries a discount of £2 per cent., and, therefore, returns over its full period an interest of £5 9s. 3d. per cent. The 6 per cent. 1930 loan returns practically the same interest to the investor. The 5 per cent. 1927 loan returns just a shade lower interest, while the 4½ per cent.

1927 loan returns $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. better interest than is being returned by the present loan. Therefore the argument of the ex-leader of the Opposition is not sustained by the facts of the case. We might, with justice, at this juncture examine a little more closely some of the details of this loan. Might I take the opportunity of expressing my personal satisfaction at the fact that the Premiers arrived at a very laudable understanding when they decided that Commonwealth loans should no longer be free of State income tax. A very vicious principle was introduced into our finances when it was decided to issue loans free of State and Federal income tax, because, in the final analysis, industry has to bear its proportion of the redemption of that loan and has to pay the interest on that loan. It was suggested by the ex-leader of the Opposition that we were responsible for the high rate of interest that was being offered. It is obvious to me that the loan that is being placed on the market at the present time bears a certain rate of interest because that investment has to compete with various other investments that are being offered. Queensland has to contribute her quota towards this loan; £5 9s. 3d. is the value which would be returned by it. As it is a competitive loan, and industry would draw the investment if it offered a better inducement, it is safe to assume that the value of this loan is based on the earning capacity of money at the present time. Interest, under present circumstances, shows a tendency to rise. These loans, as they are tax free, have to come out of industry—out of the pockets of the people generally. As there is a tendency for interest to increase on these loans, it is obvious that the load which industry has to bear is greater. It is therefore obvious that the purchasing power of the money that passes through their hands is going to be less, and, if that is so, how does it come about that the super-patriots, who have always been inferring that they are prepared to do their part towards social reconstruction, are demanding a higher rate of interest for that which they are able to give, or loan, or sell, and are asking that the worker should receive a lower remuneration for that which he has to give or sell—in the main his labour? The investing public are demanding all they can get.

Mr. KIRWAN: They went on strike for a higher rate of interest during the war.

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes, but the philosophy that dominates them is apparently the fact that the individual who demands and succeeds in getting a higher rate of interest on the money he invests is pursuing a plain, honest, business proposition, and is a keen business man for doing so; but the worker who does exactly the same thing by asking for more wages is condemned as an individual who is trying to retard the period of reconstruction.

A lot has been said about the resumptions which it is proposed to make in the Western areas. I welcome the policy of the Government in this regard. I hope that proceedings along these lines will be expedited, because at the present time and for several years to come it is quite apparent that the value of wool is going to be maintained at the present, or perhaps a higher standard. As the hon. member for Murilla pointed out in his speech—and it was one of the few wise things he told us—we practically have a monopoly of the super-wools of the world. The 64's we are able to produce are a monopoly of Aus-

tralia, and, as that is so, it is obvious we are going to retain the high prices that wool is bringing at the present time. If these resumptions are expedited, it is obvious that the fortunate selectors who are able to get them will, by virtue of the high prices obtaining for wool, be able to discharge their liabilities in the first years of their holdings, and will not require preferential treatment at the hands of the Government which may be in power when the next disastrous drought strikes this State. If a station like Vindex was worth £160,000—and if reports are true that is the price which Mr. Mick Ryan received for Vindex when he sold it two or three days ago—it is obvious that the State must compensate the owners of the big holdings, and endeavour to settle small men on the land for the protection of the West. As time goes on we are going to encounter greater pests. The dingo would not be the menace it is to-day in the Western areas if we had closer settlement, because with closer settlement these pests, if they are not eliminated, are fully controlled. The promotion of settlement stimulates trade and commerce in the areas surrounding it. We require Western settlement; we want the native population of the West to remain there, and not to write to the respective members for Western constituencies asking them what the labour market is like in Brisbane, as they are thinking of coming down. We would much prefer to build up a self-reliant community in the Western areas, who would solve their own problems by reason of the fact that land was available for them. It is all very well to blame individuals for gravitating to the big centres of population; it is not the individuals' fault, because Governments of by-gone days gave away big areas of land in the form of freehold and leaseholds, and the owners of these lands have squeezed all but the few employees they require out of the Western areas and forced them to the bigger centres of population. Small areas will stimulate population, and there will be a growth in the towns. In the areas where selection has been going on for some years there is an apparent growth in the neighbouring towns, and we shall find a repetition of that as selection progresses. By doing that we shall also increase the national wealth, and to a certain extent appease the very great land hunger in our midst at present. There is every prospect of success so far as this project is concerned. Naturally, we find the "Courier" and the organs of the squatters opposed to the project; but those people who know the capacity of the land and the Western people's desire for land settlement understand quite well that the scheme will not only be a success, but will be greatly welcomed by the people there who will largely benefit—that is, the whole of the people in the Western and North-western areas of our State.

Mr. MORGAN: Give them a living area.

Mr. BULCOCK: Certainly. I am not in favour of limiting it to 5,000 acres; I think a mistake was made in that direction. There is one phase of this question that may well be ventilated. Western people feel that it is hardly fair that those who have made their homes in the West, and in many instances have married and reared their children there and striven to give them an education—and they have thereby remained valuable units in our Western and Central civilisation—should see the land they have made available

Mr. Bulcock.]

pass into the hands of people who have never done anything for the well-being of the State, even in the coastal areas or in the more sparsely populated Western and North-western areas.

Mr. FRY: Those people would get the first preference.

Mr. BULCOCK: Some system of priority should be evolved whereby people in Queensland should have the right of preferential treatment at the land selection ballots. We also feel that those individuals who have done nothing for the State, and who desire to come from Victoria or New South Wales to Queensland and grasp all the plums resulting from the labours of the people who have developed the Western country—because after all they have given the land the value which it has—are interlopers, who perhaps should not be countenanced.

Mr. MORGAN: Do you think that people from Victoria grasp all the plums in this State?

Mr. BULCOCK: The probabilities are in that direction. Although both myself and the hon. member for Murilla are Victorians, we did not regard Victoria as being a very happy or prosperous State, and we came to Queensland, where there are so many more opportunities, and Queensland has been kind to the hon. member, as it has been kind to me. There is a selection policy in effect at the present time which is designed to split up the larger holdings, and settle a number of people on the areas which are available. But I find that areas which only a few years ago were split up for closer settlement have to-day reverted into the hands of one individual. Let me give a case in point. In 1914 the State resumed a large portion of a big Western station known as Home Creek. For a period of five years the various selections which were thrown open were providing settlement for various families in accordance with the numbers thrown open, but now I am informed that no fewer than three blocks, aggregating approximately 60,000 acres, have reverted to one individual. I am sure that that is not in the best interests of the West, and I am also sure that it was not intended by those who framed the closer settlement sections of our Land Acts. I trust and confidently hope that some method will be sought and found whereby individuals will be prevented from selling out at the expiration of their term of five years, or whatever it may be, to other individuals who already control big scopes of country, and that what was intended—the adequate settling of our Western areas—will be proceeded with. Otherwise we are only going to perpetuate a vicious circle, whereby we are going to the expense and trouble of subdividing large holdings and putting on them selectors who will sell out their interests as soon as they can, and in course of time, when the leases expire of the individual who has aggregated them into his own hands—putting on another lot of selectors who will perhaps do the same thing and therefore perpetuate a system which is, to say the least of it, very undesirable.

The leader of the Opposition, after having made his obeisance to his political bosses in Longreach just before the last election—that is to say, after he had attended the Graziers' Conference, which apparently summoned him to Longreach to get his instructions as leader of the United party—proceeded to Mutta-

[Mr. Bulcock.

burra, where he expressed disappointment that he was not required to sleep between corrugated iron sheets. He was not able to do the hon. member for Mitchell any harm, because, after all, the hon. member for Mitchell, and every other exponent of the Labour party's principles and platform, has an assured position so far as the West is concerned, and so his trip was futile except in one respect.

Mr. FRY: You cannot get your party to talk their policy in the city. You get something else there.

Mr. BULCOCK: Does the hon. member suggest Fry's or Cadbury's? (Laughter.) I am glad that the leader of the Opposition seized the opportunity to go out West—I suppose his party sent him out there because he would do the least possible harm there—but, having been sent there, he certainly did gain one valuable object-lesson. He was made to realise the conditions under which the Western people are living, and, from the way he spoke in this House, I gather that it was the first opportunity he had had of seeing them at first hand. Unfortunately, in the West we evolved—and it is all a question of evolution—from the hut of pit-sawn timber to the corrugated-iron structure; but to-day in our Western towns is growing up a better type of dwelling. People are beginning to believe that the Western country is worth living in if you have decent residential conditions; and why the people of the West support the Labour party to the extent they do is because they have at all times attempted to give them those decent living conditions. We expect a virile race of youngsters to be reared in the West. Unfortunately, we shower on them very great handicaps, and, speaking of the handicaps of the children in the West, let me tell hon. members that only last week I received a communication from a school 95 miles from the nearest doctor asking me to see the Secretary for Public Instruction and get some stuff sent out, as 57 per cent. of the children were away with blight. The children of the cities do not know what that is, nor do their parents understand its trials. And yet these people are allowed by the individuals residing in the towns to remain in what one is tempted to term a backwash of civilisation. This Government, however, realised that it was a shame that hon. members opposite, when they occupied the Treasury benches, acquiesced in that condition of things and allowed it to be perpetuated. That is the point I want to make—that it was with the advent of this Government that decent residential structures began to appear in the towns of the West, and that decent residences rather than pigsties were available for the station hands. It is to the credit of this Government that they passed the Workers' Accommodation Act. Hon. members opposite claim that the first such Act was passed by an anti-Labour Government. It was Mr. Hamilton, the late member for Gregory, afterwards a member of the Upper House, who first introduced a Workers' Accommodation Bill on private members' day and got it through with modifications, and it remained for this Government to amend it and give the people who are developing the Western areas of our State decent residential conditions. In addition, the Workers' Homes Act and the Workers' Dwellings Act were passed by them—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Not the Workers' Dwellings Act.

Mr. BULCOCK: We gave them the Workers' Homes Act and the Workers' Dwellings Act in an acceptable form, and the people of the West can and are availing themselves of those measures—measures which Labour can honestly claim as children of its brain.

There are just one or two other questions with which I want to deal. One is the fact that during the last Parliament hon. members opposite continually informed the country from their places in the House and from the hustings that this Government was a repudiation Government. When they were asked why, it was alleged that we had repudiated a contractual obligation between the Government and the squatter—that was to be one of the big features of the last campaign, and was advanced as one of the reasons why Labour should be driven from office. My electorate is an electorate affected by the Act in question, and, if my electorate could have been made a testing ground for its validity, it would have been overwhelmingly upheld. While hon. members opposite were howling repudiation in Brisbane, they could not find anybody to oppose me for the Barcoo. Why? Because the people there realised the justice—and the necessity. I may say—for the placing of that Act on the statute-book.

There is just one other question I must mention. The North Coast Railway is nearing completion. A start has been made on the Longreach-Winton line. Those lines will be completed during this Parliament. There is yet another line of urgent national necessity—that is, a connection between Blackall and Charleville. The necessity for that line was clearly demonstrated during the last drought, and it has been [9 p.m.] favourably reported on by the Public Works Commission. I hope that, before this Parliament expires by the effluxion of time, serious consideration will be given to the carrying out of that favourable report.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I have very much pleasure in speaking to the motion before the House. One must feel gratified on reading the Governor's Speech to note the keen interest His Excellency has taken in those people who have gone out in the far West, of whom we have heard so much to-night from the hon. member for Barcoo, and who have done so much for Queensland. The Governor is a very keen observer of the conditions of the men on the land. He realises, as do hon. members on this side and hon. members representing country constituencies, that the conditions of those people have been seriously neglected by all previous Governments. It was a very wise thing for His Excellency to bring those matters before the House at the opening of this Parliament. I would also like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on the reasonable moderation of their tone. It is usual for young members supporting the Labour party when they come into this House to start off with something red hot, and think they are going to make a huge stroke for themselves by raising the red flag and flying it in this House. They have realised, as the hon. gentlemen on the front Government benches have realised, that the Red Objective is not what the people are requiring in Queensland to-day. If anything can be said of the success of the Government at the polls, it was due to the Premier's modera-

tion with regard to other things that we have heard about, and to the redistribution of the electorates. That, no doubt, was responsible for the return of Labour to power. There is a good deal in the Governor's Speech that representatives of the country electorates are very interested in, and, no doubt, a good deal of support for the measures mentioned will be forthcoming from this side of the House. There is one Bill—an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act—which to the people I represent, and the people whom we are dependent upon to keep the resources of the country going—the producers—is just a little nightmare. We are wondering how far-reaching this amendment will be. We are wondering whether our rural industries and the people who are now producing the wealth of our country will be brought under the Industrial Arbitration Act. I refer to the dairymen, orchardists, and all those people who are engaged in rural industries. The wheat-grower has already been brought under the operation of the Industrial Arbitration Act, but those employed in the production of wheat have not sought awards through the court. It is a very unwise thing indeed for a Government which proposes to go in for a very extensive land settlement scheme, to come forward with an amending Bill similar to what we fear this one is going to be. I would advise the Premier to look forward to the prosperity and the prospects of his land settlement scheme. If the rural industries are placed under the operation of the Industrial Arbitration Act it will mean a great setback to our land settlement schemes, to which members of country electorates are looking forward with considerable interest.

Mr. COLLINS: We were told the same thing when the Act was applied to the sugar industry.

Mr. COSTELLO: The hon. member may think that he is the King of the North in Bowen, but the hon. member for Townsville could claim to be the King of the North. I hope the Premier will have this amending Bill so moderated that it will not injure the rural industries which he is now attempting to foster. We hope that he will stand up, if necessary, against the extremists of his party, and prevent the Bill becoming law, and we on this side will support the Government in the interests of the rural industries.

Land settlement will play a very big part in this session. The Secretary for Public Lands would do well to accept the advice of some hon. members on this side who are practical settlers and know what they are talking about when they are talking about land settlement matters. The hon. member for Marilla pointed out that a lot of the large holdings in the West are not altogether suitable for wheat-growing or for dairying. It is to be hoped that the Government will take the advice of country members and appoint a local board—not a board representing the Department of Public Lands in Brisbane—in the district in which the land is going to be opened up. I hope the Government will take that advice, and not the advice of the officials of the Lands Department. It would be very unwise indeed to put settlers on holdings and expect them to carry on agricultural pursuits when the land is only suitable for grazing and wool-growing. It would be very disastrous indeed to put people on the land, and have the results that we see attached to soldier settlements. It would be very well indeed for the Government to take warning,

Mr. Costello.]

and to see that they have not the same failures in the big land settlement schemes which they propose to bring forward this session as have occurred in connection with the soldier settlements.

I would like to refer to some pests that probably the Government are not aware of. We have to take into consideration the prickly-pear menace. We are interested in the Prickly Pear Commission, but I am afraid that that Commission will not be able to enlighten the Government or the people of Queensland, or Australia, in regard to any new or cheaper method of eradicating the pear than we know at the present time. The prickly-pear menace is a problem that the people on the land are fighting every day. Every day it is getting more serious, and, unless we can find some cheaper method of eradicating it, it is going to hold more land within the next ten years than the settlers will be holding under the land settlement scheme. Every settler within a 40 or 50 mile radius of prickly-pear infested country has to deal with prickly-pear. He has to add that cost to the amount of his rent, or deduct it as a depreciation of the value of his holding. Within that radius he has to go over his holding every year to eradicate the small seedlings that will grow up there, and which have been scattered there by birds. Almost every bird of the bush to-day is a pear distributor. Amongst them can be included the crow, the emu, the black magpie, the mountain magpie, and almost every other bird. We cannot destroy our bird life, because, if we do so, other pests will grow up which perhaps will be a greater menace. Another pest the small settler has to contend with is the dog pest. I would advise the Government to revert in this connection to the conditions in force some years ago, and I am glad to see a promise to put them into force. That assistance is in the nature of procuring for settlers wire-netting on long and easy terms. I have in my electorate, at the present time, no less than six groups of settlers wishing to take advantage of those conditions. I ask the Minister to reserve at least £60,000 for the purchase of wire-netting to distribute to the settler to enable him to fight the dingo, fox, and rabbit pests. I make this appeal for the small man, and I would ask the Minister to give preference to that man and to group settlers when he is dealing with the application.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is about time you appealed for the small man, because you have been battling for the big man long enough.

Mr. COSTELLO: I am always battling for the small man. I represent the small man, and the big man can look after himself. It is the small man whom I want to see put on his feet, and for whom I am anxious to secure reasonable consideration. I am a little man myself financially, as compared with some of the men on the front Government benches.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your side has been trying to protect the big man session after session.

Mr. COSTELLO: Not since I have been in Parliament. My support has always gone to the small man.

Mr. MORGAN: We were only trying to get him the support he is entitled to.

[Mr. Costello.

Mr. COSTELLO: I am pleading now for the man who has to contend with the prickly-pear and the dingo. If the Government, this financial year, make available £60,000 on long terms as I have asked, they will not lose in revenue, because land will be made more productive by raising sheep instead of cattle. We have the small man in my electorate who engages in sheep-raising mixed with a little dairying.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You have big tin mines in your district, too.

Mr. COSTELLO: The rents are also too high. The Secretary for Public Lands said to-night that the actual rent the settler was called upon to pay was only a mere detail in regard to the settlement of land. It is a big item, though, when a man goes on the land first, in addition to his other taxes. Remember we have to pay our shire council rates over and above our rent to the Crown, and, when all these factors are taken into consideration, I contend that it is absolutely necessary that we should have cheap land. I am an advocate of cheap land. Mention has been made of settling people on the land, but I am more interested in keeping those people who are now on the land. I hope the Government will follow the advice tendered from this side of the House and take into consideration the construction of railways in order to provide facilities to assist him to develop the land and thus prevent him drifting to the city. The hon. member for Barcoo, like myself, has been receiving letters from people on the land asking that jobs may be found for them in the city. We do not want to bring our people from the country into the city. He said the big squatter was squeezing the small man off the land, but in my case that is not so. With me it is the Government who are at fault. You may ask me why. One of the reasons is that the holdings are a great deal too small. I must not be mistaken as pleading for the big man in saying so; I am simply here as one who wants to assist those who wish to make an honest living for themselves and families.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I had a letter from a man in your district the other day urging small areas, and at the same time he holds about 8,000 acres himself.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not a small man.

Mr. COSTELLO: I believe in providing a man with a living area in order to make him content, as he will not then be so anxious to sell out, and the big man would not have the privilege of buying him out as he has now, as he is then enabled to make a success for himself and his family. If the Minister takes notice of the friend who wrote to him, and cuts that land into small areas, he, no doubt, will be able to purchase all the settlers out in about five years, as he knows very well that they will be starved and be very glad to get out.

I would like now to draw the attention of the Premier to a promise he made a little while ago in reference to the construction of a railway. I am sorry the hon. gentleman is not here in his place, but he will not need reminding that a little while ago he promised the people of Texas a railway. If ever a railway was justified, it is the connection between Inglewood and Texas. The land in the vicinity is very fine country. We have heard about the valley of the Condamine

and other rich spots in Queensland, but there is nothing in the southern parts of Queensland equal to the river flats along the Severn River. It is the pick of this part of Queensland. This railway has been promised for the last forty years. Twelve years ago Parliament voted a certain amount of money to be placed on the Estimates for the turning of the first sod of the railway. People went out ahead of the railway and settled in the district, and they have been starving in consequence of this promise not being given effect to. These people are to be congratulated on having remained there, and I am sure that the Premier will stand up to his promise and bring rejoicing to these people. This railway will retain on the land people who have been trying to get off it for the last three or four years. Many have been forced off the land by the Government's legislation and neglect to attend to the new settler, and not, as the hon. member for Barcoo said, by the big squatter.

I wish now to bring under the notice of the House a little incident which appeared in one of their daily papers that was annoying to the people in the country. It is taken from the "Daily Standard"—the Government organ—and is dated 11th July, 1923. The article I am about to quote is called "The Wishbone of the Country."

Mr. PEASE: That is written by a correspondent.

Mr. COSTELLO: It is not. It is an editorial. As this paper voices the opinion of the Government, the people should know all about it—

"THE WISHBONE OF THE COUNTRY.

"The question has been raised again. And it must be scotched. Is the man on the land badly off? With all the emphasis of which I am capable I shout, 'NO.' But the man on the land can be badly off if he wants to be. He can be antiquated in his methods, milk cows by hand, do the tedious ploughing by hand, and keep Shanks's pony to take the cream and the milk to the factory. Then he most certainly WILL be badly off. But, for the easiest job on the earth, done in the right way, commend me to the farming business. The right and the easy way is to be up-to-date with machines for the milking, many-discs instead of the one-furrow, follow-in-the-rear plough, harvesters, a motor to get the cream and the milk away early, and pools to see that he gets the best out of the market. What an easy life! All the farmer has to do is to sit on his plough, or motor or feather bed, and wait for the cheques. Of course, rain must come, too, but Governments and manufacturers of farm implements can't order the rain to come. So why blame the Government and anybody for the very things they can't do, and not give them credit for the things they do? No city worker is half as well looked after as the average cocky, who with the conveniences at his disposal can now work half the day and sleep the other half without the assistance of an alarm clock. The man on the land used to be called the backbone of the country. He ought to be called the wishbone of the country."

Now, then, will the hon. member for Bowen stand for that? I am sure that he will not. I am sure that many hon. members on that side of the House are ashamed to associate themselves with that policy.

There is another little matter I noticed—that is, the amendment of the Dingo Act. The Secretary for Agriculture has promised this for some time, but, unfortunately, the last session was rather raced through. To those who are living along the southern border of Queensland this is a very important matter. Inside New South Wales the rate is only 2s. 6d. on dingoes. On our side it is £1. You can just imagine the large number of scalps that the dingo boards have to contribute to on our side of the border. We have looked forward with some interest to see what attention is paid to the requests of our people on this subject. These people are called upon to pay taxes unnecessarily to destroy the other man's dogs. I will not resume my seat without referring to soldier settlement, and in doing so I refer to something I know a good deal about. In looking through the report from the Under Secretary for Lands for the year ended 30th June, 1922, we find the following loans made for this purpose:—

	£	s.	d.
1917-18	30,109	0	0
1918-19	99,137	0	0
1919-20	418,726	13	9
1920-21	569,306	11	11
1921-22	341,640	0	5

For these five years ended 30th June, 1922, the total loans amounted to £1,660,614 10s. 3d. I am sure that, when the next report comes out, we shall have expended at least another £500,000, and shall have in the near future at least £2,000,000 spent on soldier settlement in Queensland. We are going to lose £750,000 on soldier settlement in Queensland. What sort of an influence will this have over our friends coming from the South, or even on people in Queensland who have money to invest on the lands of the State, when they look at the failure that soldier settlement has been in Queensland? These are facts, and it is no good trying to avoid them. We as taxpayers have to stand up to these facts.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do you know what they are going to lose in New South Wales?

Mr. COSTELLO: No.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: £11,000,000, and you complain about £750,000.

Mr. COSTELLO: Look how much more money they have got invested.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It shows who is doing most for the soldiers.

Mr. COSTELLO: One cannot help but feel sorry that the Government did not take this matter up in a business-like manner. The hon. member for Windsor made these remarks the other night—

"As a member of the Land Settlement Committee, I am prepared to accept my full share of responsibility or blame with regard to any mistakes which may have been made."

Now with all due respect to the hon. member and to the Land Settlement Committee,

Mr. Costello.]

can anybody say that this committee is anything else but a failure? Has its advice to the Lands Department been the best? Have they been the right men for the committee? When it comes to a matter of settling soldiers on the land, the Government should go to the practical man for advice.

A grave matter of importance is that in the Stanthorpe district the Government promised the settlers they would advance them £100, but when they came to investigate the promise it was found the amount was only available to those settlers who had less than 10 acres of land cleared and fit for cultivation. The man who has less than 10 acres cleared is the only man who can benefit in the extra grant of £100 that the

[9.30 p.m.] Government are prepared to advance them. That is a very great mistake indeed. The progressive man, who has cleared the land at his own expense and by his own labour, does not receive any benefit under this new grant which the Government promised just prior to the election. That is the curse of the policy followed by this Government; they assist the man who will not assist himself. The Government are never willing to help the man who is anxious to get on; but they are always willing to help the man who is prepared to sit down and squal. This £100 further advance is of very little use, because it is only for those who have not been industrious. No doubt they will take advantage of the extra £100 to carry them on a little longer. It was a very good electioneering cry, but it is a downright shame that the unfortunate soldier settler should be made the chopping block, as he has been in Queensland at every election since they have been settled on the land. During the last election the Government dangled this offer of a further £100 in front of the soldier settler; but, when it comes down to tin tacks, the only man who participates in the grant is the man who has not been so progressive as his neighbour. The revaluation of soldier settlements is a thing that I support. As this is a matter that has been advocated by our party, we are very pleased with the Government for accepting our policy. But why delay this revaluation? If they are going on with it, why not be businesslike and get on with it right away while the men are still on the land, and not wait till they have left the land? The Government propose to make a revaluation of the improvements on the land, but we ask also for a revaluation of the capital value of the land. In one portion of my electorate the settlers have been called upon to pay as much as 5d. an acre rent. For first-class sheep country 5d. an acre rent is too high for any settler for the first seven years, and it is very necessary that there should be a revaluation of the Warroo lands and the Texas resumption, and other grazing land in the South-west—which is held under perpetual lease selection—in order to give the settlers an opportunity of having cheap land for the first period at all events. A great deal more could be said about our soldier settlements, but I ask the Government to expedite the revaluations, and, when the revaluation is complete I suppose, if a soldier has £625 worth of improvements on his block, and under the revaluation it is reduced to £425, he will be entitled to a further advance of £200. Do I understand that that is the intention of the Government? Naturally, it

[Mr. Costello.

will be, because they have promised the selector an advance of £625, and if he has only £425 worth of improvements he is entitled to a further £200. That will remedy a good deal of the distress that now exists, and probably would establish some of the settlers who are just on the balance. A little help now will go a long way to establish the soldier, and I would ask the Government to hurry up with their revaluations and give the settlers an opportunity of knowing what the Government value their improvements at and what further assistance they are entitled to.

A system of co-operation is also outlined in His Excellency's Speech. Co-operation is what we have been looking for from the present Government for some time. They have not talked co-operation as freely as we would have liked. Probably they do not like it. The policy of the Country party is co-operation, and, if the Government introduce any measure dealing with co-operation, they can depend on the help and support of the Country party.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is one of the first planks in our platform.

Mr. COSTELLO: They have adopted so much of our policy that they might as well adopt our policy of co-operation, and, if they do, they will get our support.

Mr. COLLINS: Why not put your co-operative plank into operation?

Mr. COSTELLO: If you will give us the power, we will put it into operation. You put it into operation, and you will get the support of the Country party.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why are there two parties opposite?

Mr. COSTELLO: We are free men on this side. We are not tied to any organisation that can threaten us in our electorates. We come into this House as free individuals, and we can exercise our votes in the interests of our electorates and country. We stand for freedom of speech and freedom of action, and members of this party do not have to consult their leader as to how they shall vote on any question. We vote according to our conscience, and, when you introduce co-operation, you will get the hearty support of every member of the Country party.

Another important matter that has been overlooked for many years is the question of railway communication between Milmerran and Kooroongarra. I can assure hon. members that the prickly-pear pest is destroying thousands of acres of first-class land in the Kooroongarra district. They are 25 miles from a railway and have to cross black-soil plains, and the settlers in that district cannot compete with the people alongside the railway simply because they are handicapped with pear. Next week they will come down here and put before the Government a case that would bring tears to the eyes of the hardest man. They are 25 miles from a railway, and are fighting prickly-pear to save this land. Are they getting any consideration from the Government? No. But when the rents are due, if they get into arrears with the repayment of interest and redemption, they are charged 10 per cent. penalty. It will be necessary to build a railway from Milmerran out to Kooroongarra in order to save this country from the prickly-pear pest. Kooroongarra is all beautiful brigalow scrub

country, but prickly-pear is taking possession of it, and, unless something is done, the settlers will be leaving and coming down here for a job on the railway or the trams. When they get down here you will never get them back again. Any man who comes down here and gets a job on the railways or on the tramways will never go back on the land. He is the best asset we have on the land, as he knows the business from A to Z, and why see him forced off? He has no pleasure there, and, when he reads his newspaper and finds out what excitements and pleasures there are in Brisbane, he says that he can work in the city as well as anyone else, and comes down here to get a job. I am approached every week by young men with a request to help them to join the Police Force. It is a pity that we have to give these references to these men to take them off the land to come down here. We should stop that drift, and, if the Government are prepared to meet the conditions of these people and give them some relief in the way of railways, lower rents, and cheaper land in the south-western part of Queensland, it will be a step in the right direction.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): Mr. Speaker,—I desire at the outset of my remarks to tender you my congratulations on your having again ascended to the chair, and I also wish personally to express my sincere thanks for the very kind consideration you gave to me, as Speaker of the Chamber, during one of the most trying periods of my life. However, I take it that you gave to me that consideration which it was your duty to give to any hon. member. I sincerely trust that your present tenure of office will be as pleasant as it was during the last three years, and that, when it expires, you may be acceptable to all sections of the House and become Speaker again.

I desire to express my appreciation for the opportunity of coming back to this House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: I was one of those who were to be eclipsed—to come to a dead end in politics. However, I am pleased that the electors of Normanby have endorsed the position I took up.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: In spite of the tactics adopted and the innuendoes and falsehoods circulated broadcast from one end of the Normanby electorate to another, I have been returned triumphantly as the hon. member for Normanby. However, in a parliamentary contest someone is vanquished, and even if I had been defeated it would have been no disgrace with all the forces arrayed against me.

Mr. CORNER: You had a very creditable win.

Mr. PETERSON. I was very much struck with the brevity of His Excellency's Speech, and when I perused it, after having listened to its delivery in the Chamber, I came to the conclusion that I had never read a more Tory address in my life. It is a replica of the Governors' Speeches which you get in Victoria—that much-abused Tory State we hear so much about. Why is it that we have such a programme placed before the people of Queensland? Is there one word in it for the workers, or to enable the workers to get

better conditions than they have had during the past seven years? I shall endeavour to show where the Government have lamentably failed in keeping their promise to the workers. I am going to deal, not so much with what is contained in the Speech—because, looking at it superficially, anybody but a Bolshevik or a Communist could support it. It is perfectly tolerant and peaceable, if satisfactorily carried out.

We have heard what a wonderful asset the sugar industry is to Queensland. That is so, and every credit must be given to State or Federal Governments for their actions in the past in helping to build up that industry. We have to realise also that side by side with it we have a greater industry at the present time in the sheep and wool industry, and allied to that again is the cattle industry. Why is there no mention whatever in His Excellency's Speech of the cattle industry, when the cattle-men are practically down and out? I am speaking not only for the big men, but for the small selectors who are scattered broadcast over the Normanby electorate. There is not a single sentence in the Speech indicating that the Land Court is to receive instructions that they are not to harass these men any further with excessive rentals. No assurance to that effect is given; but I hope it may be an oversight, and that hon. gentlemen controlling the opposite side will realise that it is their duty to protect the great cattle industry instead of trying to extinguish it. I sincerely trust that my few words on that matter will not be amiss, and that the Government will give effect to my suggestion.

Another thing is that many of them have been back-rented for seven years. They were caught at a critical period when they could not sell their stock, and were back-rented for that period. They were given a certain time in which to pay the back rent to the department, and many of them were financially crippled. In the Normanby electorate there are scores of people who are bankrupt as the result of that policy—not so much from the back-renting as from payment of the money being enforced within a specified time. These people appealed for mercy, but not one single word about mercy is contained in the Governor's Speech. The only reply the people have got is with regard to the 10 per cent. penalty. So far as the farmers in the Normanby electorate are concerned, those who are not able to get money from money-lenders have been fined 10 per cent. because they could not pay the rent.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did you not sit behind this Government when that Bill was passed?

Mr. PETERSON: No, the question of the 10 per cent. penalty was not brought up at all in the amending measure.

Mr. MORGAN: That was put in by the Denham Government.

Mr. PETERSON: It does not matter who did it; the point is that it should be removed. There is no political capital to be made out of it.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you quite sure we are enforcing the 10 per cent. now?

Mr. PETERSON: You are changing your tune a little bit now.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Why not be honest?

Mr. Peterson.]

Mr. PETERSON: The first assurance I have that it is changed has come from one of your own members. I am glad to hear that it has been altered, but in connection with the very last case I had just a few weeks ago the 10 per cent. fine was being enforced. There was a farmer named Kelsey in the Dalma district who took up a selection in the Dalma scrub. He and his wife and children felled a lot of scrub, burnt it, and planted a crop of cotton. Owing to the policy of the Government condemning ratoon cotton, these people were unable to pay their land rents.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did they get a first crop?

Mr. PETERSON: I am coming to that, but I prefer to make my speech in my own way. This man died, and the wife worked the farm. Now she has received notice, with a 10 per cent. penalty.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did they have a previous crop?

Mr. PETERSON: Yes. I may explain that the previous crop was a plant crop. The agricultural experts, Mr. Jones and others, went round the district and advised these growers to ratoon their cotton, and in the same year there appeared in the "Agricultural Journal" and other papers circulating throughout Queensland a report to the effect that the Government were prepared to pay 5d. per lb. for all cotton grown in Queensland. It did not say plant cotton, or ratoon cotton, or any other kind of cotton. The result was that these people, acting in consonance with the advice of the Government experts and the published reports, ratooned their cotton.

The HOME SECRETARY: How many years ago?

Mr. PETERSON: This last season.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Jones has not been in the department this year.

Mr. PETERSON: I said, "Mr. Jones and other experts." I have here a notice from the Department of Public Lands calling upon a selector to pay the arrears with the 10 per cent. penalty included.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is the date of it?

Mr. PETERSON: 15th February, 1923.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Has he asked for a remission?

Mr. PETERSON: The replies I always got—and I defy the hon. gentleman to show one case in which it was otherwise—were that they could have the rents deferred, but that the penalty would be 10 per cent. So did the hon. member for Burnett and other hon. members. If there was ever barefaced repudiation to the agriculturist or cotton grower, we had it in the edict issued by the Secretary for Agriculture. I quite agree that he is trying to do his very best to foster the cotton industry, and I do not wish to make any capital out of what may appear to be a mistake; but, when the Government issued instructions through their experts and by advertisements that they were prepared to take all cotton grown in Queensland, the least they could have done, even though the British delegation condemned ratoon cotton—since, I understand, the Federal Government helped them in their liability—was to have

[Mr. Peterson.

taken the ratoon cotton and given it a chance. This unfortunate woman was unable to meet her land rents, and I have here a letter from the department, according to which she is to be mulcted to the extent of 10 per cent. penalty if she cannot meet her commitments. I would like it to be publicly printed that the Minister states that the 10 per cent. penalty is remitted. It is a most remarkable thing that we have been told that it was in the Land Act and that it could not be altered, and that we are now told that the Minister can alter the Act without consulting Parliament. They have told me time after time that it could not be altered—you can see the correspondence in the Department of Public Lands—but now they are doing it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who said so?

Mr. PETERSON: You just now asked, "Did they ask for a remission?" and, "Are they not getting it?" and we are told that the hon. member for Burnett stated that he had got it.

Mr. CARTER: And you have had it done.

Mr. PETERSON: I am prepared to give £5 to the Brisbane Hospital if the hon. member can show me one case, if he will do likewise if he fails.

The next omission I am sorry to notice from the Governor's Speech is any assurance to the workers that there is not going to be a further reduction in wages. I am one of those members who say that it should be the aim and object of any Government, whether Labour or any other kind, to see that the standard of living is raised to the highest possible pinnacle. You cannot bring that about by reducing the wages of the workers by 5 per cent. at different periods; but there is not one word in the Governor's Speech which tells us that there is going to be no further retrenchment or reduction of wages or salaries of the public service. So far as I am concerned, except under the most exceptional circumstances, I never intend to vote for any reduction of wages. Even under the basic wage as it stands to-day it often puzzles me how workers can live under existing conditions, and I never thought that it would fall to the lot of the Labour Government—never mind what a Tory Government would do—to induce the Industrial Arbitration Court to reduce wages.

Mr. HYNES: Do you favour an award for cotton picking?

Mr. PETERSON: Yes, if you protect the producer of cotton.

Mr. HYNES: Do you favour the application of the basic wage?

Mr. PETERSON: Yes, all things being equal—absolutely.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You were the biggest advocate for increased wages when you were on this side.

Mr. PETERSON: So I am now, and I say that the party with whom I am associated are pledged against the reduction of the workers' wages.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: They moved for a reduction of 10 per cent. in the last Parliament.

Mr. PETERSON: On salaries over £300. Hon. members opposite are getting £500 a

year. Whom did they hit first? Did they not hit the employees of the State by reducing them 5 per cent.? They should be proud of their work. (Government interjections.) So far as I am concerned, I shall never be associated or allied with any party which stand for a reduction in wages. I am glad to see hon. members opposite getting a little bit agitated. If I provoked no interjections, I would be sure I was not hurting them.

The next thing I am going to refer to which I am sorry to see omitted from the Speech is any reference to opportunities for the workers to get their own homes.

We have been told that there is a Workers' Homes Act. What does that mean? It means the segregation of workers into compounds in certain areas where the Government resume lands. They would have to accept the perpetual leasehold tenure. I do not object to that, but I believe in giving a selector preference as to which tenure suits his pocket best. Why is there not provision in the Workers' Dwellings Act to enable the worker to get the same advantage as can be secured in Victoria—that Tory State, as it is called? In Victoria, for every £10 that is advanced by the worker, £90 is advanced by the Corporation that has charge of these Trust Funds.

The HOME SECRETARY: Here £95 is advanced.

Mr. PETERSON: Under the perpetual lease system. Here a man is not only a perpetual leaseholder, but he is a perpetual slave to the Government, too. I regret that there is no provision enabling workers who desire to live in the suburbs of Brisbane a better opportunity of getting a home than they have at the present time. Why is there a shortage of homes at the present moment? We heard from the answers to questions to-day that so much less had been spent during the past few years than the previous few years in that direction. Why is that? The reason is because the cost of workers' homes to-day is out of all proportion to what it was in 1914. You might ask what that has to do with workers' dwellings. The question is the cost of timber. It is a matter affecting the construction of workers' homes. When we stand for the levelling up of the worker by giving him the best conditions and the best wages we should do our best to remove him from the atmosphere of rentpaying in which he lives. We should place him in such a position that he can become the owner of his own little castle. There is nothing wrong in advocating that. The worker should be given that right. We plead for that right. I regret that there is no provision in the Governor's Speech for an amendment of the Workers' Dwellings Act in order to extend the benefits to those which can be obtained in Victoria. I hope that it will be in the schedule mentioned at the conclusion of the Speech.

I believe in the Government's policy enunciated there with regard to reafforestation. I think it is only right that the Government should take the fullest possible steps to preserve the forests and propagate suitable timber trees for future generations. I do not quarrel with that; but I object to the present generation being levied on for the whole cost of that. In 1914, when I was building houses in Rockhampton, we paid 26s. per 100 superficial feet for first-class pine, which to-day costs £3 6s. in Brisbane delivered on the job.

There is something remarkably wrong when there is that difference in price in timber when comparing 1914 with 1922. What has been the result of that? By this secret policy artificially called "stumpage," and by the inflation of the charge for timber royalty, the result has been that three or four workers have to herd together in one house in different parts of Brisbane. They cannot afford to get their own homes, with the result that many a man comes home at night to those tenements and is unable to find his own children. Who has got the difference between 26s. per 100 superficial feet in 1914 and £3 6s. per 100 superficial feet now? The workers have not got it.

Mr. CARTER: How much of that is royalty?

Mr. PETERSON: It depends on the distance from the railway. In 1920, in some instances, it was as high as 30s. per 100 superficial feet on pine. If my deductions are incorrect, the fact is paramount that we have to pay three times more for timber to-day than we did in 1914. That is a fact that is preventing the workers from getting their own homes. I appeal to the Government to try and do something to reorganise the Forestry Department so that the workers can get cheaper timber, and thus enable them to get cheaper homes. By doing so, you will do something that will earn the gratitude of thousands of people in this State.

I am pleased to note that the Government are very keen advocates of the principle of co-operation so far as agriculture is concerned. As a member of Parliament I will give them every possible assistance to attain any co-operative goal. Here in the Governor's Speech, whilst there are foreshadowed agricultural co-operative schemes, not one single scheme is suggested for co-operative industries. Are not the industrialists as much entitled to co-operative measures, and to engage in industries co-operatively, and why should not the Government place at the disposal of the workers the right to obtain their own factories just as they did to the man on the land the right to maintain their own butter factories? That is our policy. (Government dissent.) There is nothing wrong in attempting to give to the worker the full result of his production. I am amazed beyond description at the omission of measures like that, and I seriously hope these will be given effect to. What have the Government to offer to the workers after seven years' tenure of office? Assuming that we are making this the best State, so far as humanitarian legislation is concerned, that bald fact is that, when a man who through stress of circumstances is left in a poor condition, when he attains the age of sixty-five years, there is only one thing open to him, and that is the old-age pension. That is the highest ideal reached by this Government. We on this side of the House stand for the best conditions possible, the highest wages, and better housing. We will take him away from the spectre which rises in front of him in his old age—the miserable pittance of the old-age pension. We stand for a system of national insurance so that, when a man attains the age of sixty-five years, he will be able to retire on an allowance, and not be in a position where the police come around and root into his banking account. He will receive this allowance as a right, and there will be nothing he need feel ashamed of under a policy of that description. I shall endeavour, so far as I

Mr. Peterson.]

am concerned, to do all in my power to see it brought to a successful fruition by advocating it wherever I can.

Another question I wish to touch upon is the question of increased settlement. The Government have gone to a lot of expense and trouble, and no doubt with good intentions, to try and induce a large number of settlers to come to Queensland. I notice by to-day's paper where they have received a large number of applications from other parts of Australia. The point is that we should not be so anxious to secure settlers from other parts of Australia as we should be to attract new settlers altogether. The position has been so bad that the Government have not seen fit to engage in a bold immigration policy, with the result that we shall be confronted with a serious problem at a very early date. To-day there is a glut in many of our products. Assuming the Government place 6,000 settlers on the Burnett lands and elsewhere, we shall have a glut in everything—a glut in butter, a glut in pineapples, and in the majority of cases we shall find the markets are glutted. The result is that, if you bring more people here and settle them in the way the Government intend, you will have still more glutted markets. Why did not the Government insert in the Governor's Speech some provision which would create secondary industries, and by building up our industries in that way build up markets for our own produce? We heard a lot this afternoon about 80 per cent. of the beef that is grown in Queensland being consumed in Queensland and the other States, and only 20 per cent.—a remnant—sent overseas, or to where there is a market. The point is that the best market we can have for our sugar or produce of any kind is our own market, and I sincerely trust that, in order to encourage the establishment of secondary industries here, the Government will notify intending investors that we are prepared to exempt them from payment of income tax for a period of five years. Give them some encouragement to come here, and then we shall see the need for larger land schemes, because by this means we shall help to create a market for our own produce—a market which is much better than the overseas market.

The next matter I wish to touch on is the question of fodder conservation. The Government have foreshadowed in His Excellency's Speech that they intend to give serious thought to this important problem; but what puzzles me is that we have for years, per medium of the Agricultural Bank, given an opportunity to settlers to obtain a few hundred pounds for the purpose of building silos. Why has not the offer been taken up? And why is such an offer not taken up? Why is there no publicity, and why the need of a special Bill? All I can say is that any measures such as those enunciated dealing with water schemes, fodder conservation, and the alteration of our water laws will have my cordial support. While speaking on water conservation, let me say that the one big trouble that we have had in the past, so far as land settlement is concerned, is that settlers have gone on to dry areas and have not been able to get water. Later they were able to go to the Agricultural Bank and obtain a loan, but that loan was not available until water was actually found, with the result that people were unable to obtain the loan, and

[*Mr. Peterson.*

suffered considerable hardship. The proposed Bill aims at overcoming that difficulty and at making it possible for settlers to obtain the loan, which will be a great boon to the settlers of Queensland, particularly those in dry areas. My experience in the Dawson Valley from 1915 to 1920, generally speaking, was that the settlers suffered a very cruel time on account of water shortage, and it was a lamentable mistake to induce people to go on to areas like that where no facilities existed for water. One by one they got over that, but that does not do away with the fact that the Agricultural Bank does not advance one cent. to them until the water is in the well. Many a man has exhausted the whole of his little fortune in trying to find water. Any measure of that description will have my most cordial support, and I trust the Government will give effect to it at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): 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.

DINGO AND MARSUPIAL DESTRUCTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INTRODUCTION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) on taking the chair said:—I desire to take this opportunity of expressing to hon. members my sincere gratitude for again electing me to the position of Chairman of Committees. I can assure them that I realise the responsibilities of the position and I appreciate the honour very much, and I trust, with the assistance of hon. members generally, to carry out the duties in a manner that will reflect credit on myself and honour on the position, and give satisfaction to members of the Committee generally.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend section 13 of the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Act of 1913 in a certain particular.”

I might inform the Committee that the particular in which it is proposed to amend the Act is the section which makes it arbitrary that the bonus paid for foxes and dingoes should be not less than £1. It has been found in practice that quite a number of boards have “gone broke” through having to pay £1 per head for foxes. Particularly is this so on the border of New South Wales, as in New South Wales the Pastoral Protection Board only pays 2s. 6d. for the scalp of a fox. An additional argument in favour of the amendment is that during last year the average value of fox skins in Sydney was about 14s. each. One of the boards last year was only able to pay for 2,315 fox scalps, and the unpaid fox scalps amounted to 3,652. That is to say, they owe the scalpers £3,652, and they are collecting that at the rate of 1,000 per month, so the position is somewhat serious. For that reason it was thought advisable to amend the Act and fix the bonus from time to time

by regulation. I am not prepared, at the present time, to say what reduction should be made, but a substantial reduction should be made in fox scalps, particularly as the skins are worth such a big sum. Quite a number of boards have fixed the maximum assessment 6s., and they are still in arrears in payment.

Mr. CORSER: Would the maximum apply to all the boards in the State, or only to the boards on the border of the State?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All the boards have not fixed a maximum, but quite a number of them have. The figures for last year are not available, but the figures available now show that 38,666 dingo scalps and 14,646 fox scalps were paid for at £1 per head. It is rather a significant fact that the boards on the border, that is on the Darling Downs, Paroo, St. George, and Western Downs, paid for 11,616 fox scalps out of a total of 14,646.

Mr. MORGAN: How many were killed in New South Wales?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is quite possible that a very large number were killed in New South Wales and brought over to Queensland to collect the £1, as only 2s. 6d. is paid for scalps in New South Wales. The question may be asked, "Why not amend the Act in other directions? The Council of Agriculture at the present time are considering some important amendments in the Act, but I desire this amendment to be made with the least possible delay.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): It is not my intention to offer any objection to the proposed Bill, but I will say that, after quite a lot of consideration and very many important deputations from pastoralists and those concerned, the Dingo Act was brought into being, and it was considered then that by paying £1 per head we would gradually reduce the number of dogs and foxes throughout the State. A tremendous amount of money has been spent since that time, and it seems a shame that a request for a reduction in the rate should be necessary on the grounds stated by the Minister. It would have been better if the Minister had been able to induce the New South Wales Government to take some action to enable them to destroy their own dogs.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How do you suggest I should do that?

Mr. CORSER: You generally take credit for most of the things that are good in that State, but do not take credit for the things that are bad. There seems to be some anomaly, and it is not going to assist some of the boards to try and keep foxes down. Foxes are just making their appearance in my district. It would be a great pity in any way to damp their ardour and their desire to keep them back, because they are making headway. I think the dingoes could not be worse than they are in our district at the present time.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I am sorry the Minister is not going further in amending the Act in regard to the matter under discussion. While I agree that something should be done to reduce the amount of money to be paid for the scalps of foxes and dingoes, the Government have now an opportunity to show that they are genuinely out to assist the cattlemen by removing this burden from their shoulders. Why should men who own cattle, where the dingo does not do them

damage to any extent, be forced to pay two-thirds of the cost of destruction?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We do not put it in this clause.

Mr. MORGAN: You have put in the words "in a certain particular," and those words ought to be deleted, and an opportunity given to relieve the cattlemen of this burden. We do not ask the sheepmen to assist in keeping down the tick—the cattlemen have to carry the whole of the burden.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: No; they are the worst offenders.

Mr. MORGAN: We do not complain, because sheep do not spread the tick, but why should cattlemen carry two-thirds of the burden in respect of the destruction of foxes and dingoes when cattlemen receive no damage from the destruction done by foxes and very little by dingoes? Hon. members opposite cannot justify the fact that the cattleman who is down and out to-day should contribute two-thirds of the money collected for the destruction of foxes and dingoes. I know that the Minister does not agree with it. This is an instance in which we can relieve the cattlemen from the burden which they carry to-day in respect to this matter. It is not a fair thing to ask the cattlemen to contribute, as they are doing now, the bulk of the money required for the destruction of these pests, when the sheepmen are not paying their proportion.

Mr. GILDAY: Is that the case now?

Mr. MORGAN: We discovered from the Department of Agriculture that the cattlemen are contributing two-thirds of the money which is collected, and why should they have to contribute this amount to keep down something which is not damaging them?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Because they let the dingoes breed on their holdings.

Mr. MORGAN: That is absolute nonsense. It is right to saddle the cattlemen with something, but not the proportion which they are asked to pay at the present moment. The Minister knows perfectly well that the cattlemen need immediate relief. Here is an opportunity for him to do something, by striking out the words "a certain particular" and inserting the words "certain particulars."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not prepared to amend the Act generally now.

Mr. MORGAN: Will you give an undertaking that, if evidence is brought that the cattlemen are entitled to this assistance, you will further amend it this session?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: Then I am satisfied.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

DISEASES IN POULTRY BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

“That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to make better provision with respect to diseases in poultry,”

said—This Bill is really on the lines of the Diseases in Stock Act, so much so that the department thought that it would be possible to include poultry in that measure, as has been done in Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia; but the Crown Law authorities did not think it could be done in that way. It therefore becomes necessary to introduce a separate measure. It is designed to protect poultry breeders and also the public against diseases in poultry. Quite a number of complaints have been made to me about diseased poultry in the market, and we find it necessary to protect all concerned against their spread.

[10.30 p.m.]

Mr. MORGAN: Will everyone have to send in a fowl return?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. There will be a form of inspection. The Bill provides for the constitution of districts. It will not apply to the whole of Queensland. The districts will be mapped out, and, by proclamation, the provisions of the Bill will be applied to certain districts as it is found necessary. Although we have had no power to prevent these fowls from being sold, the vendors have been reasonable, and have agreed to their being destroyed. We want to have power to destroy them, and to be able to give the owners notice to destroy them.

Mr. MORGAN: How do you propose to raise funds?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No funds will be raised. The only funds that will be raised will be by way of fines. I hope that no necessity will arise for the imposing of fines. When it is remembered that the value of the poultry industry in Australia last year was nearly £10,000,000, and nearly £500,000 in Queensland, we can realise the importance of the poultry industry. The measure is a simple one, and is necessary in the interests of the breeder and the general public.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) presented the Bill, and moved—

“That the Bill be now read a first time.”

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

The House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

[*Hon. W. N. Gillies.*]