

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 30 AUGUST 1923**

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**THURSDAY, 30 AUGUST, 1923.**

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

**QUESTIONS.****COST OF INKERMEN IRRIGATION WORKS.**

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

“1. In connection with the Inkerman irrigation works and the increase in their cost from the original estimate of £130,000 to that of £392,851 on the 30th June last—how much of the item—machinery and material, £293,924—was spent on Australian manufactures, how much on British goods, and how much on foreign machinery and material?

“2. In the increase on the original sum of £19,728 estimated as being sufficient to pay for wages to the cost of £98,927 on the 30th June last—how much is represented by expenditure in the clearing of land, and what is the area cleared on that date, and what was the original estimate for this work?

“3. How much of it has been spent in well-sinking, and how many wells had been sunk on 30th June last, and what was the original estimate for the cost of well-sinking? Are any more wells required to complete the scheme, and what was the original estimate of the cost of well-sinking?

“4. What was the expenditure on the erection of poles up to the 30th June last? How many were then erected? Are any more required? What was the original estimated cost of the erection of the poles? Have any poles, after being erected, been removed?

"5. What was the cost of the labour employed upon the erection of the powerhouse? Is this amount included in the sum of £98,927—the cost of the labour employed on the works up to 30th June last?"

"6. What is the total cost of the Inkerman irrigation works when completed?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), in the absence of the Secretary for Public Lands (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

"1 to 6. The information is not yet available, but the full particulars will be supplied when the Estimates are being discussed."

#### STOCKS OF INFERIOR WHEATS SOLD BY WHEAT BOARD.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Is the £49,820 10s. credited to inferior wheats of the 1920-21 pool in the Auditor-General's report of 30th June, 1922, still credited to inferior wheats in the Wheat Board accounts?"

"2. Are there any charges against that amount not included in the report?"

"3. Was the cash balance credited to inferior wheats used in paying the 3d balance due on f.a.q. wheats?"

"4. Has the Board sold the stocks in hand—1920-21 pool—mentioned in the report?"

"5. What was the net amount realised?"

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

"1 to 5. Inquiries will be made. Regarding this and questions of a similar nature, I desire to say that, this Government having given the wheatgrowers of Queensland, by special Act of Parliament, the most complete form of control of their own industry, through a board elected by themselves, the Minister should not be asked to interfere with what is obviously the business of the Board. If the honourable member is a wheatgrower, he should make any complaint to his representative on the Board. If he is not a wheatgrower, he should practise what he preaches and endeavour to keep the Board free from what he calls 'political interference.'"

#### STATE ENTERPRISES—CHARGE FOR AUDIT AND LIABILITY TO PAY STAMP DUTY.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*), in the absence of Mr. Elphinstone (*Oxley*), asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Is any charge made by the Audit Department for auditing the accounts of the State enterprises under the control of the Commissioner for Trade? If so, what fees have been charged to the respective enterprises to date?"

"2. Is stamp duty paid by State enterprises such as is charged in the case of similar operations carried on by private enterprise?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) replied—

"1. Yes, as determined by the Auditor-General. Annual fees—

	£
State butchery ... ..	200
State cannery ... ..	60
State fishery ... ..	60
State hotel ... ..	25
State produce agency ...	100
State refreshment-rooms	120
State stations ... ..	100

"2. Stamp duty is paid where required by law."

#### PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table and ordered to be printed:—

Third Annual Report of the Public Service Commissioner, being the report for the year ended 30th June, 1923.

#### SUPPLY.

##### FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Question stated—

"That there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1923-1924, a sum not exceeding £300 to defray the salary of the Aide-camp to His Excellency the Governor."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The appeal for sympathy that has been made by the Treasurer in the Financial Statement is worthy of comment. I think that, when he was making his second reading speech on the Government Loans Redemption and Conversion Bill, he indicated that the credit of the State was all that it should be: that the assets were amply sufficient to warrant the people who held the money to lend the State all that was required. Yet in the first paragraph of his Financial Statement he said that he is not to be envied in his position. The reason that he is not to be envied is owing to the legislation of the Government—to the short-sighted and spiteful legislation and the squandering of the revenue and loan funds. That is why he fears going to England, and I want the people of Queensland to understand that the burdens that they have to bear and the extra costs imposed upon them arise from the maladministration of the Government and from the class of legislation brought in by them. I do not want any excuses to be offered regarding the war and the delegation. I want the people thoroughly to understand that these drawbacks arise from maladministration and reckless and wanton extravagance. There is no blinking the fact, and I want it to be thoroughly understood. When the Treasurer was bringing in his Government Loans Redemption and Conversion Bill he made a long apology for the repudiation Act that had been passed, endeavouring to prove that expediency should be considered instead of right. I would not mention this but for the fact that my silence might be construed as approval, and it might indicate that there were extenuating circumstances.

Mr. COLLINS: What Bill do you refer to?

Mr. MOORE: The "Repudiation" Act and also the Brisbane Tramway Purchase Act.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I rise to a point of order. I have been in this Chamber eight

years and I should like to know whether it has passed any legislation known as the Repudiation Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: A point of order has been raised by the hon. member for Bowen, who asks for information. So far as I know—and the records of the House will bear me out—no such Act has been passed. When hon. members are referring to any Act of Parliament, I think they should describe it by its proper name.

Mr. MOORE: If it pleases the hon. member I will call it the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920. Everybody knows what is meant when one speaks of the "Repudiation Act" and what effect it had. What I want to point out is that in 1905, when the original Act was passed, there was no doubt that a definite agreement was made, and that that agreement was embodied in the 1910 Act and a schedule was attached to that Act showing all the holdings that came under that provision.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There has been a general election since then.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is a shocking admission.

Mr. MOORE: All the elections in the world do not make a wrong right.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The people endorsed our action.

Mr. MOORE: I want the people of this State to recognise that the effect of that legislation has already been felt in Queensland. We have already felt its effect in the onerous conditions imposed by the American people when they lent us money, and we have already felt its effect in the extra rate of interest we have had to pay. I want the people to understand that the burden placed on their shoulders has been caused by the legislation passed by this Government, and not by any delegation or any outside organisation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Did not your party agree to return the increased rents when they got into office?

Mr. MOORE: We did not; and the hon. gentleman knows quite well that we did not. He can find that out by looking up "Hansard."

Mr. POLLOCK: Every newspaper said that it was your miserable policy that led to your defeat.

Mr. MOORE: If the hon. member wants to ascertain what is the definite policy of this party in that regard, let him look up "Hansard." He does not want to take it from the newspapers. If a wrong was committed in 1905, another wrong in 1920 does not make it right. The unenviable position the Treasurer is in to-day is of his own making, and it is no good looking for sympathy outside. I quite recognise that Queensland is in an awkward position, but I realise that the Government are to blame for that, and the people outside should know it. The Government should not expect the Opposition to condone every act of the Government simply because they happen to be in a tight corner. We realise that money must be secured; but we realise that the Government are to blame for the present position, and let them shoulder the blame and not come to this Chamber and ask for sympathy. We knew very well what they were doing at the time. We warned them about their legislation and their reckless extravagance, and now

that a difficult time has come, what is the good of saying it is due to outside causes? It is all very fine for the Treasurer to make this apology when he made his Financial Statement. We know very well you can bring yourself to believe anything. I have a quotation from George Bernard Shaw, which says—

"There is no harder scientific fact in the world than the fact that belief can be produced in practically unlimited quantity and intensity, without observation or reasoning, and even in defiance of both, by the simple desire to believe founded on a strong interest in believing."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If you go on quoting George Bernard Shaw, you will learn a good lot.

Mr. MOORE: I wish I could say the same of the hon. gentleman. For the last eight years we have been endeavouring to teach him and his colleagues what is the right thing to do for Queensland, but unfortunately they have been too ignorant to learn, or too obstinate to accept our advice.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were taught something at the last election you will not forget very quickly.

Mr. MOORE: There will be another election in three years. I want to get on to this question of the extravagance of the Government, and wish to show that the reckless extravagance that has been going on is one of the reasons why the credit of Queensland, unfortunately, is bad.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your party are always asking for increased expenditure.

Mr. MOORE: In 1914-15 the public debt was £56,869,046, and in 1922-23 it had increased to £87,315,513—an increase of £30,446,467.

Mr. PAYNE: Had not the war something to do with that?

Mr. MOORE: The war had absolutely nothing to do with it. For this increase of 80 per cent., the receipts have decreased by 13 per cent., and the charge on the revenue has increased from 3.72 per cent. in 1915 to 16.92 per cent. to-day. From the £56,869,046 of loan money spent on reproductive works up till 1914, the State received £1,707,729, and for the £87,315,513 of loan money spent up to date, we have only received £1,458,317, or a decrease of £249,412. That means that with an expenditure of £30,000,000 of loan money we have received £249,412 less, so that the increased expenditure of loan funds has been absolutely unproductive. A private individual showing such a loss would have hard work to convince his banker that he was a fit person to borrow more money. I think everybody will recognise that, when we are spending money on reproductive works, we expect to get some return from them, and when you remember that £30,000,000 of borrowed money have been spent in the last eight years from which there is absolutely no return, that is what I call wanton expenditure. I will show what the Treasurer himself thought of expenditure of that sort in 1913, when he was pointing out the absolute absurdity of continuing to borrow money without getting sufficient results from it. He then said, as reported in "Hansard" for 1913, page 1238—

"Western Australia is the only other State in the Commonwealth that is in a

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worse position than Queensland from that point of view, and still, in Western Australia, they are making excellent provision for the redemption and due retirement of their loans by the establishment of a Sinking Fund, which has not been done in Queensland. So that Queensland is actually in a worse position than any other State of the Commonwealth, relatively, in regard to loan indebtedness. We have a Sinking Fund in Queensland—that tacked on to the 1910 Act, with provision for the payment into it of 10s per cent. per annum. I do not know whether the Government, in their loans which they have floated since then, have carried out their obligations in regard to that matter."

He goes on to say—

"I say that it is not effective, because it is only 10s. per cent. I think it should be 20s. per cent. I think that Western Australia has set the example to other borrowing States in the matter of the provision they are making for the redemption and retirement of loans. The sinking fund in that State varies from 1 to 3 per cent. per annum. That seems an enormously high amount."

He was advocating then something which he failed to carry out when he got into power. What he did when he got into power was to wipe out the Sinking Fund. Then he goes on—

"There is no doubt that the interest burden in connection with the expenditure of loan money is borne to a large extent by the primary producers and to an enormous extent by the workers of the State, who do not enjoy the benefit of the expenditure of loan money in the same proportion as speculators and investors. Farmers, primary producers, and wage-earners generally are not the people who benefit most by the expenditure of loan money. A great number of wage-earners do certainly get temporary employment from the expenditure of loan money, and to that extent they benefit, but it is only a small benefit they receive."

Those are the remarks of the Treasurer at that time. He is in a position to-day to carry out the precepts that he advocated on that occasion, but we find the greatest expenditure that has ever taken place in the history of Queensland, both loan money and revenue, but we do not find the prosperity that we were led to believe would be brought about. You, Mr. Kirwan, quoted the immense number of visitors at the Exhibition as a proof of our prosperity, but the Treasurer himself recognises that it is only a temporary prosperity, which is caused by the expenditure of huge sums of loan money, and when the enormous amount of borrowing has to be stopped, it is generally followed by a period of depression.

Mr. KELSO: We are to spend £5,000,000 of loan money this year.

Mr. MOORE: That expenditure cannot go on, and the time comes, on the morning after the night before, when everything is not so pleasant.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They are knocking off railway men now.

Mr. PEASE: They do not keep them on after their job is finished.

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Mr. MOORE: I want to point out the percentage items of State revenue to show the position Queensland is in with regard to taxation receipts, as compared with the other States. In New South Wales taxation represents 21.71 per cent of the total revenue, in Victoria it represents 20.19 per cent., in Queensland, 29.22 per cent., in South Australia, 22.68 per cent., and in Western Australia—which is a large undeveloped State, and practically in the same position as regards development as Queensland—it represents 14.07 per cent. The return from money invested in public works and services, as compared with the interest on the cost of such works and services in the various States, represents in New South Wales 62.35 per cent., in Victoria 56.90 per cent., in Queensland only 43.72 per cent., in South Australia 58.36 per cent., and in Western Australia 55.36 per cent. We are the worst-off State as regards taxation, and also the worst-off State as regards production, in regard to our services on which loan money has been spent.

Mr. PEASE: And we have the worst Opposition. (Government laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: We also have the worst Government—I do not know that that is anything to be proud of. We certainly have that one black spot in an otherwise white Australia. I trust that after the next election that will be remedied. Government taxation is becoming such a serious burden (and we are getting also other taxes) that I would like to draw attention to the position. We have a Main Roads Act on the same principle as the Victorian measure, and I would like to point out what has happened in Victoria with regard to taxation for main roads, because the same thing is gradually creeping on us in Queensland. For that purpose I shall read the following newspaper extract:—

#### "RURAL TAXATION BURDEN.

"Councillor Jones reviewed the financial position of the Warragul Shire, and said that through the Country Roads Board the council had expended £120,000 on roads. Up to the present the shire had just been able to meet interest and other charges by striking a rate of 2s. 4d. on a high valuation. But the newly made roads were now beginning to wear, and the maintenance charges and loan interest practically absorbed the whole of the rate. The shire overdraft now was £3,846, and the council would have to increase the rate to 2s. 9d. next year. In his opinion the council would soon reach a rate of 3s. 6d., which would be a crushing burden for the farmer, as 3s. 6d. in the £1 annual valuation represented the loss of 1 acre in every 6. Such discouragement to the producer would be disastrous. He did not wish to be pessimistic, but there was no sense in the ratepayers or the Government living in a fool's paradise. In six years the shire valuations had been increased 50 per cent. Notwithstanding the record revenue this year the shire had gone £2,000 behind; and if the present high valuations fell again, where was the council to get the necessary revenue?"

We in Queensland are getting into the same position—not immediately, but gradually.

We have the same double taxation—the shire council rates and the Main Roads Board rates, in addition to the ordinary taxes—or the extraordinary taxes—which are levied by the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would you repeal the Main Roads Act?

Mr. MOORE: No. I would amend it so as to make the burden on the producers a little lighter, because we are building roads which are costing them too much.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: On whom would you put the burden?

Mr. MOORE: I would alter the law so that the enormous expenditure on roads, which are far beyond the needs of the district they go through, would not be incurred. We can build roads to-day which would carry all the traffic of the population in the country districts for much less money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Your party have no vision; you cannot look ahead.

Mr. MOORE: Having vision is all right if the people in the country can bear the load until such time as the extra population comes along. But that is going to be a struggle. At the present time we are spending money on roads which are too good for the districts through which they pass, because the districts are too sparsely settled to carry the burden.

Mr. W. COOPER: The roads are too good for the people.

Mr. MOORE: They are too costly for them to pay for. You could build an economical road which would carry all the traffic in the district for half the expense.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What did your crowd—the local authorities—do to make decent roads?

Mr. MOORE: The local authorities did not get the subsidy the Government are giving the Main Roads Board, but what I am complaining of is that the expense of these roads is so great. I think the hon. gentleman must recognise that. He will soon find it out in his electorate. He thought that the Railways Guarantee Act was all right, but, when he found that the people had to carry too heavy a burden, he took part in repealing it.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Main Roads Board will allow the local authorities to build their own roads.

Mr. MOORE: Under their specifications and supervision.

Mr. GLEDSON: No; under the specifications of the local authorities.

Mr. MOORE: I think that the hon. member does not quite realise the position. If he had something to do with them, he would know more about it.

Mr. GLEDSON: I have had as much to do with them as anybody else.

Mr. MOORE: Perhaps!

Mr. GLEDSON: I know I have.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Bowen said that, when private enterprise had failed, it was the duty of the State to step

in. He made the remark in justification for the State enterprises.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you not agree with that?

Mr. MOORE: I have yet to see that the State stepped in where private enterprise failed. The Government stepped in in the very things in which they thought there was profit, not where they thought the private individual had failed. They stepped in in butcher shops; they stepped in in State stations; they stepped in in sawmills; they stepped in in coal mines; and we had the hon. member for Leichhardt telling us the other night that men who were employed at the private coal mines had to leave their homes and look for work in the State coal mines which had come into competition with them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about State insurance?

Mr. MOORE: The one little ewe lamb of the Government—(laughter)—State insurance, a monopoly! I think we ought to have got past the time when that has to be trotted out on every possible occasion to justify the State in entering upon the realm of private business. What I want to point out is that the State has entered into enterprises that would have been better if they had been left to private individuals. They have not been a success, they have not been instrumental in reducing prices, and they have not developed Queensland one iota, but have only been a burden on the people.

Mr. GLEDSON: Tell us what enterprises the Government have embarked upon?

Mr. MOORE: I will at once take the State sawmills. The Workers' Dwellings Board called for tenders for the erection of workers' dwellings, the tenderer to stipulate a price if the timber is obtained from the State sawmill, and a price if the timber is obtained from a private sawmill. I find that in connection with Job 11,177 the tender was £805 if the timber came from a private mill, and £815 if it came from the State mill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where do you get that information?

Mr. MOORE: From the tenders down in the department. I have also obtained the figures in connection with the following tenders:—

Private Mill.		State Mill.	
£	...	£	...
410	...	418	...
529	...	544	...
400	...	412	...
799	...	815	...
530	...	545	...

If the State sawmills have been a benefit to the people, how is it that, when people tender for workers' dwellings, they stipulate a higher price if the timber has to be obtained from the State sawmill?

Mr. PEASE: You should go up to North Queensland and see the benefit State enterprises have been to the people there.

Mr. MOORE: Why should I go to North Queensland, when the evidence is at our very door? When we point out the loss on State enterprises in one place, we are told to go somewhere else. Nobody can say that

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the State butcher shops have been a success. It is all very well to claim that they have saved the people a certain amount of money. The private shops in Toowoomba were able to undersell the State shop all the time. Before the State shop came there their prices were below the State butcher shop prices, and they continued below the State shop prices after the establishment of that shop.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: How many of the private shops sold at the proclaimed price?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know.

Mr. PAYNE interjected.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member would go to Cairns or somewhere else that we knew nothing about in order to get information to prove that the State enterprises were a success. (Opposition laughter.) The hon. member for Herbert, in speaking about the Inkerman irrigation scheme, said that it was results that counted, and not the costs. What are the results? When the Treasurer was at Home Hill he intimated that the Government would have to write off a considerable amount of expenditure because the burden was too heavy for the farmers to bear. You always find that when the State goes in for heavy expenditure. The Government do not care about what are the results from the money expended, but only whether it is going to purchase support for the member who happens to represent the district. The money was wastefully expended, and you have only to look at the Auditor-General's report to get confirmation of that statement. You will there see the ridiculous estimate of the cost of the Inkerman works and the actual cost of those works. When the Treasurer went through that district at election time, he saw that the results were such that there would have to be a revaluation with a view to wiping off a large portion of the expenditure, because the burden was too heavy for the farmers to bear. That is what I call results. Talking about getting a large amount of sugar-cane might be very fine from the point of view of the farmer, but the general taxpayer has to shoulder the burden of that expenditure.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. COLLINS: What about the assistance given to the wheat farmers on the Downs?

Mr. MOORE: They got most of it back through the Wheat Pool. I am now going back a little further, because the hon. member for Bowen, when he came into this House, had ideals exactly the same as he has to-day. In "Hansard," of 1911, at page 815, the hon. member is reported to have said—

"I want the men to be free men and not slaves, and the only way to do that is to give them free land; and, after giving them free land, to make them advances to assist them."

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: And yet the hon. member is sitting behind a Government to-day which will not give them land at all except under perpetual lease. That is not giving them land at all. He is sitting behind a Government who are endeavouring to make these people slaves. I want to quote a little more to emphasise the point I am getting at. The

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hon. member for Rosewood, in the course of his speech the other night, said that the dairy farmers were disorganised. He said that he would prove it, and that many of the farmers in the district where the Booval butter factory is situated send their cream past that factory to the factory at Kingston, but under proper organisation that would not occur. That means that the unfortunate farmer is to be compelled to send his produce to the factory situated in his district irrespective of price, management, or any other reason, simply because there happens to be a factory in the district where he is organised. We have the same principle creeping in with the farmers that exists wherever the Government have legislated, because it is developing into the socialisation of industry and because the Government have chosen to put that part of their platform into effect.

Mr. COLLINS: No wonder voluntary pools are not the success they should be when we have men of your sort.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member is not in a voluntary pool of any kind, otherwise he would know more about it. The chief charm inseparable from the hardship of the man on the land is that he is allowed to be a free individual. He is not to be tyrannised over or dictated to as to where he is to send his produce and how long he is to work. He is only limited by his ambition and his own efforts. If his self-reliance and initiative are to be taken away and you are going to compel him to send the result of his labour to some place other than where he wants to sell it, and he is to be subjected to the whims of idealists, he is not going to be free. He is a slave—exactly the position the hon. member for Bowen spoke of when he came into this House.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You say you believe in co-operation?

Mr. MOORE: I believe in co-operation to allow the individual to get the best out of his produce; but, when you bring it down to compulsion, it is not co-operation.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you a conscriptionist?

Mr. MOORE: I am a conscriptionist so far as the defence of the country is concerned; but that is a very different thing to compelling a man to distribute the results of his own labour in a way other than what he considers best.

Mr. PEASE: What are the people trying to do with the Kingston butter factory? Where is the Kingston butter factory under your scheme?

Mr. MOORE: Where they ought to be—free and independent.

Mr. PEASE: But what is the price of butter?

Mr. MOORE: If the Kingston butter factory were in with the pool, would the price of butter be any better than it is to-day?

Mr. PEASE: Of course it would.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member does not know anything about it. He wants to impose conditions on men that he would not work under himself. I am speaking on behalf of the individual who wants to control his own produce in his own way. He has every right to do so. I will just read a

quotation taken from a newspaper of 21st August—

“MEAT POOL.

“COMPULSORY SCHEME.

“*Pastoralists Anxious.*

“Brisbane, 21st August.

“Considerable interest was aroused in pastoral circles by the publication in the Press yesterday of the intention of the Council of Agriculture to proceed with the compulsory meat pool. The cattlemen were of opinion that the result of the combined conference held in Exhibition week, when it was decided to object to the proposed compulsion, would have resulted in the scheme being abandoned.

“Surprise was expressed yesterday when the announcement was made that the Council of Agriculture had decided to refer the scheme back to the sub-committee for further consideration. It is understood that this is not for the purpose of withdrawing it, but with the intention of overcoming the constitutional difficulties. The committee is to meet on 6th September, and from consideration already given to the points raised, it is believed by those promoting the compulsory scheme that the obstacles can be surmounted.”

A large section of the cattlemen interested in the question convened a meeting for the purpose of discussing this scheme, and they practically unanimously turned it down because they did not consider it suitable for their interests. Now we find that the Council of Agriculture are not doing what the people interested decided upon. They practically said, “We are going to compel them to have this compulsory pool.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You need not worry about that. If they don't want a pool, they will not have one.

Mr. MOORE: If you have a meeting of the people interested in the industry, and if the combined conference turns down the proposal, why do the Council of Agriculture say, “We think you ought to have this scheme, and we are going to compel you to have it?” Under the Primary Producers' Association scheme practically every local producers' association objected to the appointment of district agents, as they thought it would be a waste of money. Were those associations listened to? They sent their protests down by the sheaf. The only reply they got was a special leading article in the Primary Producers' Association paper saying they must have them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would you abolish the Council of Agriculture?

Mr. MOORE: I think too little of such an interjection to take any notice of it; the people know me too well to take any notice of questions of that sort. I am only voicing the protests of people who have voiced their protests through the Press, and whose protests were sent down to the Council of Agriculture. We are finding billets for quite a large number of people under these schemes. The farmers have to contribute towards the expenses of the organisation, and, if they say that this expense is not justified, why does not the Council of Agriculture pay attention to their opinions? The initiative in all matters is supposed to come from the local producers' associations, and all they are asked

to do at the present time is to confirm something that is being done by the Council of Agriculture. I have attended meetings of the Local Producers' Associations, and have observed that what they asked for was turned down, and what the Council of Agriculture has done they are supposed to ratify whether they believe in it or not. In 1911 the hon. member for Bowen was talking on the cost of coal and the cost of distribution, when Mr. D. Hunter interjected—

“What does it cost to deliver the coal to the consumer?”

Mr. Collins replied—

“I will deal with the consumer presently. The consumer pays for all, just as the worker pays for all.

“The Treasurer: I thought it was the farmer who paid for all.

“Mr. COLLINS: I am glad of that interjection that the farmer pays for all. That is the reason why the farmer has to work such long hours, because he has to keep all the parasites that live upon his labour.”

Are we getting away from that principle? He has to work longer hours to-day because a large section of the people work shorter hours, which increases the price of the products the farmer has to purchase, and he has to work longer hours to enable him to live. He has got to work longer hours through having a lot of officials placed over him. If the Department of Agriculture had given greater encouragement to the experts of their own department and expended more money on them, we should have had better results. Instead of that, not even a reasonable expenditure has been allowed. Now we have a Council of Agriculture paying idealists or amateurs bigger salaries than the department are paying their experts, and I think the department have every right to object. They look upon it as their duty to carry out a large part of the work that the Council of Agriculture undertakes, and they have to bear a large proportion of the cost.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you think the Council should be abolished?

Mr. MOORE: I think it should give a fair deal, and that, when appeals are forwarded from the Local Producers' Associations, those associations should have their objections listened to; they should not have a large number of people that they do not want foisted upon them. When the Act was brought in it was definitely stated that the initiation of legislation would be with the Local Producers' Associations.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, with the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. MOORE: From them to the District Councils, and thence to the Council of Agriculture for approval. To-day that position is reversed, and no notice is taken of the protests of the Local Producers' Associations. I happen to be the chairman of a Local Producers' Association, and I know the position. I am there to get all the benefit I can, and also to see if we are getting the conditions proposed under the Act; if not, to protest.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You want to override the Council of Agriculture and get everything you ask for.

Mr. MOORE: No; but I do not think the Council of Agriculture should be allowed to override everyone else irrespective of protests.

Mr. Moore.]



In the Treasurer's Financial Statement there is a sort of apology for the disastrous position into which the railways have got. This is one of the most serious problems that Queensland has to deal with. The mere fact of the Treasurer pointing out that the rates have only been raised by 17 per cent. or 19 per cent. and claiming that they compare favourably with the rates in other States, and that the railways carry the farmers' produce at a lower rate than any other State, cannot be taken as a justification for the unfortunate position in which they stand. We started off with our fares and freights considerably higher than those of adjoining States. I will quote from page 183 of "Hand-sard" for 1913. The present Secretary for Railways then pointed out the difficulties under which the primary producers had to labour, and pointed out the difference between the freights of Queensland and New South Wales. He quoted the following comparative rates on things which were necessary for the farmer to effect improvements:—

		100 Miles.	
		Queensland. N.S.W.	
		s. d.	s. d.
" Furniture ...	...	75 0	44 11
Oils (kerosene, etc.)	60 0	...	26 3
Groceries ...	...	75 0	44 11
Drapery ...	...	75 0	44 11
Iron, loose ...	...	55 0	44 11
Iron, in cases ...	...	38 4	36 3
Wire, fencing ...	...	38 4	11 10

That was for places 100 miles distant, and if we take the places 500 miles distant we find that there is a greater disparity still, as will be seen from these figures—

		500 Miles.	
		Queensland. N.S.W.	
		s. d.	s. d.
Furniture ...	...	235 5	115 9
Oils (kerosene, etc.)	139 2	...	78 4
Groceries ...	...	235 5	115 9
Drapery ...	...	235 5	115 9
Iron, loose ...	...	173 0	115 9
Iron, in cases ...	...	120 9	97 4
Wire, fencing ...	...	120 9	34 9"

Then he went on to say—

"I quote these figures at length, because I wish that information to be disseminated amongst the settlers and primary producers of Queensland, to give them some idea of the disparity in the rates existing between New South Wales and Queensland."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In what year did he make that statement?

Mr. MOORE: In 1913. The disparity is even greater in 1918.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Tories were then in power.

Mr. MOORE: The disparity is even greater now when the Labour party is in power.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not this year.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Herbert, in his endeavour to bolster up the case for the State Government, picked out one solitary example.

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Mr. PEASE: I did not pick out one example, I picked out the rates on agricultural products.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member picked out the only example he could find—that was truckloads of agricultural products. In every other table Queensland is miles ahead of the freights in New South Wales. The following is a list of lowest class freights in 1921:—

	MILES.				
	50	100	200	300	500
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
N. S. Wales ...	5 0	6 9	8 5	10 0	12 4
Victoria ...	3 6	5 4	7 10	10 6	12 8
Queensland ...	5 8	10 2	17 3	21 2	30 3
South Australia ...	4 3	8 0	13 9	16 7	21 1
W. Australia ...	3 3	4 1	6 2	8 3	12 5
Tasmania ...	4 4	7 0	13 0	..	..

That shows that the Queensland rates are more than double those of every other State, with the exception of South Australia, for distances over 500 miles, and we are 11s. higher than that State. When the Treasurer was pointing out the position of the railways he put it down to the low class of rates at which agricultural produce was carried. I will quote the following table to show what a very small proportion of freight is carried on our railways at this low rate. The list shows the percentage of tonnage carried on the railways at the various freights—

Queensland—	Per cent.
Minerals ...	32.61
Firewood ...	6.24
Grain and flour ...	1.0
Hay, straw, and chaff ...	5.3
Wool ...	1.71
Live stock ...	10.92
All other commodities ...	41.71

Only 1 per cent. out of all these freights represents grain and flour; yet the Treasurer states that our bad position is due to the amount of agricultural products carried for the farmers at low rates. Queensland is the only State in which the low rate was negligible as regards farmers' products. Here are the figures for Victoria—

	Per cent.
Minerals ...	19.04
Firewood ...	11.23
Grain and flour ...	20.11

Remember, it is only 1 per cent. in Queensland—

	Per cent.
Hay and straw ...	4.84
Wool ...	0.71
Live stock ...	6.6
All other commodities ...	37.47

South Australia shows an even better result. Queensland is easily at the bottom of the list. New South Wales is next to Queensland, but New South Wales showed a profit last year. These figures show the absurdity of the Treasurer attempting to make out that our railways are in their present position owing to carrying primary produce at low rates. When we boil it down, we find that the proportion amounts to only 1 per cent.

of the tonnage carried on the railways. I wish to compare our position with other States, as this is a very serious matter—

N.S. Wales.	Victoria.	Queensland.	South Australia.	West Australia.	Tasmania.
Percentage of Net Revenue on Capital Expenditure.					
3.93	3.27	0.56	1.48	1.64	2.72
Net Revenue per Average Mile Worked.					
£ 645	£ 463	£ 40	£ 123	£ 84	£ 194
Net Revenue per Train Mile Run.					
d. 34.06	d. 29.56	d. 5.16	d. 12.04	d. 14.55	d. 21.42

In every case Queensland is the worst off. All this cannot be due to agricultural produce being carried at a low rate. There is something else that may have something to do with it, and in this connection I would like to quote from the "Courier" of 19th August, 1922—

"At the last staff board meeting, Mr. Sullivan, general president of the F.A.U.L.E., Queensland branch, and the association's representative on the above board, very graciously and quite voluntarily informed the departmental heads in words implying the following:—(1) That the cleaners of to-day were absolutely uncontrollable; (2) that they would not tend to their work; (3) that they regarded the job as a joke; (4) that they laughed at supervision; (5) and as a parting shot for the edification of the heads, concluded by remarking that was it any wonder that the engines in this dépôt were in such a filthy condition, and the invidious position the organisations were in upon being asked (in the event of a cleaner being dealt with by the department) to fight his case for exoneration."

When you get the president of a union making statements like that, it shows that there are other conditions which militate against the success of our railways. We had the hon. member for Bremer pointing out yesterday some of the reasons why our railways do not pay. He took occasion to refer to what is taking place there in the Ipswich railway workshops. I suppose that hon. member is unbiassed, and he would not make those statements unless he had good ground for making them. That is another instance where the railways are not being managed in the way they should have been managed.

Mr. COLLINS: Does the fault not lie with the heads of the departments?

Mr. MOORE: The heads of the departments have very onerous duties to fulfil. I do not agree with the hon. member for Maryborough, who said he believed in political interference in every branch of the public service. Political interference has had a lot to do with the unsatisfactory position in the Railway Department. If you put men in authority and do not give them power to enforce that authority, you cannot expect satisfactory administration.

Mr. COLLINS: Always blame the working man—never the man on top.

Mr. MOORE: The Secretary for Railways stated that it did not very much matter whether the railways paid or not—that the

main object to be achieved was the settlement of Queensland. The system of land settlement adopted by the Government has not been a success, because in the last ten years there has been a decrease of 3.38 per cent. of the people in the country districts. For the six years ending in 1921 there were 10,951 people settled on the land as against 10,352 settled on the land six years previously. So that, from a land settlement point of view as well as from a railway point of view, the policy of the Government has not been successful. The other night the hon. member for Herbert said that one of the causes for the loss on the railways was that trains had to run three times a week to carry dairy produce when one train would do the work. I cannot see why the department cannot follow the example set by New South Wales and reduce their costs, and so eliminate a large amount of the loss which is incurred to-day. I have here an article from the "Sydney Morning Herald," which is headed "Problem of Non-paying Lines for Back Country in New South Wales." The New South Wales Government are endeavouring to meet the difficulty in this regard. This article says—

"The high cost of running trains on back country lines has long perplexed the Railway Commissioners in this and other States, and it has led to exhaustive investigations with a view to ascertaining the best means of making such lines pay. The problem has been met in America by the introduction of the rail motor. In New South Wales a type of that locomotive, consisting of a forty horse-power lorry motor attached to a coach, converted for the purpose, was introduced some time ago experimentally on the Grafton-Lismore line. It has proved singularly successful. For the past eighteen months the motor has been running 170 miles on each trip, with results both economical and otherwise satisfactory. In addition to carrying thirty-three passengers, it has drawn a small trailer for the carriage of milk. It has also earned for the line the distinction of being probably the only paying country line in the service. The motor ran 16,346 miles, and carried 7,157 passengers in one year, and the earnings of the coach and its trailer amounted to £2,377. The working expenses were £922, or 38.79 per cent. of the earnings. The cost of running was 1s. 2½d. per engine mile, as compared with 9s. 3d. per engine mile with the ordinary locomotive. In addition, the train is able to run at a great speed on the light lines, reaching a maximum of 35 miles per hour, at which heavy locomotives could not with safety travel, and maintaining an average (including stops) of 19.08 miles per hour."

The article goes on to point out that the first motor put on in New South Wales was not altogether successful, and they had to develop a class of motor suitable for the traffic. They have developed one, and they have introduced a successful method of conveying the traffic on country lines where the traffic is not heavy. When they have reduced the cost from 9s. 3d. per engine mile to 1s. 3d. per engine mile by using a rail motor, it shows that something similar could be done in Queensland.

Mr. PEASE: Did not Commissioner Evans try that system and find it a failure?

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Mr. MOORE: He probably found it to be a failure for exactly the same reason that it was found to be a failure in New South Wales at the start—because a wrong type of motor was used—one that was incapable of drawing sufficient loading to make a profit.

Mr. PEASE: Why did he not get another type?

Mr. MOORE: That is the point—Queensland only tried the system, and when it was found to be a failure, instead of endeavouring to ascertain if there were any means of making it a success, they dropped it. In New South Wales, apparently, they have taken up a different attitude. They made experiments to see if they could evolve an efficient type, and they have succeeded. In Victoria they have a large number of motor trucks carrying country produce on some of the railways, and they have turned railway lines from being non-productive into productive assets. That being so, the Railway Department in Queensland should give some consideration to the question.

Mr. PEASE: Before you finish with railways, deal with the railway passenger fares.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member has put in the passenger fares.

Mr. PEASE: They are quite correct.

Mr. MOORE: They are probably correct, but in the freights the hon. member took the lowest table that it was possible to find, and the only table in which Queensland compared favourably with the other States, and he put it into "Hansard."

The Treasurer apologised for the position of the railways, and said that it was owing to the low cost at which primary produce is being carried on the railways for the benefit of the farmer, and, as I have pointed out, only 1 per cent. of the total tonnage is carried at a less rate than in other States.

Mr. PEASE: That is not so.

Mr. MOORE: It is no good the hon. member saying it is not so. It is so. The hon. member can easily prove it.

Mr. PEASE: You quoted grain and flour. We do not produce grain and flour to any extent in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: That is the only produce that is carried at the lower rate. The hon. member is endeavouring to mislead the House by putting into "Hansard" a table which states that the Queensland freights are lower.

Mr. PEASE: I did not mislead the House.

Mr. MOORE: In every other case the rate is higher than it is in the other States, and it is no use the Treasurer saying that the position of the Railway Department has been brought about owing to concessions given to the farmers.

Mr. PEASE: What about Mount Morgan?

Mr. MOORE: We are giving concessions all round, and the railways have to bear the burden. We are extending our railway system, although the present position is far from satisfactory. You can summarise the whole position by saying we are expanding our railway system in advance of population, and we are making the position worse instead of better. It is a well-ascertained fact that the traffic on railways increases by the square of the population. That is, if you double the population you increase the traffic on the railways four times. Is it a wise thing to

go in for an expansion of our railway system when we are having such huge losses?

Mr. PEASE: Members on your side are asking for new railways all the time.

Mr. MOORE: If we only increase the population along existing lines in order to make them pay, it would be much better than extending the present system.

Mr. COLLINS: Suggest how you would increase the population along existing lines.

Mr. MOORE: I would not open up further land until the land available along existing lines is settled. There is plenty of land available, and if the conditions were improved and the people encouraged to take up the land, it would be settled. People will not go in for perpetual leases when they can get freehold somewhere else, and people are not going to come to this State to take up land if they are going to be dictated to as to where they shall sell their produce and to whom they shall sell it.

The farmer is an individualist, and he is going to handle his own produce in the way he wants to handle it. He does not care whether he makes a mistake or not; he wants to handle his own stuff and have the results of his own labour in his [4.30 p.m.] own hands; he does not want anyone to dictate to him. If the Government are going to dictate to the farmers as to where they are to sell their stuff, we shall not be able to open up new land or increase settlement along existing railway lines. I am with the hon. member for Bowen when he says that he wants to see men free and not slaves. We have tyranny, unfortunately, in the cities at the present time, where an individual is not allowed by legislation to exercise his own abilities, but has to conform to a law by which he is not permitted to advance. He has to keep in one groove because he cannot work outside the hours fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. PEASE: What are you referring to?

Mr. MOORE: The Industrial Arbitration Act, under which an individual is not allowed to exercise his own ambition.

Mr. PEASE: Did you read the "Producers' Review" on that? It has a very fine editorial.

Mr. MOORE: I have plenty of papers to read without reading papers of the class of the "Producers' Review" from which I can get information of value. I do not read a paper to make political capital out of it, but a paper which will be of use to me either in Parliament or in my business as a farmer. I do not want to read papers which can be used for party purposes. The hon. member for Herbert is not a farmer. What does he read the "Producers' Review" for? Merely to find out whether he can get something to use against this side of the House—not to get any information.

Mr. PEASE: I read it because it is the official organ of the sugar-growers of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: The position we have got into is one in which extra burdens are going to be placed on the people of the State. We are expending an enormous amount of loan money, and expending it against the precepts which were uttered by the Treasurer himself when he was in Opposition. He then pointed out that, if you are going to

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expend a large amount of loan money without results, it must end in increased taxation and greater burdens on the primary producers. If you are going to continue that expenditure and there is no productive result from it, it stands to reason that the burden upon the producers of the State is going to be greatly increased. I want the people of Queensland to understand that the present position is not because Queensland is a poor State, but that it is the result of the reckless administration of the Government who are placing these burdens on the shoulders of the people. The sooner the people realise that it is the administration and the spiteful and vindictive legislation brought in by the Government that are destroying our credit and making it difficult to secure adequate money to develop the State, they will chuck out this Administration neck and crop, and we shall have an Administration which will allow Queensland to recover and be put on the right road to prosperity and progress, instead of going deeper and deeper into the mire, and having burdens placed on the shoulders of the people that they are unable to bear.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I desire to congratulate the Treasurer on his Financial Statement. Personally I cannot claim to be a financier, but I claim to be possessed of ordinary intelligence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Hear, hear!—that is the main thing! (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. WRIGHT: One thing noticeable is the lack of destructive criticism on the part of hon. members opposite in regard to the Financial Statement. I listened very attentively to the speeches of hon. members opposite. I think that during the whole of this debate I have only interjected on four occasions, one of which was when the hon. member for Wynnum was speaking, as I thought he had made an absurd statement. I came to the conclusion that the criticism of the leader of the Opposition was very mild, but he displayed sentiments which hon. members opposite under his leadership would do well to emulate. I believe that the leader of the Opposition was quite serious when he expressed the wish that the Treasurer would have a successful mission in London next year.

Mr. KELSO: We all wish that.

Mr. WRIGHT: I personally think that there are some hon. members opposite who would be delighted if the Treasurer failed again to obtain money in London next year.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: A foolish statement that—very wicked.

Mr. WRIGHT: One of the best tests that can be applied to Queensland as a State is the growth of our trade returns, and it can easily be shown that Queensland has easily held her own against any of the other States of the Commonwealth. I was much interested in reading the "Daily Mail" this morning to find a report of a speech made by Mr. R. H. Julius, the retiring president of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce. There is one point I wish to make here. Whilst I noticed in big headings in the "Daily Mail" something about Queensland going back, yet at the bottom of the report it is stated by Mr. Julius that Queensland is not going back but that her increase of exports over imports is greater than in any

other State of the Commonwealth. This is borne out by Mr. Julius himself.

Mr. KELSO: Do the Labour party take credit for that?

Mr. WRIGHT: Let me continue my speech. This is an extract from the speech of Mr. Julius to which I wish to refer—

"IMPORTS £14,000,000 IN EXCESS OF  
"EXPORTS.

"I think I am quite safe in making the assertion that the past year's trading has shown a gradual recovery. In many instances solid progress has been made, and, although it was necessary the previous year to make tremendous reductions in prices, this has been accomplished without any serious casualties, which is a matter for congratulation. The imports for Australia show an increase in the year ended 30th June, 1923, of £29,000,000 over the previous twelve months, but I regret to say that our exports for the same period show a decrease of £10,000,000, leaving our imports £14,000,000 in excess of our exports. This is a most serious matter, as we are a debtor nation, and it is absolutely essential that we should show an excess of exports over imports. We are constantly hearing from overseas that such and such a consignment arrived in bad condition owing to faulty packing or that the containers were not sufficiently attractive when compared with our competitors. It should always be borne in mind that we have to please the consumer. We must, therefore, see to it that, whatever the product may be, when exported it is of the best quality, prepared and packed in the best manner and displayed to the best advantage."

Mr. EDWARDS: A very good statement.

Mr. WRIGHT: A very good statement, and the latter portion is better—

"INCREASED QUEENSLAND EXPORTS.

"So far as Queensland is concerned it is almost impossible to obtain the correct figures of our imports and exports. Many trading houses have their goods landed in Sydney and forwarded to Queensland, which, of course, do not appear in our official figures. Still, on the figures obtainable, it is a matter for congratulation that our exports show an increase of £5,000,000 over our imports, and this fact should have a most important effect on the future commercial activities of this State."

Mr. EDWARDS: Why do you not read the heading of that speech?

Mr. WRIGHT: I referred to the heading of that speech, which to my mind is a wrong one. If the hon. member for Nanango is quite serious—I am quite serious—I think it would be better if the Queensland newspapers showed up the bright side of Queensland rather than the dull side. Whilst I am on this point, let me point out that in a back portion of the same paper, the same gentleman is reported as having addressed the Chamber of Commerce on the same day upon the question of obtaining better facilities at the ports of Queensland. I think that, if the "Daily Mail" had published that report in the centre of the paper instead of the other one—which tended to cast a slight on the progress of the State—it would have been much better and much more in

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keeping with the sentiment which should actuate members in this House, as well as the Press in the country.

Mr. KELSO: You do not blame the Opposition?

Mr. WRIGHT: Certainly not. The hon. member interjected and I replied to him.

Mr. EDWARDS: You would not cover anything up so long as it was true, would you?

Mr. WRIGHT: That is all right. The hon. member could not cover anything up. He is well known as having the worst farm in his district. Now, I am going to quote some statistics given by Mr. Julius to show the progress of Queensland during the last ten years in respect of the excess of exports over imports. Mr. Julius stressed the fact that the exports must be greater than the imports. The figures are as follows:—

Year.	Imports.	Exports.
	£	£
" 1913 ...	6,714,942 ...	12,352,748
1922 ...	8,639,446 ...	17,575,103 "

Mr. KELSO: What was responsible for that?

Mr. WRIGHT: Good government—good administration.

Mr. KELSO: Wool.

Mr. WRIGHT: Taking Mr. Julius's figures as being correct and as showing that throughout the Commonwealth there has been an excess of imports over exports, I think that the balance in favour of this State of nearly £9,000,000 indicates that Queensland is the most progressive State in Australia.

Mr. KELSO: In spite of Labour government.

Mr. WRIGHT: In spite of Labour government (laughter.) I should say because of Labour government.

Mr. KELSO: First impressions are the best.

Mr. WRIGHT: During the eight years of Labour Administration those figures have been continually increasing. Queensland has never gone back, although even at the present time the State is suffering from one of the severest droughts it has ever experienced. I should say that on the next occasion when hon. members opposite go to the country, instead of trying to decry Queensland and shouting "Blue ruin" and other parrot cries—

Mr. EDWARDS: "Red ruin."

Mr. WRIGHT: "Red ruin," if you like. Instead of doing that, they would be better advised if they said to the people of Queensland, "If you put us on the Treasury benches, we will try to do as well as the other fellow"; but I doubt if they will be able to do so.

I have taken the trouble to read up quite a number of speeches made on the Financial Statement during the last session of the last Parliament, because I have observed a continual cry from hon. members opposite that the redistribution had made it impossible for them to win the election. Hon. members opposite did not take that line of thought when they were discussing the last Financial Statement. Nobody could have been surer than they—no section of the community was more certain—that they would be occupying the Treasury benches after the last election. I want to read a few extracts from their speeches. The first I shall quote is that of

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the hon. member for Dalby, who was leader of the Opposition at that time. I can imagine how elated the hon. member was at the prospect of the election; he was so certain that he must have felt that he would be the next Premier of Queensland. On page 619 of "Hansard," volume cxxxix, I find he is reported as having said—

"Last night we had the privilege of listening to the Treasurer delivering a fighting speech, which was really the climax of a dying Government.

"Mr. Hartley: You want to look up the dictionary for the meaning of the word 'climax.'

"Mr. VOWLES: That speech was a record of incapacity and ineptitude; it was a tragedy. We are told now that the Government, after having to study economy, after having broken all the promises they made to their supporters throughout the State that they would not retrench the public service—and having done so to the tune of about £300,000—propose to end their financial career with a deficit of £576,000. If ever the writing was on the wall, it is on the wall so far as the present Government are concerned.

"Mr. Pease: You have said that before.

"Mr. VOWLES: I have said it before, and I say it now. When we find the very Labour organisations and the official newspapers of the Labour party telling the occupants of the Treasury benches that they no longer are fitted to be there, and calling upon them to do the proper thing—to get out and give the electors the opportunity to decide who has the right to occupy those benches—the climax has arrived.

"Mr. Dash: You cannot read print.

"Mr. VOWLES: Even the children in the street are talking about the Government, wherever you go."

Those were remarks of a man who was absolutely certain that after the coming election he would be, if not Premier, at least sitting on these benches.

Mr. CARTER: And he is out in the cold!

Mr. WRIGHT: He is out in the cold. Mr. Fry, the hon. member for Kurilpa, is reported on page 694 of the same volume of "Hansard" as having said, when speaking on the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill—

"It reminds me of a man dressing his window and making a great display and having no stock behind it. That is the position with the present Government. We challenge the Government to go to the country; we challenge them to go to the people and say, 'Here we are! We ask for an expression of confidence. We have kept our promises.' When the Government went to the elections in 1920 they had a majority of twenty, which has now dwindled down to a majority of one, and, including the Speaker, a majority of two. I promise the Government that they will get a very warm reception when they go to the people and again ask for their confidence. They are not game to go. When the Treasurer asked for two months' Supply, I asked him if that was sufficient to cover the election period, and he replied, 'No.' The

more's the pity that the country must go on for another twelve months under the control of a Government who do not possess the confidence of the people."

There is no doubt that hon. members opposite were absolutely certain of their ground. In the same volume of "Hansard" is a speech by the hon. member for Wide Bay. It is just probable that that hon. member had visions of becoming a Cabinet Minister in early life. This is what he said—

"Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I am very pleased to have the opportunity of making a few remarks in connection with this Financial Statement. I predicted that the previous Financial Statement would be the last that the then Treasurer would have the opportunity of reading; and I venture to say that this will be the last delivered by a Labour Government in this House for a great number of years."

He was absolutely certain of his ground. This is what the hon. member for Nanango had to say—

"I am safe in saying that, in spite of the gerrymandering that has taken place in connection with the country electorates, the next time they have to face the electors we shall be done with socialism in this House. It is quite impossible for the Premier to sit on the rail any longer, so far as the industrial workers and the farmers of this State are concerned. He must come out and show himself. It is impossible for a man, no matter how strong he may be, to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, as the Premier is trying to do to-day."

Mr. EDWARDS: That was right so far as the country districts were concerned.

Mr. WRIGHT: He goes on to say—

"The Premier will have to come out in the open in a very short time or else his name will be forgotten so far as politics are concerned in Queensland."

Let me now quote the speech by the hon. member for Wynnum. At that time he was representing the Bulimba electorate. A portion of that electorate I am proud to represent to-day. The hon. member for Wynnum was speaking about proxy voting, and possibly he displayed some passionate feeling during the course of his speech. This is what he said—

"This Government have introduced things which are obsolete—they are a 'proxy Government,' a 'Richard Government,' and a Government who are clinging to office like leeches.

"The Treasurer: Keeping wolves out.

"Hon. W. H. BARNES: They are a Government which hang on to office, knowing that once they go out they will never get back."

What a bad judge the hon. member was! Let me now quote some remarks made by Mr. Green, the late member for Townsville. In speaking on the Address in Reply he said—

"The Government on this occasion have adopted that method, and have put this Speech forward, with the various measures mentioned in it, as a vote-catching programme for the coming elec-

tions. A short time ago the distracted people at Einasleigh, when their machinery was pulled down and sent to other fields, remarked, on seeing some of the machinery going away, 'Ted's circus is moving on.' It appears to me that, with this programme, 'Ted's circus is moving on' very quickly to an election campaign. This is but the advance agent of that circus which is going to be played in order to attract the votes of the people. But I am quite sure that the sword of Damocles—which has been hanging over the Minister's head during the past two years, and which manifested itself in such an unmistakable manner at the last election in the vote of the people rejecting the present Administration—who, although they have a majority in the House, represent only a minority of the people—will shortly fall, and bring calamity to the Administration. The disillusioned and disappointed people of Queensland will see that the string is cut and that the sword falls upon the Government and destroys them."

The dreaded time, so far as the Government are concerned, is past and gone. The elections are over and victory has been won.

Mr. KELSO: We came back with a majority of votes.

Mr. PEASE: The hon. member only belongs to the tail end of the Opposition. He belongs to one section.

Mr. WRIGHT: The parties which constituted the Opposition before the elections are now smaller in number.

Mr. KELSO: I am talking about the total votes of the people.

Mr. WRIGHT: The unexpected has happened so far as the Opposition are concerned.

Mr. FOLEY: Do not pull your own leg.

Mr. KELSO: I am not.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Opposition are not justified in whining about the Government arranging the electorates so as to make it impossible—as they allege—for them to win the elections.

Mr. KELSO: We are not whining. We are giving you a statement of fact.

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Wynnum went so far as to say that the Government had made it impossible for the Opposition to occupy the Treasury benches.

Mr. KELSO: He was not wrong.

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Wynnum deliberately charged the Treasurer with so arranging the electorates as to make it impossible for the Opposition to attain the Treasury benches. The hon. member for Wynnum must be very hard to please, because, when discussing the question of the redistribution of seats, he said—

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

*Mr. Wright.]*

up in 1920. I hold in my hand a copy of my address to the electors, in which this reference was made to a redistribution of seats."

[5 p.m.]

The reference is as follows:—

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

Hon. W. H. BARNES: If you compare how the electorates have been worked out, you will find they have been worked out to a very fine point.

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Wynnum further said—

"That being so, anything that is done by any party of whatever name should not make it harder for the man who is making life and conditions in the city possible—I refer to the man on the land. I very heartily support anything in the direction of making it imperative that the quota of electors shall be in favour of the country."

Mr. EDWARDS: So they should, too.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Government wiped out four of them.

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Wynnum, continuing, said—

"I want to avoid the narrow and parochial view taken by some hon. members. I am prepared to admit that whatever one's intentions may be, sometimes there is very great danger in looking at matters from a narrow and parochial point of view."

Mr. KELSO: He must have been dealing with the Labour party then.

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Wynnum further said—

"To avoid any view that may be narrow, let me say that the fact of any electorate being near the city does not always mean less work, less trouble, and less expense to the member for that district. I represent an electorate which contains more electors, and I think it has in it more show societies, than any other electorate in the State. That shows how alive the people are, and how they are in keeping with their member, who believes in keeping alive."

The hon. member for Wynnum—

Mr. MAXWELL: You are giving him a good advertisement.

Mr. WRIGHT: I at once heartily concur. Those are very fine sentiments, and I realise to the full in stepping into the shoes of the hon. gentleman how much alive that particular electorate is, and the best that can be said of its electors is that they know, at any rate, how to do things right.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: By voting right.

Mr. WRIGHT: The leader of the Opposition also went into this matter a few days ago and secured the insertion in "Hansard" of a very large table to support his contentions.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You were quoting him very strongly a little while ago.

[*Mr. Wright.*]

Mr. WRIGHT: I am not abusing the hon. member at all. He went to a lot of trouble to explain that the Government were still representing a minority of electors, but we know that figures can be made to prove many things. No member in this House knows better than the hon. member for Wynnum the truth of that statement. I have heard him quoting figures in all sorts of ways. If I wanted to quote figures in a certain way and they were not political, the hon. member for Wynnum is the man I would look to for assistance. In reply to statements by the Opposition the Attorney-General gave some figures to the Press on 21st July last.

Mr. KELSO: They were incomplete.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Attorney-General is in charge of the department which controls the elections, consequently he did not collect and tabulate those figures himself. His officers did it for him, and to say that those figures are not correct is to cast a slur on the officers of that department. All that can be said about them is that they are not complete in every case.

Mr. KELSO: Only the figures in sixty-eight out of seventy-two electorates are given.

Mr. WRIGHT: The figures in the untested seats are certainly not given. The leader of the Opposition contended that, whereas Labour had a majority of fourteen members, they had a minority in the aggregate of over 14,000 votes. The Attorney-General, I claim, is cognisant of all the details and has the figures at his hand. He has not to trust to newspaper reports or advertisements, which the leader of the Opposition admitted he did, but depends for his information on the returns sent from every electorate in Queensland. These figures show that 193,477 votes were cast for the Government party and 192,999 for the Opposition, or a majority in the aggregate for the Government of 478.

Mr. KELSO: Is he trying to lead the public to believe the Government had a majority of votes?

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Nundah, like myself, is a new member, but I do not know whether he has consulted the Standing Orders or not. If he does so, he will realise that interjections—especially senseless interjections—are disorderly. So far as equal representation is concerned, I claim to represent in this House more electors than any other hon. member. As I said a few moments ago, I have had the good fortune to fall into the shoes of the hon. member for Wynnum. As the member representing the greater number of electors, I am satisfied with the redistribution.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT: If I am satisfied, when I represent the greater number of electors in any constituency, then hon. members who have a smaller parcel—and most of the hon. members who are making all the noise have a smaller parcel of country than members on this side, who have hundreds of thousands of square miles—should also be satisfied. If hon. members opposite wish to go any further on this question of redistribution, I would refer them to the Southern States. If they take Victoria, for instance, they will find there is a vast margin so far as members and quotas are concerned between the city and country electorates. In some cases the enrolments for the city electorates are as high as 50,000, while they go as low as 4,000

in the country electorates. There is just one other point I wish to deal with in connection with the redistribution of seats, and this is a cutting from the "Daily Mail" of 7th October, 1922. This appeared in bold print on the top of the column—

"REDISTRIBUTION.

"NEW ELECTORATES—AS YOU WERE."  
and a small paragraph in bold print, signed by "Mr. J. Shaw, secretary of the National Democratic Council." This is his opinion on the redistribution of seats—

"It is a case of as you were. What we lose on the swings we gain on the roundabout."

I am led to believe—I am open to correction—that every member in this House had an opportunity of approaching the Redistribution Commissioners in connection with the altered boundaries.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That would seem an improper thing, at any rate.

Mr. WRIGHT: It has been stated in this House since I have been here that they had an opportunity of interviewing them if they so desired.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It would be exceedingly improper.

Mr. WRIGHT: That was with the object of assisting the Commission to bring about the best redistribution possible; so why should hon. members attempt now to raise a bogey? Why should they attempt to explain to the House or anywhere else—to the Press, as a matter of fact—that they were defeated by a redistribution deliberately brought about by this Government to make it impossible for the members on the opposite side to regain the Treasury benches? By their own speeches the redistribution was the last thing they were thinking about and the last thing they were concerned about, because they knew that they had had a fair deal. The main fact is that they were beaten when they went to the country as a party because the people of Queensland were afraid to trust them.

Mr. COLLINS: They are in the wilderness. Long may they remain there.

Mr. WRIGHT: I wish to make a few remarks in connection with workers' dwellings. I listened attentively to the hon. member for Wynnum when he was discussing the Supply Bill. I have known the hon. member for a considerable number of years—

Mr. KELSO: He is not a bad fellow.

Mr. WRIGHT: No; but he is on the wrong side of the House.

Mr. PEASE: He is on the right side. Leave him where he is.

Mr. WRIGHT: I have every respect for the hon. member, except politically. He got into a passion and declared that the Government was not a working-class Government. He went on to explain his point by quoting the number of dwellings completed under the Workers' Dwellings Act and the Workers' Homes Act respectively last year, but he did not make a fair quotation. In the first place, he quoted figures from the official lists for 1914-15, and then he compared the gradual decrease as far as 1922.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I stated that last year the number was greater than in the two previous years.

Mr. WRIGHT: I submit that he was attempting to prove his point by stating that,

because the number of houses had decreased year by year from 1914-15 to 1922, this Government was not a working-class Government. But he forgot to mention that in 1914 the great war broke out.

Mr. MORGAN: We have heard enough about the war.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am not going on the war stunt—I suffered as much as any hon. gentleman in the House during the war, and have not yet got over it. The hon. member for Wynnum forgot to mention that tens of thousands of the young men of Queensland, who would, in all probability, have been setting out in matrimony and requiring homes, were not here, but had gone across the seas to do their duty to the country. He also forgot to mention that during the later years—1918, 1919, and 1920—we were in competition with a Federal Government scheme which was termed the war service homes. If he wants to discover an anti-working-class Government, let me introduce him to the Federal Government and their administration of the war service homes. The hon. member stated that in 1921-22 219 houses were erected. That is quite correct; but he did not mention that the total applications for that year numbered 747. Approval was given to 563 applications, showing that the hon. member's quotation was not a fair one.

Mr. ROBERTS: They were facts, anyhow.

Mr. WRIGHT: We find that the manager's report states—

"Building operations in connection with workers' dwellings were, during the second half of the year 1920-21, considerably curtailed owing to abnormally high costs. In July, 1921, as building values had receded somewhat, particularly as regards costs of timber and galvanised iron, contracts were gradually resumed and are now in full progress."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You stinted the workers.

Mr. WRIGHT: The report continues—

"I have had the following table prepared to illustrate the variation in the cost of houses over the twelve years of the operations since the establishment of the Workers' Dwellings Board in 1910. The type of house taken as a standard of values is a cottage of the same design throughout the period—four main rooms, kitchen, and front and back verandas, and with a total floor area of 1,200 superficial feet. The figures used are based on the prices at which several of such buildings actually were erected during the years stated."

The report goes on to show the difference in the cost of buildings. It shows that in the year 1921-22 the maximum cost of building was reached, and I think that the administrators of the Workers' Dwellings Act were wise when they curtailed operations; they were much wiser than the Federal authorities. The position of the latter now shows that there are scores of soldiers who took on homes at the maximum cost who will never be able to pay for them. At the time when the report was printed, no less than 503 houses were in course of erection, and I have every reason to believe that there will be a very large increase this year in the number of completed houses. I maintain that the name of the Workers' Dwellings Act is a misnomer. Although the Act was liberalised by this Government, it is even now a difficult

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matter for a man who is established so far as a family is concerned, but not financially, to erect a home under this Act. In 1914—the year the hon. member for Wynnum is so fond of quoting—I happened to be an applicant for an advance under the Workers' Dwellings Act. My application was approved, and the construction of my home was gone on with. Before a stick of furniture was placed in that home it had cost me £96.

That was £60 for the ground and £30 odd for the difference between the amount that they would lend me and the actual tender price. In the first place a loan of £251 was promised. The lowest tender for the home was £250, and for some reason or other the Administration at that time said, "Oh, no; we will have to reduce your loan from £251 to £238." I could not get any satisfaction either one way or the other, consequently I had to make up the difference. What would have happened if I had not been able to find the extra £30? It would have meant that I would have had to go back to the department and seek a further loan, or I would have had to cut down the home so that it would have cost £30 less. The present Government, during the course of years, have seen the difficulty of men who have not had an opportunity of putting away a few pounds in order to buy a freehold, and they passed the Workers' Homes Act. I want to take the hon. member for Wynnum to task once more in connection with his remarks in regard to the Workers' Homes Act. When speaking on the Appropriation Bill the hon. member again in a passionate way stated that the Workers' Homes Act was a sham and a fraud. He declared it was a sham and a fraud, simply because the payments in the long run amounted proportionately to more than the payments under the Workers' Dwellings Act. The attitude of hon. members opposite in regard to the Workers' Homes Act reminds me of their attitude towards another measure that was brought in last year by the Government. I refer to the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act. Hon. members opposite referred to the Unemployed Workers Insurance Bill when it was introduced as "The Loafers' Paradise Bill." After all, what does it mean? It means that the Government realise that, no matter how good a Government may be, under present conditions of society, we shall always be faced with a certain amount of unemployment, and they said, and rightly so, "We will introduce some legislation which will, at any rate, eliminate some of the trouble of unemployment." What is happening to-day? I read in the newspapers the other day that the Federal Government have decided to take action to initiate a national insurance scheme against unemployment, and nobody will accuse the members of the Nationalist Government of being Labourites.

Mr. GLEDSON: They are introducing a "Loafers' Paradise Bill."

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes, they are introducing a "Loafers' Paradise Bill."

Mr. KELSO: Is it not a fact that under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act the man who is on the minimum wage pays the same as the man who gets £10 a week?

Mr. WRIGHT: I have heard that statement many times, and it does not affect me; it is like pouring water on a duck's back. My opponent during the elections campaign tried to induce the workers of Bulimba to

believe that it would cost them 9d. a week. Did the workers of Bulimba believe that? No fear!

There is another question that was very much to the front in my electorate during the election campaign. I have here a leaflet which was issued within four days of the election, and it will show to what depths some of the friends of hon. members opposite are prepared to descend. The leaflet has a photograph of my opponent, whom the hon. member for Wynnum knows very well. The leaflet reads—

"MOTHERS! READ THIS.

"IT IS THE WAY THE THEODORE GOVERNMENT SAYS YOUR SONS MUST LEARN A TRADE.

"1. A boy, wishing to become an apprentice in the building trade, electrical and mechanical engineering, furniture, leather, and musical instrument making, printing, sheet metal working, and coachmaking, must apply to the Apprenticeship Committee, in the Treasury Buildings, for a form of application to sit for the entrance examination.

"2. Then he must fill in this form and return it without delay.

"3. He must read the daily newspapers to find the date of the examination.

"4. He must sit for the examination, but not if he has passed his sixteenth birthday.

"5. He must pass his examination.

"6. After having passed the examination, he must await further instructions from the Apprenticeship Committee. Then he will be interviewed by the Central Apprenticeship Committee, and be allotted by the committee to the trades group of lads of the trade decided on.

"7. During the period of apprenticeship—should it ever come—he must attend classes at the Technical College.

"Are you in favour of putting the 'shackles' on your boys' future?

"If you wish your boy to have freedom of choice as to what trade he shall follow—

"Vote thus:"

These leaflets were floating around the Bulimba electorate in thousands during the last three days of the campaign. I know something about this question, as I am a tradesman myself. As a matter of fact, I was one of the first representatives from the organisation to which I belong to sit on a conference in Brisbane to discuss the apprenticeship question.

Mr. EDWARDS: The present system has not been a success.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am not going to say that it has been a complete success; but we found that it was almost impossible to get the masters to agree to take any boys other than those they particularly desired to take. The position before the appointment of the Apprenticeship Committee was that any person who was in a position to put trade in the way of any manufacturing firm in Brisbane or Queensland only had to say, "I would like you to take my boy into your shop," and he was taken in. Even if the boy was the biggest dunce in Queensland, he got preference over the best scholar, who might

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not have any trade influence behind him. Boys who might never make a success in the trade were given preference over other boys who had gone to school, and who had passed all the examinations required of them. When the time came for the son of a poor man to be employed or taken on as an apprentice, it was found that the boy whose father could place trade in the way of the manufacturing firm was given preference. The Apprenticeship Committee is composed of

[4.30 p.m.] an equal number of employers and employees, who have spent many hours of valuable time, mostly at night, in discussing this question. This is a national question, and one which every State in the Commonwealth and every country in the world will have to deal with. I believe that the Apprenticeship Committee in Queensland has done better work than anything of the kind elsewhere in the world. We hear a good deal about the Southern States with regard to the apprenticeship question. I have here an extract from a leader which appeared in the "Sydney Guardian" on the 13th of this month, which reads—

"Junior technical education in New South Wales has not received support from the Department of Education in its warrants.

"No sounder investment can be made by a Government than a thorough system of technical education accessible to the poorest.

"It is the means by which unskilled labour can be reduced to a minimum.

"Such a system should be so designed that a student receives knowledge to fit him to any branch of industry.

"A lad leaves a primary school at thirteen to fourteen; too often he enters some occupation without receiving at the most receptive age any further education, to find out, when the acquisition of knowledge is very much harder, that success entails attendance at a commercial or industrial night school."

It goes on to enumerate the subjects, and then states—

"At present the form of junior technical education in New South Wales is a travesty of the real thing.

"Workshops in name only, without the plain necessities of equipment, are open.

"Ill-lighted, ramshackle buildings house them."

That statement does not apply to the Labour Government of Queensland. I had the pleasure a few days ago of going through the Central Technical College in Brisbane, when my eyes were opened with regard to the different subjects and trades in which the students were being instructed. The Government are to be congratulated on making such a large amount of money available on the Estimates for education purposes.

It was my intention to deal with co-operation. We heard speeches from hon. members opposite on that subject during the debate on the Address in Reply. After listening to the remarks of hon. members opposite, one can only come to the conclusion that co-operation means to them something by which they can put money into their pockets and let the consumer be hanged. They are not concerned about producing for use; their idea of co-operation is producing for profit.

I am one of those who believe that this is a wrong idea to take up. This is what the Sydney "Guardian" has to say about co-operation—

"Legislation is needed in New South Wales to protect the word 'co-operative.' It is being used by limited liability companies to mislead the public."

I often wonder whether hon. members opposite know the real history of the co-operative movement.

Mr. WARREN: Tell us something about it.

Mr. WRIGHT: It might do the hon. member good if I did. I would refer him to the book entitled "The Consumers' Co-operative Movement," written by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

Mr. WARREN: I have read it.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is a pity the hon. member read it with such an empty head.

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

Mr. EDWARDS (Yanango): While the Financial Statement has been well debated on both sides of the Chamber, it is a pity that some hon. members opposite take up such a contemptible attitude in their criticism of Opposition members. I am satisfied that it is the desire of all hon. members on this side to give the Treasurer the assistance which he asked for in connection with financial matters when delivering his Statement. I consider that it is always best to look at the bright side in regard to our State, but I agree also with the hon. member for Bremer that, when things are radically wrong in connection with the administration of our public utilities, no hon. member is justified in covering up the position. I do not refer to this matter with any idea of making political capital out of it, because I do not think any hon. member should do that; but I say that the greatest encouragement should be given to hon. members to speak out. I think the hon. member for Bremer deserves the congratulations not only of the House but of the country for the straight-out and definite statement which he made yesterday in connection with the methods adopted in carrying out the work at the Ipswich Railway Workshops.

Mr. GLEDSON: He will be quite pleased to receive your commendation.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am very sorry that the hon. member for Bremer has got in in front of the hon. member for Ipswich. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. GLEDSON: If you knew anything about Queensland you would know that the railway workshops are not in my electorate.

Mr. EDWARDS: We should give the greatest encouragement to hon. members who have backbone enough to speak out in regard to such matters, and that is why the hon. member for Ipswich has not made the statement before the hon. member for Bremer. It would be a good thing for the State if hon. members were prepared to speak out fearlessly like the hon. member for Bremer, whether they belong to the Government party or to the Opposition party. It would be much better also if the Government would pay the same regard to statements made by Opposition members as they do to representations coming from the Government benches.

The Treasurer, in delivering his Financial Statement, said that so far as land settlement

*Mr. Edwards.]*

and railways are concerned, everything is all right. I think that hon. members are not doing their duty if they are not prepared to express their opinion fearlessly when they know that everything is not right. I say that under the administration of the Labour Government land settlement has not gone ahead as it ought. In Queensland, whether Labour members realise it or not, the settlers in the bigger portion of the closer settled districts of the State are in a worse position than they have ever been in since I came to Queensland—which is a period of fifteen years. It would be wrong to blame the Labour Government for all of that, but I blame them for some of it.

Mr. DASH: No one takes any notice of you.

Mr. EDWARDS: I do not expect the hon. member to do so, because I am making a common-sense speech. The hardest workers of the State, the primary producers, in spite of the difficulties under which they are labouring at the present time, are in many ways ignored by the Government, or, at least, are not attended to.

Mr. HYNES: Who are the workers of the State?

Mr. EDWARDS: Not the hon. member, at any rate—he never sweated from hard work in his life. To show the attitude of hon. members in this House towards primary production, I want to quote from "Hansard" about the time when this Country party came into being in 1920. Here is a statement I made myself when the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Stock were before the Chamber—I am not quoting it because I take any pride in having made it, because many other members have made similar statements—

"They had to be prepared to spend a great deal more money than in the past. If, before the last drought, the Government had taken up the question of water conservation and sinking bores—which could be done without any great expense, and was being done in hundreds of cases in New South Wales—they would have saved millions and millions of pounds worth of stock, besides avoiding a great loss in production. Many settlers in his district—and he knew it was only one of many—were driving stock for miles and miles for water, until it was impossible for them to travel, so that in the end they lost them.

"The advances to settlers for conserving fodder, such as stacking hay, should receive very careful consideration, and the suggestion of the hon. member for Port Curtis that a Royal Commission should go deeply into the question, and make investigations also in the Southern States, with a view to offering suggestions to the bank, should also receive consideration. He understood that in America people were giving advances on hay stacked in sheds, regarding it as a sort of defence against dry spells and to tide the farmers over the times when fodder was dear."

We often hear it said from the Labour side that no practical suggestion ever comes from the Opposition benches. In reply I want to say that, if the Government were to adopt the practical suggestions which come from this side of the House, Queensland and her

settlers would be in a very much better position than they are to-day. Now, I want to quote the Secretary for Agriculture. When replying to the arguments put forward on that occasion, he made these remarks—

"The hon. member for Nanango urged the putting down of bores and the conservation of water, and he also made a very good suggestion that some arrangement should be made to make advances on haystacks and on fodder conserved by the farmer. That would be attended to, he hoped, in drafting the proposed Rural Bank. A Rural Bank should be capable of making advances to farmers on standing crops and on their fodder, for, after all, the conservation of fodder was a system of insurance that no farmer could afford to neglect."

Had the Government carried out the suggestions put forward by myself and other hon. members on this side of the House and commented upon favourably by the Minister himself, had they laid it down definitely that the producers were going to get some assistance, they would have saved the State hundreds of thousands of pounds. To-day we have the spectacle of the Department of Agriculture being forced to come to the rescue of the settlers nearly all over the Downs and nearly all over the Southern Burnett. I want to give them credit for doing that, although I do not admit that they are doing all that can be done. Some arrangement, however, should be made to buy the fodder which is being distributed direct from the grower. I understand that in many instances it comes from New South Wales to Brisbane, and is bought by the produce agents in Brisbane and then sent back to the Downs.

Mr. HYNES: Some of those produce merchants sit on that side of the House.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am not worrying about that. What I am trying to do is to get fodder for the producing population as cheaply as possible. I understand that they are paying from £12 to £14 a ton for chaff, and are asked eventually to sign a promissory note to repay the money to the Government in twelve months, with 5 per cent. interest. Every effort should be made to supply them with fodder as cheaply as possible, so that they may be able to save their stock at a reasonable rate during the extreme drought through which they are passing. The policy of the Government shows the burden which is placed on the man on the land in comparison with the worker or the ordinary unemployed man. When the Government are asked to give assistance to families on the land—there are not many asking for it, which is a blessing—the farmers are asked to fill in a long form of questions and repay the amount advanced in twelve months with 5 per cent. interest. The unemployed working man, however, can go to the nearest police station and get his order for rations without filling in any form or being asked to pay the money back. I hope that the Secretary for Agriculture will use his influence with the Government to see that primary producers are assisted in the conservation of water and fodder at once, and according to a definite method. It is no use, as the hon. member for Bowen remarked the other night, to have it on the party platform. That is no consolation to the farmers in bad times, such as they are passing through at present.

[Mr. Edwards.]

Now, I want to deal for a few minutes with land settlement. I hold that we are living in a fool's paradise. In answer to a question by the hon. member for Mirani the other day, the Secretary for Public Lands said that the selections forfeited in Queensland during the last few years were as follows:—

Year.	Selections	Forfeited.
1916	...	774
1917	...	543
1918	...	937
1919	...	1,013
1920	...	1,044
1921	...	812
1922	...	702

That shows clearly that this State is being gradually overtaken by the pear pest. The selections that were taken up years ago are now being forfeited. In connection with our land settlement to-day the people who are forfeiting their areas because they have been over-run by prickly-pear are now going into the clean areas that are being opened up for selection. It does not matter whether a man is living in a clean district or in a pear-infested district, this pear pest is everyone's concern. It is the concern of every man, woman, and child in this State. The blocks are being forfeited, which means that the Government will receive no revenue from them. This is a very serious matter. It is not only a serious matter from the point of view of the taxpayer, but we have to realise that some day some Government will have to tackle this question and definitely say that the spread of this pest has to be stopped in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: There is a Prickly-pear Commission sitting now.

Mr. EDWARDS: The trouble is that there is too much sitting. We want to clear the pear.

Mr. PAYNE: Your Government allowed the pear to spread everywhere.

Mr. EDWARDS: Unfortunately, past Governments did not take the steps they should have taken, but it is no excuse for laxity on the part of this Government. Now that the matter has been brought so forcibly before them, they should step in and tackle the problem. From 1908 to 1914 the agricultural selections taken up comprised an area of 10,240,214 acres. From 1915 to 1920 the area amounted to 4,816,470 acres.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you not know that there was a war on during that period?

Mr. EDWARDS: I am well aware that there was a war on during a portion of that time. Those figures show that there was a decrease in acreage for those periods of 5,423,744 acres. The average amount of land taken up per annum was 1,462,380 acres for the period 1908-1914, and 688,060 acres for the period 1915-1921, showing an average annual decrease of 774,823 acres for the latter period. Those figures show that this Government should take the matter of clearing pear seriously to heart. They show that the land laws of Queensland are not right, and that the encouragement given to primary production in this State is not what it ought to be. Over and over again I have heard hon. members opposite asking hon. members on this side to show how the land alongside the railways can be cultivated. For many years the Government were not disposed to take any notice of the difficulties of primary pro-

ducers. Recently they have been considering the primary producers in connection with the production of cotton. They have taken more notice of the primary producers and their difficulties recently than they have ever done before. Many areas alongside the railways at the present time are being planted with cotton.

Let me now deal with the dairying industry, which is a very important matter. We all know that for years past efforts have been made in this State to stabilise that industry. Hon. members opposite know the great efforts that were made to conduct that industry on true co-operative lines. While that work was being carried out the Government stepped in and seized the producers' butter.

Mr. FOLEY: I think they purchased the butter.

Mr. EDWARDS: No; they took it from the co-operative companies.

Mr. CARTER: Those companies are only camouflage.

Mr. CORSER: Why do you say that it is only camouflage?

Mr. CARTER: It is camouflage when they are presumed to be conducted on co-operative lines and they are not.

Mr. CORSER: Are not our butter factories co-operative concerns?

Mr. CARTER: No; they are only a sham.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member knows nothing about it. Since this Government came into office it is well known that they have interfered with private capital and the efforts of the individual to such an extent as to drive our secondary industries out of the State.

Mr. FOLEY: Name one or two of them.

Mr. EDWARDS: To prove my contention, let me say that from 1911 to 1914 the number of factories decreased by one in Queensland, and in New South Wales increased by 568; in Victoria, by 882; in South Australia, by 115; in Western Australia, by 108; and in Tasmania by 13. Those figures prove beyond doubt that Queensland has not encouraged the establishment of factories to the same extent as has been done in the other States. This is a comparative statement of the secondary industries established to deal with primary products—

Primary Product.	Secondary Industry.	No. of FACTORIES.		
		N. S. Wales.	Victoria.	Queensland.
Hides, skins, and wool	Fellmongering and woolscouring	42	32	18
Ditto ..	Tanneries ..	80	48	17
Ditto ..	Boot and shoe ..	189	304	31
Wool and cotton	Woollen, cotton, and tweed mills	9	17	2
Pigs ..	Bacon-curing ..	18	22	6
Milk ..	Butter, cheese, and condensed milk	168	184	141
Wheat ..	Flour mills ..	60	51	11
Fruit, &c. ..	Jam, fruit preserv-ing, pickles, &c.	44	42	17
Coal and iron	Agricultural imple-ments	28	60	6
Ditto ..	Engineering works	429	566	96

Those figures prove beyond a shadow of a  
*Mr. Edwards.]*

doubt that where the primary producers can build up their own secondary industries they have made great strides in Queensland. The

[7 p.m.] primary producer is hit up on account of the discouragement of the manufacture of agricultural implements within our State. This comparative statement proves that every assistance should be given to our secondary industries.

Mr. CARTER: Does it not prove that we should have more population on the land?

Mr. EDWARDS: No. What it proves is that every encouragement has been given to the building up of secondary industries in Victoria and New South Wales, and the result is that this State is placed in such an unfavourable position that we have to send our raw material to other States, and then the manufactured article is sent back.

Mr. CARTER: What raw material do you send there?

Mr. EDWARDS: Hides, for one. This is a big blow to the primary industries of Queensland, because it does not place them on the same footing as the primary producers of New South Wales and Victoria. I was astounded when I heard the hon. member for Queenton referring to this question and attempting to prove to this Committee that it was possibly a good thing that the factories were going ahead in other States in comparison with Queensland.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I did nothing of the kind. What you want is to have all the people concentrated in the cities, like we have in Townsville in the North.

Mr. EDWARDS: I say without hesitation that we should build up our secondary industries and create production in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why don't you say that when you go to Nanango?

Mr. EDWARDS: I will say it in Nanango or anywhere else in the country, and so should anyone else who is interested in the welfare of this State. If we are not going to use our primary products in our own State and manufacture the finished article here, how are we going to raise our primary producers to the same level as in the other States? It does not take a great deal of argument to see that.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Bulimba referred to the address of Mr. R. H. Julius, the retiring president of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Julius said that Queensland was at a disadvantage in connection with the very matter that I have quoted. We find that during the last seven years Queensland has increased her factories by 35 and her employees by 1,340. During the same period Victoria, which has double our population, increased her factories by 1,340 and her employees by 30,142. It is plain to every thinking person that by increasing the number of secondary industries we not only assist the primary producers of our State to have their products manufactured locally, but in addition we give a cheaper article to the consumer and work to the working man.

Mr. CARTER: What articles are cheaper in other States than in Queensland?

Mr. EDWARDS: The very articles with which the primary producer has to work and improve his farm. That is a big thing so far as Queensland is concerned.

Mr. CARTER: The prices are higher in the Southern States.

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Mr. EDWARDS: By giving every assistance to the primary producer we shall be going a long way to assist in giving our own men work and to give the consumer a cheaper product. We also give greater wages to the man on the land. I will quote a few figures in connection with our railways. After all, the questions of the railways, land settlement, agriculture, and secondary industries go hand in hand so far as the business of the State is concerned.

In Queensland in 1921 we had 5,794 miles of railways open and 9,817,409 train miles were run. New South Wales had 5,043 miles open—700 miles less than Queensland—and ran 22,792,033 miles. Victoria had 4,274 miles open and ran 16,783,638 miles. That proves the importance of developing the primary and secondary industries of the State. When the Treasurer was speaking I remarked by interjection that the Government were only running three and four trains a week where they were running up to twelve trains a week some years ago. That proves that the business of the country has gone back.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Probably they were carrying a great deal of timber in those days.

Mr. EDWARDS: I want to be absolutely fair and admit that in some instances they were. However, after the timber was taken off, the land was generally proved to be good agricultural land. This proves that the Government have not given that special attention to the development of our primary industries that should have been given; and it means that on our railways we are losing a great deal of money. If our trains were filled and were running three a day where now only three a week are running, the upkeep of the lines would be very little more than at present and the railways would be a big and prosperous business. In conclusion, I want to say a few words in regard to the development of Queensland by new railways. In my own district the unfortunate producer is in such a position that he has to cart his produce 83 miles before he can put it on the track to the principal market. I hope the Government will see their way in the very near future, in the interests of Southern Queensland, to link up the Nanango-Yarraman lines, because that is all-important to the primary producers there, as well as to the whole State. I hope hon. members sitting on the other side of the House will use their best endeavours to get the Government to have that link completed in the very near future.

Mr. CARTER: You say the railways are not paying, and now you want more.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the hon. member had the sense of a horse—

Mr. CARTER: That is more than you have got.

Mr. EDWARDS: He would know that the railways would pay better if that link was completed. There is another important question so far as the Queensland railways in Southern Queensland are concerned—that is the question of connecting the Burnett district with the Downs. That is not a local question. It is a national question, as it would assist in bringing people from the large centres into the country district. After all, we must give facilities to country people if we are going to encourage them to stop

in the country and develop Queensland as it should be developed.

I maintain that, as compared to the country districts, the city is getting too good a deal in connection with educational matters. The Government are not doing justice to the children in the country districts of our State. It is far too long before school accommodation is provided for the children of settlers. There are all sorts of difficulties put in the way in regard to buildings and in regard to repairs in schools in country districts. I hope the Government will give this matter their most serious consideration. I know they are doing big things—I am not going to deny that for a moment—but we want them to do bigger things. We want them to realise that, when people settle in the country districts educational facilities should be at once provided for the children. That should be one of the first considerations in connection with land settlement. I will quote a couple of instances of what is happening in country districts. It was two years after people settled on Burrandowan Soldier Settlement, which is from 35 to 40 miles from a railway, before they could get a school for the children, and then only after considerable agitation on the part of the settlers.

Mr. FOLEY: How many children were there on the settlement?

Mr. EDWARDS: There were sufficient children for a school, because the school was approved of nearly two years before it was built. I am not speaking on behalf of my own electorate only, as what I am saying applies to other districts as well. In another case a school was burnt down, and it was well over twelve months from the time it was burnt down before it was re-erected, although there were forty-three children attending that school.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What was the member for the district doing?

Mr. EDWARDS: The member for the district was doing what we are all doing—going to the Secretary for Public Instruction and going to the Secretary for Agriculture, as we do when we want conditions improved for the man on the land. We are told that careful consideration will be given to our representations; but what we want is to see facilities made available so that people in the country districts will have better conditions. All these things are necessary, and they go hand in hand with the development of Queensland. The development of the State depends, firstly, on land settlement; secondly on railway extension, and also on educational facilities and the establishment of secondary industries. If we considered these matters entirely apart from politics, we would get on much better. If hon. members opposite will speak out in regard to matters of administration, like the hon. member for Bremer has done, I believe that a great improvement will take place in the near future.

I want now to refer to the abuse which is so frequently hurled across the Chamber by Government members. When the hon. member for Maryborough was speaking during this debate, he made all sorts of insinuations.

Mr. CARTER: Truthful statements.

Mr. EDWARDS: Some of his insinuations were, in my opinion, very low down. It is not my practice at any time to hurl personal abuse at any one in this Chamber. If we on

this side have any criticism to make of the Government, we fire it at them as a Government. After the little brush between myself and the hon. member for Maryborough took place the tone of debate was very different. (Laughter.) The speeches of the hon. member for Bremer and the hon. member for Bulimba were a credit to those gentlemen. The Opposition do not mind a little criticism, but it is not right for hon. members opposite to hurl personal abuse across the Chamber at us. The Secretary for Agriculture, by interjection on a previous occasion, indicated that I have got the worst farm in the Nanango district. Does the hon. gentleman feel proud of saying a thing like that, or think that it is a statesmanlike interjection? I will invite the hon. gentleman to my place when he visits the Nanango electorate shortly, and if he has a more highly improved farm than mine, I am prepared to give £10 to any hospital, and I will leave the decision with him. I am also prepared to take on any hon. member opposite at any time he likes to put up the money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am very pleased to hear that offer.

Mr. EDWARDS: We are here to do the very best we can for the State, although we do not always agree as to the way it should be carried out.

In conclusion, I wish, in common with other hon. members, that the greatest success may attend the Treasurer in his mission to the old country to secure the conversion of our maturing loans. The hon. gentleman has just come into the Chamber, and I wish to say that I do not think he gave me a fair "go" during the election campaign. He came up to my electorate and made all sorts of promises, which I hope he will carry out. He led the people to believe that anything they asked for would be carried out if the Labour Government got back into power. I now ask him to go on with the construction of the Nanango-Yarraman railway in the interests of the producers in the Southern Burnett and the whole of southern Queensland. Once again I say that we on this side of the House—and I am satisfied that I am speaking for every member on these benches—wish the Premier the greatest success when he goes home to the old country. I hope that, when those loans are fixed up and the Government are spending further loan money, they will see that it is spent in the best interests of the State from a reproductive point of view—that the waste will not go on which was mentioned by the hon. member for Bremer and other hon. members, but that we shall have some check at least on its expenditure in order that it may be spent in the development of the State and the real interests of the people of Queensland.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): First of all, I want to make a short reply to some of the explanations which have been given during the course of this debate by Government members regarding how they find themselves on the Treasury benches. The hon. member for Bulimba referred to the distribution of seats, and I want to say, as I said prior to the election publicly, that the redistribution of seats was carried out according to a studied plan. Take the electorates which I know something about—Toowoomba and East Toowoomba. The hon. member for Bulimba said that hon. members had the privilege of going before the Commission

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and making statements as to how the electorates should be cut up, but I want to say that eighteen months before that Commission was appointed, in the electorates of Toowoomba and East Toowoomba men interested in the Labour movement were setting out to cut up the electorates in the way that they considered to be in the interests of the Government. I can prove that certain inquiries were made of public men as to how certain boundaries ran, and when the redistribution came out it was found that they had made the boundaries of Toowoomba and East Toowoomba. When the Commissioners were in Toowoomba they asked me personally what I thought of an electorate which would take in a certain division and show the Swamp as a boundary. I said that it was nothing to do with me, that it was their business. When the plans were published it was seen that that line had been followed, showing that those men had all the information they desired before they arrived in Toowoomba and had what they called a look round the electorate. I want to say quite definitely that they did not keep in their minds the provisions of the Act which governs the redistribution of electorates, which says that there shall be a certain quota, and a smaller number of electors than the quota may be allowed for a country electorate and a greater number for a city electorate. Let me give two instances of what happened, the first in respect of the electorates of Cooroora and Gympie. If the Commissioners had kept in their minds the rule laid down in the Act and given less than the quota to the country electorates, a portion of the electorate of Cooroora would have been attached to the electorate of Gympie, and the Gympie seat would have been lost to Labour.

Mr. COLLINS: No; the hon. member for Gympie got the biggest majority ever got by a Labour member for Gympie.

Mr. ROBERTS: If there is a man on the other side who will give an impartial judgment, he will agree with the statement I am making that Gympie must have been lost to Labour. Then what happened in the Rosewood electorate? To get the quota they did not go to the adjacent country, which you will assume, owing to the geographical nature of the country, they would have done, but they skipped the Bremer electorate and the Ipswich electorate, and went to the other boundary and took in a portion of Oxley, with the result that the Rosewood electorate was held by Labour, because the men who formerly voted Labour in that portion of the Oxley electorate voted for Mr. Cooper in Rosewood. Let me now deal with the Merthyr and Fortitude Valley electorates. To look at the figures one would say that the Merthyr electorate was won by Labour, but the United party reduced the majority of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. A section was taken away from the Merthyr electorate and put into the Valley electorate, where the Government knew that Mr. Wilson could not be unseated. As the result of this unfair distribution, the United party has lost Mr. Macgregor, the late hon. member for Merthyr, and we have in his place Mr. M'Lachlan, representing Labour. I have nothing personally against Mr. M'Lachlan, but I do say that the position had been studied before the Commission was asked to carry out the work of redistribution. Let us now consider the Drayton, Pittsworth, and Cunningham electorates.

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Will anyone say that there was a fair redistribution there when two Country party seats were wiped clean out? One hon. member now represents that vast extent of country.

Mr. COLLINS: What do you call a vast extent of country?

Mr. ROBERTS: That is what we get from a Government who profess to give the country people a fair deal. The Attorney-General says that we have nothing to complain about in the results that have been achieved. On his own figures we find that the Opposition represent a majority of 14,000 in round figures, and that in face of the fact that the Government hold 43 seats as against 29 held by the Opposition. But the combined Opposition, representing 29 seats, polled 195,143 votes, and the Government, representing 43 seats, polled 182,357 votes.

Mr. COLLINS: Are those the official figures?

Mr. ROBERTS: They are as official as we can get them.

Mr. COLLINS: Are they compiled from that return of yours?

Mr. ROBERTS: They are just as good as the figures given by the Attorney-General. We shall have the official figures when the statement is printed—it is no fault of mine that it is not printed. I stand by my figures to-night. I want to show that the Opposition have 6,832 votes for every seat they hold, as against 4,241 votes for every seat held by the Government. I would not take so much exception to this if it were only a matter of country seats against city seats, but unfortunately that is not so. I do not wish to go into the figures in detail, because I understand that the leader of the Opposition has had certain figures put into "Hansard;" but, from my own knowledge, I can say that more than one-third of the electorates held by hon. members opposite have, roughly speaking, considerably under 6,000 voters. On the other hand, the number of [7.30 p.m.] electors represented by members of the Opposition is anything between 7,000 and 7,500. As I said previously, anyone will see that the redistribution was according to a very closely studied plan.

Mr. PEASE: Tell us something about the Commonwealth situation?

Mr. FRY: What about the New South Wales ballot-box scandals? That is how the Labour party there selected their candidates.

Mr. ROBERTS: Although the hon. member for Bulimba might have had certain ideas regarding the apprenticeship conditions in his mind, we have to recognise that he is not in a position to have them put into effect. Members of the Opposition have to criticise the position as they find it. To show our criticisms are justified, I would point out that the Secretary for Public Works, who is in charge of the apprenticeship question, himself recognises that there is just cause for complaint. The President of the Arbitration Court has gone so far as to say that the system will have to be altered. We have evidence in the remarks made by the hon. member for Ipswich that the position brought about by the Apprenticeship Committee has not been satisfactory. We have to recognise that 509 boys made themselves eligible under the apprenticeship conditions for employment, yet positions were only found for 245. Let us examine some of the reasons

why positions were not found for these 243. I have in my possession a list of occupations where the employer is not allowed to engage an apprentice unless he has a journeyman working with him. As one who knows something of trades and callings, I know that a lad is just as likely to learn a trade and become an efficient journeyman working under an employer who has no journeymen as in a business where ten y-five or thirty journeymen are employed. I find that no apprentice can be engaged by a master baker employing no journeyman, and the same position exists in the callings of cooper, electrical engineer, and saddle and harness maker. To illustrate my point I wish at this stage to bring before the House a position which was brought under my notice in connection with a saddle and harness maker. I made inquiries of the Director of Labour, Mr. Walsh, and I found that the position as related to me existed. A young boy in Toowoomba was out of employment. He had an uncle who was a saddle and harness maker, who said to the parent, "Send the boy down and I will give him a chance. If he shows any desire to follow the trade, I will make him an efficient tradesman." The boy was sent down and shortly after he commenced work the fact was brought under the notice of an inspector of labour. The inspector carried out his duties honestly and rightly, and he pointed out to the uncle that he could not continue to employ the boy in his business because he was not employing a journeyman. It was at this stage that the matter was brought under my notice, and I said, "I recognise that under the Arbitration Court awards certain conditions are laid down, and one possibly has been made in this direction; but it is very unfair." After consultation with the Director of Labour I found that this was correct. That is a condition that requires altering. That boy probably would have become an efficient tradesman, but he was probably out of work for months and months, and when he got a job he was debarred from continuing in it. Then again we find that a bootmaker who does not employ a journeyman cannot apprentice a boy. What is wrong with a master bootmaker having a boy in order to teach him his trade? He has to carry out all the apprenticeship conditions just as if he had ten or twenty men working for him. In the clothing trade, tailoring, and such like, no apprentice can be employed unless a journeyman is engaged. The same conditions exist in the following trades:—hairdressers, engine-driving—there might be some justification for the condition in this calling—confectioners, breweries, distilleries, jam-makers, warehousemen, electro-platers, and dental mechanics. Restrictions exist in all these trades and callings, which prevent the boys of our State having an opportunity to become efficient tradesmen. I am not blaming the Government. I recognise that the employers and employees go to the Arbitration Court and come to this arrangement themselves; but we who govern the State of Queensland in the interests of all Queensland, if we consider an injustice is being done, have a right to call attention to it in the hope of getting that injustice put right. I consequently welcome the recent amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act dealing with apprentices, and hope that every opportunity will be given to the boys of Queensland who desire to learn a trade to learn that trade.

I have been very much struck with the very big figures that are contained in the "Tables Relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement." I have made a few calculations, but the more I look at the tables the more astounded I am that Queensland is not in a position even worse than she is unfortunately in to-day. We have nothing to boast about so far as our financial position is concerned. I have heard hon. members on the Government side saying that things are all right, but I want to say, as one who travels up and down the country, that, so far as the workers are concerned, things are all wrong. It is a very difficult matter for a man to-day, unless he is a competent tradesman, to get a job in Queensland; and every day we see the lessening of the opportunities of the worker. With the figures I have in front of me we ought to be able to do something totally different. The total amount of revenue received by the Government in 1914-15 from the taxpayers of Queensland—we have to remember that there was no land tax in that year—was £954,457, whereas in 1921-22 the amount received was £3,420,296, and in 1922-23, £3,330,885. I want to give one or two points so far as taxation is concerned which were quite unknown to the Government prior to 1915-16. I find that the amount received from the land tax in 1915-16—the first year of its imposition—was £247,044.

Mr. COLLINS: You used to be in favour of a land tax at one time.

Mr. ROBERTS: In 1916-17 the revenue from the same source was £362,535; in 1917-18, £344,547; in 1918-19, £578,253, in 1919-20, £459,188; in 1920-21, £469,175; in 1921-22, £480,518; and in 1922-23, £417,865—or a total taxation from this source of £3,359,123.

At 7.40 p.m.,

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

Mr. ROBERTS: We received stamp duty in 1914-1915 to the extent of £321,404, and in 1922-1923 to the extent of £611,147. I am referring to this matter of stamp duty, because I recognise that it is one of the duties which, unfortunately, poor people also have to pay. When a man buys a property he pays stamp duty. When in financial difficulties and requiring an advance, he has to register securities and again pay stamp duty. Later, when releasing his securities, he pays further stamp duty. Therefore, this sum of £611,147 is a point of considerable interest to the poor people of the State. In the matter of income tax we find that—

The receipts amounted to—		£
1914-1915	...	517,273
1915-1916	...	766,560
1916-1917	...	756,292
1917-1918	...	967,421
1918-1919	...	1,677,335
1919-1920	...	2,023,316
1920-1921	...	2,410,171
1921-1922	...	2,194,361
1922-1923	...	2,149,607

I have quoted these figures to bring before the House a statement which was made by the present Treasurer, when speaking on the Financial Statement in this House in 1912 when in opposition.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

*Mr. Roberts.]*



Mr. ROBERTS: I think I heard the hon. member for Bowen saying "Hear, hear!"

Mr. COLLINS: My word you did.

Mr. ROBERTS: I think the hon. member for Bowen says that for the same reason that the present Treasurer made these remarks in 1912—

"Everyone in the community has paid, because it has been passed on. The consumers are really paying the tax. It is passed on to them."

A comparison of the hon. gentleman's speech at that time with his tables now would show that things were flourishing then compared with to-day. Whereas we only got £954,457 from direct taxation in 1914-1915, in 1922-1923 we took from the people of Queensland—the workers—£5,530,885. We had considerable criticism from the hon. gentleman in 1912 in connection with our loan expenditure. He said, on page 1247 of "Hansard" for that year—

"This year they proposed to spend £2,835,250. That also is an inordinately higher rate of expenditure, and a rate that this country cannot keep up.

"The Secretary for Railways: Why not? It is for railway building.

"Mr. THEODORE: The hon. member knows that it cannot be continued. He knows that his Treasurer is pretty emphatic upon that point, and when they tried to get loan money for works they could not get it, until they arranged for works which would involve the expenditure of £3,000,000 in a year, which is not only an insane policy, but one which they cannot carry out, because they cannot get money at a reasonable rate of interest to do so."

This year provision is made for spending upwards of £5,000,000 of loan money. Surely the possibilities are not as favourable now as they were in 1912. In 1912 the present Treasurer stated that it was an insane policy to borrow £3,000,000, and that the country could not stand up to it. He said—

"Sooner or later our country will be faced with a serious position regarding the position of the different industries."

We have long since passed that position. If hon. members look at the tables I quoted a few moments ago in connection with taxation, they will find that the income tax shows a reduction. On this side of the House several years ago we said that a consistent increase could not continue. We see from the Treasurer's tables for the last three years that in each year there has been a reduction in the amount of tax collected, thereby showing a lesser earning power on the part of the people of Queensland. The hon. gentleman went on to say—

"When this party is on that side they will adopt a policy which will not involve an expenditure of £3,000,000 per annum, and I think there will be no necessity then to complain about the public works policy."

I wish to remind hon. members that on that memorable occasion, when the hon. gentleman criticised the then Government so trenchantly on account of their loan proposals, he went so far as to say that, with a little adjustment of taxation, Queensland could easily build up to 200 miles of railways per year at an expenditure of £1,000,000.

Mr. COLLINS: Would that not be an ideal state of affairs?

[Mr. Roberts.

Mr. ROBERTS: It might be an ideal state of affairs. It was ideal for the hon. gentleman to talk about building railways out of revenue when in opposition; but it is taking him all his time to build railways to-day, even with the great amount of loan money at his command.

In the matter of building railways and of loan money, I wish to call attention to the way in which the Government juggled with the Loan Fund. That is one of the methods which is answerable for the result of the elections. I will cite two instances. We have seen where they juggled in the spending of money on railway construction work. At Toowoomba we have work going on known as the Willowburn works. What is the position? I have to recognise that the hon. member for Toowoomba, the Hon. F. T. Brennan, has done his best to get this work pushed on, but this is what he said in 1920—

"He (Mr. Brennan) had promised two things, butcher shops and railway engine sheds. Regarding engine sheds, he (Mr. Brennan) told Mr. Fihelly he would not stand again for Toowoomba unless the engine sheds were gone on with. Subsequently he (Mr. Brennan) received a letter and the works went on."

That was what the hon. gentleman said at Toowoomba prior to the elections in 1920, and we know those works did go on. We know also that shortly after the elections they were closed down, and, as a result of that closing down, Queensland has lost some thousands of pounds through the damage done to the work which was then left unfinished. As I pointed out a few nights ago, last year we asked that this work might be recommenced, and we were told that there was no money available; but, when the elections came on unexpectedly, this work was immediately started, and I was somewhat concerned as to how these things were brought about. I saw works being commenced in many places, consequently I have gone to the trouble during the last few weeks to make some inquiries. The Estimates for the current year were tabled the other night, and I notice in those Estimates that there are sums of money to be voted for railway construction works in various centres. The sum of £20,000 is set down on the Estimates for the engine shed at Toowoomba. Seeing that we have £20,000 on the Estimates for that work, one would think there would be no need for the Assistant Home Secretary, the hon. member for Toowoomba, to address the men at Willowburn works as he addressed them last Tuesday to show them that he had done all that he could to get them continued in their employment and the job pushed along to completion. He said, however, that, owing to the shortage of loan money and the urgent necessity for proceeding with work in the Burnett district, the work could not be completed. Evidently a number of these men have to be put out of employment. How is the hon. gentleman going to square that statement with the statement he made in 1920? If he could influence the Treasurer of the day, Mr. Fihelly, to start those works in 1920 for electioneering purposes, as I claim, and then start them again just before the election in 1923, and then see that £20,000 are placed on the Estimates this year for these works, how is it that these works cannot be continued? The reason that they cannot be continued is that the money was spent prior

to the elections; consequently I am justified in saying that these works were recommenced to try and buy that electorate for the Government. Probably £12,000 out of the £20,000 on the Estimates of this year has already been spent, and there is only something like £3,000 or £9,000 left to carry on the work during the current year, and that is why the men were told last Tuesday that they could not be continued in their employment. The climax was reached at that meeting when a member of the Toowoomba Labour election committee addressed the men and appealed to them—not to help the workers, but to help a certain function in order to pay the expenses of the last Toowoomba election. Just imagine it! Men were being dismissed, and then this man had the audacity to ask them to contribute to the expenses of the recent election. It only shows the position which some men take up.

Mr. COLLINS: Is not that democracy?

Mr. ROBERTS: If he asked these men to contribute to something that was going to find them or other men employment, nothing further could be said. The action of the Government in connection with the Willowburn works does not do the Government credit.

The present Treasurer used to be very critical on the matter of expenditure, and he contended that the country could not stand an expenditure of £3,000,000 a year from loan money. Here is something that the Auditor-General has told the Treasurer since he occupied that position. In his report for 1918-19 the Auditor-General says—

“There is now a world-wide demand for economy in respect to public expenditure, and, in view of the deficits of the past three years, together with the information conveyed by the figures in general, appearing in the report, it is obvious—if the financial stability of the State is to be maintained—that the gravity of the present situation and the risk in regard to the future call for thoughtful reflection.”

There is no doubt that the subsequent figures show how completely the Treasurer has disregarded his own principles and ignored the pointed hint of his chief financial adviser. Since the Auditor-General spoke, the annual expenditure has gone on mounting up, as follows:—

	£
1918-19	9,587,531
1919-20	11,266,909
1920-21	12,591,201
1921-22	12,499,969
1922-23	12,784,382

And, according to the Budget we have before us to-day, we are asked to make provision for an expenditure of £13,057,063 this financial year. I ask, in all seriousness, what do the Government think about this increase in expenditure year after year? We cannot keep extracting this amount of money from the people of the State year after year and expect progress to be made. The Government are reducing the staff at Willowburn, and this applies to all construction works throughout Queensland. No doubt, these men would have been retrenched weeks ago, but the Government were considerate enough to keep them on until they would be eligible to receive the unemployment allowance under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act. If the Government intend to run their railway

construction policy by keeping the men working six or seven months in the year and then allowing them to receive the allowance under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act for the balance of the year, it is not a statesmanlike policy. It appears to me that that is what they have in

[8 p.m.] their minds. They will find employment in certain parts of the year, and say to these men, “You are contributing your 3d. a week, and for the rest of the year you can look for some financial assistance from the fund.” That is not my idea of giving assistance, and I do not think the general body of workers want that. If I understand them rightly, they want permanent employment; and if the country was managed wisely, there would be no reason why employment should not be available for them; but we want very different conditions to what we have had in the past two years. We want freedom for men to work, and freedom for men to spend their capital, and if that is given we shall see the country moving along.

I just want to refer briefly to the speech made by the hon. member for Nundah the other night. Some exception was taken to his remarks on that occasion by the hon. member for Herbert, who interjected that the amount of £2,862,705 which the hon. member for Nundah mentioned as the actual amount received in connection with the American loan did not include the 620,000 dollars retained in America for the purpose of a sinking fund. Since these remarks were made by the hon. member for Nundah the matter has been very closely looked into, with the result that the statement of the hon. member still holds good. The amount quoted is the same as that which is mentioned in the Treasurer's Financial Statement of 1922, and also in Table G2 of the Treasurer's tables issued this year. Comparing this with the details given in the Auditor-General's report for 1921-1922, there is practically an agreement—there is a small discrepancy of £2,570, probably accountable for by some expenses which at that time had not been finalised.

These are the Auditor-General's figures—

Proceeds converted and remitted to London	.. .. .	dollars	10,780,000
Proceeds on conversion at 3'92½ to 3'96½	.. .. .	..	£2,739,085
Add 620,000 dollars retained in America:—			
520,000 dollars used in America	.. .. .	£106,864	
100,000 dollars later remitted to Brisbane at a profit	.. .. .	23,121	
			129,985
Total	.. .. .	..	£2,869,070
Deduct 18,465 dollars (engraving, &c.)	.. .. .	..	3,795
Net realisation	.. .. .	..	£2,865,275

That is, the amount of £2,862,705 quoted from the Treasurer's Budget Speech of 1922-1923 includes the profit on conversion and the 620,000 dollars retained in America. The interest payable (7 per cent. on 12,000,000 dollars) is 840,000 dollars per annum. If dollars could be bought at par value (4.866 for the £1 sterling), the rate of interest on the net realisation (£2,862,705) would be £6 0s. 7d. per cent. per annum. The average rate of conversion for payment of interest last year would be approximately 4.45 dollars for £1 sterling, and the rate of

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interest on net realisation £6 11s. 10d. per cent.—that is, 19s. per cent. more than the rate stated in last year's Budget Speech. I desire to make that statement, because the hon. member for Herbert seemed very emphatic in his contradiction of the hon. member for Nundah, and it is only right that the position should be made quite clear.

Mr. PEASE: Is that the first or the second loan you are referring to?

Mr. ROBERTS: Those are the figures which were challenged by the hon. member.

With regard to the subject of railway freights, which has been freely discussed, I made inquiries at the Railway Department this morning with regard to the matter, as I do not wish to quote anything which is not likely to be correct, and I obtained full information. The following table shows the old and new rates of freight on maize and wheat:—

Miles.	Maize.		Wheat.	Wheat.
	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Old Rate.	New Rate.
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
1 to 10 ..	1 6	4 6	1 6	3 3
1 to 15 ..	1 9	5 2	1 9	3 6
1 to 20 ..	2 2	5 9	2 2	3 9
1 to 25 ..	2 7	6 5	2 7	4 1
1 to 30 ..	3 1	7 0	3 1	4 4
1 to 35 ..	3 6	7 7	3 6	4 7
1 to 40 ..	3 11	8 4	3 11	4 10
1 to 45 ..	4 4	9 3	4 4	5 4
1 to 50 ..	4 10	9 11	4 10	5 11
1 to 55 ..	5 3	10 6	5 3	6 3

I may mention that there is a terminal charge of 6d. added to the amounts quoted in the second column of rates; for instance, the department will first of all quote 4s., and then there is a terminal charge of 6d. in addition. There is another direction in which the consumer in the country is affected. The mineral class rates have been increased as follows:—

Class M, from 12s. 6d. to 14s. 4d., or equal to 9 per cent.; Class A, from 18s. 8d. to £1 2s. 1d., or 10 per cent.; Class B, from £1 13s. 3d. to £2 0s. 4d., or 20 per cent.

Merchandise—Class 1, from £2 13s. 1d. to £3 3s. 10d., or an increase of 20 per cent.; Class 2, from £3 19s. 7d. to £4 15s. 4d., or 17½ per cent.; Class 3, from £5 9s. 5d. to £6 10s. 7d., or an increase of 20 per cent.

The men to whom I am now going to refer are those who take up a certain class of work in their hour of need—i.e., woodcutters. This concerns hon. members on the Government side as well as Opposition members. A lot of people turn their attention to getting a truck of wood and sending it into the town when times are bad. How has the department treated them?

The old rate for a large eight-wheeled wagon for 10 miles was 8s. 3d., and it has been increased, with a terminal charge of 1s. 6d., to 18s., or by no less than 135 per cent. As the hon. member for Warwick pointed out, an increase of that kind in freight on the railways affects two classes. It first of all affects the worker in the city, because we have to recognise that he is a large consumer of wood. The average man with a cottage uses wood as against any other fuel. Then again, it seriously affects the man who gets it. They work long hours

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and very often are up all night. Some of them, on the average, would not make more than 8s. a day at wood drawing—I am not speaking of the men who own the wood, but of those who get it. An increase in the railway rate means a very great deal to those men. For 20 miles the old rate was 11s. 11d. and the new rate, with the terminal charge again of 1s. 6d., brought it up to 19s. 4d. That becomes a very heavy tax. Then again, take the freight on cattle. I have to recognise that the Government did make some reduction some time ago, and I want to give them credit for doing it. I am reminded that just prior to the election one hon. member was taking credit for having been the means of getting this reduction, and actually inspired a paragraph in the Press—to my astonishment—setting out that it had been granted owing to representations which he had made. But, if you look at the "General Notices" which the Railway Department issue, you will find that this very concession had been granted fully a month before this man was taking credit for it.

Mr. RIORDAN: Who was it?

Mr. ROBERTS: Never mind who it was—at any rate it was not the hon. member. For an eight-wheeled cattle truck the charge for 100 miles in 1915 was 80s., and in 1919 it had been increased to 139s. 3d. For the same sized truck for a distance of 200 miles, the charge in 1915 was 146s. 6d., and at the present time the charge is 244s. 6d. For 300 miles the charge in 1915 was 202s. 6d., and at the present time it is 323s. 9d. These figures show that the increase for 100 miles has been 59s. 3d., for 200 miles 98s., and for 300 miles 121s. 3d. Those are very heavy increases, and in other classes of freight the same thing exists.

There is another matter with which I wish to deal if time permits—a matter on which the Government used to pride themselves, that is, the nationalisation of hospitals. I can remember some of the speeches hon. members opposite made on this subject. It was a great plank in their platform.

Mr. GLEDSON: You signed that plank, you know.

Mr. ROBERTS: I never denied it. I have never denied anything I have done; I am not ashamed of it. What I do regret is that I have to-night to make a reference to the fact that the Government in power, who call themselves a Labour Government—who say that they look after the interests of the poor and the down-trodden, the sick and the distressed—allow a condition of affairs to exist which prompts the Medical Superintendent of the Brisbane Hospital, Dr. McLean, to make the report for 1922 which was laid on the table a day or two ago. Further, I want to remind hon. members that I have here also his report for 1921, in which he drew attention to the same condition of affairs. What action did the Government take? Is a similar report likely to be made again next year? I propose to read both of them to show hon. members how the Government are to blame. This is what he wrote in 1921—

#### "OVERCROWDING.

"Last year I brought under notice the increasing demand on the resources of the hospital. Other institutions are in similar difficulties, so one cannot expect any relief from them. For many years

past there has been no increased accommodation for the sick poor to cope with the increased population.

"Cases arrive here from all over Queensland, and it is one long struggle to find accommodation for patients. Wards normally containing nineteen beds often have thirty patients, the excess numbers being placed on verandahs in all sorts of weather and on stretchers in the wards. All departments have the same trouble, and the position is accentuated by deficient lavatory accommodation and store rooms.

"Complaints are made because patients are not admitted, and also because it is necessary to send home those who are best able to make room for others in more need. The number of cases that have to be sent home by ambulance is a sad reflection on the accommodation and the necessity for the increase."

What does Dr. McLean say in his report for 1922?—

"The most important trouble in the hospital, and one which is a constant source of anxiety, is the continued overcrowding. Patients are kept on unsuitable couches in wards and on verandahs. The ventilation is insufficient inside the wards, and those outside on the verandahs are exposed, particularly in winter, to the inclemencies of the weather.

"In spite of all attempts to meet the demands it is necessary to often refuse to admit cases and even sometimes to warn ambulances to only bring desperate cases. Complaints naturally arise both from those who are refused admission and from those who are requested to leave to make room for those much worse than they are. The attention of the nurses must suffer under such conditions. The lavatory accommodation is also over-taxed.

"The position of the Brisbane Hospital is similar to that existing in other States. The accommodation is over-taxed. The condition becomes more acute every year and the sick poor who must depend on hospital treatment are not receiving the attention that is necessary. The whole matter requires grave consideration. The increase of two or three wards does not meet the difficulty, as with more wards more nurses and more equipment, increased accommodation at the nurses' home, improved laundry, etc., are required.

"It is time that the whole future of the hospital be considered, and plans made for its permanent improvement, with a view to fully meeting the demands for treatment of those who are unable to afford medical and private hospital fees.

"We must recognise the fact that the population is increasing, that the hospital is called on to treat cases from all over Queensland, that no provision to cope with the increase has been made for many years, and that the time has arrived to consider the present condition of the hospital and its ability to cope with the demands laid on it for many years ahead.

"Yours obediently,

"J. C. McLEAN,

"Medical Superintendent."

I recognise the difficulty that the Brisbane General Hospital was in at the time the Government took control. I do not desire to blame the Government for their action, because I believe that at that time the hospital was right up against it.

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

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): This year I, for one, expected to see a united Opposition. We heard a good deal about the conference that took place at Rockhampton as well as the one that took place at Emu Park. The hon. member for Oxley came back from Rockhampton and said that he was going to create a united party in this Chamber. The hon. member for Rockhampton reminds me that the hon. member for Oxley has again gone to Rockhampton to resuscitate that party. I think that to-day the Opposition are even more divided than before the United party came into this House. The hon. member for Dalby has generously given way to allow of the formation of a united Opposition. He did not want to hang on to the spoils of office.

Mr. FRY: The spoils of office!

Mr. RIORDAN: The position of leader of the Opposition carries an extra £200 in salary. Every hon. member opposite was fighting for it—there were six or seven aspirants for the position.

Mr. FRY: That is not so. Every hon. member opposite fights for the position of Minister.

Mr. RIORDAN: The Nationalists claimed that while the hon. member for Dalby was leader of the Opposition there could be no unity. That gentleman has now relinquished that position, and we find the Elphin-tone party, the Barnes party, and two or three other different parties sitting in opposition. Practically every hon. member opposite is a party on his own. I am not a bit worried over that, but I would like to see a united Opposition, just to see how they would fare. I have been in this Chamber for five years, and I have seen the Opposition divided all the time. I would like to see what sort of a stunt they would put up if there was a united Opposition. It is really a shame to take the money when one goes to the country, because it is just a case of the Labour party continuing to roll home without any struggle. We like a fight, and when we are defeated in a fight we are always prepared to put up with it. For years the Labour party sat in opposition.

Mr. FRY: And will again.

Mr. RIORDAN: When we returned from the elections after we were defeated we took our defeat like any party should. We were prepared to abide by the will of the people. We have heard hon. members opposite trying to excuse their downfall ever since this Parliament met. Their downfall is attributed to the fact that the people of Queensland did not want any more of the type of Government which advocate black labour and all other things that mean low wages and the keeping down of the bottom dog.

Mr. FRY: Your Government are sacking them every day now, and they are getting no wages.

Mr. RIORDAN: It was my intention to confine my remarks to the Estimates-in-Chief,

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but as I shall be leaving on a tour of my electorate, commencing on Sunday next, I would not like to allow this opportunity to pass without having a little to say in the interests of the people I represent.

The chief intention of myself, along with other gentlemen who are going in the party on this tour, is, to my way of thinking, in the interests of the State and in the interests of opening up a portion of the State that has been long neglected by different Governments. There are men going in the party to the Gulf country to see if it is suitable for sheep-raising. We have ballots taken in connection with land in which 1,000, 1,200, up to 1,500 applications are received for each block. The Government have announced their intention of resuming freeholds in Western Queensland—Marathon, Saltern Creek—and another holding in Southern Queensland. I predict that, if the Government go on and the Land Court fixes a rental which the selector will be able to bear, there will be anything from 2,000 to 5,000 applicants for those blocks. I hope that the compensation to be paid will not be so high as to be a burden heavy enough to break down the intention of closer settlement. Hon. members opposite are continually howling that the railways are not paying. I am not one who expects our railways to pay for many years to come. I think the lines should be extended to assist settlement, but not built through large holdings unless it is the intention of the Government to resume those holdings. There should be anything from ten to fifteen families on each holding, and returning a good living to the people settled thereon. To show the demand that there is for sheep country, let me state that these gentlemen are going up to have a look at the Gulf country, and, if it is suitable for sheep-raising, they are prepared to find £100,000 for the purpose of sheep-raising. They are going to do that in this State, which hon. members opposite contend has been ruined by the Labour Government. The Gulf country has been for a long time the meat-producing portion of this State. We know that at the present time the meat market is not good, and the cattle-growers in the Gulf country are unable to market their products. The position has been a serious one from their point of view, and if sheep-raising can be carried on up there it will give a new lease of life to the Gulf country and assist in obtaining a return from land that is now lying idle. There has been an attack made by hon. members opposite in regard to the Government State stations policy. The Government policy in that direction is not a bad policy. I am not going to cry down the State stations because they have made a loss. If the same market had continued after the purchase of the State stations as existed before that purchase, the State stations would have turned out one of the biggest successes in the enterprises embarked upon by this Government. The Labour Government, in the first place, were unfortunate in accepting the recommendation of Mr. Bunning regarding the appointment of their manager. The man they got was unsuitable. This is not the first time that I have mentioned that gentleman. When I came into this House first, I think I pointed out that the man was unsuitable for the position he was in.

If there was a return to pre-war prices for cattle, the State stations under the

present management would not be long in picking up the losses they are now showing. The Government hold the cattle, and there is another way out of the difficulty. The Government to-day conduct State butcher shops throughout Queensland. If the State stations were to kill their beef and sell it over the block to the consumer, it should return 6d. per lb., and at least £8 per head, without taking into account the by-products.

The Commissioner for State [8.30 p.m.] Enterprises, until just quite recently, has allowed Mr. Garbutt, of Townsville, who is opposed to the Government, to kill all the cattle for the State shops there. The State shops sold the carcasses over the block, and Mr. Garbutt, in addition to being paid his charges for the killing, retained the by-products. Since the private butcher shops have been in competition with the State butcher shops in the open market, and on the lowest market we have had in Queensland for some time, the business of the State shops and the profits have increased, simply because the State has taken up the killing and handling of its own cattle. The same conditions prevailed all down the coast until a couple of years back. I do not know for certain whether the State is killing its own cattle in connection with all their State shops; but if it is not, it should do. If it is not, it should either kill its own cattle or take the cattle from the small grazier and put them over the block for him. With beef selling at 6d. per lb. he should then get a fair return for his cattle. There are many small cattlemen in business to-day. Most of them have sprung up since the advent of this Government, who have made it possible for them to go on the land. These men, unfortunately, stocked up on a top market, when cattle were £14 per head, and consequently had their rents assessed on a value basis of £14 per head. I admit the Lands Department has been generous towards small selectors who have made application for time to pay their rents without penalty. But this is not going to get the small man out of his difficulty. I know certain gentlemen are working to try and assist the cattle industry out of its present difficulty, but their prospects are not too bright. In the course of the debate on the Address in Reply, I mentioned that the Government had guaranteed to a co-operative company a loan of £20,000 for the establishment of a boiling-down and canning works at Karumba, at the mouth of the Norman River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Some of my friends said that they would only can for a few months in the year, and that there is no market for canned meats. Meat can be chilled in the Gulf and a market can be found for it. What we did not chill we could can. I am sure that, when these works commence, they will give to the cattleman a better return than he is now getting from the meatworks. "Smith's Weekly" of 25th August last had a very good article on the beef industry, and dealt with the question why "dummy" cannot afford to buy beef. We hear certain men advocating the opening up of trade with the East and the Islands in connection with the cattle industry. Sugar can be produced in the Islands, where wages are 1s. per day, at £9 per ton, and the population there cannot afford to buy our beef. The population is certainly in the East, but they cannot afford to purchase our beef at the price it will cost to put it on the Eastern market, because of the low rate

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of wages there. If there is a possibility of establishing trade with the East, that possibility rests with the Gulf, because it is only seven days' sail from the Eastern market, and beef can be landed there much cheaper than if shipped at Brisbane. There have been certain interests at all times working against the establishment of works in the Gulf and the killing of the beast where it is grown. We know that the American meat trust have a lot of money invested in meatworks, outside Townsville, and we also have the Queensland Meat Export Company operating close to Townsville, with anything up to £500,000 invested there. There is a very strong influence working against the small cattleman doing anything for himself. Mr. Philp, a son of the late Sir Robert Philp, ridicules the idea of establishing meatworks in the Gulf. I do not want to debate the question with Mr. Philp, but, from what I have seen of the cattle industry, it pays better to kill the cattle where they are grown than to drive them 400 or 500 miles, and then rail them for another 400 or 500 miles under crude methods to the market. The late Sir Robert Philp, who at one time represented Townsville in this House, exercised a big influence in keeping the Gulf back. The trade of Cloncurry should have been with the Gulf. The rails were actually at Normanton to construct a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, but, on account of the weakness of the Northern representation and on account of the strength of numbers of Southern members and the members representing constituencies on the eastern sea-coast, the trade of Cloncurry was brought to Townsville. The result is that the products of Cloncurry are railed 600 miles, in spite of the fact that there is a port within 220 miles of that town. If that is the way to develop the State, then I do not know too much about developing the State. Reverting to the cattle industry, if the cattle-grower kills his own beef, there is no reason why he should not get a better return than he is getting to-day. "Smith's Weekly" states—

"Beef on the hoof in Queensland fetches an average price of £3 12s. 6d. a beast.

"In Sydney and Melbourne the same beast brings £23 12s. 6d. and £28 respectively.

"The difference represents the harvest of the carcass butcher and the other middlemen.

"It represents also the ruin of the producer and the starvation of the consumer.

"The American beef trust already controls largely the workings of the Australian cattle industry. When the subsidy of 4d. a lb. on exported beef was granted by the Commonwealth, the London market dropped. When the Queensland Government reduced freights, the London market dropped again.

"The American interests which control the London beef market saw to this checkmating of Governmental assistance. Unless those interests in turn are checkmated Australia will soon be importing chilled beef from the trust's works in the Argentine.

"At least one of the moves towards such a checkmate is indicated herewith."

"Smith's Weekly" also deals with Australia handling her meat and putting it upon the

market in a better manner than it has been marketed previously. During the war all the cattle that it was possible to secure in Queensland were bought, slaughtered, and dumped over the other side of the world. When the war collapsed a large quantity of inferior meat was left on the markets there, and Australian meat in consequence secured a bad name. Argentina devoted its attention, meanwhile, to building up its herds. A bullock matures in Argentina in two years, whereas in Queensland it takes three and four years. "Smith's Weekly" states—

"For years the stock-raising industry in Queensland has been steadily slipping backwards, in the same ratio as the middlemen have grown, over the whole of the State. Cattle herds have grown from 5,210,391 in 1912 to 7,047,370 in 1921. But the price of meat to the householder has increased faster than the herds, and the profit to the stockraiser has decreased in a like proportion. The acreage carrying cattle has grown until it now forms the chief industry over two-thirds of the State.

"At the present time the industry spells disaster to the cattleman. There are herds throughout Queensland which cannot be given away. Yet the price of beef in the Southern markets is sky high.

"Bullocks that sell for £8 12s. 6d. in Brisbane bring £23 in Melbourne and £23 12s. 6d. in Sydney. Deduct £3 5s. freight, and the sale price of a bullock, less freight, in Sydney is £20 7s. 6d. Who gets the difference?"

Mr. CORSER: Who gets the difference?

Mr. RIORDAN: The cattleman has been looking around for a good while to find out who gets the difference.

Mr. CORSER: Who are the middlemen in the beef industry in Queensland?

Mr. RIORDAN: To my way of thinking, the American meat trust.

Mr. CORSER: The State butcher shops.

Mr. RIORDAN: The State butcher shops operating in my electorate offered £9 17s. for "poddies" in and around Croydon, and the cattlemen refused the offer.

Mr. CORSER: They sold their own cattle for £4 per head.

Mr. RIORDAN: Yes, because they were giving an opportunity to the small man to get a few shillings to keep him on his land. "Smith's Weekly" is with me in regard to the American meat trust. It states—

"The American meat trust have an organised system of commercial espionage in Australia, by which they are apprised of the contents of every ship that leaves this country for overseas ports. When a large consignment is despatched for London from Australia, a cable leaves for Buenos Ayres, and four or five times the quantity of chilled meat is shipped to London to swamp the market before the Australian shipment arrives.

"Big meat factories in Queensland years ago tried to market chilled meat in England, but discontinued after a short time. There is talk now of further experimenting with the object of trying to shake the grip of South America on European markets. Cattlemen regard success along these lines as

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the only salvation for the meat industry. But distributors know they will be merely wasting their time if they try it. The only hope of improvement, according to their analysis, is more canning and the elimination of the middleman."

People have ridiculed the idea of canning at Karumba. There is another string to the bow of those advocating the establishment of canning works in the Gulf. Meat can be chilled there and sent to New South Wales and Victoria and marketed in those States at a cheaper price than meat that is being sold there to-day. In the Address in Reply my remarks were mostly connected with the meat industry, and I do not wish to continue on those lines any longer.

When you spoke yesterday, Mr. Cooper, you made some astonishing revelations in regard to the working of the Ipswich Railway Workshops. If those remarks are not inquired into by the Secretary for Railways or by the Government, then there will be neglect of duty. Somebody is responsible. If scientific sabotage is going on, the only ones capable of carrying on that scientific sabotage are the "boss" class; the toiler has nothing on them in this regard. If that state of things is prevailing, somebody is responsible, and the sooner the Government get busy and find out the offender and clean him out the better for the Railway Department and the Government. I do not want to get on to the Railway Department, or make it appear that I have a grudge. I know it is very difficult for the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner to carry out all their duties; but when a member of Parliament brings such matters as these to light, they are worthy of consideration, and should not be placed to one side.

Regarding the railways generally, there is a good deal of pin-pricking going on amongst the "bosses" or inspectors. I do not know the reason for the idea, but we find that throughout the service those who have a little power as inspectors seem to think that their whole object in life is to persecute and pin-prick the workers in the Railway Department. The Commissioner should not stand for this, and I feel sure that the Secretary for Railways will not stand for it. When we find the heads of departments pin-pricking any servant of the Commissioner, it is up to the Commissioner or the Minister to take action and deal with those individuals. These matters may appear trivial to the Commissioner or the Minister, but they are matters of great importance to the men affected—the workers. I think that the railway worker, in common with other workers, should have a fair and just "go" from the Commissioner, and he will give the same in return. You will find a staff clerk appointed in the Commissioner's Office—possibly not in Brisbane, but in Townsville or Rockhampton. He will start off with a sort of vendetta against some individual in the service, and keep heckling him until that individual is transferred somewhere to some railway terminus in the backblocks where it does not suit him to go. All this merely because the official has a dislike to the man! That man should have some means of having his case rectified, and of bringing the matter before the Commissioner. I know there is an appeal court, but it is a difficult matter to get before it. The Commissioner's word is final, and he has to stand behind his officials. I have an idea of some of the officials of the Railway

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Department. When they come along to the Commissioner they are very oily—very gentlemanly when in front of him—but when speaking to the employees of the Commissioner, you would imagine that the lower-paid men are dogs or dirt beneath the officials' feet. That class of official does not make for harmony in any service, and should not be tolerated. There are men of that class in the Railway Department to-day, and if any cases are brought to my notice I shall have no hesitation in letting the Commissioner know of them. Their excuse is that a Labour man attacks them. They are Labour men until things are going a bit hard with them, and then they go along to their Nationalist friends, kick up a row, and try to get the Commissioner's support. These are the people who talk about the railways being removed from political influence. This type of man knows that that is absolute "bunkum."

Mr. FRY: Can you quote a specific case?

Mr. RIORDAN: I can quote lots of cases. I will quote one concerning a man who went to the war and who was promised that he would get his job back when he returned. When he returned I found that there was a vacancy in the Railway Audit Office, and it was arranged that this man was to go there. The hon. member for Murilla took another nominee to an official under the Secretary for Railways, and that official told the Minister that there was no vacancy in the Audit Office. Yet this man whom the hon. member for Murilla had taken to the Commissioner was sent up to the Audit Office, but he did not get in, for before he got up there I had my say in the matter. That is a case in point.

In the matter of emergency passes, men out in Western Queensland a long way from the Traffic Office have to wire to the General Manager in the case of sickness because somebody at Timbuctoo abused the privilege on one occasion, and Mr. Steer put his foot down. Mr. Steer spoke and that was the end of emergency passes. If Mr. Steer during his railway career had been transferred from Brisbane to Mount Cuthbert or to some other place, he would have had an opportunity of developing in the railway service, and it would have given him an opportunity of becoming sympathetic to the men who are blazing the way for the likes of Mr. Steer and other officials who are well cared for in Brisbane.

Mr. MAXWELL: He is a good man.

Mr. RIORDAN: He may be a good man, but I am not going to allow Mr. Steer to victimise the Western worker or any other worker. Under this Government Mr. Steer must keep his place. He could only find one case of abuse under the emergency pass system, and, if the station-master was responsible for the abuse that took place, then the station-master should have been dealt with and a reflection should not have been cast on the whole railway service because some individual failed in his duty at Mareeba.

In regard to the railway service generally, the regulations allow of a man, after six months' temporary service, being put on the permanent staff. We know there are quite a number of temporary men who are going on this year. That regulation is either right or wrong; and, if it is right, then the men should be put on the permanent staff

after six months' service so that they may get the privileges they are entitled to. These men must be wanted or they would not be kept on, and, if they are wanted, they should be put on the permanent staff.

Mr. PEASE: Some have been kept on the temporary staff for six years.

Mr. RIORDAN: I quite understand some of them being kept on the temporary staff for six years, because in 1914 Europe demanded a war and men left the Railway Department to go to the front. The Government therefore had to put on temporary men to hold the jobs of those men until they returned. Now that the war rumblings are over—or just beginning—I do not know which—and the men have returned from the last war—which was to end war—the temporary men should be placed on the permanent staff, because they must be necessary to the carrying out of the railway work.

There is another matter that I hope the Commissioner noticed during his tour through the North; that is the practice of the jingoes who are running the service for him. They appoint a man as acting guard, and they keep him "acting" for four or five years. Or they appoint a fireman as acting driver. These men, if they are doing the work and they are necessary, should be appointed to the grade in which they are working, after acting for a certain time. I can quite understand the Commissioner appointing a man as "acting" during the cattle season or during the sugar season; but I have known men to be "acting" guards or "acting" drivers for two or three years and never appointed to the grade. All these things are small, but they give rise to discontent in the Railway Department, and the Commissioner is not going to get the best results if he is going to allow a certain class of official to carry on in the same old method as he carried on under the Tory Government, of victimising the toiler who is not prepared to kiss his hand when he comes along. That day is past, and the sooner the officials of the Railway Department realise that they are under a Labour Government the better will it be for the railway service. Mr. Davidson's report is all very good on paper, but there are many little things that require rectifying, and which, if rectified, will go to make for a more contented service.

Another matter on which I wish to touch in regard to the Railway Department is the question of accommodation for maintenance men. Right through the West there is no proper accommodation provided. The accommodation out there would not come up to the requirements of the Workers' Accommodation Act. The Minister has promised that he will provide accommodation this year, and I have no occasion to doubt his word. Now that things are looking brighter, my prospects and the lengthsmen's prospects are also brighter. Between Hughenden and Richmond—I take this section because I know it, or I could take the Cook electorate, as I also know that district—a gang is stationed every 12 to 14 miles. There are three to four men in a gang. If the Commissioner were to establish a central camp of sixteen men and put a motor engine into the pump car, the Commissioner would be able to establish decent homes, where he could station his married lengthsmen, and he could erect schools for the education of their children, and also establish reading rooms, so that there would be some social life for the women and men

engaged in this class of work. The day of the pump car has passed. We see the inspector getting about on his motor tricycle, and we see the General Manager getting about on a rail motor. Very nice indeed. But the next thing we want to see is the lengthsmen going to his work on a motor pump car and not on the old pull pump car. By what stretch of imagination the Arbitration Court arrived at the idea of making a man pull to his work in his own time is beyond me, and it would be a very good thing if the Arbitration Court judge had to pull one of these pump cars 12 or 14 miles. It is up to us to rectify this matter of men pulling to work in their own time, and it is up to the Minister and the Commissioner to start building central camps as early as possible. These lengths could be worked from one centre, where there would be an opportunity for some social life for the workers. I know the Government have done their best for the men, and the men appreciate what the Government have done. We are going along very nicely in all departments, but the maintenance branch requires a good deal of attention to bring it in line with the other departments.

It is a good thing sometimes to get back to the delegation. My friend the hon. member for Toowong will remember the delegation going home. It put us back for two or three years, but we got over that difficulty, and we are now going along very nicely, and I do not think it will be long before grievances are rectified when brought forward by hon. members. When I have brought matters before the Secretary for Railways, he has immediately acted on my representations; I have had sympathetic consideration from him on every occasion.

There is another thing which astonishes me in regard to railway officials. I think that you, Mr. Cooper, must have had similar cases brought under your notice. A railway

employee is not supposed to conduct any business outside his railway work; his wife is not supposed to do so; and, in some instances, if it does not suit the railway officials, they will not allow any member of the family to conduct a business in the town in which the employee is stationed. One man one job is a very good principle if that job affords sufficient remuneration to keep a man and his family in a decent state of comfort; but I cannot see what claim the Commissioner or any of his officials have over the members of the family of a railway worker. When travelling with the hon. member for Balonne through his electorate, we were told at Thallon about a porter stationed there who was then down in Brisbane. He had been called upon to resign from the railway service because his daughter was conducting an agency. Another daughter worked outside the Railway Department at Thallon. Cobb and Company wrote in to the department objecting to this man starting an agency at Thallon, and asked that he be shifted. The agency was conducted by his daughters and not by him at all; but Mr. Steer, who dealt with the case, could not allow the man to remain there. The hon. member for Balonne made representations to the department, and was told that the man would be reappointed to the service and could go to the back of the Never Never country to some place near Quilpie. The man said that he was prepared to do that, but that it was pretty

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hard on him having to leave Thallon and his family. The department said, "You cannot come back to Thallon if you allow your daughter to continue the agency there." There may be some "pull" in that which Mr. Steer can see, but I fail to see any "pull" in it any more than in Mr. Steer accepting an extra £300 a year as chairman of the Tramway Trust while occupying the position of Secretary to the Commissioner for Railways. If it is good for the bottom dog, it is good for the official. I have no objection to Mr. Steer, who is capable as far as his job goes, but he is too narrow. He should do unto others as he would like others to do unto him. If he can take £300 a year from the Tramway Trust, surely he cannot object to "Bill Smith's" children conducting an agency against Cobb and Company in any town where the parents reside. That kind of thing causes discontent in the railway service, and it would be a good thing for the Commissioner to clip the wings of some of his officials. They fail in matters of importance, and they pin-prick where it is absolutely unnecessary. The Secretary for Railways cannot be expected to watch the administration closely, as he has his legislative duties to attend to. The Commissioner and his officials are paid to carry out the work. A lot of them have failed, and it would be a good thing for the Railway Department if we were to appoint an economy board from the porters and engine-drivers to go through the heads and see which of them could be done away with. (Laughter.) I am sure a good few could be wiped out. That is one place where economy could be effected. Mr. Steer, as Secretary to the Commissioner, ought to be in his place in the department, or the job should not be kept going to hold him there. He arranged the tour of the Prince of Wales when he was here, and he goes to picnics in connection with the tramways, and makes speeches in which he says, "We are not going to sanction any political influence." While Mr. Steer is away from the department, I suppose some girl getting about £2 17s. 6d. a week is conducting his job. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAXWELL: That is not correct.

Mr. RIORDAN: That is the position, as no one was appointed to take his place during his absence, and the hon. member for Toowong cannot deny it. Mr. Steer was entertaining the Prince of Wales for about six months.

Mr. MAXWELL: He did it well.

Mr. RIORDAN: I could have done it just as well, and it would have been a pleasure to me to have done it in my spare time. (Laughter.) If an official is going to create a wrangle with the man who improves the Commissioner's returns, then I am going to try to keep the official in his place. I claim that, while Mr. Steer may have thought he was doing good work when he swept Queensland with his Economy Board, the men who were put off are gradually going back into the service. Had metals gone up in price in the Cloncurry district during that time, every one of those men would have had to be put back into the service inside of twenty-four hours; and, if they had been engaged meantime in the mining industry, we would have had to get men from the other States to fill their places.

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With regard to the mining industry in the Cloncurry district, I want to let the House know how mining is progressing there. The hon. member for Kurilpa, who talks about "monkeying with dangerous men," knows that, if I get angry, he will suffer badly. (Loud laughter.) I do not know why there is all this levity. (Renewed laughter.) Mining has been languishing in the Cloncurry district for some time.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That has been thrashed threadbare.

Mr. RIORDAN: It may have been thrashed threadbare. For the last few days we have been lost in a haze of "piffle." If I were allowed to make a bet in this House, I would bet that not half a dozen men could tell you two lines of figures quoted by any member of the House. It has all been mere camouflage of the issue. They have got it into "Hansard," and it can be dug up in "Hansard."

Mr. KING: You are the only bright spot in the firmament.

Mr. RIORDAN: I am, because I represent a bright spot and bright people. (Laughter.) The mining industry is utterly down and out, but I think that we can make an improvement in that regard. Mr. Corbould said on one occasion that he could treat 5 per cent. copper ore profitably with copper at £80 a ton and pay £1 per day, if he could only get the right class of labour. He could have got the right class of labour if he had gone the right way about it. He was the "boss," and he could work the men round until he got what he wanted. Copper is not at £80, but there are good shows in the Cloncurry district tied up by the Mount Elliott and the Mount Cuthbert and the Hampden companies. These companies have been working for a long time for an amalgamation. But time is going on—the job must be a big one. It is only camouflage and sparring for time by the companies. The lodes at Cloncurry are rich enough to be treated; the poorer ore could be kept; prospectors and "gougers" are prepared to work lots of mines held by those companies. I am of the opinion that, if an amalgamation is not brought about at the expiration of the three months' exemption which the Government have given to them to fix it up, no further extension should be given, although the mines are partly in my electorate and partly in the electorate of the hon. member for Flinders. The Government should set about erecting a furnace from Chillagoe there, to be worked co-operatively by the "gougers." If they adopt that attitude, I am sure that another twenty-four hours will not be lost over the amalgamation. With coal produced at Bowen at 14s. per ton and coke at a much lower price than the £3 10s. which they were paying to bring it from Newcastle, there is a reasonable chance of the Cloncurry mines working in the near future, and I do not think the companies should be allowed to lock them up any longer. The Government are carrying on at Chillagoe with silver and lead. People cannot argue successfully that their venture there has been a failure, because the returns from the railways, and the fact that men have been kept in employment, have more than repaid the Government. And we still have the copper. A rise of £12 per ton in the price of copper would practically wipe off the loss. The silver and lead

still stick to Chillagoe, and will keep 1,000 men or more working. There is gold content in some of the Cloncurry ores, and the companies should work the mines, or leave them to men who will work them and treat the ore locally or send it to Chillagoe to be treated.

Goldmining has gone back a good deal of late years, but there is a prospect of recovery at the Woolgar, and I believe that it would be good business to send a man there at an early date. Mr. Jensen would have been a good man, but he has faded away out of the service—for what reason, I do not know. He was recognised as one of the best geologists in Australia. Why let men of that kind leave the service? He resigned to contest the Senate election, and he has not got back into the service. It pays to keep men of his type in the service, even though they do not come up to the standard of some of the jingoes who occupy nice, snug little offices in Brisbane, and do not want to go more than 5 miles off the railway for fear of getting lost. Mr. Jensen would dig into any of the mining fields anywhere in the State; but a certain little coterie in the Mines Department had no time for Jensen, because Jensen knew more about the job than some of them. Professional jealousy made it so warm for him that he walked out.

Now, I want to deal with the ambulances for a few moments. The reduction of 5s. in the Government subsidy was in some places necessary—in big centres elaborate buildings were being put up—but I hope that the Home Secretary is not going to lose sight of the fact that ambulances in country districts should not be allowed to languish for lack of funds, because if there is one service which is valuable to the people in the country districts, it is the ambulance.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: There is something in what the Minister told the deputation to-day—that those who can afford to pay a mileage rate should pay. I know some people who use it who are in firmly established positions and who come along afterwards and give their 5s. to the ambulance. Bill, the shearers' cook, is brought into town, does his three or four weeks in the hospital, pays the hospital, and goes out and gives a couple of guineas to the ambulance. He can afford his two guineas less than John Brown can afford to pay 1s. 6d. per mile for being brought to the hospital.

I have continued longer than I expected, but, in conclusion, I would like, along with the hon. member for Oxley, to wish the Premier every success in his mission to London. I am sorry that the hon. member for Oxley is not in his place, because a nasty rumour has been floating around to the effect that he endeavoured to get on to the delegation that went to London to "queer the pitch" for the Premier a few years ago. I would like to have his denial, because if anyone interjects about such a matter when he is speaking, he just waves his magic wand and you must be quiet and silence must reign. I also congratulate the Treasurer on his Budget Speech. The Government have done yeoman service for the State, despite the calamity howlers on the Opposition benches.

Mr. KELSO: They know how to spend money.

Mr. RIORDAN: We know how to spend money wisely and well. (Opposition laughter.) Our friends were here for fifty years, and went along in the same old slipshod way. We are doing work that is going to be of value to coming generations. Queensland, built up under a Labour Government, is going to be the Queen State of Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: There is another little matter on which I would like to congratulate the Premier, and that is upon being so generous to the Opposition in May last. All last session they were wanting an election. I think the Premier had even too much consideration for them. He gave them an election on 12th May—six months before the election was due. When I was going to my electorate I saw by the Press that the Opposition were not satisfied even then. They said that the Premier had sprung the elections on them, yet they had been asking him for the elections for six or twelve months before, when they said that they were going to wipe him off the face of the map. There are many faces missing from the Opposition benches to-night, and I venture to say that after the next election there will be many more missing.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I want to congratulate the hon. member for Burke on his entertaining speech. In his opening remarks he had a lot to say about the United party. He said that the hon. member for Oxley had gone to Rockhampton for a certain purpose, and, instead of bringing about the desired effect, he had brought about even more parties than had existed before that time. I would like to refer to a time when there was a division in the Labour party just prior to the last elections. We know that a faithful eight voted against the Government on that occasion, and the action of the rest of the party brought forth considerable comment from certain people in the Ipswich workshops. Mr. Rymer at a mass meeting at the Ipswich workshops on 4th July, 1922, said—

"Mr. Theodore had made promises in his speeches before the last election. Labour candidates had assured the railway men that there would be no retrenchment. Was that honoured? They were also told there would be no reduction in wages. Was that honoured? . . . Mr. Theodore said he would search the pockets of the wealthy. Had he done so? It seemed that he was more inclined to search the pockets of the workers . . . I am sorry to say the delegates have reason for believing, as far as the member for Bremer is concerned, he is in the bag with Ted Theodore and McCormack."

At a meeting of the Fire Brigade Section of the Australian Workers' Union on 30th March, 1922, Mr. Jones said—

"The time was undoubtedly ripe for the propaganda campaign now being conducted by the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labour party. It was everywhere apparent that it was the intention of the employing bosses to bring down wages. . . . It was most remarkable that whenever a time of difficulty arose, the average employer could see no way out but to cut into the wages-sheet."

Mr. Bond, secretary of the Public Service

*Mr. Logan.]*

Professional Officers' Association on 30th July, 1922, said—

"The principles of the Labour movement had been distinctly violated by the Government, which had distinctly departed from the promises it had given to the people before the last general elections."

At a meeting of the Australian Railwaymen's Union on 25th July, 1922, this resolution was passed—

"That this meeting asks through its representatives that they approach the Queensland Central Executive calling for a special convention to deal with the political Labour party for the betrayal of their platform pledges to the people."

This is an extract from a manifesto issued by the Trades and Labour Council—

"The Labour Government of this State has, in opposition to the publicly expressed wishes of the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labour party and other Labour bodies, including this Council, seen fit to join in the bosses' wage-slashing attack by reducing the wages of Government employees, in addition to increasing the working hours and wholesale retrenchment indulged in for some time."

There we have the inconsistencies of a Government which profess to be so kindly disposed towards the workers. We have similar instances of the same treatment being meted out to the farmers. They have always held out the hand of friendship, as they say, to help the farmers; but we find that, instead of helping the farmers, they have increased their taxes to such an extent that in many instances the farmers have been obliged to leave the land. The hon. member for Bremer last night was courageous enough to raise some matter in connection with the Railway Department. There are other anomalies in connection with that department which can be remedied to the advantage of the public. I wish to refer to the Sydney mail train. I live on the South-Western line, and I know that on many occasions that train goes through practically empty, whilst the "sweeper," which follows immediately afterwards, is always packed and sometimes you are unable to get a seat and have to stand. The railway authorities says that the Sydney mail is not allowed to pick up any passengers this side of Stanthorpe unless they are prepared to pay a fee of 10s. I think that charge is altogether too high. I think the Government should only charge a nominal fee of 2s. 6d. when there are vacant seats this side of Stanthorpe. If the officials there were to advise the officials at Toowoomba of the number of seats that are vacant, then the Toowoomba officials could relieve the congestion on the "sweeper." Very often commercial travellers and other people who get into the "sweeper" at Warwick and Toowoomba could ride on the Sydney mail train if there were seats available.

I have known of instances, because of this hard-and-fast rule operating, where people have not been allowed to board the mail train when it has been running late, with the result that, when they arrived by the "sweeper" at Ipswich, the officers there have been obliged, owing to the departure of the train that usually connected with it to take on passen-

gers for the intermediate stations to Brisbane, to put on a special train for that purpose. If there is any desire to economise in the Railway Department, the "sweeper" should be stopped in such cases at the intermediate stations, as required, to set down passengers in order to obviate the additional expense of a special train to set down perhaps four or five passengers between Ipswich and Brisbane.

While I am touching on railway matters, I want to refer to the necessity for the construction of additional branch lines in my electorate. In 1915 Parliament passed a measure authorising the construction of a branch line from Rosewood to Rosevale. The construction of this line would open up some of the finest country that we have in the Lockyer and Rosewood districts. The hon. member for Rosewood can substantiate my statement in this respect. There is a great amount of country in the Rosevale area capable of growing any kind of fodder.

At 9.23 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) resumed the chair.

Mr. LOGAN: I cannot state the area of the district off hand, but it is in the new portion of my electorate. As this line has been passed by Parliament, I hope the Government will not lose sight of the fact that it is urgently required, and that, as soon as circumstances permit, they will proceed with its construction. This line will not only open up the lands in the Rosevale district, but it will also give facilities to people at present engaged in dairying in the Hidden Vale and Mount Mort districts, which are capable of producing anything that soil can grow. It will encourage them to go in for heavier produce, which will mean additional freightage and a corresponding increase in revenue to the railway, as well as assist the farming industry. At the present time the Government are undertaking the construction of railways in the Callide, Dawson Valley, and Burnett districts. I do not wish to discourage those undertakings. I hope that their ventures and hopes will be fully realised, and that they will be able to get the settlement they anticipate; and that the settlers will find the leasehold system under which they will be settled congenial to them, and that it will make for the general prosperity of the primary producers and the State. But I also hope they will not lose sight of the fact that those people who are already settled on the land are in need of assistance. If the railway is constructed to Rosevale in the near future, I have every confidence that there will be a much larger area put under cultivation than there is at the present time. I think Rosevale is 20 miles from Rosewood and about 16 or 18 miles from Harrisville. That is altogether too far for any farmer to cart his produce, as he would be almost the whole of his time on the roads. To do so he would have to keep a man specially for the purpose of driving his team backwards and forwards, and the additional cost of feed for the horses, especially at the present time, is a big item. The railway presents no engineering difficulties and can be constructed very cheaply, as the whole country from Lanefield to Rosewood is practically level. I hope that the Government will be able to afford the relief I have asked to the people in the Rosevale district by constructing this line in the very near future.

[Mr. Logan.

In the Financial Statement, under the heading of "Trust Funds," the Treasurer says—

"During the present financial year I propose making some adjustment in the Trust Accounts with the object of using part of the funds in the healthy accounts to strengthen the position in the weaker ones."

This, of course, deals largely with State enterprises. My suggestion to the Treasurer is that, rather than take funds from the healthy accounts to strengthen the weaker ones, it would be wiser to eliminate some of the State enterprises that are not paying propositions.

Mr. KELSO: Hear, hear! It is only camouflage.

Mr. LOGAN: The matter of schools has been dealt with at considerable length. The hon. member for Fitzroy, when the hon. member for Albert was speaking last night, stated that every "cow cocky" wanted a school near his farm, so that when the "kids" had finished milking they could attend that school. That was a very senseless interjection, and one that could be expected from a person like the hon. member for Fitzroy. It is poor sympathy to show to the farmer, and, if he is only going to get that sympathy, then God help the country. He also said that the present Government had constructed four schools for every school constructed by the Liberal Government. Ever since the Labour Government have been in power I can say with accuracy that there has not been a new school erected in the Lockyer, except the High School at Gatton. There have been new schools certainly, but only provisional schools, which the people themselves provided. Therefore I fail to agree with that statement of the hon. member.

I wish to deal a little with the Financial Statement regarding the Loan and Trust Accounts and to criticise the action of the Government when they were in opposition. Dealing with the financial administration on 10th September, 1913, the present Secretary for Railways said—

"I am reserving the best part of my argument for a peroration. (Laughter.) Let us now take the percentage of taxation to total revenue. In New South Wales the percentage of taxation to total revenue is 11.95, in Western Australia it is 8.8, and in Queensland it is 13.15. Yet hon. members have the effrontery and audacity to assert that if a Labour Government was returned to power it would mean an increase in the burdens on the people of the State."

Let us compare that period with to-day. The taxation then was £954,457, with a total revenue of £7,202,658, and the percentage of taxation on the total revenue was 13.2 per cent. In 1921-22 the taxation had risen to £3,420,296, with a total revenue of £12,311,378 and a percentage of taxation to total revenue of 27.8 per cent. The hon. gentleman went on further—

"The taxation per head of the population is greater here than it is in the States of New South Wales and Western Australia, where Labour principles are dominant."

The leader of the Opposition adopts a sound and logical basis, and proves that, if the financial principles of the Opposition were

put into operation the burden of taxation on the general community would be enormously reduced. The taxation per head of population in 1915 was £1 8s. 2d. In 1922, under a Labour Administration, it had grown to £4 8s. 10d. The present Secretary for Railways, continuing, said—

"The first thing of importance I note in the Financial Statement is the great discrepancy between the estimate of revenue and the expenditure and the actual revenue and expenditure. There is a gross and inexcusable error in calculation. In his estimate of revenue and expenditure, involving a sum of £12,500,000, the Treasurer was out £222,000. In a private business such an error in calculation would not be tolerated for one moment. It would probably be met with dismissal, particularly if the official was one who had years' experience in the position, as the Treasurer has had in his position."

It is interesting to note that in 1921-1922 the discrepancy between estimated revenue and expenditure and actual revenue and expenditure was—

	£
Revenue ... ..	40,689
Expenditure ... ..	235,757

Total discrepancy ...£276,446

It shows that hon. gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches had no experience in finance in this particular regard, and did not anticipate that sooner or later they would be faced with the same difficulty as the Treasurer is faced with to-day.

In dealing with loans, the present Treasurer, as reported on page 1240 of "Hansard" of 1913, when he was in opposition, said—

"There seems to be a great desire on the part of the Premier and the Treasurer to blink our obligations in regard to the matter of loan expenditure, and the matter of a sinking fund, or some other effective means of paying off our public debt in due course. They seem to be satisfied to go on and allow the public debt to outlive entirely the public works that have been established by means of the loans which have been floated. They seem to have no desire to reduce the indebtedness of Queensland. They are well enough satisfied to shuffle out of their responsibility, and to allow future generations to take up the burden—a most ungenerous and uncharitable and withal unwise policy, and quite unnecessary."

The public debt on 30th June, 1915, was approximately £54,000,000, while on 30th June, 1922, it had increased to £86,000,000—an increase in seven years of £32,000,000, or an average, approximately, of £4,600,000 per annum. In 1917 the Government suspended the Sinking Fund payments, which goes to show that they certainly did not realise the position so far as finance was concerned.

Dealing with railway administration, I would like to quote what the hon. member for Brisbane said on 9th September, 1913, as reported on page 1235 of "Hansard" for that year—

"Dealing with railway matters, I am pleased to see that the railway revenue is increasing. I think the increase of

*Mr. Logan.]*

revenue is indicative of a wise policy of railway construction and of prosperity as far as Queensland is concerned."

Then, in dealing with the interest on the public debt, the present Treasurer, as reported on page 1238 of "Hansard" for 1913, said—

"There is no doubt that the interest burden in connection with the expenditure of loan money is borne to a large extent by the primary producers, and to an enormous extent by the workers of the State, who do not enjoy the benefit of the expenditure of loan money in the same proportion as speculators and investors. Farmers, primary producers, and wage-earners generally are not the people who benefit most by the expenditure of loan money. A great number of wage-earners do certainly get temporary employment from the expenditure of loan money, and to that extent they benefit, but it is only a small benefit they receive, because when there is a large expenditure of loan money the price of land goes up and rents increase, and the cost of living is increased in other ways, so that although the wage-earners do get a little regular employment, they do not benefit by it to any great extent.

"We might relieve the general taxpayer of part of the interest burden he now has to carry. Then I would, without any hesitation, advocate an increase in the income tax, a heavy dividend tax, and the imposition of a land tax. By these means the Treasurer could supplement his revenue very considerably, and he might be able to carry out the policy hinted at by the hon. member for Herbert—the policy of spending possibly not more than £1,000,000 of loan money on railways each year, and, if more railways are required, building them out of revenue."

The interest on public debt on 30th June, 1915, was £1,975,581, and on 30th June, 1922, it was £3,286,096, showing an increase of £1,310,515. This shows that the Government of the day have not been as economical in regard to expenditure as former Governments.

The railway expenditure in excess of earnings is shown by the following table:—

	Loan.	Deficits (necessitating Appropriation from other Revenue).
	£	£
1915-16 .. ..	1,879,660	508,244
1916-17 .. ..	1,218,705	737,388
1917-18 .. ..	1,067,694	1,028,088
1918-19 .. ..	1,316,635	1,421,323
1919-20 .. ..	2,860,755	1,229,579
1920-21 .. ..	1,688,751	1,739,475
Total six years	£10,032,200	£6,664,102

The total expenditure on railways in six years in excess of net earnings of the railways was £16,696,302, which is equal to £2,782,717 per annum. I do not propose to deal any further with this question, which has been fairly well thrashed out.

[Mr. Logan.

I wish now to refer to the sugar industry. The present Government have claimed that they have been responsible for the good position in which the sugar-growers find themselves to-day. I would like to give some figures to show that the Government were not altogether responsible for the agreement previously made with the Federal Government. The Sugar Works Act of 1922 placed the growers in the position that, although the Government may build mills, they will never become the property of the sugar-growers. Under the Sugar Works Act of 1911, the Liberal Government built mills which, in a certain period and after certain conditions are fulfilled, will become the property of the growers.

Now I should like to give a short account of the past history of the industry, showing Labour's attitude towards it. Towards the end of 1914, when prices had commenced to soar and sugar could have been profitably exported, the Commonwealth Labour Government placed an embargo against the export of sugar. The Queensland Labour party's then attitude is shown in the following extract from "Hansard" of 1914:—

"Mr. THEODORE: As a matter of fact, the Chief Secretary did say that sugar should go up in price on account of things that are happening elsewhere. Everyone in the community is a consumer of sugar. The Minister for Agriculture wants to see dear meat, and other members of the Cabinet favour high prices.

"The Treasurer: Who said they wanted dear meat?"

"Mr. THEODORE: The Minister for Agriculture said it some months ago.

"Mr. Hunter: And the Premier said to-night that sugar was too cheap.

"Mr. THEODORE: Yes, the Chief Secretary wanted a higher price for sugar. That would mean dearer living for the people in this State. I do not think we can draw any other inference from their remarks.

"Mr. E. B. Corser: £2 per ton would not mean much more for the consumer.

"Mr. THEODORE: Here is another expression in favour of dear living. It may be only ½d. per lb., but several pounds of sugar consumed each week would mean several pence increase."

The Federal Labour party's attitude towards the industry is indicated by these extracts—

"Mr. Tudor (Federal 'Hansard,' 1917): 'I do not blame any Treasurer for doing his best for the State, but I do object to the Commonwealth handing over £500,000 to the grower at the expense of the consumers of the Commonwealth. The £500,000 was obtained by charging the people of Australia more for their sugar than they ought to pay.'

The correspondence between Mr. Hughes and Mr. Ryan shows that it was the former who first proposed to raise the price of raw sugar from £18 to £21 per ton.

At a conference in April, 1918 ("Daily Standard" of 5th April, 1918), Mr. Theodore, referring to the request that the price of raw sugar should be advanced to £24 per ton, said—

"They should consider as a conference

whether they would not be opening their mouths too widely in asking for £24 per ton for raw sugar. It was worth their while to consider whether they would not be more likely to achieve their object by asking for reasonable consideration, whereas by asking for something that was unreasonable they might in the end get nothing."

"Mr. LENNON: I am in full accord with the opinion Mr. Theodore has expressed—that it would be unwise to ask for too much. The present is a war price, and cannot be sustained. If we could get £22, it would be entirely satisfactory."

There is a good deal more of it, but I do not intend to read it all. I shall content myself with a few extracts—

Mr. Scullin (Federal "Hansard" page 3729) said—

"When the Labour party advocates agreements and the control of the sugar industry, it does not advocate a continuation of existing conditions, but a return to the effective control which the Labour party exercised in 1915 and 1916."

Showing that the bogey of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company getting exorbitant profits is only so much humbug.

(Federal "Hansard," page 3741)—

"(i.) Re the 1920 agreement, the representatives of the Australian Workers' Union agreed with the Commonwealth Government on all the terms of this agreement. The Queensland Labour Government also agreed.

"(ii.) Under this agreement, the C.S.R. charged actual outlay, plus 22s. 6d. per ton, covering depreciation, interest, and cost of refining.

"(iii.) In 1921, this charge was reduced to 20s. per ton, exactly the same charge as that which received the approval of the Commonwealth Labour Government in the 1915 agreement."

(Federal "Hansard," page 3748)—

"In October, 1922, Mrs. Glencross, president of the Victorian Housewives' Association, convened a public meeting in the Assembly Hall, Melbourne, to protest against the continuation of the sugar agreement and the existing high price of sugar."

Mr. Charlton, as leader of the Labour party, wrote to Mrs. Glencross, stating that Messrs. Brennan (Batman) and Scullin (Yarra) would represent the Labour party at that meeting. The motion submitted and passed was as follows:—

"That this meeting of citizens protests against the continued high price of sugar, and declares its uncompromising opposition to the renewal of any agreement necessitating Government control, and supports the Housewives' Association in the campaign initiated by them in reference thereto. It further records its opinion that Government political control of trade and industry is pernicious and detrimental to producers, manufacturers, and consumers alike."

Messrs. Brennan and Scullin spoke strongly in favour of the motion, and Mr. Higgs, Nationalist, who attended as a Queensland

representative to protest against it, was roughly handled and forcibly ejected. That all goes to show that the Labour party in Queensland have not done such a great deal for the sugar industry. It has been shown clearly that before that party came into power there was a natural increase in the price of sugar, and, no matter what happened, the price had to go up, and now it has reached a satisfactory level.

I sincerely hope that when the Treasurer goes to England to renew the maturing loans he will meet with better success than he did in 1920. It is of the utmost importance that these loans should be renewed on the most favourable conditions. I hope the Treasurer will be able to make our case good enough to induce the people of Great Britain to lend their money at a satisfactory rate of interest.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): There have been a number of statements made during this debate which should be corrected before the debate closes. I heard the hon. member for Herbert make a statement to the effect that, by the establishment of State butcher shops, a sum of £3,000,000 had been saved to the people of Queensland. I have gone to a certain amount of trouble to ascertain how the hon. gentleman compiled those figures. In the report of the Commissioner for Trade for 1921-22, he says—

"A conservative estimate of the saving to the people of Queensland, as a result of the establishment of the State shops, can be set down at over £3,000,000 during the period 1916-1922."

I presume that is where the hon. gentleman obtained his information from. A sum of £3,000,000 seems an enormous amount of money, and is certainly very hard for anyone to believe. The total amount of meat sold by the State butcher shops during the period under review, as set out in the same report, was—beef 112,141,963 lb., and mutton 10,777,282 lb., making a grand total of 122,919,245 lb. of meat. To have effected that saving there must have been on every pound of meat sold a profit of 5.86d.—a fact which is too absurd to be considered.

[10 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your statement is absurd. If you go into the figures properly, you will find that the figures deal with the amount of meat sold by the State shops, and that this amount was one-third of the total consumption.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is not in a position to say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Of course I am.

Mr. SIZER: I was able to show in his own electorate that the private shops were selling meat cheaper than the State shops.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What nonsense! I say you are absolutely wrong.

Mr. SIZER: I say I am not wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Of course you are.

Mr. SIZER: Private stock owners competed with the State shops by killing their own cattle, and they were by this means more than able to compete with the State shops—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your statement is wrong.

*Mr. Sizer.]*

Mr. SIZER: And the State shops were run at a loss while the private shops were being run at a profit.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why cannot you speak the truth about it?

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is not much of an authority on the truth.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am an authority on the question you are talking about.

Mr. SIZER: I am taking the figures as supplied by the Commissioner for Trade. I was working on an analysis, and, according to that, there must have been a saving on those figures of 5.86d. on every pound of meat sold at the State butcher shops. That is absurd.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have told you that the amount of meat sold in the State butcher shops represented one-third of the total amount consumed in the State, and that the profit works out at 1½d. per pound.

Mr. SIZER: The Minister has no reason to claim that the Government have been responsible for anything else except what has happened in relation to their own shops. He has no reason to contend that the State shops were responsible for saving an amount of money to the people because the other shops were selling at the same prices.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Am I not entitled to take credit for reducing the price of meat 3d. per lb.?

Mr. SIZER: I heard the hon. member for Albert last night say that the Government take credit for everything. On those figures a direct saving of £3,000,000 to the people cannot be borne out except by a big stretch of imagination, or unless the analysis is on very doubtful grounds.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not on as doubtful a ground as you are.

Mr. SIZER: I know that I am on safe ground.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your figures are inaccurate.

Mr. SIZER: I want to deal with the question of our public debt in its relation not only to progress but in relation to the loan money we are spending at the present time. I also wish to show its great burden, the effect of the immense amount of our taxation, and the fact that we are making no provision for meeting future commitments although we are continuing to borrow. I am not going to oppose borrowing entirely, but we are making no provision to meet the situation by affording relief to the people paying that taxation. We undoubtedly have reached the maximum of our bearing capacity. I am not objecting to a great deal of the loan expenditure, as a great amount of developmental work must be continued if we wish to open the country for settlement, and we can only pursue that policy by the use of loan money. The basis of my argument is that the taxation of the number of people here to-day has reached its limit. To place further taxation upon their shoulders must have the effect of retarding the State. I consider that any loan policy we go into should be accompanied by a vigorous policy of immigration; that is the only basis on which we can progress. I shall show the effect both ways—in States where this policy has been adopted, and in

[Mr. Sizer.

States where it has not been adopted. I have a certain amount of pleasure in quoting from a speech made by the present Treasurer on 24th September, 1912, when speaking on the question of immigration. The hon. gentleman said—

“No doubt when the hon. gentleman is speaking, he will tell us exactly what has been spent on immigration. The Premier has at last found the correct policy regarding immigration—the necessity of making conditions attractive and satisfactory enough for workers in this State, so as to attract immigrants without the necessity of paying their passage. He admits that large numbers of people from the old country are being attracted to Queensland, no doubt because of the prosperity that Queensland is enjoying in many of her industries.”

The Treasurer was then on perfectly sound ground. At that time Queensland's public debt was nothing to what it is to-day. Similarly, unemployment and taxation were nothing then to what they are to-day, while at that time a large number of immigrants were coming in.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you know that we were increasing our population in a way that compares favourably with New South Wales during the years 1921 and 1922?

Mr. SIZER: I am prepared to contest that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You need not do that, because the figures are prepared by the Commonwealth Statistician.

Mr. SIZER: During the Treasurer's administrative period he has not followed out that policy in its entirety. Undoubtedly he has done so, so far as developmental work with loan money is concerned, but the trouble is that we have been spending loan money, and loan money, and yet more loan money, on works which are not giving a reasonable and adequate return on the capital outlay, and we have now accumulated an enormous debt, which puts me in mind of a business that has spent all its capital in bare walls and has no money to trade with, and then asks for further money for buildings only. It is impossible to continue. In 1911-1912 the interest on the public debt of Queensland amounted to £1,724,304. The actual charge on revenue on account of loan expenditure that year was £349,618, which represented 5.84 per cent. of the revenue of £5,989,347. Queensland at that time was undoubtedly prosperous. In 1914-15, when the present Government came into power, the per capita debt of the three eastern States was—

	£	s.	d.
Victoria	51	4	9
New South Wales	58	7	2
Queensland	82	9	2

The TREASURER: What about Western Australia?

Mr. SIZER: In 1922 it increased in Victoria to £63 7s. 2d., or an increase of £12 2s. 5d.; in New South Wales to £78 4s. 1d., or an increase of £9 16s. 11d.; and in Queensland to £104 8s. 1d., or an increase of £21 18s. 11d.

At 10.10 p.m.,

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

Mr. SIZER: That shows that, so far as this State is concerned, during that period we had an increase in our public debt to a far greater extent than the other States I have mentioned. During that period the number of immigrants arriving in Queensland was also less than the number arriving in the other States. The number of immigrants who arrived in Queensland in the year 1919 was 6,007; in New South Wales, 96,331; and in Victoria, 84,751. When I made use of some of these figures on the Address in Reply the Secretary for Public Works contended that they were wrong. I have not yet heard of the hon. gentleman having refuted them, and I am going to quote some of the same figures again. In 1920 the number of immigrants arriving in Queensland totalled 4,151; in New South Wales, 69,135; in Victoria, 19,302. In 1921 the number of immigrants arriving in Queensland was 4,269; in New South Wales, 54,578; in Victoria, 15,883. The average for the three years was—

Queensland	...	...	4,809
New South Wales	...	...	73,348
Victoria	...	...	39,979

The figures I have quoted show that during the period mentioned Queensland had a larger increase in its public debt than either of the other States referred to, and at the same time the increase in population in Queensland was less than in those other States.

The TREASURER: You only show the number of immigrants, not the increase in population.

Mr. SIZER: The increase in population other than by immigration would only be from natural sources.

The TREASURER: And from the other States—that is a big factor.

Mr. SIZER: And from the other States, too.

The TREASURER: The ratio of increased population is greater in Queensland than in any other State.

Mr. SIZER: I am not prepared to argue that. I have never argued that the railways could be made to pay. I do not think any Government in the world could make them pay, because we have in Queensland over 5,000 miles of railway and only about 800,000 of a population. We have more railways than the whole of Japan, which has a population of 60,000,000 people. We have enough railways already constructed to supply the needs of 50,000,000 or 60,000,000 people. My objection is that the Government have done what past Governments have done, and are not providing industries and a population to make those railways pay so that we shall get a reasonable return for our loan expenditure. In the face of that, to increase our public debt and make no provision for immigration is a policy which is unsound and will bring about a state which is not desirable.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is ignoring the fact that we are making provision for an increased population.

Mr. SIZER: I honestly believe the Treasurer thinks he is, but he is not making any serious attempt to bring immigrants here.

The TREASURER: We are making preparations for an increased population.

Mr. SIZER: We may get into an argument about what is an increased population.

The TREASURER: We are opening the Burnett lands, the Palmerston lands, and the Maranoa wheat lands. All this means preparation for an increased population.

At 10.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane) resumed the chair.

Mr. SIZER: The Treasurer may say he is doing that, but I want to test the soundness of his argument by saying that to develop these lands means the expenditure of more public money, and it will be many years before we get a return for the capital invested. We already have a large amount of money invested in our railways, and there is any amount of land adjoining these railways which is not being used to its fullest capacity. My argument is that the sounder policy, in view of the position of Queensland with regard to the public debt, would be to consolidate our position, rather than to go in for development in new directions. It puts me in mind of an army which has stormed a position and lost a large number of men in doing so. The advantage gained from securing that position has been worth the sacrifice; but if the position is not consolidated when taken, the effort is only a waste of life and money. That, to my mind, is the position of the State. We have already spent that money, and have not consolidated our position. We are going to storm another position without having made good the ground we have taken. I would not object to the expenditure of loan money to make our existing railways productive. The section of the North Coast line to Gympie pays, and if we could make all our railways self-supporting, the expenditure of the money in doing so would be reproductive in the true sense of the word.

Mr. PEASE: Do you advocate State undertakings?

Mr. SIZER: While the hon. member was speaking recently, he read a pamphlet from which it would appear that the members of this party were in favour of State concerns. The hon. member knows that we do not favour State enterprises. I want to show that in the State where there has been the most immigration, the percentage of revenue required to pay the interest on the national debt has become less than in the State where there has been the least immigration. I have here the figures showing the percentage of revenue required to pay interest on the public debt in the States of Queensland and Victoria from 1914-1915 to 1922-1923. I take Victoria for comparison with Queensland, because that is the State which will suit the purposes of my argument when I come to industrial development later on. These are the figures—

	Victoria.	Queensland.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
1914-15	10.5	3.72
1915-16	5.3	10.75
1916-17	5.9	14.44
1917-18	3.3	17.75
1918-19	3.7	20.48
1919-20	4.3	14.64
1920-21	4.9	16.81
1921-22	3.6	18.18

Victoria adopted a policy of immigration, and consolidated the position of their indus-

*Mr. Sizer.]*



tries with the money which it had borrowed. The result was that by the year 1921-1922 it had increased its industrial concerns and reduced its percentage of revenue required to pay the interest on its public debt to 3.6 per cent. In Queensland the position was reversed. This State started off with a percentage of 3.72 per cent. at the time when the Treasurer made his speech about immigration, but it neglected to do those things which Victoria has done, and it has now arrived at the position that we require 18.18 per cent. of our revenue to meet the interest on our public debt.

The TREASURER: What is the conclusion?

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman cannot deny the conclusion if he admits that my figures are correct. It is obvious that the position in the two States is exactly reversed.

The TREASURER: What does that prove? In Western Australia, where they have an immigration policy, they are worse off than we are.

Mr. SIZER: I have not had time to get those figures. The Treasurer may be correct, but in Western Australia they have been suffering for many years from the financial débâcle caused by a Labour Government. I have some other figures to show that the policy adopted in Victoria of spending public money productively has brought about an expansion of industry. Nobody can deny that it is useless to be prosperous in primary industries unless we also pay attention to secondary industries. It is futile for us to be a primary-producing State alone and let the other States do all our manufacturing for us and make us the dumping ground for their products.

Mr. PEASE: There is no reason why private enterprise should not do that.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member knows quite well that, if a small company starts business in Queensland with a capital of £5,000 and makes a profit of £5,000, it immediately pays income tax on the maximum rate.

Mr. PEASE: £60!

Mr. SIZER: We have to get into a similar position to the other States. Victoria has been catering for secondary industries, and she is winning very great success in that line; but it is becoming more and more difficult to establish manufacturing concerns here, as I know to my sorrow. Victoria's policy of reducing her public debt and encouraging immigration and industry has had a remarkable effect on her manufacturing concerns, the growth of which I contend is the direct reflex of that policy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: She has a smaller area and shorter railway distances, but higher fares and freights.

Mr. SIZER: I admit that the long distances in Queensland have made it difficult for our railways, but it does not alter the fact that in an industrial sense coal is cheaper in Brisbane than in Melbourne up to the present. But now Victoria is developing the Morwell coal seams to give cheaper power to her industries, and spending money for that purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Queensland is doing the same. We are producing the best coal in Australia.

[Mr. Sizer.

Mr. SIZER: Let me quote the number of factories in operation in the different States in 1914 and 1920—

State.	1914.	1920.	In-crease.	De-crease.
New South Wales	5,269	5,837	568	..
Victoria ..	5,650	6,532	882	..
Queensland	1,796	1,795	..	1
South Aus-tralia	1,323	1,438	115	..
Western Aus-tralia	787	895	108	..
Tasmania ..	603	616	13	..

That shows that during that time there must have been a greater degree of industrial prosperity in the other States, and that it brought about that large increase in the number of factories, whereas in Queensland there was a decrease of one in the number of factories.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Give now the percentage of profit in the different States.

Mr. SIZER: The percentage of profit would be against the argument of the hon. gentleman. If Queensland showed a greater profit—I do not say that Queensland does—for the lesser number of factories than the other States, it would mean that this State was going very close to the establishment of combines, whereas perhaps in Victoria there would be a number of factories earning a reasonable amount of profit.

Let me now give the number of employees in the factories in the different States—

State.	1911.	1914.	In-crease.	De-crease.
New South Wales	116,811	145,011	28,400	..
Victoria ..	118,399	140,743	22,344	..
Queensland	43,282	43,196	..	86
South Aus-tralia	26,874	30,430	3,556	..
Western Aus-tralia	17,640	17,034	..	606
Tasmania ..	8,922	10,225	1,303	..

That shows that during that period Queensland did not progress in the same proportion as the other States. To make my argument quite conclusive, let me quote these figures relating to Queensland—

—	1911.	1914.	Increase (3 years).
Factories ..	1,657	1,796	139
Employees ..	37,156	43,282	6,126

Those figures show conclusively that during the time that this State was progressing under an immigration policy, the industrial prosperity was greater, and there was a greater increase in the number of [10.30 p.m.] factories and the number of employees engaged in the factories. The figures, despite what hon. members opposite say, prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the progress following the adoption of that policy in 1911 was remarkable, but during the rest of the period Queensland stagnated because we dropped that policy.

whereas in States where that policy was continued progress resulted.

Mr. PEASE: You are a very little Queenslander. I can give you a list of Queensland factories selling their products in the South.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member is making a very big mistake in designating me a little Queenslander. I do not think it is unpatriotic to a State, if one holds the view that the policy that is being administered in that State is bringing about a different result to what was intended, to state the fact. If a member can prove conclusively that it is so, he is neglecting his duty as a Queenslander if he neglects to do so. The hon. member for South Brisbane last night expressed satisfaction that there would be no more loans free of taxation. I agree with him. The hon. member might have called me a little Queenslander in 1919 when I advocated that. I believe I moved an amendment to the effect that that principle should cease.

The TREASURER: There was no amendment moved.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman, no doubt, remembers me raising the question.

The TREASURER: The hon. member raised it after three members on this side of the House raised it.

Mr. SIZER: It was not raised by any member on the Government side until the hon. member for Brisbane raised it last night.

Mr. HARTLEY: Nonsense! You have been asleep.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member does his fair share of sleeping. I give credit to the Government now for removing the bad principle that has been associated with recent loans.

The TREASURER: The only State Government opposing it is the Nationalist Government of New South Wales.

Mr. SIZER: I do not care. It was said to me by interjection when I advocated it before, "Your own Commonwealth Government have done it." I said that they were equally wrong in doing it. It is a wrong policy. It does not matter what Government pursue that policy, it does not remove the guilt of this Government. The Government have not paid the attention to the loan question that they should, and they have been spending loan money without consolidating our position. The natural corollary is that an additional burden must fall on the people. The Government are proposing a loan expenditure of £5,000,000. Undoubtedly, they have good reasons for doing so. I am sure that the Treasurer recognises the importance of this, as, with the conversions, it will mean an increase in our interest bill of something approaching £600,000, which will have to be met out of revenue. That will fall on the shoulders of the people who are already within the boundaries of Queensland.

The TREASURER: Did you say £600,000 this year?

Mr. SIZER: No, when the negotiations are completed, it will amount to that, approximately. I presume the Treasurer will make arrangements at an increased interest

rate of about 1½ per cent. We have £25,000,000 of loan money falling due, and we propose to spend another £5,000,000, and 1 per cent. on the whole amount will be about £600,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: A little over £250,000 on the conversion.

Mr. SIZER: The additional burden, as a result of the conversion, will be about £250,000 or £260,000, and, assuming that the £5,000,000 will be floated at 5¼ per cent., our total additional burden when the transactions are completed, will be in the vicinity of £600,000. That has to go on to the shoulders of the people who are already here. My argument is that that burden is too great for that small number of people—not too great for Queensland, but for the small number of people here. The corollary is that you must increase your population and have a vast system of immigration to place that additional burden on more shoulders.

Mr. HARTLEY: That's a pretty good argument for prospective immigrants—to bring them here to tax them.

Mr. SIZER: The immigrants coming here from the old country, by and large, have made good, and have been assets to the country. In conjunction with our loan expenditure, we must develop our immigration policy. Hon. members opposite will raise the old cry that, if we increase the number of immigrants, we shall increase unemployment. That is an unsound argument, and has not been borne out by facts. During the periods mentioned in the earlier part of my speech, the percentage of unemployment, when immigration was greatest, has been less. The percentage in 1918-19 was—

	Per cent.
Queensland ... ..	8.5
New South Wales ... ..	5
Victoria ... ..	4.3

For 1920—and there was then a great immigration policy going on in the other States—the figures read—

	Per cent.
Queensland ... ..	16.3
New South Wales ... ..	6.9
Victoria ... ..	7.3

For 1921—

	Per cent.
Queensland ... ..	11.3
New South Wales ... ..	11.9
Victoria ... ..	5.9

And for the three years an average of—

	Per cent.
Queensland ... ..	12.03
New South Wales ... ..	7.9
Victoria ... ..	5.8

Which proves that the States which have had a vigorous policy of immigration have brought about a similar percentage of increase of revenue to pay interest on public debts. They have increased their industrial prosperity by an additional number of factories and by an increased number of workers. In addition, they have had a lower percentage of unemployment.

I cannot see why this State cannot go on along those lines. I am convinced that the

*Mr. Sizer.]*

Treasurer agrees with me that it is impossible for us to put this tremendous debt on the shoulders of the small number of people at present in the State. We must have more people here to produce more wealth; more industries to enable us to pay taxation. Unless we do this—if we are simply going to sit in our own dugouts—we shall always be as we are to-day. We have the resources, but we are not doing our duty as legislators to develop those resources along proper lines.

A loan policy is essential, because no Government can have a policy of progress unless they have a loan policy. The Government must spend loan money, but for goodness' sake let us spend it on reasonable proposals that are likely to give us some return. Instead of spending large sums of money on new railways, let us spend more money in developing our present railways to a profitable point. I quite agree that it is necessary to complete the North Coast Railway, but what will be the position if we spend the most of the £5,000,000 it is intended to borrow on new railways? It is unsound to expend any of that money, which will probably cost us 5 per cent., on new railways that will only return 1 per cent. It will mean a dead loss of 4 per cent. We want to make some provision for developing lands along the existing railways so that they will get more freight and more passengers. Give these railways a chance to pay. That is one policy that must be pursued. Secondly, we must not continue the vendetta against private enterprise. We should give encouragement to private enterprise. The Government would be wise if they allowed five years' exemption from income taxation to all new companies established in Queensland to develop our resources. I moved in that direction on one occasion, and I am still convinced that it would be a sound proposal.

We have a Primary Producers' Organisation Act, and we want to encourage primary producers to control their own industry. We also want to encourage people to put their capital into secondary industries. To do that would be one of the soundest policies that the Government could adopt. These things, in conjunction with a vigorous immigration policy, would bring about a much better state of affairs in Queensland, while to continue a policy of piling more and more burdens on the already scant population is unsound in every shape and form, and the Government will be wise if they drop it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

##### DEATH OF SIR POPE COOPER.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 6.30 p.m. to-morrow.”

That will give hon. members an opportunity of attending the funeral of the late Chief Justice, Sir Pope Cooper.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

*Mr. Sizer.*