

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 29 JULY 1924

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QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Legislative Assembly.

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN
OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1924.

TUESDAY, 29 JULY, 1924.

Pursuant to the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor, dated 26th June, 1924, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the despatch of business, the Speaker (Hon. W. Bertram) took the chair at 12 noon.

The Clerk of the Parliament read the proclamation.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

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

The members of the Assembly being seated,

His Excellency read the Opening Speech, as follows:—

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. —I am glad to take advantage of meeting again the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled, to express through them to their constituents my gratitude for the simple kindness I have everywhere received in recent travels through the country and in visits to the towns on those occasions when country folk come together in happy concourse and for friendly competition in improving the produce of the land. I would especially refer to the loyalty and heartiness of my reception when journeying along the north-west boundary of the State. While the conditions of life there are not easy, they are met with cheerfulness and energy. I was glad to hear, in the course of my travels, various expressions of gratitude for the good work done for women by the Government in the provision of maternity hospitals in the far-away parts. The improvement in the ordinary house in those parts, and in fact throughout the State where tropical conditions prevail, seems to be what is now most necessary to secure the degree of comfort to which those developing the land should

be assisted. The best design for the tropical house deserves and will no doubt receive close scientific inquiry.

"While referring to the country, I would add that the attempt now proceeding to organise women in a non-political association to consider and, where they can do so, take action in matters affecting their own interests and those of their children, is likely to be helpful to the country and is viewed with favour by my advisers.

"With material assistance from the Government of this State, from the Commonwealth Government in the Navy Department, from the Universities of Queensland and of Sydney, and from various individuals interested in science, arrangements have been made for the scientific investigation of Australia's most unique natural feature—the Great Barrier Reef. Funds are now available for carrying on this investigation in a limited though effective manner for the next five years, and the many men of science in Australia and elsewhere who are interested in this investigation hope that it will lead eventually to the establishment of a marine biological and oceanographical station in Queensland for the investigation of the scientific problems and the economic resources of the South-West Pacific, similar to those that are the pride of various countries in Europe and States of America as regards other seas of the world.

"While the financial conditions of the State will not allow the erection of the new University buildings in Victoria Park to be proceeded with in the present financial year, my advisers fully recognise the need for removal from the present cramped building if the University is to fulfil in the future its triple purpose of being the portal of admission to all the learned professions, of securing the highest standard for the secondary and elementary education of the State, and of spreading that joy in the beautiful things of Nature and Art that constitutes so great an element of happiness

in all civilised nations. The erection of the new buildings at Victoria Park will be kept steadily in mind until circumstances admit of the project being put in hand and rapidly carried through.

"During the recess my advisers were successful in arranging the conversion, upon satisfactory terms, of the loan which matured on 1st July of this year. Arrangements also have been made for the underwriting of loans in London to meet next year's maturities, and to provide new money required in the State to carry on the public works programme.

"My advisers have agreed to the proposals of the Australian Loan Council, whereunder the Commonwealth Government will borrow in Australia a local loan, to be distributed among the States upon an approved basis and used by them towards financing their respective loan undertakings. When this agreement is completed a copy of it will be laid on the table of the House.

"In October last an agreement was entered into with the Commonwealth Government, under which Commonwealth income tax is assessed and collected in Queensland by the State on behalf of the Commonwealth. This arrangement is working satisfactorily and has saved the taxpayers much inconvenience and effected considerable economy.

"The administration of the taxation agreement has demonstrated the necessity of amending in certain particulars and consolidating our income tax laws. A Bill with this object will be introduced during the session.

"My advisers have endeavoured to keep as much work within the State as possible, and with this end in view have granted substantial preference to Queensland firms when placing orders for material or plant. In conformity with this policy, two contracts have been entered into with Messrs. Walkers Limited, of Maryborough, for the construction of a sugar-mill at the Tully River, and of a bucket hopper dredger, for the sums of £390,000 and £95,000, respectively. Contracts amounting to £244,000, for railway rolling-stock, also have been let to Queensland engineering firms.

"During the year production in the sugar industry was greater in the northern area than ever previously recorded, though south of Townsville the crushing was below the estimate. The tribunal appointed under the arrangement with the Commonwealth Government has fixed the price of raw sugar for the current season at £27 per ton, but the Sugar Pool Board will not be able to pay the full price of £27 per ton to the millers, owing to the loss which is anticipated in finding an export market for the surplus production. As the present arrangement between the Federal and State Governments in respect of the marketing of the sugar crop will expire in 1925, some anxiety exists as to the policy of the Commonwealth Government for the future. My advisers believe the present arrangement for the protection of the sugar industry is the best that could be devised. The embargo against the importation of sugar, except in the case of a shortage in the Australian production, and the regulation of the prices of cane, raw sugar, and refined sugar, ensure equitable treatment for all concerned, and

is a much more satisfactory form of protection than any that could be afforded by the enactment of a fixed tariff.

"If the Commonwealth Government consent to a continuation of the existing arrangement, legislation will be introduced in the Queensland Parliament for the purpose of defining more clearly the authority and obligations of the Sugar Pool Board.

"The dairying industry, despite adverse seasons, is making steady progress in this State, which bids fair to become the premier dairying State of the Commonwealth. The area under artificial grasses has increased from 205,000 acres to 475,000 acres during the last ten years, an increase of 130 per cent.

"Co-operative control by the farmers of manufacture in the dairying industry has made more rapid strides in Queensland than in any other State. Although co-operative control of marketing has been discussed for many years, it is only now that the matter is being taken up seriously and earnestly by those concerned.

"The Council of Agriculture, after having been equipped with all the legislative powers the State can provide, have recognised that the problem cannot be solved without the co-operation of the Commonwealth and the other butter-producing States. The Council, after making a comprehensive investigation into the question of production and marketing, convened an Interstate Dairying Conference, and placed before that conference a scheme for interstate and oversea marketing, which was endorsed by the interstate delegates. This scheme is now the subject of negotiations with the Federal Government.

"The year has seen a marked advance in the organisation of the fruitgrowers towards mutual help and protection. A large proportion of the fruitgrowers accepted the scheme put forward by the Council of Agriculture for the compulsory co-operative marketing of fruit. A special Act of control was passed last session to give effect to this policy, and although, like all rapid changes, the scheme was criticised for a time through the Press, the Fruit Marketing Committee, elected by the growers themselves, are succeeding in the work they were intended to do under the Act, and the more regulated marketing of fruit and the bringing of the producer and the consumer more closely together will result in a benefit to the community as a whole.

"The cotton industry continues to advance despite the dry weather and numerous insect pests, although, owing to these causes, the yield per acre in many districts was not as good as might be wished. The harvesting season for seed cotton has been extended to meet the conditions of the season. The total yield is expected to reach 15,000,000 lb. of seed cotton. The outbreak of the pink boll-worm, which has been so destructive to cotton crops in other parts of the world, emphasises the wisdom of passing special legislation to ensure the whole of the cotton stalks and debris being destroyed every year and to provide a close season. Special precautions have been taken in the field and also to ensure the effective treatment of seed prior to its being planted. The necessary apparatus has been installed for this purpose. The Commonwealth Government have

imposed most rigid conditions regarding the importation of cotton seed.

"The Durango variety of cotton, which produces a good crop and has proved to be of high value for spinning purposes, has been planted wherever possible, and for the 1924 planting it is estimated that sufficient seed will be available to plant 10,000 acres, and the following year there will be sufficient seed to meet all demands.

"The conditions under which the Government are prepared to relax the embargo on the growing of ratoon cotton having been agreed to by the growers, through their delegates at a conference under the auspices of the Council of Agriculture, a Bill will be introduced to amend the Cotton Industry Act in the direction indicated.

"The several units in the scheme of agricultural organisation—namely, Local Producers' Associations, District Councils, and the Council of Agriculture—have settled down to their respective functions under the Act, and are doing good work. There are 756 Local Producers' Associations, with a membership of 23,000.

"In the Atherton district granaries are being erected at a cost of approximately £70,000, the money being advanced by the Government to the Northern Queensland Maize Pool Board. These granaries are capable of holding about 400,000 bushels of maize, and the scheme provides for the latest drying and cleaning equipment. The completion of these granaries, which is expected in a few weeks' time, will enable the farmers to clean, dry, and store their crop, and thus regulate the supply and stabilise the price. It is believed, as a result of this scheme, that the area under maize will be considerably increased.

"The first section of 1,400 portions in the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley areas was made available for selection at the end of November last year. Already 650 portions have been allotted to new settlers, and a good proportion of these are now in occupation and are making improvements and preparing the land for cotton-growing, dairying, and general farming. The second section of the scheme, comprising about 1,400 portions, has been designed for selection, and will probably be made available at the end of the year.

"In the Clermont and Capella districts sixty-one portions, ranging in area from 1,000 to 2,560 acres each, will be opened for perpetual lease selection towards the end of the year. The country is suitable for cotton-growing combined with dairying and sheep-raising. During the year an area of about 1,000,000 acres from pastoral holdings has been resumed for closer settlement.

"The demand for rabbit and dog netting continues to increase, and my advisers are encouraging the inclosure of holdings in groups wherever possible.

"The classification, valuation, and survey of the Crown timber lands have been pushed on during the year. By the addition of 76,000 acres, the Crown Forest area was increased to 4,800,000 acres. The past alienations of the forest resources are having a bad cumulative effect upon the life of the important timber industry of the State. It has been necessary to adopt careful measures in order to assure to the sawmills a sufficient supply of pine logs. The Forest Service has

increased its pine-log output from 35,000,000 super. feet in 1918 to 44,000,000 super. feet in 1923 in its endeavour to cope with the situation. Careful technological researches have been made into the economic value of the four or five hundred distinct tree species which are found in the forests of the State.

"The operations of the Main Roads Board were continued during the year, and approximately 110 miles of road, including bridges, have been completed and thrown open, and about 150 miles are now under construction.

"My advisers have taken definite action to cope with the prickly-pear problem. A commission of three members has been appointed, which will exercise all the functions of the Land Court throughout the areas infested with prickly-pear, and also all administrative functions in respect of such lands. Poisons for the eradication of pear are being supplied to settlers at cheap rates, while the State Government is co-operating with the Commonwealth Government in carrying out biological experiments and research. It is anticipated that shortly a system of 'buffer areas' will be proclaimed, and that by the activities of the commission the devastating spread of pear in this State will be stopped.

"Satisfactory progress has been made on the Dawson Valley Irrigation Scheme, where the work is proceeding according to schedule. During my recent visit of inspection to the area, the pumping plant and electric power house were opened by me, and the first water sent through the distributory channels on part of the preliminary 5,000 acres of irrigated lands. It is confidently anticipated by the Commissioner of Irrigation that the 5,000 acres will all be thrown open for occupation by December next. The great work of damming the Dawson River which is to follow on this preliminary irrigation project is destined to play a prominent part in the future land settlement of the State, and is in every sense a truly national undertaking. Fodder grown on the irrigated area could be transported throughout the State in periods of drought, avoiding stock losses and stabilising rural industries. Thus the scheme, apart from settling thousands of families on farms, provides an insurance against losses during the droughts of the future.

"Although the mining industry is still depressed, the marked improvement in the world's prices for silver, lead, and tin has had a stimulating effect, and the future may be faced with high expectation. Prospecting is being vigorously conducted, and the important discoveries of silver-lead deposits in the neighbourhood of Cloncurry and Chillagoe hold out promise of rich reward.

"The North Coast Railway, between Brisbane and Townsville, was opened for traffic in December last, and construction is proceeding with the remaining links between Townsville and Cairns. The survey of the Queensland portion of the 4 feet 8½ inches gauge line, between South Brisbane and Grafton, has been completed. The draft agreement with the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments for the construction of the line has now been received. A Bill to ratify the agreement will be one of the early measures to which you will be asked to give attention.

"The Greater Brisbane Bill will be submitted for your consideration. This measure is designed to secure a single control in the

government of the affairs of the people of Brisbane. As this measure is to be the foundation of the government and development of a city destined to rank as one of the great cities of the world, my advisers desired that the people and authorities concerned should have the fullest opportunity to become aware of the great change which is to be effected.

“Through each of the main avenues of national education—primary, secondary, technical, and university—the normal expansion of public service has been maintained. By reason of the increasing diversity of its activities, the administration of the Department of Public Instruction becomes yearly more complex. Special attention is being devoted to the closer co-ordination of schooling with occupational life, to the provision of various means by which education may be extended beyond the elementary stages, to the more equitable distribution of facilities in country districts, and to the conveyance of instruction to even the most isolated families.

“The vocational values of education have received more definite consideration. The Gatton Agricultural College has been reorganised and equipped with modern apparatus, and with it has been associated an agricultural high school, the first of the kind in Queensland. Domestic science classes, trade classes, apprentice classes, and commercial classes provide training for a steadily increasing number of students diversely interested.

“The apprenticeship question is one of national importance, and to-day is receiving the serious consideration of every section of the community. In recent times apprenticeship, where it has not entirely fallen into disuse, has been generally lacking in method, altogether uncertain in its results, and in particular cases has amounted to little more than an imposition upon boys and their parents. Indentures, for all their formality, have, to a substantial extent, come to be regarded as guaranteeing nothing, because of their omission to state the exact processes in which the apprentice is to be instructed, and the course of the education or training that he is to receive.

“The future of the apprentice is now realised to be the concern of the State. The State then, being interested, its rights and obligations in relation to apprentices must be declared. In September last my advisers gazetted certain regulations under the Industrial Arbitration Acts. Under careful administration these have proved effective, and it is admitted by both employers and employees that they form a sound foundation upon which to build. In order to place the scheme upon a more definite basis, my advisers propose to introduce a Bill this session to give effect to this desirable end.

“It is gratifying to know that the workers' homes legislation recently placed on the Statute-book, to enable persons of limited means to acquire their own homes on a very liberal rent-purchase system, is being freely availed of by applicants who are unable to provide the larger deposit required for a worker's dwelling loan.

“Notwithstanding the comparatively high cost of building, my advisers provided funds for the completion of about 1,000 dwelling-houses last year. The facilities for acquiring workers' homes and workers' dwellings are becoming increasingly popular, and are proving of great service in establishing people in

their own homes and in improving the standard of dwellings.

“The question of unemployment has been one of grave concern. Much of the wealth of Queensland is derived from industries which provide only seasonal employment but demand the services of large numbers of men, and the immediate result is that every year many workers are thrown on the labour market with no opportunity to sell their labour.

“My advisers, being fully awake to the evil consequences of unemployment, both in relation to the worker and to the State, have made a determined attempt to grapple with the problem in a practical manner.

“In 1922, an Act was passed to make provision for the insurance of unemployed workers. This Act, which is unique in Australia, represents a practical attempt to deal with the unemployment question on sound lines. The workers must contribute to be entitled to benefits; industry, through the employers, bears a portion of the cost of the excess labour which its exigencies demand; the Government sponsor the scheme and endow it.

“That the principles laid down in the Act are sound is shown by the general appreciation of its operations by all classes. The benefit it has conferred on the community has become so apparent that it is now accepted as one of the most practical attempts made in Australia in recent years to deal with social problems.

“The office of the Public Curator continues to be largely availed of by the public generally. Further facilities have been provided for the conduct of business in North Queensland, a branch office having been constituted at Cairns. It is the intention of my advisers to introduce a Bill to amend the Public Curator Act in order to provide additional machinery which has been shown to be necessary in the course of administration.

“The Estimates for the current financial year are under consideration, and will be tabled at the earliest opportunity. They will be found to have been framed with due regard to the requirements of the State and to the imperative need that exists for economy in public expenditure.

“Among other measures, the following will be submitted for your consideration:—

- A Bill to amend the Public Curator Act;
- An Apprenticeship Bill;
- A Bill to amend the Weights and Measures Acts;
- A General Water Supply Bill;
- A Land Act Amendment Bill;
- A Loan Bill;
- A Bill to amend the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act;
- A Bill to amend the Trustees and Executors Act;
- A Bill to amend the Justices Act;
- A Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act to provide for a maximum 44-hours week for employees;
- A Bill to ratify the South Brisbane to Grafton Railway Agreement;

A Bill to amend and consolidate the mining laws;
 A Bill to amend the Cotton Industry Act;
 A Bill to regulate the opening and sale of lands in the Tully sugar-works area;
 A Bill to amend the Main Roads Acts;
 A Bill to amend the Animals and Birds Protection Act;
 A Bill to consolidate and amend the Income Tax Acts;
 A Greater Brisbane Bill;
 A Brisbane Civic Survey Board Bill;
 A Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill;
 A Bill to amend the Police Acts;
 A Health Act Amendment Bill;
 A Dental Act Amendment Bill;
 A Bill to regulate the sale and use of firearms and to guard against the careless use thereof;
 A Bill to provide for the complete education of blind, deaf, and dumb children.

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

His Excellency then left the Chamber.

The Speaker left the chair at 12.28 p.m., resuming at 3.30 p.m.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

JUDGE FOR 1924.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from His Honour The Chief Justice intimating that His Honour Mr. Justice Lukin would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the year 1924.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

RESIGNATION OF MR. M. J. KIRWAN.

The SPEAKER: I have to report the receipt of the following letter:—

"Parliament House,
 Brisbane, 10th July, 1924.

"Dear Mr. Speaker,—

"I hereby tender my resignation of the position of Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

"I am,

"Yours faithfully,

"M. J. KIRWAN.

"The Honourable the Speaker,
 "Legislative Assembly, Brisbane."

PAPERS PRINTED DURING RECESS.

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

Annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for the year 1922-1923.

Twenty-third annual report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

Eleventh report of the Public Service Superannuation Board.

Statistics of the State of Queensland for the year 1922.

Report of the Royal Commission on Public Works upon the proposed extension of the Alton Downs Railway to Louisa Creek.

Report of the Royal Commission on Public Works on a proposed extension of the Yeppoon Railway from Yeppoon to Byfield.

Second actuarial report of the Public Service Superannuation Board.

Annual report of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board for the year 1923.

CIRCULATION AND COST OF "HANSARD."

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the Principal Shorthand Writer on the circulation and cost of "Hansard" for the financial year ended 30th June, 1924.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS.

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

Despatches conveying His Majesty's assent to Acts passed during the session of 1923.

Regulations under the Navigation Act of 1876.

Regulations under the Explosives Act of 1906.

Regulations under the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916-1923.

Regulations under the Sugar Works Act of 1922.

Regulations under the Private Savings Bank Act of 1923.

Regulations 1-62 under the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act of 1923.

Regulation 12 (a) and License Regulations 41-46 under the Primary Products Pools Acts, 1922 to 1923.

Regulation 11 and Primary Producers' Levy Regulations Nos. 1-10 under the Primary Producers' Organisation Acts, 1922 to 1923.

Regulations 1-10 under the Cotton Industry Act of 1923.

Regulations 1-78 under the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act of 1923.

Regulations 1-5 under the Stallions Registration Act of 1923.

Regulations 1-12 under the Pest Destroyers Act of 1923.

Regulations 1-29 under the Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1923.

Regulation 17 and amendment of Regulation 13 under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913.

- Regulations 58 and 59 under the Diseases in Plants Act of 1916.
- Regulations 1-6 and alteration of Fruit and Vegetable Grading and Packing Regulations of 1922 under the Fruit Cases Acts, 1912 to 1922.
- Regulations 1-12 under the Stock Foods Act of 1919.
- Regulations 57 and 58 under the Diseases in Stock Act of 1915.
- Regulations 1-10 under the Pure Seeds Acts, 1913 to 1914.
- Report of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Brisbane.
- Regulations, dated 14th December, 1923, under the Weights and Measures Acts, 1906 to 1923.
- Regulations, dated 2nd November, 1923, under the Electrical Workers Act of 1923.
- Regulations, dated 1st May, 1924, under the Industrial Arbitration Acts, 1916 to 1923.
- Regulation, dated 17th January, 1924, under the Workers' Accommodation Acts, 1915 to 1921.
- Regulations, dated 7th December, 1923, under the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act of 1922.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into certain alleged defective work in connection with the reticulation sewer in the vicinity of Laidlaw Parade, East Brisbane, the sewer near the Baby Clinic in Alfred street, Fortitude Valley, and such other sewers and reticulation sewers as the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board may determine.

Statements of various insurance companies deposited with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies during the year 1923 in accordance with the provisions of section 47 of the Life Assurance Companies Act of 1901.

Orders in Council under the Supreme Court Act of 1921.

Regulations under the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act of 1922.

Regulations under the Trust Accounts Act of 1923.

Order in Council under the Magistrates Courts Act of 1921.

Regulations under the Public Curator Act of 1915.

Proclamation under the Jury Act Amendment Act of 1923.

Order in Council under the Jury Act Amendment Act of 1923.

Regulation under the Elections Act of 1915 and the Jury Act Amendment Act of 1923.

Proclamation and Regulations under the Racecourses Act of 1923.

LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I have to announce that the two parties on this side of the House having met together on 9th April for the purpose of discussing methods

for the more effective carrying out of the duties devolving upon an Opposition decided that, while each party will retain its identity, and its officers and the organisation will be entirely separate, we have enough in common in the interests of the State to work together in opposition on the floor of the House. I have been elected leader from that date, Mr. R. M. King, deputy leader, and Mr. B. H. Corser, whip. While steadfast in our opposition to socialisation and Government interference in business, our endeavours will be to assist by criticism and amendment any measures brought forward for the benefit of the community. (Hear, hear!)

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I desire to offer a word of congratulation to the hon. member for Aubigny on his appointment as leader of the Opposition. I hope that he will not find the duties too onerous, and if anything can be done to lighten his duties, I shall be glad to do it. (Hear, hear!)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY DURING RECESS.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to lay on the table of the House a copy of the "Government Gazette" of 14th July, 1924, containing public notifications of the following changes in the Ministry:—

Resignation of the Hon. John Huxham as Secretary for Public Instruction and as a member of the Executive Council;

Appointment of the Hon. Frank Tenison Brennan as Secretary for Public Instruction; and

Appointment of the Hon. Michael Joseph Kirwan as a member of the Executive Council.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I desire to move—

That the following Address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this the second session of the twenty-third Parliament of Queensland:—

"May it please Your Excellency,—

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

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

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

I desire to express my keen appreciation of the honour which has been conferred upon me and my constituency by giving to me the duty of moving the Address in Reply. Before proceeding with my speech I desire to pay a tribute to that most distinguished member of the House, the Premier, for the statesmanlike manner in which he carried out the important mission entrusted to him by the people of Queensland in connection with his journey abroad for the purpose of securing the conversion and renewal of loans which fell due this year and which fall due during the next year. We all know how difficult that task was made by the organised opposition and hostility of the moneyed power of Britain. We know that the moneyed power of Britain endeavoured to exploit the situation which had arisen for the purpose of dictating the policy of this Government.

Mr. KELSO: The same old tale.

Mr. HYNES: Notwithstanding the fact that the Premier was obliged to meet the brains of the financial world, we find that he held his own with them, and that he secured a renewal of the loans falling due and the removal of the financial boycott on terms and conditions which, under the circumstances, must be considered favourable.

Mr. FRY: What were they?

Mr. HYNES: There is no gainsaying the fact that that task was made more difficult by the opposition of the moneyed power to which I have referred. I tremble to think what would have happened had the Premier failed in his mission. Besides loss of prestige it would certainly have meant financial chaos, industrial stagnation, and starvation for thousands of workers in this State. Therefore I say that it is creditable to the Premier for us to know that he has secured the removal of the financial boycott, and that loan money will be made available to this State to carry on the splendid programme of development which has been going on since the Labour party took office in 1915, and that this work will be able to be continued during the future. It is gratifying to know that the financial boycott has been removed and that we have now access not only to the money market of Britain, but also to the money market of America. This fact places this State in a more independent position than has hitherto been the case.

Some criticism has been indulged in of the action of the Premier by the Tory Press, above all institutions in the world, and by a small section of the people in the movement in regard to alleged concessions, in connection with the settlement, given to holders of certain pastoral leases. I wish to point out that, even if we were to interpret the terms of settlement as being something in the nature of a compromise, these people cannot give us the name of any individual in this House, in this State, or even in this Commonwealth who would have secured more satisfactory terms of settlement consistent with Labour's policy and ideals than were secured by the talented leader of the Government of Queensland.

Mr. CLAYTON: What did the "Daily Standard" say?

Mr. HYNES: I, speaking as one who represents primarily the interests of North Queensland in this House, was fully conscious of the great disaster that would have befallen North Queensland had the Premier failed in his mission. I realise that it would have been impossible to carry on the policy of the Government in developing and settling the North unless loan money was made available for that purpose; and, having this knowledge, I am pleased to have this opportunity of congratulating and complimenting the Premier for the masterly and statesmanlike manner in which he brought us through what undoubtedly was the most critical situation which has developed in the financial history of Queensland.

There was one outstanding feature of the boycott and the subsequent settlement which has caused me very great concern. That is that the truth of the old saw "money power is economic power" has been brought home to me. There is no gainsaying the fact, in my opinion, at any rate, that the Premier did everything that was possible in securing a satisfactory settlement for the people of Queensland. This point, at any rate, stands out clearly that, if the Labour party are to be compelled in future to go cap-in-hand to the moneyed power of Britain or to the moneyed power of America for the wherewithal to carry out the functions of the Government, we shall find it increasingly difficult as time goes on to effect any reforms of a fundamental and comprehensive nature.

Now, the remedy, in my opinion, is for the workers in Queensland and the other States of the Commonwealth to assume control, as soon as the opportunity presents itself, of the National Parliament and legislate in the direction of putting the States in the position of being able to dictate terms to the moneyed powers, instead of allowing the present intolerable conditions to obtain, whereby the moneyed powers are permitted to dictate terms to the States.

On coming South last year I was rather surprised to find that a great deal of the old conservative prejudice regarding the possibilities of the permanent settlement of a white population in North Queensland still existed, notwithstanding the vast amount of evidence both statistical and scientific, which has been put forward from time to time, which clearly indicates that the Northern part of this State is the healthiest climate in the world in which to live—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HYNES: And that the increase in population has been greater in North Queensland during the last decade than it has been in any other part of the Commonwealth. It will be my earnest endeavour during the time that I am privileged to represent the Queen City of the North in this House to direct attention to the best of my ability to that fact, and to give the matter as much publicity as possible. I shall also take pleasure in directing attention to the possibilities of its development, to its great potential wealth, and the necessity for the Government of the day to foster and encourage the development and settlement of North Queensland.

In connection with the climate we find that several scientific gentlemen have put forth irrefutable evidence which shows that North Queensland is the healthiest part of the world in which to live. I do not wish

Mr. Hynes.]

hon. members to accept my unsupported testimony, but I have here an extract from a very fine pamphlet which was issued by Dr. Cilento, Director of the Institute of Tropical Medicine. This pamphlet was published last year, and deals with the climatic conditions of North Queensland. It contains a great deal of information regarding the possibilities of permanent settlement of the white race in North Queensland. On page 9 it states—

[4 p.m.]

“As regards the effect upon health of residents in the tropics of Australia, careful scientific inquiry has failed to elicit any evil effects depending upon climate alone. The majority of those violently opposed to the colonisation of the North are either people who have never been there, or people whose conservatism makes it impossible for them to form an unbiased opinion. All scientific inquiry (and there has been much of it) goes to prove that there is no obstacle to a white working race living, thriving, and multiplying in the Australian tropics.”

In their report on the question of the settlement of tropical Australia, Breinl and Young wrote as follows:—

“At the census of 1911 the total population of Queensland (exclusive of full-blooded aboriginals) was 605,813, and at that date the tropical population of Queensland represented about 95 per cent. of the total tropical population of Australia. It might consequently be presumed that any unhealthiness of tropical Australia would have left its imprint on the vital statistics of Queensland. That this is not the case is clearly shown from the following comparison of the Queensland death rates per thousand of population with those of the Commonwealth as a whole:—

	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.
Queensland ..	9.50	10.31	10.26	9.70
Commonwealth..	10.92	10.99	11.07	10.33
	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.
Queensland ..	9.71	10.65	10.96	10.39
Commonwealth..	10.41	10.66	11.23	10.78
	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.
Queensland ..	9.97	11.00	11.09	9.64
Commonwealth..	10.51	10.66	11.04	9.80

“It will be seen that in ten out of the twelve years under review, Queensland recorded a lighter death rate than the Commonwealth as a whole, and that in one of the remaining two years the difference was inappreciable (1916). The remaining year (1915) was that in which Queensland suffered from the most severe drought ever known there, while the greater part of the remaining States experienced normal conditions, having suffered from drought in the previous year.”

Another proof of the salubrity of the climate

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of North Queensland is shown in the following table which deals with the infantile mortality in Queensland as compared with that of the Commonwealth as a whole and other countries of the world for the years 1906-1917:—

NUMBER OF DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE IN EVERY THOUSAND (1913).

Country.	Death Rate.	Infantile Mortality.
Queensland	10.4	63
Commonwealth	10.8	72
Netherlands	12.3	91
Ontario (Canada)	12.5	94
Belgium	14.8	120
Germany	15.0	151
Scotland	15.5	110
Italy	18.7	137
Japan	19.5	150
Rumania	25.9	202
Ceylon	28.4	189
Chile	30.1	255

“A collective investigation was begun in 1914 into the question of the desirability of the permanent occupation of tropical Australia by a healthy indigenous white race, and the subject was thoroughly discussed at the Australasian Medical Congress of 1920. The opinion of the medical practitioners present was overwhelmingly in favour of the suitability of North Queensland for the successful implantation of a working white race.

“Medical examinations were made of the citizen forces and cadets and a comparison established between the percentage of rejects under the national scheme of compulsory military training between tropical Queensland, non-tropical Queensland, and other Australian military districts. The results with respect to the examination for citizen forces display for the years reviewed a substantially smaller proportion of rejections for tropical Queensland as compared with non-tropical Queensland, and in the two years, 1918 and 1919, the proportion of rejections was less than the average for all Australian military districts outside Queensland.”

Speaking from my own personal experience, my children belong to the third generation of North Queensland natives. (Hear, hear!) They are all healthy, vigorous children, and we have at no time had occasion to call in the services of a doctor. (Hear, hear!) The figures which I have quoted to-day bear eloquent testimony to the fact that Queensland is the healthiest part of the world in which to live, and that the healthiness of its climate compares favourably with any other part of Australia. There is one thing we are seeking in the North—that is, a place adjacent to the coast towns for the purpose of allowing people with limited means to have a holiday in a higher altitude away from the humid atmosphere of the coastal districts—and I desire to invite the assistance of the Minister concerned in securing that very necessary convenience for the people of Townsville and the coastal districts of the North. Already we have commenced an agitation and formed a committee for the purpose of opening up Mount Spec, which is situated about 50 miles from Townsville, as a health resort for the use of the people of the coast. At the present

time the railway runs to Mutarnee a distance of about 50 miles on the Ingham line, and with a road built about 9 miles long from Mutarnee we shall be able to reach an altitude of 3,300 feet on Mount Spec. It is all very well for the people who have means to go to Katoomba or the Barron Falls for their holiday, but the working-class people and those with limited means are obliged to remain at home. We first of all want the Secretary for Public Lands to proclaim Mount Spec a national park. We then require the Main Roads Board to build a suitable road to Mount Spec so as to give easy and inexpensive access to this very healthy spot for the purpose of enabling people to recruit their health during the summer months of the year.

The next matter I wish to touch upon—and I notice that it has secured some prominence in the Governor's Speech—is the position existing in the sugar industry. The north of Queensland is dependent to a very large extent upon the future of this great national industry, and the future of the sugar industry is dependent, in my opinion, wholly upon the amount of protection that will be afforded it by the National Parliament in connection with keeping cheap black-grown sugar out of the country. I am pleased that the Government have definitely declared themselves for a continuance of the existing arrangement. We need to consider what this industry means to the State. It is without doubt the most important of our agricultural industries. From the wages point of view, we find that £6,000,000 is paid out annually in wages in connection with it. The Premier has told the people outside, and the Governor in his Speech to-day has stated that it is the intention of the Government to do all in their power to secure the continuance of the existing arrangement. I have looked at the sugar industry from every aspect, and I find that the substitution of a higher duty for the present embargo on imported sugar is not a suitable alternative. We only have to take into consideration the violent fluctuations which have occurred in the world's sugar market in recent months. In the early part of the present year sugar was quoted on the world's markets at £30 per ton, and during the present month it fell as low as £17 per ton. One can easily imagine the anxiety that would exist in the minds of the people engaged in this great national industry if they were depending upon a higher duty in order to safeguard their interests. I say that an increased duty is not a suitable alternative to the embargo, and I am therefore pleased that the Government have decided to stand foursquare for the continuance of the present arrangement—which means retaining the embargo upon imported sugar until such time as every grain of sugar which has been produced in Australia under white labour conditions has been consumed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HYNES: I notice that there is in the South still some opposition—indeed, it seems to be growing—to the course I favour, and that it has been instrumental in influencing the present Federal Tory Government in their sugar policy. I refer to the campaign for cheap sugar which is being carried on in the South by the jam manufacturers and fruitgrowers and others who are assisting them. I think it is most ungrateful and unjust in them to continue this campaign,

when one takes into consideration the fact that those very people were placed on their feet by the people who are engaged in the sugar industry in Australia.

Mr. SIZER: Speak about the Labour movement.

Mr. HYNES: I will do so later on. Our friends opposite, I suppose, will repudiate any connection with the Tory Government in the Federal political sphere who have decided to discontinue the embargo, but let us not forget that those self-same men wasted their time and money going about this State to help their friends to get on to the Treasury benches at the last Federal election. I claim that it was owing to the fact that sugar was produced in Queensland and made available to the jam manufacturers and fruitgrowers in the South at the lowest price in the world during the war period that they were enabled to build up a lucrative oversea trade for their product, which since peace has been declared they have been able to retain so effectively that it has grown to tremendous proportions. Then take the Consumers' Associations who are growling about the high prices of sugar and the alleged excessive wages paid in the industry. We find that, owing to the fact that they were getting during the war period the cheapest sugar produced in the world, they owe the industry no less than £25,000,000. I have arrived at that conclusion by comparing the prices in Britain with those in Australia for the war period, and I have here a table of prices which sets out clearly the basis for the point I am making—

—	Australia.		England.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
1915	25	0 0	27	0 0
1916	29	5 0	34	0 0
1917	29	5 0	46	0 0
1918	29	5 0	57	0 0
1919	29	5 0	57	15 0
1920	49	0 0	66	0 0

Taking the Australian consumption of sugar at 280,000 tons a year, it will be found that the saving effected for the consumers of Australia was equal to the amount I have stated. Hon. members will see that in 1920 the price of sugar in Australia reached £49 per ton. That result was brought about by the large importations of sugar into the Commonwealth, owing to the bungling methods of the Hughes Administration. Hon. members who have been students of the history of the industry know that, when the 1918 agreement was being drawn up, Mr. Hughes insisted upon the insertion of certain provisions, the inclusion of which was instrumental in preventing the growers and millers in Australia from producing the sugar necessary to fill our home requirements. The provisions I refer to are—

“1. That the Queensland Government will not erect or assist in or encourage the erection of any new mill for the treatment and manufacture of sugar-cane into sugar.

“2. That the Queensland Government will not remove or assist in or encourage the removal of any sugar mill from its present site.

“3. That the Queensland Government will not alter, enlarge, extend, or assist

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in or encourage the alteration, enlargement, or extension of any sugar mill so as to increase its present crushing capacity."

The result of those provisions was that the Commonwealth Government were obliged to import 184,000 tons of black-grown sugar in order to fulfil local requirements, and for which they paid a very high price. That was the start of the whole campaign for cheap sugar, and that was the start of the agitation to wipe out the existing embargo, and the whole trouble can be placed on the shoulders of the political "cobbers" of hon. members opposite.

Mr. FRY: The greatest opposition came from the Labour party, and I can quote the "Daily Standard" to support my statement.

Mr. HYNES: Hon. members opposite who are becoming so excited know full well that prior to the advent to power of the Labour party in Queensland the farmers were even denied the right to have a voice in the fixing of the price of their product, and hon. members opposite deliberately voted against provisions which were calculated to give the farmers the protection I have mentioned.

It has been stated on many occasions that the workers in the sugar industry are paid an excessive wage. The people in the South are saying—I have heard the statement repeated here—that excessive wages are paid to the toilers in the sugar industry. I have been associated with that industry all my life, first as a worker in the industry, then as a workers' representative on the old wages boards, and then later I have appeared on their behalf in the Arbitration Court. I can say truthfully that the wages paid to the average worker in the sugar industry are not adequate, having consideration to the amount of toil that they are asked to perform, and the conditions they have to endure in connection with their daily method of living.

Mr. BRAND: Are you in favour of the Arbitration Court?

Mr. HYNES: I have had some experience of the Arbitration Court during the present year. During the year the Australian Workers' Union lodged a claim in the court for an increase in wages and an improvement of conditions for the people working in this great national industry. I had the privilege of assisting the president of the Australian Workers' Union, Mr. W. J. Riordan, in presenting the case to the court. I have a first-hand knowledge of the conditions obtaining in the industry at the present time. The Australian Workers' Union lodged the claim in order to allow the worker—the worker who is doing the "hard yacker" in this great industry—to participate in some of the prosperity that the other sections of the industry are enjoying at the present time.

Mr. CLAYTON: Do you not believe in arbitration?

Mr. HYNES: The case was handed over to Mr. Justice Douglas, and we travelled through the whole of the sugar districts taking evidence in the most important centres, and the evidence showed that, whilst there were a few cane-cutters earning good money, the average worker in the

industry was being inadequately paid when that industry was compared with other industries in the Commonwealth where conditions of work were far more congenial than they are in the sugar industry. We found any number of married men with large families who were permanently settled in North Queensland who were securing less than the basic wage laid down by the Arbitration Court. The worker is entitled to a higher wage than he is getting at the present time, and it is the duty of the employers in the industry and the community to see that he gets a fairer and squarer deal than he is getting at the present time.

It is a notorious fact that the growers, millers, and other sections of the industry have secured enormous benefits from State and Federal legislation, the worker—the toiler in the industry—the man who is permanently settling the sparsely populated portions of North Queensland in the interests of the nation—has had to scarp for every "bob" he has got on the industrial field, and depend on his industrial strength to bring about any betterment in his wages or improvement in his condition.

Mr. CLAYTON: Has the small grower not had to do so also?

Mr. HYNES: The small grower would have been scrapping yet had the people whom the hon. member represents been in charge of the Treasury benches.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HYNES: I wish to refer to a most important matter in my electorate, and I hope in so doing that hon. members will not accuse me of working the parish pump.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, no! (Laughter.)

Mr. HYNES: I want to direct the attention of this House, and of the Minister too; to the urgent necessity of erecting a new railway goods shed at Townsville. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. CLAYTON: You mentioned that last year, too.

Mr. HYNES: I am going to keep on mentioning it until such time as it is erected: At the present time it will be found that the cost of handling goods in the goods shed at Townsville is higher than the cost of handling goods in any other part of the State. I find on making inquiries that it is double the cost of handling goods at the goods shed in Rockhampton, where more up-to-date and scientific utilities are in vogue. I have watched the workers in the goods shed at Townsville, and I have also observed the workers in the other goods sheds of the State, and I would unhesitatingly say that the workers in Townsville work as hard as any other class of men doing similar work in the railway service. The high cost in handling goods at the goods shed in Townsville is not then due to go-slow tactics on the part of the men but to the conditions under which they are compelled to labour. The trouble is that we have a goods shed at Townsville nearly forty years old. It was erected to deal with the lines which were then in existence. There is only one entrance to the present goods shed in Townsville, and very often lorries loaded with merchandise have to wait hours before they are able to unload it. The facilities are absolutely inadequate for the

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service of such an important centre as Townsville is. The goods shed, when it was erected in 1889, had only to serve 280 miles of railway, as the lines then only went to Ravenswood and Hughenden. To-day the position has changed. It serves to-day over 1,000 miles of railway, and, in addition, we have through communication with Brisbane, and before the end of this year—thanks to the Labour party—we shall have railway communication with Cairns. We are asking that a new railway goods shed be erected at Townsville, and that attention be given to the request when the Estimates are being framed. We think that if this is not done there will be a serious breakdown in the railway system in Townsville. The present high cost of handling goods in Townsville is a serious matter to thousands and thousands of people dependent on the Northern Railway service inasmuch as their cost of living through having these obsolete facilities for handling goods on the railway at Townsville has been considerably increased.

I desire to make some reference to what the Labour party have done in connection with the settlement of the North, and also to make some reference to the attention they have paid to country development. During the time the Labour party have been in power they have completed a large portion of the great North Coast Railway. We know that the friends and predecessors of hon. members opposite talked a lot about the North Coast Railway, but it was left to the Labour party to give effect to that policy, and, as a result, we had the pleasure last year of performing the opening ceremony that connected the Northern railway system with the Central and Southern systems of Queensland. In addition, at the end of the present year we are hopeful that we shall be able to perform a similar ceremony in connection with the far Northern system.

I have gone into the question of how the present Government have been endeavouring to bring about a settlement of the northern part of Queensland. Regarding the expenditure on railways, we find that the amount expended on the railways of North Queensland has been greater than the railway expenditure in the whole of the rest of the State, and I think that expenditure is justifiable. The mileage of railways constructed by the State since the beginning of 1915 to date is 884 miles, at an approximate cost of £7,300,000. The length of line acquired during the same period was 316 miles, at a cost approximating £885,000. The mileage of railway constructed in North Queensland since the beginning of 1915 to date was 65½ per cent. of the total mileage constructed in Queensland, and the cost was 68.68 per cent. of the total cost. The length of line under construction in North Queensland to-day is 6½ miles.

This is how the Labour party are encouraging and carrying out the great national work of developing the northern part of this State. They are endeavouring, by building railways and by giving concessions on the railways to the people who are living in the remotest parts of the State, to encourage closer settlement, and their efforts have not been futile.

We find that there is a greater proportion of the population of Queensland living outside the metropolis than is the case in any other State in the Commonwealth. We have only 28.27 per cent. of the total population

of the State living in Brisbane, while in Melbourne 51.37 per cent. of the total population of the State of Victoria are residing within the metropolis.

Mr. KELSO: That is because we have a greater number of coastal towns.

Mr. HYNES: One of the most important measures which was referred to in the Governor's Speech, in my opinion, is the initiation of a 44-hour week for the whole of the workers in Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: Why did you put it off for twelve months?

Mr. HYNES: Your party put it off for fifty years. I anticipate that the passage of this measure will be bitterly opposed by hon. members opposite, and I would like to anticipate some of their arguments. They will doubtless say that, as the judge of the Arbitration Court at the present time has the power to fix what wages he deems just and necessary in any industry, he should be allowed to do so, and the Legislature should not interfere. Another argument is that, if the 44-hour week is brought in, it will kill our manufacturing industries.

Dealing with the first argument, I have had considerable experience of the operations and the activities of the Arbitration Court, and I know full well that it is hopeless, so long as the present provision of a 48-hour week remains in the Act, to expect the extension of a 44-hour week to any of the other industrialists of the State who are not already enjoying it. Time after time the various workers affected have gone to the court, and have been turned down.

I would point out that section 10 [4.30 p.m.] of the Act provides for a maximum of forty-eight hours, and it is hopeless for us to expect to get anything less than forty-eight hours in those industries which have not already secured a working week of less than forty-eight hours.

Mr. EDWARDS: Cannot you trust the court?

Mr. HYNES: I certainly could not trust the hon. member.

Mr. EDWARDS: How did you vote in caucus?

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. HYNES: With reference to the cry of blue ruin following the introduction of a 44-hour week in our manufacturing industries, everyone knows that in Queensland at the present time the average number of hours worked in the various industries is 45½, and in most of our industries we have a 44-hour week. Notwithstanding that fact, we find on page 92 of "The A.B.C. Statistics of Queensland" that the productivity of the workers of Queensland has increased since 1915, when the Labour party came into power and brought about a big reduction in working hours. According to "Australian Statistics, Bulletin No. 95," dated March, 1924—the figures being for the last quarter of 1923—the average hours worked in the various States in 1915 were:—

Western Australia	... 48.11 hours
South Australia	... 48.49 hours
Victoria	... 48.55 hours
Tasmania	... 48.59 hours
Queensland	... 48.70 hours
New South Wales	... 48.27 hours

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Hon. members will notice that, when Labour took office in 1915, the hours worked in Queensland were longer than in any other State in Australia. That is the time when the colleagues of hon. members opposite were in office.

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

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

“That the hon. member for Townsville be granted an extension of time to enable him to complete his speech.”

Question put and passed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HYNES: In 1923, after eight years of Labour administration, the number of hours worked in the various States were:—

Queensland	45.51 hours
Western Australia	46.66 hours
New South Wales	46.73 hours
South Australia	47 hours
Victoria	47.06 hours
Tasmania	47.27 hours

So that under the Labour administration in Queensland the workers worked the least number of hours per week of any workers in Australia. During the time hon. members opposite were on the Treasury benches the workers worked the greatest number of hours. The point I am trying to develop is that the workers in Queensland have increased their productivity during the period the Labour party have been in power. An examination of the figures dealing with “Production and Manufacture in Queensland,” shown on page 92 of the current number of the “A.B.C. of Queensland Statistics,” discloses the following position:—

Number of factories in Queensland—		
1914	:: :: :: ::	1,796
1922	:: :: :: ::	1,878
Value of output—		
1914	:: :: :: ::	£25,491,955
1922	:: :: :: ::	£37,824,101
Value of machinery and plant—		
1914	:: :: :: ::	£6,898,673
1922	:: :: :: ::	£11,098,375
Number of hands employed—		
1914	:: :: :: ::	43,282
1922	:: :: :: ::	43,403

During the years under review, notwithstanding the large reduction in hours of persons employed in manufacturing industries, there was an enormous increase in their producing power.

Now this clearly indicates that a reduction of hours does not necessarily mean a decrease in production. In fact, most eminent economists point out that a reduction of hours up to a certain point invariably means increased production. That is what has taken place in Queensland; and, even viewing the introduction of a compulsory 44-hour week from the aspect of sordid commercialism, there is no logical reason why it should not be introduced. I say that, apart from the commercial aspect, there is the social aspect. I say that forty-eight hours is too long to allow of the full and proper development of human capacity and the natural and rational enjoyment of life. I say that the workers need a shorter week in order to give them an opportunity of developing themselves in the

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same way as the privileged people in the State are doing.

I do not wish to impose on the time of the House at any further length, as I shall have the privilege from time to time as important measures come forward to express my opinion in connection with the benefits which will accrue to the people from their passage. The measures outlined in the Governor's Speech to-day, and the past programmes which have been translated into legislation during the nine years the Labour party have been in power in this State are but the tangible expressions of those lofty aims and humanitarian objects for which the Labour party stand the world over. I say that we have accomplished wonderful things in the way of social legislation during the time we have been in power in this State.

Mr. CLAYTON: And the National party, too.

Mr. HYNES: We have accomplished wonderful things, but a lot remains to be done. While we have the hideous spectacle of idle parasites on the one hand living in wealth and luxury, and on the other hand thousands of working-class men and women who are doing the useful work of society living in penury and want, we are a long way from the goal of our desires as a part of the great Labour movement. I admit that we are progressing as fast as it is possible and practicable to do, and that we are doing everything possible in order to traverse the road to our objective as speedily as possible; but that road everyone must admit is a difficult and a long one, and in my opinion we shall only be able to reach the goal and bring about the consummation of all that Labour stands for by hard toil and continuous evolutionary effort. That is my own personal opinion. I say that this party, notwithstanding what may have been stated to the contrary, during the time it has been in power has paid every attention and stood foursquare for the basic principles of the great Labour movement. We have never lost sight of the fact that every child born in the State is entitled to be fed, clothed, and educated irrespective of whether it is brought into the world in a hut in the “Never Never,” or whether it first sees the light of day in a feather bed in a palace in the city. We say that every child should have an equal opportunity in life, and we are doing our utmost to see and make sure that every child has that opportunity, and that its body and brain will not be stunted through lack of food and fresh air, and by the heavy burden of premature toil. We have attended to these important big things in our social legislation, and the programme which has been submitted to Parliament to-day by His Excellency is another contribution to Labour's splendid record of achievement in this State, and will bring us a step nearer to the goal of our desires—that goal which can be described in one word—a word which has brought hope and inspiration into the hearts of countless millions of working-class men and women the world over—that word is “Socialism.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): In seconding the motion so ably moved by my friend, the hon. member for Townsville, I have,

first of all, to thank His Excellency the Governor for his personal statement in the first paragraph of his Speech of his own experience of the humanitarian acts for which the Labour Government have been responsible in the establishment of maternity hospitals in the outback country. Generally it will be recognised that the whole work of Labour has a humanitarian basis, and, if we have on occasion been too optimistic financially, it will always be found that it has been due to the fact that we thought more in terms of flesh and blood than in terms of mere money.

The most interesting paragraph in the Speech to me is practically the shortest—His Excellency's statement regarding the conversion of the loan. I think that the thanks of all Queensland, and indeed of all Australia, are due to the leader of the Labour party in this State who put up in London a better fight, I believe, than any other man would have done, who was exceedingly well equipped for the task, and who came back having given away practically nothing of what Labour had insisted upon in the earlier times. (Opposition laughter.) I need hardly call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact of the terrible alternative—the terrible alternative that the gang of incompetents on the other side might have come into power. I am quite sure that no matter what we might have given away—if we have given anything away—in the face of the greater danger of the Opposition succeeding to office, we would have been rewarded by the people of Queensland with a fine new gallows.

Mr. MOORE: Why did you not think of that in 1920?

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. member is talking even more confidently now than when he made himself appear so silly by opposing me at Charleville. In the matter of this conversion, the point has been taken that these debts were incurred forty years ago. The great business Governments of the time—endowed with the tremendous business genius which we are taught to associate with anti-Labour—ordained that these loans of £25,000,000 should fall due within fifteen months. At the time when those loans were incurred, Queensland had a population of 321,000 persons. In the face of the fact of the tremendous development of the country since, and of the fact that we have in Queensland 800,000 of the best off people in Australia, who are the best off people in the world, our public debt of £81,000,000 to-day does not look a bad thing. The only bad thing about it is that 68 per cent. of it is held overseas, and that 29 per cent. of our revenue goes in interest and sinking funds. If the money was held and owned in this country, it would not hurt us in anything like the same proportion to which we are affected now. In considering this loan, let us not forget that the flotation of £13,000,000 was subscribed to the extent of £57,000,000, whereas when New South Wales put £10,000,000 loan on the market, £3,500,000 of it was left in the hands of the underwriters. Some part of the result may have been due to the fact that, owing to the actual work of the Labour party since they came into power, out of 429,000,000 acres of public estate, only 27,000,000 acres are alienated—that, although

the public debt of Queensland may be £109 2s. per head of the population, still 92 per cent. of the public estate is held by the State. That looks better than a public debt of £84 per head in Victoria, where only 41 per cent. of the land is the property of the people, and it looks immeasurably better than the position in New South Wales, where one-third of the public estate has been alienated. Owing to the fact that the Government's leasehold system became law—a system which hon. members on the other side opposed to the finish—to-day Queensland is in the happy position of having over 400,000,000 acres of public estate, never to become the property of individuals until the other party get into power—and, judging by all appearances, that will be never.

Mr. KELSO: Do you not believe in the abolition of capital altogether?

Mr. BEDFORD: I certainly believe in the abolition of some of its adherents. (Laughter.) The position in regard to that public estate is that our railway position, bad though it looks, is not nearly so bad as in places where the public estate has been frittered away. Here we regard our 6,000 miles of railway as largely a working plant for a great estate which could not get along without that working plant. The Melbourne "Age"—a Tory paper opposed to this Government—in objecting to the Government of Victoria in its railway policy, says—

"Queensland's condition is frequently quoted. The Treasurer has shown that the total cost of running the Queensland railways far exceeds the cost in Victoria. He has sought to silence critics by allusions to Queensland's railway debt of approximately £9,000,000. But certain facts are overlooked."

Our critics would have us believe that there were no deficits until a Labour party came into power. The article continues—

"The debt has been in existence for twenty years; during these years the increase in the amount has been comparatively slight. Yet freights and fares are cheaper, wages are higher, in Queensland than here."

Mr. KELSO: You do not believe anything that a Tory paper says, do you?

Mr. BEDFORD: Even the hon. member will tell the truth sometimes. (Laughter.) The position is that, although we have made this conversion, we are not yet out of the wood, and we shall not be out of the wood while the present system of imperialism governing this country, or governing the finances of this country, continues to obtain. The sum of £147,000,000 is due by the States and the Commonwealth during the next three years, and our position will then be immeasurably worse than it is now. It means that under a private banking system, by which the money of the public gets into the hands of a few people, and they use it for the purpose of bolstering up their own pernicious system, there is no possibility of Australia getting out of debt, with all its marvellous powers of rehabilitation and its wonderful capacity of recuperation, until it takes hold of this question of finance right at the root.

Mr. Bedford.]

Supposing, for instance, that there were a real Australian Government in power in the Federal Parliament, the immediate nationalisation of banking and private insurance would be brought about. There would be in operation a system which would prevent us from gradually sinking to the condition of a coolie nation—we must sink to that condition if the present arrangement exists. Although we have a credit at present of £50,000,000 on the other side of the world, we are not allowed to get it by an iniquitous exchange system primarily intended to make us take our credit in shoddy goods and put our own people out of work. The position is that in England to-day, if you had any gold you desired to convert, you would have to make a conversion payment of 3s. per ounce, which is equal to 3½ per cent.

The pastoral industry affects my electorate, and it affects Queensland probably more than any other. This statement was made on that industry at the Empire Textile Conference—

“Mr. Harry Dawson warned the conference that if the Empire's pastoralists did not provide the necessary increased wool supplies they were certain to be provided from Asia, notably China. The wool trade at present was well managed at both ends, but needed better financing, particularly in Australia, where the difficulties of financing the purchase of the crop at present really amounted to an export tax of 3½ per cent. on Australia's wool clip. It was remarkable that the Commonwealth Bank, which was formed to foster Australian industries, had allied itself with the associated banks, and, therefore, could not function as was intended. The Commonwealth Bank held £29,000,000 worth of Treasury bonds, against which Treasury notes could be issued. Only that day he had received a cable message intimating that home and continental buyers found it almost impossible to obtain credits for the forthcoming Sydney and Brisbane sales. He hoped the Commonwealth would quickly find the means to relieve the situation, which was inevitably reducing the prices growers could obtain by from 5 to 7½ per cent.”

Here is a case in which Australia could do a great deal to force the suspension or at least the partial destruction of that bad exchange position. We cannot dictate to the rest of the world in meat because, so far as the London meat market is concerned, it is closed to us by the vested interests of Argentina in Britain.

It will be possible in the case of wool—and they can get no other such product in the world as Australian wool—for us to insist that they should make Australian credits for the wool they must have. It would be impossible from that end for us to secure the same credits in Australia for goods which it is not absolutely necessary to Britain. This Government has at least attempted to be all-Australian. It has been the one Government in Australia which has insisted that it is much better to pay a little more for an article made in Australia than it is to pay a little less and export the whole of the money paid for that particular article abroad, while the Tory Governments of the Commonwealth and South Australia

were at the same time ordering locomotives abroad. The Tory Government of New South Wales have purchased a bridge abroad, and are now buying a ferry boat for the Clarence River, in order to bring the trains over. Our Government have insisted that the £729,000 that they have to spend in sugar-mill plant, in a harbour dredge, and in rolling-stock for the railways should be expended in the State, with preference for Australian manufacturers. Here is the one Australian Government of the whole lot attempting to do Australian work, while the average man opposed to us, when he begins to talk, usually ends up with a roar about imperialism. It is imperialism that is making Australia spit blood; and it is imperialism, if insisted on, that will leave us naked to our enemies. Everyone knows the position that England is in to-day, and with all the goodwill existing in the world, I believe Australia will decline to be made a chopping block in order that the vested interests of England shall be saved.

Take the condition of England to-day. For instance, there were 332 blast furnaces in operation in 1913, and in 1922 there were only 132. There were 25,500,000 tons of iron ore smelted in 1919, and only 10,500,000 tons in 1922. There is also a decline in the manufacture of wool, cotton, and flax—textile materials; and the unemployed dole, which was £20,000,000 in 1922, rose to £47,000,000 in 1923.

We are asked then not only to be a dumping-ground for the cheap labour products of that country under a system of preference which should not last a day, but we are also asked to throw open our ports to immigration. We are asked to pay for the immigration of people who are unemployable, of all kinds of people unfit for Australian citizenship—sex perverts, and all the rest of it—in defiance of the experience of America, which has a much more rigorous immigration law than we have. America discovered the other day that out of the 41,000 insane people in New York asylums 23 per cent. were aliens. The proposition that imperialism makes to us is, in the first place, that we shall accept shoddy goods—which are not made in Britain, because under the preference agreement they need only be 25 per cent. of British manufacture. None of them need be the goods of British manufacturers, and these manufacturers have sublet overseas Government and private contracts to Belgium, Germany, or to any other place where a profit can be made, and where the goods can be obtained at a fraction of the cost. The position of Australia then is—even the position governing the remotest ends of my own electorate—that it depends on the moneyed power. Now, taking my own electorate of the Warrego, we have pressing needs that are almost indispensable necessities. One is railway extensions from Blackall to Charleville, Cunnamulla to Barrington, Thargomindah to the border, and Thargomindah extending and connecting with the Commonwealth railway from Maree to Boulia. Then there is the pressing need of the water supply.

Here is a case of a tremendous electorate now given over to a system which has introduced a new word to the language—“Kidmanism.” Kidmanism has its prototype in every Australian State. It exists in the overstocking of areas, the destruction of seed, and

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now along the Lachlan, in New South Wales, there is less salt bush than is grown in California from imported seed. It exists in the running of stations on the fall-down system, the destruction of improvements and the general bad citizenship which allows a man, while being a tenant of the State, to regard himself not as a trustee of State property, but an exploiter of the public and State which can be run on the fall-down system and returned to its real owner in a condition worse than that in which he received it.

However, if we turn Kidman out of that country, our condition would be that we could get nobody to take up the country; we would be without the revenue and the only tenant of the country would be the dingo. It requires a large quantity of money—I think £40,000 or £50,000 is going on to the Estimates this year—to deal with the matter of netting. The Commonwealth have ordered quantities that would only be sufficient for a small poultry yard, but which are not sufficient for our requirements. Queensland is the only State that has taken advantage of that.

Mr. MORGAN: They have got very little satisfaction out of it.

Mr. BEDFORD: The fact remains that it is a natural necessity for this State to increase its pastoral wealth—and this can be done by millions of pounds a year by a proper system of netting these vast areas now open to the dingo. On the basis of a carrying capacity of 3,000 sheep per selection, a new province can be added to Queensland if this State can find the money; and this will mean that Queensland will be further and further away from the progress that should be following right on the heels of administration.

One reason why this progress is impossible at present is that Australia is exporting money to pay for unnecessary imports; it is exporting dividends to foreign shareholders of banking and insurance companies—profits that should be retained in the country.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the money spent in State enterprises?

Mr. BEDFORD: It is not even permitted to take payment in money for the stuff that it sells in London, and it is insisted that we should take money in goods. This puts off further and further the time when we shall be able to repurchase our own bonds.

Now the strongest point in postponing progress in Australia is the roar of the loyalist. "Loyalty" is "an excellent good word," but it is rapidly getting into the [5 p.m.] description given by Doll Tear-sheet of the word "occupier." It is becoming offensive in meaning. When you hear an importer roaring "Loyalty," he only means 5 per cent. ad valorem. When you hear a money-monger, or an insurance person, or a shareholder in a foreign bank roar "God save the King," he only means "God save the products of cheap labour."

Mr. MORGAN: When you hear Labour members of Parliament roar "God save the King," what is meant?

Mr. BEDFORD: I never roar it. I think it is the most stupid song in the world.

Mr. MORGAN: I have heard members opposite singing it.

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. member never heard me; and if he only heard his own voice sing he would never speak again.

Mr. MORGAN: The mover of the motion mentioned it.

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. member is not even loyal to Australia. He is not even loyal to Queensland, for a start. This imperialism—which is dependent generally on English ignorance and Australian stupidity—is going to have exactly the opposite result to that which the Imperialists desire, because it will not be necessary for the wildest republican to talk about cutting the painter, as it is being rotted off by cheap imperialism. As a matter of fact, we were imposed on during the war, and we have been imposed on ever since. We should now insist, and at least the Labour Government in the Commonwealth will insist, on the nationalisation of banking and insurance, and they will insist on a tariff which shall be effective. We should even go so far as passing a sumptuary law for the purpose of excluding unnecessary luxuries.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the abolition of capitalism?

Mr. BEDFORD: It is certain that capital will be abolished some day, but the hon. member will be abolished a long time before. Capitalism has a short life, but the hon. member will have even a shorter one—I think it will be about 1926. Take the case of used motor-cars. When I was down in Los Angeles I saw about 20 acres of used cars—not obsolete cars—which were a testimony to good salesmanship. That kind of thing is happening in Australia, and a car that costs £450 to-day will probably not fetch £225 to-morrow. The fact remains that we are getting in very much too many unnecessary luxuries, and there should be a movement in the way of a sumptuary law to prevent this kind of thing. That sounds like a war-time measure, and it is a war-time measure, because Australia was never in a worse position, owing to the fact that it is governed by oversea relations more than it is governed by its own legislation, and it has now to decide whether it shall maintain its present high standard of industrial conditions or sink to the mean level of Britain.

On the matter of cotton, I understand that certain objections are being made to the Government for honestly recognising what was apparently an error. We quite recognise an error when it happens.

Mr. MORGAN: So many of them happen.

Mr. BEDFORD: Error is so natural to you that you have not sufficient ability to recognise it.

Mr. MORGAN: Your programme is full of amending legislation.

Mr. BEDFORD: Proof of the fact that you had not sense enough to amend it when it was before you. The excellent work of the Government in connection with the Council of Agriculture—diluted socialism which our friends like to call co-operation, but which is still diluted socialism—has been productive of great benefit to the farmers of this State, and it is likely to be of more.

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The Apprenticeship Bill will fill the want of some legislation which will throw the onus of educating technically the apprentice in the right way.

Mr. KERR: It has taken us about seven years to tell you so. The Government have been thinking over it for seven years, and are only doing it now.

Mr. BEDFORD: That is so, but the hon. member blithers so much that when he occasionally utters a common-sense word it is lost in the general confusion. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: Your confusion the other night was an example.

Mr. BEDFORD: I congratulate the people of this State on having consolidated the Labour party at the last election—especially by my own election for the Warrego, when the two bright and shining lights of the Opposition went up there and caused me to get a bigger majority than otherwise I would have got. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) I congratulate the people of the State on having consolidated Labour rule in Queensland, and the people of Australia on having revived it in the other States, so that it is almost certain that we shall govern in the six States of the Commonwealth in the very near future. I am quite sure that any tolerant or sane-minded man—any man not blinded by prejudice—must realise that, as the years go on, we shall have a smaller and smaller Opposition, until by and by it will not be able to raise its voice. I believe that the only thing that will prevent Labour from carrying on the Government of Queensland, or of any other place, will be a schism, because no man honestly can be against the programme of this party if he knows well, or takes the trouble to know well, our methods and our aims.

Mr. KELSO: What about Thursday night?

Mr. BEDFORD: I can assure the hon. member, if he attacks a member of this party thinking it is not consolidated, there will not be a place for a kick apiece for all of us on his body. Our methods and our aims being understood, it follows that we must remain in power as a Government, and the Opposition must stay in the place for which it is eminently fitted; that is the only job they are suitable for, and it will not come to an early end. No matter what mistakes have been made in trying to attain our ideals, those ideals stand; accepted by all tolerant Australians as they begin to understand our methods and our aims. And our ideal, in the mass, is the increased happiness of the individual and the betterment of our own beloved land.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 5.9 p.m.

[*Mr. Bedford.*