

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 31 JULY 1924

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 31 JULY, 1924.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Marce*) took the chair at 10 a.m.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER.

HON. J. HUXHAM.

The SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received the following letter from the hon. member for Buranda:—

“Qualtrough street,
“Brisbane, 31st July, 1924.

“Dear Mr. Speaker,—

“I hereby tender my resignation as member of Parliament for the electorate of Buranda.

“Yours faithfully,

“J. HUXHAM.

“The Hon. the Speaker,
“Parliament House, Brisbane.”

SEAT DECLARED VACANT.

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

“That the seat of Hon. John Huxham hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation thereof since his election and return to serve in this House as member for the electoral district of Buranda.”

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

INTENTIONS OF GOVERNMENT IN RE LEGISLATION TO DEAL WITH PILLAGING.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the comments made by His Honour Mr. Justice Lukin at the recent criminal sittings of the Supreme Court that steps should be taken to amend the Act to deal with pillaging?”

“2. In the face of His Honour's statement; also the recommendation made by the Federal Commission as to the amendment of the laws of Queensland dealing with pillaging, is it the intention of the Government to take the necessary steps to introduce this amending legislation?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. The matter will receive consideration.”

RECENT LOAN CONVERSION—LETTER FROM BRITISH-AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES AFFECTED BY LAND AMENDMENT ACT OF 1920.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Premier—

“In regard to the conversion negotiations in London, will he lay on the table of the House, or read out in answer to this question, the full contents of the

letter from the two British-Australian societies chiefly affected by the disputed Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, in which the following appears to be part:—

‘As a full and final settlement of the controversy and a demonstration of goodwill that you (Mr. Theodore) make this offer, having regard to the view strongly held here (London) that the Act did alter the existing contracts, and you recognise that the English companies affected by the Act of 1920 are convinced that they have legitimate grievances which you wish to remove and desire to satisfy investors that Queensland is as faithful to contractual obligations as any other portion of the Empire?’

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eaaham*), in the absence of Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), replied—

“Yes, I will lay the letter on the table.”

WATER SUPPLY FOR CALIORAN SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*), in the absence of Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. Will he place at the disposal of the soldier settlers, Calioran Settlement, at an early date, an irrigation officer in order to discuss with him the feasibility or otherwise of a water supply for their district?

“2. Would he extend the same assistance for water facilities to the above settlers as is provided to settlers on the Burnett and Callide areas?

“3. If he is unable to agree to either of the above requests, would he make arrangements, on suitable terms, for the transference of settlers concerned to such areas that have facilities for a water supply?”

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

“1. The Commissioner for Irrigation has submitted a proposal to the settlers at Calioran for their consideration.

“2. No.

“3. See answer to No. 1.”

REQUEST TO GOVERNMENT FROM LIQUOR TRADE FOR RECONSIDERATION OF HOURS OF SALE.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), in the absence of Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*), asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Has the Government recently received petitions from persons interested in the liquor trade requesting the reconsideration of the hours during which hotels may be kept open for the sale of liquor?

“2. Is it the intention of the Government during this session of Parliament to comply with the requests (or any of them) contained in such petition?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. The matter will be considered.”

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

“That the House, at its rising this day, do adjourn until Tuesday next.”

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*), who was received with Opposition cheers, said: I rather sympathise with the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, owing to the difficulty they had in working up sufficient enthusiasm over the programme that has been put before us.

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

Mr. MOORE: The mover of the motion, the hon. member for Townsville, was not so bombastic, and certainly has not been so careless of the rules of the House, as to interrupt me in my very first sentence as has the seconder, the hon. member for Warrego. Perhaps, when that hon. member has been a little longer in the House and gains a greater knowledge of its procedure, he will extend similar courtesy. However, the hon. member for Townsville, to overcome the difficulty he had in showing enthusiasm for the Speech, made a very excellent speech about the development of the North and its requirements. Everybody in this House recognises what a rich heritage we have in the North, and it is the desire of everybody in this Chamber to see that the North is adequately developed. The motion moved yesterday by an hon. member on this side of the House had for its object the securing of the best possible conditions in the North.

The hon. member for Warrego, after nine years of Labour administration, made the discovery that many more reforms are practically impossible owing to the difficulties that are facing the Government. His idea for bringing about prosperity to Queensland was for the Commonwealth Administration to nationalise insurance and banking, so that they would have control of all moneys.

I suppose the most important thing we have to discuss is the success of the Premier when he went to England for the purpose of arranging for the conversion of maturing loans. I want to congratulate him this time on showing ordinary common sense. He looked the facts in the face, and made an agreement to rehabilitate Queensland. The only pity is that he did not show ordinary common sense previously. After his last trip home he came back to Queensland petulant and with his mouth full of boasting and vituperation. Evidently, the lesson has been learned, and this time on his return we are able to congratulate him on making an agreement by which Queensland is placed in a considerably better position. We are all pleased that the prestige of Queensland has been retrieved. We are all pleased that amicable relations have once more been established between England and Queensland, because, as the Premier stated, it is going to make a vast difference to this State. We are not going to fall down and worship the Premier as a superman. To my mind, he only did the thing that should have been done long before.

Mr. HARTLEY: He only undid the bad work your party did in damaging Queensland.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: He only did something to retrieve the position brought about by the stupidity of his own Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: He refuted the slanders of your party.

Mr. MOORE: In England he was acclaimed a marvellous statesman because he arranged an agreement which was satisfactory to the financiers. The roaring lion of Queensland became the cooing dove when he got to England.

Mr. HARTLEY: That must have been a miracle. How could a roaring lion become a cooing dove?

Mr. MOORE: It is by no means an extraordinary thing to compliment a man for doing the right thing after he has done the wrong one. If we go back to the Bible we get the parable of the man who had 100 sheep—

“If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours—saying, ‘Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep which was lost!’
“There shall be more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”

That, roughly, is the principle adopted by the financial people over the repentance of the Premier.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The rejoicing is all the more if the lost sheep has not been shorn. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The remark of the Premier, in order to secure sympathy when he started out on that mission, that—

“The task was a more difficult one than any of my predecessors has had to handle”—

is, in my opinion, extremely naive. None of his predecessors acted in the way that he and his Government did, and there is no excuse for the stupid act which was committed in spite of the warnings on the other side of the world and in spite of the warnings given in this Chamber. I would like to refer to an article in the London “Times” in 1918, in which the position was exactly pointed out—

“It is feared that the Government may, by the appointment of its adherents to the Upper House, obtain the latter’s consent to the passage of a Bill removing the limitations referred to. It may seem almost incredible that a State of the British Empire should contemplate any such suicidal proposal as that with which it is credited. To alter adversely the leaseholders’ contractual position without their consent would be to adopt a species of Bolshevism which could not fail to destroy the confidence of British investors in the good faith not only of Queensland, but of Australia generally.

“If it is not repudiation for one Government to induce lessees to come under an Act by promising to insert a protective provision, which was inserted and on the faith of which lessees did come under the Act, thereby acquiring

[Mr. Moore.]

contractual rights, and at a later stage for the Theodore Government to take away, without the lessees’ consent, the provision which induced them to come under the Act, then it would be interesting to learn what Mr. Theodore’s definition of ‘repudiation’ is.”

When the Act was going through, Mr. Gunn, the then hon. member for Carnarvon, as reported on page 2623 of “Hansard” for 1920, used these words—

“I want to have a few words on this Bill, because I value the honour of my country—I value the integrity of this State. I think that when we have to borrow money at the other end of the world, if we pass this Bill, we shall find we shall be penalised to a greater extent than many of us expect. We shall not float loans on anything like as favourable terms if we pass this repudiation as if we did not.”

That is exactly what happened, and, rather than admit the mistake, Queensland’s credit was sacrificed. The State has had to pay through the nose for accommodation which was vitally necessary, and we have also been humiliated by having the finger of scorn pointed at Queensland throughout the Empire. The last election was won by appealing to the passions of the people and by frothy vapourings about the “money kings dictating the internal policy of Queensland,” and the necessity of securing loan money for the State in America, where we secured money on the most stringent terms that any State or any of the British Dominions has ever had to accept. Then, like the fox which lost his tail and endeavoured to persuade all the others to cut theirs off, we find the Premier talking in this strain in his policy speech in 1923—

“At the last election the State was faced with a critical position with regard to loan funds owing to the operation against us of a political boycott on the London money market. The sinister designs of our opponents were entirely thwarted by the success of the Government in gaining access to an unlimited market in New York. Our success in establishing a connection with that market has been of considerable benefit to the whole of Australia. The London money-lenders can no longer dictate the domestic policy of Australian Governments. On the contrary, in fear of losing more customers, they have shown the greatest alacrity in agreeing to all reasonable loan proposals put forward from the various States.”

When he came back the last time he made this statement—

“The suggestion is made that there is a kind of climb-down, that the money power of England now rules, and that to that extent our self-governing rights are limited. Such an assertion is wholly erroneous and ill-founded. The independence of Queensland is more secure to-day than it was six months ago when I left Queensland. We could get money in New York before, but the extent to which we could borrow at any time was limited because of what was happening in London, and the terms we had to pay were governed by the conditions ruling

in London. A settlement has been arrived at now, and we have access to either London or New York on an absolutely free market. Some critics have said that rather than appear to concede anything we should have gone to New York."

It just shows the unreliability of his remarks. During the election campaign he stated that there was an entirely unlimited market for money, but now, when the dispute has been settled, he points out that the market in New York was limited by the conditions which obtained in London. The loan obtained in New York, at a cost of £6 19s. 5d. per cent. in interest last year, carries the most onerous conditions for its full term. If it were statesmanlike on this occasion to take a short-dated loan for five years because the money market might fall, why was it not a statesmanlike thing to get a short-dated loan also when we went to America, instead of allowing it to continue for the full term? The money market was certainly considerably more likely to fall then than now. Possibly there are other reasons why the loan is short-dated on this occasion. It may be that the financiers in London want to see that the Government are going to carry out the agreement made by the Premier before they agree to a long-dated loan. I submit that the only way in which we can make sure that the agreement is going to be adhered to is the one indicated by the Secretary for Public Lands when he first heard of the flotation of the loan, to the effect that legislation would be necessary, but I go further and say that the terms ought to be endorsed on the leases so that we cannot be placed again in the unfortunate position in which Queensland has found herself during the last four years. The late Agent-General emphatically stated that the people of Queensland had been hoodwinked. He wants to know the full terms and conditions of this concession, and I also feel that the country ought to know. When the Premier went to England he stated that the first part of his stay there was employed in what he termed "creating an atmosphere." Since he returned to Queensland he has been doing exactly the same thing. He has been "creating an atmosphere" in Australia for a different purpose—that of hoodwinking the discontented in his own party and smoothing away difficulties in the Herbert. And on his return he stated that the arrangement was not a concession, that it was "a mere formula to enable the pastoralists to assent to a settlement of the dispute," but that was too much for his followers to swallow, so he went off on a new tack to this effect—

"To attempt to justify myself by placing the whole of the cards upon the table would imperil our good relations with London. It would tend to reawaken the animosity which existed, and which reacted against Queensland, as well as create enormous difficulties of an Imperial nature in the heart of the Empire itself."

So that now, apparently, instead of saying that it was "a mere formula," he wants to shelter behind the plea that any other course would have created difficulties in the direction of getting away from the Empire. The statements are so contradictory, especially in view of the election pledges given by the Government, that it is almost imperative that we should get a clear statement of the facts and the actual position, so that we may know

where we are. The Premier's statement is first—

"As a result of a great many conferences and consultations with bankers, underwriters, financiers, commercial men, and newspaper editors, I succeeded in creating a new atmosphere, which enabled the settlement to be arrived at. The offer of the stabilisation of existing rents during the remainder of the terms for those holdings which have already been reassessed under the Land Act of 1920 has been described as a concession. In fact, it was a mere formula to enable the pastoralists to assent to a settlement of the dispute. In agreeing to this basis the pastoralists yielded a great deal; the Government yielded very little. No settlement was involved, no sacrifice of principle on the part of the Government, and no recantation of policy. I notice that the opinion is held in Queensland that the settlement will involve legislation to amend the Land Act of 1920. That is contrary to the legal opinion I obtained in London during the negotiations. Indeed, legislation is not a condition of the settlement, which expressly states that Executive and administrative effect shall be given to the settlement. However, if it is found that full effect cannot be given to the settlement without legislation, a Bill will be introduced, but such legislation will merely stabilise the existing rents, and will not affect the principle of the 1920 Act. Nor does the concession involve any great loss of potential revenue, because it only applies to those holdings the rents of which have been determined recently by the Land Court without limitation, and as the leases of most of the large sheep holdings expire during the next ten years, it will be seen that the so-called concession is of no monetary value to them."

Then the new agreement we have heard about is as follows:—

"Without prejudice to the right of lessees to apply to the Land Court for a reduction of rent in any individual case, the Queensland Government agrees to take such Executive and administrative action as is necessary to give effect to the following arrangement:—That in the case of all those pastoral leases where rents have, on 30th May, 1924, been reassessed under the Land Act of 1920 and which appear in the second schedule of the Land Act of 1910 as being leases entitled to limitation of increase of rent, the maximum rents to be paid in respect of the unexpired term of such leases shall be the rents in force on 30th May, 1924."

Speaking of that agreement at the Labour Day function at the Trades Hall, the Secretary for Public Lands said—

"Briefly, the position is this: The arrangement that has been made is a compromise. I am not going to tell you that there is no compromise. There has been a compromise. . . . The compromise given to the pastoralists for the stabilisation of rents fixed by the Land Court since the passage of the alleged repudiation Act provides that the existing rent shall be the maximum for the remainder of the term of their leases."

"The amount of the concession is not known to anybody, because none know what rent would have been fixed for

Mr. Moore.]

the remainder of the term. It might be said that the Land Court would have increased the rents. If wool remains at 4s. per lb., there certainly would have been an increase. That was beyond argument, but it was one of those questions which made it difficult for them to assess the value of the concession. I say nobody can tell what this concession is, nor anything except that we do know they were able to compromise. That is the point I want particularly to mention. While the Government thought it could stand on no compromise there were factors which compelled that compromise."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a rather good speech.

Mr. MOORE: It is quite a good speech and quite candid, and if the Premier had been more candid, we probably would have had more information. It is a candid statement that we want, so that we shall know exactly the position in which we stand. It is impossible to make any definite estimate of the value of the concession without knowing the present rental of each of the leases concerned, the date of the last reappraisal, etc. Without allowing for resummptions since 1910, the following figures show the number and area of the pastoral leases covered by this agreement which expire in 1930 or later:—

Year of Expiry of Leases.	Number.	Area.
		Sq. miles.
1930	60	6,277
1931	10	1,460
1932	11	2,581
1933	44	11,152
1934	55	5,088
1935	35	5,046
1936	53	9,774
1937	81	16,864
1938	58	14,278
1939	55	9,550
1940	53	10,042
1941	26	4,945
1942	8	2,460
1943	7	2,319
1944	49	20,791
1945	23	11,695
1946	80	34,755
1947	9	4,849
1948	45	16,272
1949	9	4,814
1950	5	2,653
1951	1	38
1952	5	1,874
Totals	782	199,577

Allowing for resumption of one-fourth of the above area since 1910—which is a liberal allowance—it leaves the area of leases covered by the agreement at 149,683 square miles, equal to 95,797,120 acres. The total area of selections of all kinds standing good on 31st March, 1922, was 90,536,623 acres. Practically all of the above leases are subject to one reappraisal before expiry—many of these reappraisements are due as from June, 1924—and the majority of these are subject to two or three reappraisements. The Land Act Amendment Act of 1920 was assented to on 9th March, 1920, and most of the reappraisements of rental under that Act took place in 1920, 1921, and 1922. Rental values of land depend on many factors, including closer settlement, a big demand for a particular class of land, and

[Mr. Moore.

market prices of products. So far as sheep land is concerned, the undermentioned figures relating to wool prices show that a sharp rise has occurred since the majority of the leases were reappraised under the 1920 Act, and no one can say that the present prices will not at any rate be maintained, or, even if they slump, be again reached within the next twenty years. Another war may occur, and prices of both wool and beef may reach a very high level, or other factors may bring about this result. Again, it is well known that owing to the demand for sheep country, new selections suitable for carrying sheep are continually being opened at higher rentals than existing grazing selections of the same quality and in the same locality, and much higher rentals than existing pastoral holdings of similar quality. This must certainly tend to raise the rental values of the existing selections and holdings. The following table makes a comparison of the wool prices:—

	Average Price Per Bale.
	£ s. d.
1913-14	15 2 0
1914-15	13 6 3
1915-16	17 7 5
1916-17	22 16 11
1917-18	24 13 6
1918-19	25 4 7
1919-20	25 18 1
1920-21	17 7 11
1921-22	20 17 11
1922-23	28 7 5
1923-24	35 0 5

The Premier, in his policy speech delivered on the 10th September, 1920, stated—

"Last year, the average rent paid by the squatters and pastoralists in Queensland was 16s. per square mile, while the average rent paid by the grazing farmers and selectors was 59s. per square mile.

Nobody but a one-eyed partisan of the rich squatters could see any equity or justice in the old statute. The Labour party for many years advocated the reform of the land laws to 'equalise the pastoralists and selectors rents.'

The Labour platform of 1923 states—

"Equalisation of rents payable by pastoralists and grazing farmers. No special concession to pastoral lessees."

The present average rentals paid on pastoral leases and grazing selections, as disclosed by the annual report for 1922, are—

	£ s. d.
" Pastoral leases	1 6 9
Grazing selections	3 17 10

If this agreement is "a mere formula," are the Government prepared to apply the same formula in the case of grazing selections? Will it pass legislation directing the Land Court that in all reappraisements of grazing selections, its principal consideration must be the rental payable by pastoral lessees holding land of similar quality in the same neighbourhood? Will the Secretary for Public Lands direct that the rentals of all new land opened to grazing selection must be governed by the same consideration?

The statements that have been made are so conflicting that it is absolutely essential that a clear and definite understanding

should be given to this House, even if that statement is going to make for more difficulties on the part of the Government. The blundering that has occurred has [10.30 a.m.] meant a large increase in the interest bill and a very difficult situation for the State. The restriction of private enterprise and the increase in the activities of the State have meant that such a large army of workers are now employed by the State that any increase in the interest bill will impose a very huge burden. If a fair return was secured on the money invested, or, as the platform of the Labour party says, the "reproductive works" were brought to that state the position would not be so bad. The latest figures I have been able to obtain in regard to the returns from public services and charges on revenue form interesting reading—

	Interest on Public Debt.	Receipts from Loan Works and Services.	Actual Charge on Revenue.	Revenue.	Percentage of actual Charge on Revenue.
—	£	£	£	£	
Queensland	3,589,714	1,458,317	2,131,397	12,599,403	16.92
New South Wales	8,610,782	7,086,279	1,544,503	36,145,944	4.27
Victoria	5,350,140	4,406,952	853,188	21,298,210	4.00

These figures show that the so-called reproductive works in Queensland are not returning to the State anything like the amount they should, and the charge on revenue is becoming such a heavy burden that it necessitates the heaviest taxation in any State in the Commonwealth. If private enterprise was encouraged and factories developed at the rate they should be, and if the earning capacity of the people was such as it ought to be in such a State as Queensland, the burden would be considerably lighter. In a statement prepared at the request of the Premier of Tasmania, the Hon. J. Lyons, Mr. Giblin shows the tax-paying capacity of the States and a comparison of its severity. Queensland shows up in this return the worst of any State. In Queensland the tax-paying

capacity decreased from 1915-1916, taking 1,000 as the index number, from 1,149 down to 789 in 1920-1921. The comparative severity of taxation on these figures shows the crude rate to be 84s. in Tasmania and 106s. 6d. in Queensland, the highest of any of the States. It surely must be apparent that some alteration in the policy of the Government is worthy of consideration when we come to such a condition of affairs. The industrial development of Queensland should not be so far behind the other States. The factories statistics from 1913 to 1922, though, show that in the percentage of increase in the number of factories, the number of factory employees and the percentage of salaries and wages to the value of the output, Queensland is by far the worst State in the Commonwealth. To my mind that should not be. We have the raw material available and the opportunities here, and it only requires the encouragement of capital to adequately develop our secondary industries. In Queensland from 1913 to 1922 the increase in the number of factories has only been forty, the increase in the factory employees 1,040, while from 1917 to 1922 the percentage increase in factory employees has only been 4.25, and the percentage of salaries and wages to the value of the output was only 17.89. In comparison with every other State, Queensland is the lowest in the whole Commonwealth. To my mind, in a rich State like Queensland, that should not be so, and it is high time that state of affairs should be altered. It only wants a system to be adopted adequately to encourage private enterprise, which should be given equal opportunities to those enjoyed in the other States.

The following statement given by the Premier when he came back from London illustrates the position we have come to—

"They had set themselves as an absolute minimum a £5,000,000 per year programme from loan money. If overseas markets were closed, could they raise that £5,000,000 within Queensland or Australia? No. The present Federal Treasurer had reported to the Australian Loan Council some time ago that, after canvassing the situation thoroughly and examining the individual programmes of the various States of Australia, the maximum amount that could be advanced to Queensland under a scheme of generous allotment was under £700,000 for the year's loan money. They could see from this that if they did not have access to overseas loan money, the State would be faced with disaster."

He went on to say—

"Queensland carried a small population, and inordinately heavy burdens, and therefore it had to draw upon capital, knowing it had the resources which would be turned into real assets later on, and that the new capital induced and expended would be no great burden upon future generations."

I suppose that no greater condemnation has ever been offered by anyone opposed to the Government than was offered by the Premier himself when he said that the Government consider that £5,000,000 a year was the minimum amount of loan money required, otherwise the State would be faced with disaster. I cannot reconcile the statement the Premier now makes with the following statement

Mr. Moore.]

which he made in 1913, when he was in opposition—

“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 public 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 Secretary for Public Lands a short time ago, when acting as Premier, pointed out that the expenditure of loan money must be curtailed. After the recent Treasurers' Conference, at which he was present, Sir Arthur Cox, Treasurer of New South Wales, is reported to have said—

“There must be a curtailment of spending by the State Governments. He added that it was recognised by every Treasurer who attended the Loan Council that the Cabinet must realise the necessity of a diminution in the spending programme, unless they were determined to act against the advice of financial authorities in regard to the trend of public borrowing. It was impossible for the Government to suddenly reduce their expenditure by 50 per cent., but, on the other hand, it was equally impossible to go on spending in the same way in the future as had been done in the past. The money was not available, and a curtailment would have to be effected voluntarily or else outside forces would compel a diminution in the expenditure of borrowed money.”

After those statements made by the Acting Treasurer, and in the statements published by the Loan Council, it surely stands to reason that it is impossible for Queensland to spend loan money, as the Premier stated, at the rate of a minimum of £5,000,000 per year. The State will not be able to stand the strain of the interest bill, and the whole position must be reconsidered. The financial position is becoming a most disastrous one, and, although we have been successful in getting access to the English loan market, we cannot afford to spend at the rate forecast by the Treasurer.

I would like to say a word in regard to the appointment of the Agent-General. In the light of the statements that have been made by the late occupant of that office, it seems to me a most extraordinary thing that another political appointment should be made at an increased salary.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: The late occupant of the office says that the position is a farce. He says that the office should be abolished; but, in spite of his suggestions, and in spite of his experience, the Government still go on making the same class of appointment. I have received a letter from the hon. member for Cooroora, who is at present in England, and his statement to me confirms what he has

[Mr. Moore.

cabled recommending the appointment to the office of a man who thoroughly understands the commercial requirements of Queensland, and he says that such an appointment would be of immense benefit to this State. Such an appointment, he states, would be the means of saving thousands of pounds in the marketing of our products, and also be of immense value in instructing the Government in what is best to be done. Instead of that, we find the same principle being established, by which an appointment is made to find a billet for a political colleague who has served long in the Labour party. In my opinion that is absolutely wrong. I sincerely believe that a young and capable business man, if sent to England as Agent-General, would be invaluable to the State, but I do not believe in the present idea of making it a political appointment. If the increase in salary that has been given is meant to help the Agent-General to withstand the temptations that the late occupant said are always before the Agent-General in the shape of graft, it is a thoughtful action; but if the value of his services is so little, as was stated by the late occupant, then it is a wasted expenditure and should not be passed by this House.

I want to pass on to the question mentioned by the Premier the other night and which is evidenced in the Governor's Speech—that of the 44-hour week. Before the Premier left for England he made a speech to the Trades and Labour Council in which he pointed out the absurdity of reducing the industrial week to forty-four hours. He pointed out that it was absolutely impossible for the industries of Queensland to compete with Southern industries if this concession were granted. He also pointed out that it was the prerogative of the Arbitration Court to grant such a concession if it were justified, and if I had time I would like to quote several of the remarks he made to the effect that it would be out of the question to grant that concession. Now the strong man of Queensland has climbed down, because outside pressure was put on him and he has agreed to grant a 44-hour week. What it will mean to the producer and the agriculturist outside it is not difficult to understand. The Premier is going out of State politics, and he does not mind what happens to Queensland. He will feel safe enough in the Federal sphere.

When the railway employees applied to the Arbitration Court for a 44-hour week, it was pointed out by the presiding judge in his judgment that such an innovation would mean an estimated additional expenditure of £120,000 per annum to the Railway Department. This will have to be made up out of fares and freights, and the burden to a tremendous extent will fall on the producer. It means that the people who to-day are working fourteen and sixteen hours a day will, with their families, have to work still harder and suffer greater hardships and have their wages reduced, in order that a favoured section of the community may work only forty-four hours a week.

To my mind it is absolutely wrong, in view of the present disastrous and disorganised conditions which apply to the producers of Queensland, to place this additional burden on them. I remember, when the Premier brought in his Laidley programme for the organisation of producers, that they were practically living in a state of slavery, yet he proposes to place this additional burden on

them in the shape of increased freights and fares merely to enable a favoured section of the community to have a 44-hour week. He does this rather than leave the matter to the Arbitration Court, which should determine whether the industry and the country can stand it. This extra burden is going to bring about greater congestion in the towns and cities, and will mean a loss of production in the country.

The way in which the Government have handled the cotton question has been nothing but a series of blunders from beginning to end. The most extraordinary part of the position is that the man who has obeyed the law is to be penalised, and the man who has disregarded the law is going to be subsidised.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: I cannot understand the position adopted by the Government. Voluminous and sound evidence was placed before them, and they should have allowed the matter of ratoning to stand over for twelve months until further facts and evidence were produced. Instead of that, they put into force a regulation which has done very much harm to the country, and has resulted in many prospective cotton farmers becoming disgusted and going out of the business, resulting in a loss, not only to them, but to the State.

To my mind the hesitating and vacillating policy of the Government of Queensland has had disastrous consequences to the State. They have hampered and restricted our production. At Roma they have tied up large areas of land, although many people are ready to take up and test the oil possibilities of that land. The present Government do not do any work themselves on that land, and refuse to allow others to work it. Repeated applications have been made by persons to allow them to develop sections of the State, but the Government have refused those applications, and are thereby retarding the development of the State. They have ample oil legislation to enable them to secure themselves and get a large revenue without tying up the huge area of Queensland. I think there is no just excuse for such "dog-in-the-manger" action.

The legislation of the present Government has been short-sighted and has been stupid in many cases, resulting in great loss to the State. Their hesitating and vacillating policy has retarded progress, while their nationalising and socialistic policy has succeeded in driving industry and capital to other places. Their policy of production for use and not for profit has induced people to invest money in other States rather than in Queensland. Statistical tables show that industrial development in Queensland is behind that of every other State in the Commonwealth, and I therefore beg to move, by way of amendment to the Address in Reply, to add the following words:—

"But we desire to inform your Excellency that the Government does not possess the confidence of this House."

I think everybody can see the unfortunate position into which the State has got, and I am perfectly justified in proposing such an amendment. The statement from the Premier as to the concessions which have been made,

so conflicting with his election pledges, and the disastrous financial position into which the Government have got, all point to the absolute necessity for a restriction of expenditure by the State. In addition, we must consider the disastrous position of our industries in Queensland and the stagnation of development which we have had to put up with during the regime of the Government. There has also been a decrease in land settlement of almost 50 per cent. in seven years, and these facts all combined tend to show that the administration of the present Government has been unsatisfactory, and that development has been nothing like what it should have been in a State with the advantages and fertility of Queensland. That being so, I now beg to move my amendment.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I desire to second the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. In doing so, I want to set out as clearly and as concisely as possible seven or eight points and reasons why a motion of censure should be passed on the present Government of the State.

A good deal of water has run under the bridge since the last election, and the Government, by their various actions during the interim, caused many reasonable persons who have given the subject consideration to desire that the Government should be brought to book for some of their recent actions.

I first want to deal with the Premier's negotiations in regard to the loan conversion in London.

Before the Premier departed from Queensland for the purpose of propaganda, he boasted that he was then negotiating for the conversion of £25,000,000 of loan money. A good deal of capital was made out of that statement, and he tried to raise sympathy in Queensland prior to his departure by saying that it was something never accomplished in Queensland before. We only have to turn to the year 1915 to find that the then Administration renewed loans amounting to £11,723,000. The Premier on this occasion only had to renew loans amounting to £12,703,000—£1,000,000 more. Unfortunately, by his own actions and by the actions of his Government, it was much harder on this occasion to get a satisfactory deal for the State than it was on the previous occasion. I want to refer also to the prospectus that was issued by the Bank of England in regard to this matter. The loan was shown to be at 5½ per cent. issued at 99½. It must be remembered that of the £12,703,000 to be converted a sum of £4,764,000 was paying 3½ per cent., and £7,939,000 was paying 4 per cent. That is the reason why the Government should be censured. The call down of the Premier at the Trades Hall is no concern of mine. By reason of the extra interest payable for securing a conversion of the loan Queensland has suffered tremendously. We find that the list closed in London in April, 1924, and I want to quote other issues about that date to show that, while Queensland has had to pay 5½ per cent. for conversion money, no other State in Australia, and no other country in the world, paid such a high rate of interest. The Premier may have been guided by the Bank of England, but who guided the Bank of England in this matter? The legislation previously passed by the Government was

Mr. Kerr.]

the decisive factor so far as the Bank of England was concerned. In April, 1924, we issued our prospectus for the Queensland conversion loan. In the same year loans were floated by the following States on the following terms:—

—	—	Interest.	Issue Price.	Terms.	Yield to Investors.
Feb.	W. Aust.	5.2	98	Years, 11-21	£ s. d. 5 3 3
Feb.	S. Africa	5	97½	9-19	5 1 8
March	N. S. W.	5	97½	11-31	5 2 7
March	S. Aust.	5	98	9-19	5 3 4
April	Qland	5½	99½	2-5	5 12 4
April	C'wealth	5	par	11-21	5 0 0
April	N. Zealand	4½	95	21	4 17 19
June	N. S. W.	5	par	12-32	5 0 0
		£			
		2,000,000			
		4,000,000			
		16,427,000			
		1,650,000			
		12,703,000			
		10,000,000			
		5,000,000			
		10,000,000			

Queensland, for the £12,703,000 conversion, was the only country in the world at that time, or within a few months before or after that date, which had to pay as much as 5½ per cent. for a discount loan of 99½. A great deal has been made of the fact that the Queensland loan was oversubscribed. No wonder it was oversubscribed when such a high rate of interest was to be paid by the Queensland Government. It is the best gilt-edged security that has been placed on the market for some time, and the Premier cannot take credit for it having been oversubscribed. It was only oversubscribed because of the high rate of interest allowed. I have a note here which gives the summing up of the leading critics—

"A careful perusal of the conditions of the principal financial papers at the time of issue of the Queensland loan disclosed very few critics who favoured the short loan policy. The only one of any importance was the 'Times.'"

As against that, we have the outburst of the Secretary for Public Works, that "We must have money." The Government are just in that position that they must have money, and it is unfortunate that, in order to get more money, they have sacrificed the interests of the taxpayer and the interests of the whole of the community of Queensland. Someone has to pay for it, and it is time Queensland sat up and took notice of the financial conditions.

There is another point, too. The extra interest charged means a further charge of £203,000 a year. If you look at the loans floated by the various States, you will find that, owing to the high rate of interest paid by Queensland as compared to that paid by

[Mr. Kerr.

the other States, Queensland will have to meet an extra interest bill.

As compared with—	Annum.
Western Australia, Queensland pays an extra	£ 49,000
South Africa, Queensland pays an extra	32,000
New South Wales, Queensland pays an extra	32,000
South Australia, Queensland pays an extra	35,000
Commonwealth, Queensland pays an extra	77,000
New Zealand, Queensland pays an extra	56,000
New South Wales, Queensland pays an extra	63,000

That is what the conversion of £12,703,000 means to Queensland owing to the high rate of interest to be paid as compared to the interest paid by the other States for their loan money. There is no reason why we should have paid that price for the renewal of that loan other than the repudiation legislation which has already been dealt with, because at that time other Queensland stock was on the same level in London as the stock of the other States. Queensland 6 per cent. stock was quoted at £105 7s. 6d.; Commonwealth 6 per cent. stock at £105 5s.; New South Wales 6 per cent. at £104; and Victoria 5½ per cent. at £103 2s. 6d. I say distinctly, therefore, that the Premier has been guilty, and his Government have been guilty, of making a distinct gift to the people in the old country. There was no necessity to go to the extent of crippling the industries of Queensland to a large extent by making the taxation much heavier than was necessary, and I again say that a vote of censure is very necessary.

Mr. FOLEY: Do you suggest that he should have gone to America for the money?

Mr. KERR: The position would have been much worse if he had gone to America to get this money.

Mr. FOLEY: He only had one alternative.

Mr. KERR: He had an alternative, and he took the alternative. He was told what sort of letter to write to get the money, and he turned round and wrote the letter. The letter has been placed on the table of the House, and we were informed of the facts this morning by the Acting Premier. There is nothing certain in regard to the future money situation. The Premier says he has arranged for the renewal of further loans, but there is nothing definite about that. Another £11,000,000 or £12,000,000 will have to be renewed at an early date, and we have no certainty that any action has been taken in regard to that matter whatsoever.

I want to deal with one or two other matters, especially with the police tangle. I want to tackle this from the point of view that the Government nearly brought [11 a.m.] the State to a verge where there might have been an exhibition of disloyalty in certain sections of the public service. I do not desire to touch at this stage upon the rights or wrongs of the police, but I want to emphasise publicly that, in my opinion, the Police Force conditions should be at least equal to those in New South Wales, and on other occasions in the House I will

take the opportunity of stating my views in that regard.

Mr. HYNES: Your predecessors refused to give the police a vote.

Mr. KERR: We have had hon. members opposite in power for eight or nine years, and yet in the adjoining State the police conditions are better than they are here. They have so administered affairs that the Police Force has had to come with a pistol and place it at their head, and the Government have backed down. To avoid an explosion the Government in their wisdom have climbed down. It is deplorable that we have a Government in power who have not got the wisdom or foresight to see the trouble that would ensue if the police conditions here were not made equal to those in the other States. The Government are equivocating still in regard to the matter, but let us hope they will be wise and do the right thing. When the Government place themselves in a position like this the people outside should take cognisance of their actions.

Another reason why a vote of censure should be carried against the Government is because of their disregard of the interests of the young boys who are coming on in Queensland. I venture to say that there are over 1,000 boys who have not had an opportunity under the administration of this Government of learning a trade. If that is not deserving of censure I think nothing is. I could quote cases of hundreds of men who are at a dead-end to-day because of the action of this Government, and the dominance of unions and the Trades Hall who will not allow men to take a job when they can get it. A silly regulation has been in existence for years requiring an arithmetic sum to be worked by a boy who wants to be an apprentice, and because he may not be able to work a fifth class arithmetic sum correctly that boy is deprived of his future living as a skilled tradesman. It is only because of the opposition on this side that we have been enabled to remove those restrictions, and it is through our efforts year after year that we are now able to tell a boy that he can take a job without having to work such a sum.

I want to refer to another matter. A man who to-day is out on the street unemployed cannot take a job that is offered to him under existing conditions. I am going to fight in this House until such time as a man who has a job offered to him can take it.

Mr. HYNES: Don Quixote used to do a lot of fighting, too.

Mr. KERR: It is about time the hon. member started fighting, too. I have had a concrete instance of men to-day who have been offered jobs not being allowed to take them. For instance, a man was offered a job in connection with the spreading of hides at a slaughter-yard. He went to the union, and was told that the books were full and he could not take the job. What is happening to-day as a result of this kind of thing, is that men and their wives and families are drawing State aid. Is it right to stop a man from getting a job? It is against common law.

Mr. HYNES: Your predecessors made them work for rations.

Mr. KERR: There are many men walking about the town to-day who could get a job, but they are not permitted to get it because of the legislation passed here. Some men want to make a monopoly of jobs, and they are working with the Government to get

that monopoly. A man who can get a job should be allowed to take it, and until that time arrives the Government will be censured by the Opposition year after year.

Another point I wish to make in regard to the need for censuring the Government is this: Only the other night we had time and again statements made that engineering and other work was going to be done in this State. That should be the policy of the Government, but they have not carried it out. In 1920 we bought £356,910 worth of material from London. The railways alone indented £340,896. In 1921 we indented £303,018 worth of material from the old country, the railways purchasing £253,715, and so on, year after year, we have been indenting material from the old country which should be made in this State. All the talk of making rolling-stock and other things in this country is all "eyewash," and the vote of censure is being moved to-day to try and make the Government do the right thing, and give employment to the men of Queensland.

I want now to deal with a financial matter which I think will interest most of the rate-payers in the area of Greater Brisbane, that is in connection with the Brisbane Tramway Trust. We can recall the negotiations in regard to the purchase of the tramway system, and they are closely connected with the loan conversion in regard to which the Premier visited the old country. My own opinion is that we have paid in a spirit of conciliation many thousands of pounds too much for these tramways.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is the fault of your own representatives on the Tramway Trust. They agreed to that.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member practically acknowledges that too much has been paid. The London "Times" had this to say with regard to the Brisbane tramways—

"It is another indication that Queensland is desirous of improving her status on the British market by getting rid of all contentious matters."

The time has passed when the State can afford to give away what we are giving away to-day.

I frankly admit that we might have to give away a concession to repair an acknowledged wrong, as the Premier did, but why should we give away our money in other cases as if we had many thousands of pounds to spare? Our powers of taxation are exhausted. The time has arrived when people have to take stock carefully of what they have to pay out, and nothing should be given away without complete justification. I admit that from an accountant's point of view the position of the tramway business is undoubtedly somewhat obscure. It is very difficult to get at it clearly, but I propose to show as far as I possibly can what the assets of the Brisbane Tramways Company were, according to the Company, when the Trust took them over. The Brisbane Tramways Company took over the old horse tram system, for which was allocated a sum of £105,148. The actual cost of the work done by the Brisbane Tramway Construction Company was £229,812, and the work done by the Brisbane Tramways Investment Company to 1919 represented another £555,632, or a total of £890,592. To these figures must be added the expenditure since 1919, including work done by the Investment Company, 1920-22, of £14,711, and stores on hand when the undertaking was acquired by the Tramway

Mr. Kerr.]

Trust of a value of, say, £120,000, making a total of £1,025,303. Now we are to pay for the undertaking £1,400,000. I want to know how it is that we have to pay so much more than the assets represent. The Government did not let the appeal go to the Privy Council. Had they done so, it might have cost us £10,000 or £20,000.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: If we had gone there you would have said that we ought not to have gone.

Mr. KERR: As a governing body the Government have to carry out the law, and they should have tested the position according to the laws of the land, and not given away thousands of pounds for the purpose of trying to get our conversion loan—which when we did get it we only got at the highest rate possible for a State to pay.

Mr. GLEDSON: You ought to make that speech to the Tramway Trust.

Mr. KERR: They can read my speech. One of their first actions has been to try to raise the fares. In my electorate a protest meeting has already been held which I attended, and at which I supported the actions of the people. The profits are so great at the present time that there is no justification whatever for an increase of fares, and I am afraid that this attempt to increase them is only a beginning. I protest as strongly as I can against it while profits are being made.

Mr. GLEDSON: Did you not oppose taking over the tramways, saying that there would be no profits, but a loss?

Mr. KERR: Did I? I ask the hon. member to produce his proof, and to show me any speech I ever made in which I made any such statement. It must not be forgotten that this money which is to be paid away has to be provided for, which, of course, the community have to pay. The first balance-sheet of the Brisbane Tramway Investment Company, December, 1901, puts the value of the shares at £1,150,719, although the tramway undertaking was shown as representing only £732,089—a discrepancy of £418,630. In 1922 the assets stood at £1,653,073, although in 1919, when the accountants made their report, the full capital expenditure was given as £890,592. The difference of £747,770 appears to represent shares and debentures for which no tangible assets exist. Apparently the Government have sacrificed the interests of the people by acquiring the tramways at a higher price for the sake of getting themselves out of the muddle they found themselves in as a result of the repudiation Act.

Mr. FARRELL: Do you not know that Mr. Macrossan advised it?

Mr. KERR: I do not know. Mr. Macrossan may be well versed in law, and an eminent barrister, undoubtedly he is recognised as such, but, when qualified accountants take out figures such as those which have been given to us and there is a discrepancy of many thousands of pounds, it is very hard for a man of common sense to see how we are justified in giving away so much for apparently nothing. The question has been raised that no valuation had been made of the undertaking, and we find in the first report of the Trust some statements in regard to the condition of the assets—

“Much of the plant in the power-house is obsolete and inefficient compared with modern machinery.”

[Mr. Kerr.

We bought “a pig in a poke,” and it is going to react upon us year after year. As to the shortage of cars, the report says—

“The Trust’s difficulties are accentuated by the bad condition of many of the cars, particularly as regards obsolete and inefficient motors, also by the bad condition of the wheels, inefficient maintenance of the insulation of electric cables underneath the cars, and leaky roofs.”

Then as to the maintenance of tracks, the report says—

“Before the Trust took charge the tracks and road surfaces had been allowed to fall into a serious state of disrepair.”

Everywhere you turn you find justification for repeating the arguments we on this side have used; and yet we have the Premier going home and offering £1,400,000 for something which on the face of it is not worth that figure. But the “London Times” explains that it is one more contentious matter out of the way.

I want to follow the leader of the Opposition in regard to the stupendous blunder which was made by the Government in regard to the cotton industry. I admit that it is not much good crying over spilt milk, and I am not going to take up that attitude at all. This is not a motion of censure only for what has been done, but also for what is not being done. There is no equity in the proposed arrangement regarding the conditions to rectify the Government’s own bungling. We find ourselves in this position—that certain legislation is on the statute-book. Some cotton-growers have carried out the provisions of that law, and have destroyed their means of livelihood and credit. Other men have defied the law, and they are to be compensated for so doing, by reason of the fact that they have a crop and can sell it. Are the men who destroyed their ratoon cotton in accordance with the Government’s Act of Parliament going to be compensated? I say that the Government have to do the right thing. So far the Secretary for Agriculture has indicated that no action will be taken, but I venture to say that the Minister will again have to crawl and crayfish out of the position he has created and agree to pay compensation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the word “crawl” as applied to the Secretary for Agriculture.

Mr. KERR: I withdraw it and say, “walk backwards.” It is well that, when we censure, we should also point out the right line of action to take. I am quite sure that, if an open vote were taken in this House after a consideration of the points which have been brought forward this morning, the Government would not last five minutes.

Just in conclusion, I want to say that the most important subject with which we as an Assembly can deal is the administration which has to follow the passage of our various Acts of Parliament.

We are reaching a stage to-day in the administration of our finances when consideration should be given to reduction in taxation. The Commonwealth Government have seen fit to reduce taxation, but, whilst that Government are in a position to do so, it will be found that such a reduction will not benefit Queensland because it will be all mopped up by the State Government. I want to emphasise that this Government should endeavour to make that reduction a benefit, and not mop up all the benefits that

the Commonwealth Government are extending to the people. That state of affairs will bring about a great deal more unemployment than exists to-day. To-day our secondary industries are in a stagnant condition because money is so tight, and that position has been brought about by this Government taking away so much in taxation. A man in business to-day does not deem it wise to extend his business by the expenditure of money because of the heavy taxation and sometimes because he is unable to obtain the money.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman must be blind. If he would go down the street, he would see buildings extending in every direction.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman may be quite right, but I would point out that, although in walking down Queen street one may see the T. and G. building and various other buildings which certainly make this city look prosperous, still those large and magnificent buildings are no indication at all of the progress of the city or the State.

Mr. GLEDSON: Then what is?

Mr. KERR: If, instead of standing in the street and looking at the buildings, hon. members would enter those buildings, they would find therein hundreds of indent merchants in little offices, not more than 20 ft. by 20 ft. What are they doing? They are sending out the various manufactures from the Southern States.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: I defy hon. members to point to any industry that is springing up in the suburbs of Brisbane. The different buildings and magnificent offices are only tenanted by men who act as agents for firms in the southern parts of Australia. We have reached a stage to-day where the deposits in the Queensland banks are not represented by local assets, but they are being sent down to the southern parts of Australia, and being invested in industries there. I do not know whether this Government could prevent that or not. In Queensland, the deposits placed in our banks are in excess of the local assets, whilst in the southern portions of Australia the assets greatly exceed the amount of local deposits. That can only mean one thing, and that is that the capital of this State, raised by means of the sale of wool, etc., is going to the southern States and is being invested there. The perusal of any statistics relating to banking returns will bear out that I am saying what is correct. We all contend that Queensland is the most solid State from the point of view of production from soil and the finest State from a climatic point of view, and, if the money that we receive for our wool, sugar, and other primary products immediately leaves this State and goes to the southern States into certain industries there, there must be something wrong. Would it be correct to say that what is happening is the fault of this Government? I venture to say that it is, because of the excessive taxation, loss of business confidence, and various other factors operating against the interests of this State. The finances of Queensland generally are in such a deplorable condition that one cannot restrain himself from censuring the Government for bringing about such a bad state financially, and then reducing the public servants' salaries by 5 per cent. The Government are not in a position to pay

any increases to the public servants, and, in fact, are unable to pay the existing salaries because of their bad financial administration, and have called upon the public servants to refund 5 per cent. of their salaries.

Mr. FARRELL: The hon. member is sore because he lost a portion of his salary.

Mr. KERR: That does not hurt me a bit. While the Government were retrenching and reducing the salaries of their employees, other firms in Queensland were giving increases to their employees. The Commonwealth public servants have not only received increases in salary, but they enjoy the automatic increases as well. The public servants in Queensland to-day are giving of their very best in the interests of the country, but because of the bad state of the finances of the country they have been called upon to forfeit a portion to the Government in order to help the Government out of their difficulty. Not only have the employees been compelled to give 5 per cent. of their salaries, but some of them have lost their positions altogether. The penalty is very great. The Government were also able to save hundreds of thousands of pounds by compelling hundreds of employees to pool their work. I refer to engine-drivers, guards, shunters, etc., who for months and months pooled their work. As a result of the 5 per cent. reduction and the pooling of work hundreds of thousands of pounds were returned to the Government to assist in overcoming bad administration.

If the people would sum up the operations of this Government during the last twelve months, they would realise that it is time that they rose and definitely demanded to know the position to which the country is drifting. The hon. member for Townsville, in speaking on the Address in Reply, made some remark hailing the advent of socialism. Another sneered at the words "God save the King!" We should endeavour to make Queensland a loyal country, and not be swayed by any sordid personal or party consideration. The time is opportune for the people to return to Parliament men with a certain amount of loyalty, if not to themselves and the old country, then loyalty to their own country. Perhaps what I have just said will not have very much effect upon hon. members opposite. There is an inner feeling in regard to this question that hon. members opposite cannot wipe out. Endeavours should be made to inculcate in the minds of the younger generation in the course of their school career a fine sense of loyalty. I hope the time will never come when the Government will inculcate in the minds of the younger generation views contrary to those that have been held for many centuries, and which have made the British people the finest race in the world. Those sentiments are never held by hon. members opposite, and the quicker the people realise that the better it will be for themselves and for this glorious State.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): In the course of my speech I propose to furnish proof that during the time that the present Government have occupied the Treasury benches, instead of making the progress which should have been made in Queensland and the progress that has been made in other parts of Australia, we have actually gone back considerably. The Government have well earned for themselves the title

Mr. Morgan.]

of "The Blundering Government." We daily see Ministers being placed in humiliating positions when meeting deputations in asking the deputations to forgive and forget the Government's past blunders.

It is only a little while ago that the Premier admitted that a blunder had been made in regard to State stations. He stated that the Government had made a mistake, but that all Governments were liable to make mistakes. That mistake has caused the country an expenditure of some hundreds of thousands of pounds. Recently the Secretary for Agriculture admitted that a mistake had been made with respect to the cotton industry. He again asked those [11.30 a.m.] engaged in that industry to forget and forgive. Men who have been ruined financially owing to the blunders made by the Government are now asked to forget and forgive.

Mr. FARRELL: To let bygones be bygones.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes—let bygones be bygones.

Mr. WARREN: Are you not satisfied with that?

Mr. MORGAN: We are all pleased to know that the Premier was successful in getting the loan money that was necessary. Before leaving Queensland a suggestion was made that he should in some way agree to meet the financiers of Great Britain in a spirit which would bring about reconciliation. He evidently took that advice, and decided to grant to the pastoralists of this State certain monetary concessions which had been taken away from them by way of repudiation. Had the Premier come back and told the people of Queensland what he had actually done, and admitted that, in order to obtain the renewal of the loans, it was necessary to give certain concessions, it would have been all right. Instead of that, the moment he arrived in Western Australia he delivered a speech, stating that he had practically given away nothing. A few days after that the Secretary for Public Lands made a statement, in which he said it would be necessary to bring in an amendment of the Land Act in order to ratify the concessions made by the Premier to the financiers of Great Britain. We now find that even the Secretary for Public Lands has been whipped into line by the Premier, because the hon. gentleman now states that it is not necessary to bring in an amendment of the Land Act, but the Land Court will not be asked by the Lands Department to deal with any reappraisements of rents. That means that the Lands Department is going to ignore the Land Act for the time being. The Minister now admits that he is going to ignore legislation passed by this House and placed on the statute-book of Queensland. His latest statement that he does not intend to ask the Land Court to reappraise the rents of pastoral holdings when the time for reappraisement arrives amounts to that.

Mr. HARTLEY: The time is not due for another ten years. Why worry about that now?

Mr. MORGAN: The Land Court will not reappraise the rentals because no application will be made by the Lands Department for it to do so. As the leader of the Opposition has told us, there are any amount of pastoral holdings falling due for reappraisement next year. As a matter of fact, some are falling due next year, yet the Government are not

going to place the matter before the court. I would like to know if that action is fair in view of the agreement entered into by the Premier. The decision may bind the present Secretary for Public Lands, who may honestly desire to respect the wishes of the Premier in that regard; but what will happen within the next few years when, perhaps, the present Minister is not in that position? What will happen when the present Premier goes out of office, as he is endeavouring to do, to become a Federal member? Will his present decision bind the Minister, whoever he may be, administering the Land Act in the future? If he is a fair and just man, he will say that the Act provides that these holdings must be reappraised every ten years. If he does his duty as Secretary for Public Lands, the people of Great Britain who lent the money to Queensland on certain conditions will discover that the word of the present Premier is not being kept. They will have to depend entirely on whoever may be the Government in power in the next ten, fifteen, or twenty years. If the Government are going to do justice to the agreement entered into by the Premier with the financiers overseas, they as honest men should bring in an amendment of the Land Act to provide exactly the terms of the agreement entered into. Unless the Act is amended, another Government can call upon the graziers to have their leaseholds reappraised. An amendment of the Land Act is the only fair thing to be done under the circumstances. The moment that the Premier goes out of the State Parliament, no matter what position he may hold, there will be nothing on the statute-book and no ratified agreement to show that he made any compromise with the money-lenders of Great Britain. It is no use the Government or the Premier endeavouring to say that the loans are only being renewed for a period of five years because money is likely to be cheaper then. We know that taxation is not likely to be reduced. We also know that money has reached a certain value, and that that value is more likely to go up than down. The true reason why the Premier could not get a loan for a longer period was because it was the only weapon the money-lenders of Great Britain possessed in order to ensure that the present Government recognised and carried into effect the agreement entered into by them with the Premier. If the Government do not fulfil that agreement, in five years they will be called on to repay the £12,000,000.

Hon. M. J. KEWAN: Why all the tears?

Mr. MORGAN: They will not be able to repay it. It is the sword of Damocles hanging over the neck of the Premier of the day waiting to chop off his political head if the agreement is not fulfilled.

Mr. HARTLEY: If that is so, they have got it hung up by a chain which is not likely to break.

Mr. MORGAN: We know that the Government of the day, if Labour, will break the agreement if it suits them. Unfortunately, it has been a costly lesson for Queensland. The first loan with America was, in my opinion, entered into from a disloyal point of view.

Mr. COLLINS: Cut that out.

Mr. MORGAN: That step was taken because of the fact that the Government were going to interfere with the moneyed interests in the State. Great Britain at the time was

[Mr. Morgan.]

up against it. She was fighting certain internal troubles, and the Government of the day thought that they would do Great Britain a certain amount of injury if they could obtain loan money in America. They went to America, but what was the result? The amount of money that was received from the graziers through increased rentals has had to be sent across to America to pay for that loan. The people of Queensland did not gain by the increased amount of money taken from the graziers of Queensland. The people who have gained are the American money-lenders. Queensland is no better off, as she had to send the extra £200,000 or £300,000 obtained from the graziers in higher rentals across the seas to America, instead of the money being used to develop the country portions of this State. Queensland is the poorer by that amount each year. That is what has happened through obtaining a loan from America. That is what this superman has done—the man who is credited throughout this State and throughout Australia as being something special! When I ask members on the Government side of the House or the people of Queensland in this particular to point out what the Premier has done—why he has earned his title—can they do it? I admit the Premier has been boosted by the Press, but it has been proved by questions asked in this House that he has been boosted by money taken from the Treasury.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You will say anything but your prayers.

Mr. MORGAN: We know that "Smith's Weekly" was paid an enormous sum of money—it appears in "Hansard"—for the purpose of writing up the Premier. We know that the Press does not generally conduct business on a philanthropic basis or from a charitable point of view, and when any favourable publicity is required by an individual it is usually paid for. The Government of the day, though unfortunately they are not prepared to run the business of the country on a businesslike basis, are sufficiently businesslike to subsidise articles boosting the Premier and other Ministers.

Mr. HARTLEY: How much was paid?

Mr. MORGAN: With respect to an article that appeared in a Roma paper at a cost of £50 we know that that was written about the late Agent-General, Mr. Hunter, praising him up to the skies and telling people what a great man he was. We asked the question and found that the article was paid for.

Mr. HARTLEY: Then you have not got much hope of getting over here, for nobody wants to pay to boost you.

Mr. MORGAN: The Premier knows the value of securing articles in the Press, particularly in the Press not politically in his favour. He recognises that, if an article appears in a publication that does not support his party politically, it is of greater value than if it appeared in the "Standard" or some other paper subsidised by his Government. Such boosting has caused his reputation to be built up. If we were to go into figures and facts, we would find that Queensland has not progressed under this wonderful Labour Government and the superman, the Premier of Queensland. Instead of that we are daily going down, down, and down.

The Assistant Minister, the hon. member for Brisbane, asked whether hon. members on this side of the House ever walked down Queen street. I am sorry to say that the

prosperity of Brisbane is not reflected throughout Queensland. If it were, we would have nothing to complain about. I admit that money can be borrowed to-day for the purpose of erecting buildings in Queen street—for bricks and mortar in the capital town of Queensland—but unfortunately the same amount of money—or practically any money—cannot be obtained for the purpose of developing the country portions of this State. It was pointed out by the hon. member for Enoggera that Brisbane is only developing by reason of the fact that it is building offices for those who sell articles that are manufactured in Southern States. We have fewer factories in Queensland to-day than we had ten years ago. We are really a State upon which the rest of Australia dumps manufactured articles, and we sell them, use them, and consume them.

Our workers are not getting the benefit of our industries. Our cattle, for instance, have been going to the Southern States to be killed, while our workmen have had nothing to do, and have had to apply to the Government for subsidies. Instead of helping those workmen by giving them work, we are allowing our cattle to be sent away and killed, and the Southern people to have the benefit of that work of slaughtering and handling the stock.

What is the Premier doing in respect to the present agitation from the public service? To-day there is agitation right throughout Queensland. Every department of our State service is a seething mass of discontent. The police, the railway officials, and everybody else is coming forward and asking the Premier to do certain things. He has decided upon certain conditions that a Bill be introduced into this House that will not come into operation until 1st July, 1925. By that delay he will throw the burden of a 44-hour week on those who follow him. He does not care a rap what happens to the financial position of Queensland once he gets away. He is just the same as a previous ex-Premier when he took from Queensland all his capital and invested it in other States. The Premier does not care what happens the moment after he wins the plebescite for the Herbert. He knows that the electorate for which he wishes to stand is strong in the matter of public servants, and he is therefore promising to benefit them in the future and so endeavouring to get one over the hon. member for South Brisbane.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member is not in order in imputing improper motives to the Premier.

Mr. MORGAN: There is no doubt that the Premier is endeavouring to make his marble good by saying that these things will be brought into effect in the future. It will be noticed that he is not proposing to bring them into operation during the time he will be Premier of the State. He knows what will be the consequences of such legislation, and he is not prepared to take the risk and carry the burden. He is allowing those who will follow to shoulder the responsibility. Perhaps they deserve all they will get, because they are forcing these things on the Premier at the present time.

Regarding the cotton question, while we admit that the Secretary for Agriculture may be genuine in his endeavours, we know that a fearful mess has been made of the cotton industry through Government interference.

Mr. Morgan.]

Had the industry been allowed to go on and grow, like the wool industry for example, it would have been a success. The Government did not foster the wool industry. Its success is due to the graziers and sheep owners, and it is now proving the salvation of Australia. It did not receive assistance from any Government; rather, it was continually pestered and burdened by Governments.

Mr. HARTLEY: What about Kidston establishing wool sales in Brisbane?

Mr. MORGAN: To-day it is the stand-by of Australia. We find that the Government by interfering with the cotton industry, which was likely to achieve the same success as the wool industry, have strangled that industry through their blunders. Why did they not allow the cotton industry to sink or swim by the endeavours of the growers? They did not want Government interference.

Mr. HARTLEY: You had to get the Government to buy your gineries for you.

Mr. MORGAN: We want the industry to be conducted and controlled by the growers, and to sink or swim on its merits.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are on a 6 per cent. guarantee with your cotton.

Mr. MORGAN: Through the interference of the Government insects that have never been seen inland from the coast have penetrated to the West, although it was pointed out that cotton seed was likely to carry such insects. Those insects were taken to the West in the seed that we buy from Brisbane and the coast.

Mr. W. COOPER: How do you know that?

Mr. MORGAN: I know it is a fact, because I have lived in Queensland for seventeen years and have grown crops of all types. It is only since cotton has been taken up—and this is the experience of others—that we have seen these insects. They were not there previously. It was known that they were prevalent in the coastal districts, and now we find them ravaging the cotton in the western portions of Queensland.

Then again, take the railway freights and fares. We find there is going to be another increase, and the people in the country have to pay railway freights both ways. That is to say, if I am a producer and have something to sell and send it to Brisbane to be sold, I pay the freight from my town to Brisbane. Then if I want foodstuffs or wearing apparel or machinery manufactured in Brisbane, I pay the freight from Brisbane up to my country town. The city people do not pay railway freights at all. Now we are told that an extra burden is going to be placed on the country people of this State.

Mr. HARTLEY: The man who buys your lucerne pays the freight.

Mr. MORGAN: The man who buys our lucerne does not pay the freight. Unfortunately we sell our lucerne in the city, and the freight is charged to us by the merchant who sells the lucerne. We sell our stock in the Enoggera yards, and we pay freight on our stock down to Enoggera. Why is it that the population of the cities is increasing to such an extent over the population of country districts, and why is the country population drifting to the cities? Figures cannot lie, more especially figures that are prepared by the Government Statistician, and this is what has actually happened in Queens-

land during the eight years of Labour Administration and during the eight years prior to the Labour Government taking office in Queensland:—

DRIFT OF POPULATION.
DRIFT OF POPULATION TO CITIES.

—	Increase.	Increase Per Cent.
		%
Eight years to 1914—		
Cities and Towns ..	52,688	23.2
Shires	104,881	34.2
Eight years to 1922—		
Cities and Towns ..	64,005	22.9
Shires	16,648	4.4

The cities have gone ahead by 22.9 per cent. while the country districts have only increased by 4.4 per cent. during those eight years. That does not even represent the natural increase by births in the country districts. Those figures show that the people of the country are drifting to the cities under a Labour Government. Why?

Mr. HARTLEY: Showing that you are hunting them off the land because you won't pay a decent wage.

Mr. MORGAN: No. It shows that the productiveness of the country is not sufficient to enable us to employ labour. It is not sufficient generally to enable us to make a decent living on the land ourselves. That is the reason for the drift to the cities, and not because we do not pay decent wages. The country is being denuded of its population, and what have this Government done? When members on the other side were on the Opposition benches they were always crying out for the opening of land for closer settlement. They have been in power now for eight or nine years, and the following table shows conclusively that there has been less land opened for settlement during the time they have been in power than was opened during the eight years prior to the Labour Government taking office:—

LAND ACQUIRED FOR CLOSER SETTLEMENT ADJACENT TO EXISTING RAILWAYS.

—	Name.	Acreage.	Cost.
			£
1907 to 1914	Jimbour ..	121,061	423,713
	Cooroy ..	5,507	10,465
	Maryvale ..	29,156	87,468
	Widgee ..	46,827	92,534
	Inkerman ..	80,088	130,143
	Totals ..	282,639	744,323
1915 to 1922	Cecil Plains ..	120,947	241,894

SETTLEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL CROWN LANDS.

—	Selections.	Area.
		Acres.
1907 to 1914	20,257	11,518,708
1915 to 1922	10,542	5,221,924
Deficit	9,715	6,296,784

Not half the area of land has been opened during the régime of this Government that was opened prior to their taking control of

[Mr. Morgan.]

the Treasury benches. Previous to taking office members of the Labour party were continually abusing the Liberal Government for allowing land to be held in large areas. What have the present Government done in respect of the land that was proposed to be opened in the Roma and Goondiwindi districts? During the last election they obtained a number of votes under false pretences, inasmuch as they told the people that they were going to resume vast areas of land and cut it up for closer settlement. Have they done it? Ask the hon. member for Maranoa whether they have resumed the land that it was proposed to resume. They have not resumed land in the Goondiwindi district that they said they would resume—beautiful land for sheep which could be cut into blocks of from 5,000 to 10,000 acres. All they have done is to serve notices of resumption on these people, and they have gone no further. Just for a little political kudos before an election they said they were going to do this and do that, but they have done nothing up to the present moment in that regard.

Now I would like to draw attention to what has happened in connection with railway construction. The Government are always taking credit for building railways. We are told that they have built railways in the North. They may have built railways in the North, but very few railways have been built in the Southern portion of the State.

Mr. HARTLEY: All the "dud" railways have been built in the South.

Mr. MORGAN: The following figures in regard to railway construction are very illuminating:—

RAILWAYS.		
	1907-8 to 1914-15.	1915-16 to 1922-23.
	Miles.	Miles.
Mileage constructed and opened for traffic ..	1,701	1,067
Average mileage per annum	213	134

Nearly 700 miles more of railway were built during the last eight years of the previous Government than were constructed during the eight years of Labour Administration. Yet they pride themselves on their railway construction policy.

Mr. HARTLEY: Wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: My friend says, "Wrong." I knew the figures would surprise hon. members. They go out into their electorates, and say, "Look what we have done in railway construction. Look at the millions of acres of land that we have opened up to settlement." The figures show that they have not opened for settlement anything like the amount of land opened by the previous Administration, and the figures show that they have not constructed the same mileage of railway during the last eight years that was constructed during the last eight years of the previous administration. The Labour Government have only constructed an average of 134 miles per annum, whilst the Liberal Administration in the same period constructed an average of 213 miles per annum. Are those figures wrong? Unfortunately, those figures are not known generally throughout Queensland, and the people have a right to know them.

There is a general idea on the part of the people that the Government have made wonderful progress in land settlement and rail-
way construction, and that our

[12 noon] rural population is increasing, but the figures show that that opinion is erroneous. They show that the Labour Government have not opened up within 5,000,000 acres the area of land that the Liberal Government opened up in the previous corresponding period, and that they have not constructed by 700 miles the same mileage of railway that the Liberal Government constructed during a similar period. Statistics also show that our population is leaving the rural areas in the States and coming into the towns. I admit that it is almost impossible to keep young men and women in the country; but it is deplorable to think that our most valuable people are coming into the cities and swelling the population there while the areas in the country are being denuded. Our country towns to-day are not the same as they were twenty years ago. If we take any town west of Toowoomba as far out as Cunnamulla, we shall find that there has been little progress made during the last seven or eight years, and the people there are worse off to-day financially than they were then. I will admit that Brisbane has gone ahead wonderfully; but, unfortunately, Brisbane is not Queensland. The prosperity of Queensland generally is judged from the fact that huge buildings have been erected on every vacant allotment in the city. We are told then that Queensland is prosperous, but it is a false prosperity. I say that a big city like Brisbane cannot be prosperous when men of the city are forced to go into gambling games, and to break the law of the State in order to raise money for the centenary celebrations. I see posted up in different places where I go the words—

"Oxley founded the city. Your fathers built it. Will you honour it?"

I am sorry the Attorney-General is not here. I saw one poster which had that heading, and underneath was written the words—

"'Morry' Barry and 'Johnny' Mullan have disgraced it."

And so they did by allowing gambling to be carried on in the Albert Square. Ordinary persons who carried on the same games as were permitted in Albert Square would be arrested, and those who permitted them were as liable as other citizens to six months in gaol. The Attorney-General allowed a game to be carried out, while under the Act the man who plays it becomes a criminal if he is convicted. Our friend, Mr. Barry, may wish to have his portrait placarded all over the place because he happens to be mayor of the city during the centenary celebrations, but he cannot deny the fact that, when they were asked to allow these games to be played, they were being asked to disgrace the fair name of Brisbane.

I want to refer to State trading concerns, to show what a huge blunder the Government have made in that respect. Other Governments, unfortunately—even Federal Governments which were not Labour—went into State trading concerns with disastrous results. The losses throughout Australia to the taxpayers in respect of State trading amount to £7,000,000, after allowing for the profits made on some of them. The annual interest bill on the £7,000,000 amounts to the huge sum of £420,000. We are paying a lot

Mr. Morgan.]

of interest annually on the money lost through the different Governments of the States and Commonwealth going into trading concerns. The Federal Government up to 30th June, 1923, made a loss of not less than £4,274,000—a huge loss, one must admit. The New South Wales Government made a loss of £772,711, after allowing for profits from some of them. The Queensland loss amounted to £823,665, and that was after the market values of the cattle on the State stations had been increased considerably over and above their true and market value. In Western Australia the loss was £467,000, and in little Tasmania they lost £77,000. Yet we have Governments which are still desirous of perpetuating State enterprises. I do not care what Government may be in power. Governments cannot successfully run these enterprises, simply because the man who makes a business a success must be a trained man who has been in the business from infancy, and knows everything necessary for its successful conduct. Governments have put in charge of State trading concerns managers who were not able to make a success of their own particular business. That applies to all Governments. No Government, whether Liberal or Labour, can conduct State enterprises successfully, and the consequence is that the taxpayers have to bear the burden, and huge sums are added to our interest bill year after year.

I would like to refer to the speech delivered by the seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Warrego. I once heard it said that England was "the home of cant, humbug, and hypocrisy." That may be true. I do not know whether the hon. member for Warrego was born in England, but one would think he must have been, otherwise he would not have made those disloyal utterances that he made during his speech, and at the same time second the motion, which I will read—

"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."

Mr. POLLOCK: What did he say that was disloyal?

Mr. MORGAN: One would naturally think that a man with the sentiments which the hon. member for Warrego expressed would not have seconded that resolution. One would have thought he would have refused, and said, "No, I possess different opinions"; yet he seconded the resolution of loyalty to the Throne. We know by the sentiments he expressed that that is not his opinion.

Mr. POLLOCK: What sentiments did he express which were disloyal?

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. member read his speech he would see them for himself.

Mr. POLLOCK: I read his speech, and I did not see them.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that it is not in order to accuse any hon. member of disloyalty.

[Mr. Morgan,

Mr. MORGAN: I am not accusing the hon. member of disloyalty; I do not wish to accuse him of that. I say that those who read his speech and also read the resolution which he seconded in connection with the Address in Reply will form their own conclusion about the matter. We know that there is general discontent right throughout the public service of this State, although the public servants have got their pet Labour Government in power. Why is there that discontent? It is because the Government, while they have benefited some, have caused great hardships to others, and those who have not got the easy, cosy positions are naturally discontented, while the few who have benefited by the advent of the Labour Government are contented and satisfied with what is going on. We see by the deputations which wait daily upon the Premier or the Ministers of the various departments that the service is discontented. We have only to look at the papers published by the various branches of the public service, such as the "Railway Advocate," "The Police Journal," and the journal published by the school teachers of the State, or any other organ issued on behalf of the various sections, to find that the whole of the public service is discontented.

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

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I listened very carefully to the speeches delivered by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, and it seemed to me that there was a very strong endeavour on the part of each of those hon. members to deal with His Excellency's Speech as little as possible. The hon. member for Townsville dealt very briefly with it; the greater part of his time was taken up in working the parish pump. He told the House that he wanted certain things done in Townsville, and by using a good deal of his time in airing the wants of his constituency I have no doubt that he did good service to himself from the point of view of a future election.

Notwithstanding the disclaimer which was made a few minutes ago about the disloyal statements of the hon. member for Warrego, the impression was left on my mind that, if the hon. member did not actually do as has been suggested, he was, at any rate, sneering at loyalty. I consider it is a disgrace for any man to stand up in this Chamber and take up the attitude the hon. member adopted. It is possible that he knew he was skating on thin ice, but perhaps he was "cute" enough to do it so carefully that you, Mr. Speaker, could not pull him up. Certainly the impression was left on this side of the House that he was sneering at loyalty, although he was seconding a motion which says distinctly—

"We assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and person of Our Most Gracious Sovereign."

When the Premier was about to leave for London in order to take up this great task of converting the loan, we met in another part of this building to give him a friendly send-off, and the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Country party sent him off, so far as they were concerned, with the very best wishes. He had the very best wishes of every member of this House, and

I give him the credit of publicly acknowledging that evening that nothing had been done on this side to injure the prospects of floating that loan. But the Premier stated without any reservation that he viewed with grave concern the reception that he would get in London. If the hon. gentleman had had a clear conscience, he would not have anticipated that there was going to be trouble when he went home. If he had been a member of our party, he would have gone home with such a clear conscience that he would have been confident that the financiers at home would rush him with money because they knew that the interests of the State were safe in the hands of such a party as ours. But he had a guilty conscience, and he got what he was looking for. Immediately he got home the discontent which had been smouldering for the last four years manifested itself in no uncertain form, and he has admitted that he had a most difficult task. He has said, in fact, that he spent a considerable time in creating a favourable atmosphere. He had conferences with all the men interested in pastoral, financial, and other important circles, and he says he successfully created an understanding that what the Government did in 1920 when they introduced the amendment of the Land Act was not repudiation but the very opposite. When the hon. gentleman came back to Australia—whether owing to the fact that he had had a good trip across and was feeling in good fettle, or whether he had been communing with people who had very correct methods of dealing I do not know—he was, at any rate, in very good talking strain, and, according to the Press, when he landed in Fremantle he made certain statements. I may say here that so far as I can judge the hon. gentleman seems to have become more reticent the nearer he got to Queensland, and whatever he said at Fremantle was watered down by the time he got back here. He had one story out there and another here. Perhaps when he neared Queensland he began to fear what sort of a reception he would get from his conferees on the other side, so that, as a metropolitan journal described him, he might well be called, “Mr. Theodore Facing-Two-Ways.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The country is not much concerned about your description of the Premier.

Mr. KELSO: The Acting Premier has his views and I have mine, and I represent a constituency just as he does, and the views of my constituents are just as important as those of the hon. member's. In an interview after the return of the Premier, the hon. gentleman said—

“There has been some criticism of the terms of the settlement of the Queensland controversy in London. These attacks can only arise from failure to realise the conditions which prevailed in London with respect to the dispute or misunderstanding of the nature of the settlement.

“To answer the charges categorically, there has been no climb down on my part, no recantation of Government policy, no surrender of self-governing rights to overseas financiers, no imposition of the will of others upon the Government of Queensland with regard to the land policy of the State. On the contrary, the Land Act of 1920 remains on the statute-book, and will not be repealed. The 50 per cent. limitation to

rental increases, which was the privilege enjoyed by squatters for many years, will not be restored. No refund of extra rents will be paid to squatters, no extension of leases will be granted to them, yet these latter conditions were but part of the terms demanded by the pastoral companies as a condition precedent to Queensland appearing on the London money market.”

Then he went on to say—

“To fully appreciate the position which existed in London, it must be remembered that the demands on the Government were supported not only by Anglo-Australian pastoral companies, but by the London Stock Exchange, the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, and brokers, bankers, and the financial Press. It was my task to break down the hostility of these powerful interests, to have the impossible demands withdrawn, to satisfy the large body of British investors that the Queensland Government was straight in its dealings, and restore the credit of the State, which for four years had been vindictively assailed.”

The hon. gentleman admits that he met some of the most intellectual men in Great Britain. The long list that I have read shows that there must have been some great discontent, and shows that these men at home—men of honour, men who are unbiased, such as the Association of British Chambers of Commerce—where could you look for a more unbiased set of men than they?—were so incensed by the Government's act of repudiation in 1920 that the hon. gentleman said—

“They had been saving this up for four years.”

We know perfectly well what happened the last time the Premier went home and when he went to the American money market. On this occasion he came home a repentant man, and tried to make us believe, after going home and consulting the men representing the great interests concerned, that the large body of British investors were prejudiced against him. He cannot say that all those British investors were absolutely prejudiced. He stated on his return on the last occasion that he had created an atmosphere that enabled him to restore the credit of Queensland. If the Premier is correct in saying that, then how does he square it with his statement made here that he has not given anything away at all? He stated—

“My offer of a stabilisation of the existing rents during the remainder of the terms for those holdings which have already been reassessed under the Land Act of 1920 has been described as a concession. In fact, it was a mere formula to enable the pastoralists to assent to a settlement of the dispute. In agreeing to this basis the pastoralists yielded a great deal, and the Government yielded very little. The settlement involved no sacrifice of principle on the part of the Government and no recantation of policy.”

Do the public believe that the Premier is telling the truth when he makes that statement? The public know very well that the Premier went home and met shrewd business men—men of intelligence—and made an arrangement with them which involved the

Mr. Kelso.]

retraction of what the Government had done in 1920. The arrangement provides that there shall be no further increase in rents during the term of the present leases. If that agreement is carried out, it certainly means that the revenue which the Government would have obtained under the 1920 Act is actually to be given back as a present to the pastoralists. It is impossible to estimate definitely the value of that concession; but, if you take into consideration the length of time that the leases have to run, and estimate the increase in the rents by 50 per cent., then how on earth can the Premier hope to persuade us to believe that he has not given anything away? I have no doubt that the Premier tried to persuade his party and supporters here that no concession was given; but no fair minded man could argue that such a state of affairs exists. This morning the leader of the Opposition stated that probably with the existing high price of wool, had the present rents been reassessed, not only would there have been a 50 per cent. increase, but there would have been a much larger increase. It is impossible to know the exact amount of the concession, but it must be an enormous amount. An enormous concession has been given to the pastoralists, and is it reasonable to believe that the Premier at home was able to persuade those men that by doing what he did he was not giving them a concession? They knew perfectly well what sort of a concession they were getting—a very handsome concession—but it was a concession which was an act of justice. Before the Premier left Queensland he stated that, although the Act had been amended with regard to the 50 per cent. limitation, still the lessees had no legal right in that respect because the provision was not included in the lease. That is nothing more or less than a bit of special pleading. No honest Government would induce people to take up land on the assumption that they were taking it up under a certain Act of Parliament, which would bind them down during the period of that contract, and then purposely, apparently, when the lease is drawn up leave out that very clause dealing with the 50 per cent. limitation. If that were done purposely it would be a disgraceful thing to do. Will the Government be prepared in the future to embody the full conditions in the lease? Has a man when he gets a lease not the right to know exactly what the conditions will be during the term of that lease? All those conditions ought to be embodied in the lease, so that the lessee or anyone who interprets the lease for him will be able to know if the lease can be abrogated during its term. If a man took up a lease on the assumption that during the term of the lease there was to be no alteration in the conditions set out, and then further conditions are imposed, that is repudiation of the grossest type. That man would have been induced to sign that lease under false pretences, and nothing could be more disgraceful than that. The lessees took up their leases for a period set out in the schedule of the Act. The Premier also stated on his return that, although it might appear that a concession had been granted, still the greater number of the leases would expire during the next ten-year period, and there would be no reappraisements of rent. I think the leader of the Opposition this morning gave very convincing proof—unfortunately many hon. members were absent from

[Mr. Kelso.

the Chamber—that a very large proportion of these leases will fall due for reappraisal—not only once, but two or three times.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: How could they fall due two or three times?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why did the hon. gentleman not say five or six times?

Mr. KELSO: I am simply stating facts.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Can the hon. gentleman tell me the length of the leases?

Mr. KING: They are all set out in the schedule to the Land Act.

Mr. KELSO: The leader of the Opposition pointed out this morning that the leases falling due between 1930 and 1952 number 782, embracing an area of 199,577 square miles, and, allowing for the resumption of one-fourth of that area since 1910, there is left an area of 149,683 square miles, or 95,797,120 acres, covered by the agreement. He also pointed out that the total area of selections of all kinds standing good on 31st December, 1922, amounted to 90,556,623 acres. Those leases are liable to be appraised every ten years, and probably some of them would have been appraised two or three times—not six times as the Acting Premier suggested I should say—before expiry. We do not know what the price of wool will be during that time, but we certainly believe that for many years to come the price of wool will not go down; and, if the rent is to be assessed on the earning capacity of the land, it is reasonable to assume that at the very least the assessments would not be less than those which obtain to-day, and which hon. members opposite claim are very much in excess of the assessments under the Act of 1910. I claim that the Government have not only given justice to the extent of the 50 per cent. limitation, but that they have given the lessees a greater concession than they would have asked for if the 1920 Act had not been brought into operation.

During the time that the Premier was at home conducting these negotiations New Zealand and New South Wales floated loans. New Zealand floated a £5,000,000 4½ per cent. loan at 95 on 8th May, 1924. The cost of redemption of that loan amounted to £5 0s. 10d. per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What were the terms of that loan?

Mr. KELSO: I do not know exactly, but they were fair terms.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Quote the New South Wales Government's £5,000,000 loan when the Premier got his offer of £60,000,000.

Mr. KERR: The rate of interest in connection with the Queensland loan materially affected the New South Wales loan.

Mr. KELSO: I am not going to miss the New South Wales loan. That Government floated a £5,000,000 5 per cent. loan at par. The hon. member for Warrego has informed us that a great amount of that loan was left on the underwriters' hands. That may be so, but the underwriters were satisfied at any rate that it was a good proposition, and I have no doubt that now the whole of that amount has been absorbed in England. What do we find as regards Queensland? We were told in reply to a question that the Queensland 5½ per cent. loan was floated for five years at £99 10s., and that the costs amounted approximately to £2 2s. per cent., and, if the

loan is allowed to run for its full term, the rate of interest will be £6 2s. 5d. per cent. at £99 10s. We know perfectly well that, when financial interests at home are concerned in the flotation of loans, they will naturally try to get the best rate they can. Queensland goes home disgraced. The Premier goes in sack-cloth and ashes and asks for forgiveness, and the money interests say, "We will renew your loan, but we will make you pay a little stiffer rate of interest," and they put on an extra half per cent. The cost to the taxpayer for the sins of the Government in 1920 are now coming home to roost, as it [12.30 p.m.] will mean they will cost £65,000 in extra interest. That is the penalty the State has got to pay for the Government not running straight. Their chickens are coming home to roost. Who has got to pay that sum? Not the members of the Government, but the whole community. The Premier admitted in a speech on one occasion that all taxation has ultimately to be borne by the whole of the people; and the whole of the people represent a large proportion of workers who are simply on wages. That is the trouble that the present Government have brought on Queensland.

Last session during the discussion on the Financial Statement the Premier threw out a challenge. He was so delighted with the wonderful success of his New York loan that he challenged any criticism of the figures, and I took up the challenge. In "Hansard" appears a statement made by me which has never been contradicted. If I had made any mistake in my figures, it is certain that the Treasurer would be the first person to have a column in the newspapers the next day pointing out what my mistake was.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not at all. He would take no notice of it.

Mr. KELSO: The Acting Premier is very pessimistic this morning.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Under Secretary to the Treasury does not read "Hansard."

Mr. KELSO: I think the trouble of the Acting Premier is due to the chilly feeling through sitting in the morning, which he is not used to. He is always best at night after 7 o'clock, and the hon. gentleman would have been better had he agreed to evening sittings so as to appear at his best. This morning's attendance bears out what we said last night inferentially—that the sittings of the House would not be well attended if day sittings were adopted. That is borne out to-day. Look at the attendance here this morning. The Premier, amongst other things, said in 1923 that the cost of the loan floated in New York was £5 12s. 10d. per cent. In the course of a speech I made in this House in 1923 and which is to be found in "Hansard," page 623, for that year, I quoted the following statement from the speech of the Premier—

"The rate of interest on the net proceeds is £6 0s. 7d. per cent., but, as the realisation has been £116 1s. 8d. per cent. the effective cost (including redemption) works out at £5 12s. 10d. per cent."

Those are the figures which the Premier told us could not be controverted. If hon. members want to go into the technical details, they can look up that speech in "Hansard." I there proved, and it has not been contradicted, that the effective interest rate at that time was £6 11s. 10d. per cent.

even on the figures then submitted. I also showed that as time went on that rate would be increased. Even at the present time the pound sterling is at a discount in New York, and every half-year we have to send there a certain amount of interest and redemption on the whole of the money we borrowed. We lost on that money last year about £25,000, and that will be continued during the whole term of the loan. When the loan is finally repaid the probability is that we shall find it works out at considerably more than 7 per cent. The Premier at that particular time was very cocksure about the fact that he had dished the London financiers, and that he had made a splendid arrangement with New York, and that the rate of interest would be down to 5 per cent. in the long run. When the hon. gentleman went home this time he proceeded via New York. He admitted in his interview at Fremantle that certain offers were made to him, and he had not taken them up. He went over to London. If the negotiations had been turned down in London, the Premier knew—he admitted it—the difficulty would be that if he went over to New York the New York financiers—the friends he hung to when he was in trouble—would have squeezed him for what rate of interest we do not know—probably anything up to 10 per cent. We give the Premier every credit for having done what he did under difficult circumstances, but it is our duty at the same time to point out that, if the Government had run straight, he would have done far better than he did, and saved $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the loan that has been floated. We do not know what rate of interest will be put on next year for the wrong-doing of the Government.

Last year the Acting Premier was the strongest advocate for the encouragement of the cotton industry. The Government, in spite of the strongest protest of the Opposition and the splendid fight put up by the members of the Country party, who gave chapter and verse for their conclusions, for some unknown reason persisted in banning ratoon cotton. The Secretary for Agriculture told us that ratoon cotton was not legal tender. A suggestion was made to him from this side of the House that ratoon cotton should be allowed to be harvested for one year, and if during that time it was found that the pests which were supposed to be floating about manifested themselves, it would then be time to bring in legislation to protect the State of Queensland from them. What do we find? We find, just as the hon. members of the Opposition foretold, that ratoon cotton is legal tender, and that the farmer by growing ratoon cotton can make more than he can with his plant cotton, that the crop is more certain, that there is more likelihood of having a successful crop with ratoon cotton, and that the difficulties of dry seasons to a certain extent will be minimised, because if the plants have been in for three years, he has had two years' ratoon. All these things that were prophesied from this side of the House have come to pass. We find now that law-abiding citizens under the penalty of the law passed last year, dug up their ratoon plants in obedience to the law. We find that another section who did not do so will now harvest their cotton, and the men whose ratoon cotton had to be dug up will have to be compensated. What the cost will be to those law-abiding citizens is not known yet,

Mr. Kelso.]

but it is estimated at about £150,000. If the Government are going to allow ratooning for one year, the question is—are they going to compensate those most unfortunate individuals?

We do not know. There is no Minister with pluck enough to say whether these men are to be compensated for obeying the law. My friend, the hon. member for Mirani, reminds me that the Minister stated that no compensation would be given. If that is so, it is disgraceful. Those men obeyed the law and dug out their ratoon plants; they are now under a heavy penalty for doing so while those who failed to obey the law are the gainers.

What is the effect of such action on the cotton industry? We hear remarks all over the place that men who conscientiously went on to the land will not plant any more cotton. They have no faith in the Government in the face of their previous treatment. That is only a sample of many other actions on the part of this Government. Reference has been made in past years, and will be made again this year in detail, to the calamitous undertakings known as State enterprises. Up till last year the strong point the Government had was the State butcher shops, and I remember, when discussing the Estimates last year, that the Secretary for Public Works tried his best to keep back the report of the Commissioner of State Enterprises. At last, when it was presented, we saw that the State butcher shops, instead of being the prize profit-maker of the State enterprises, had suffered a tremendous loss. A most extraordinary statement was made then that the reason why they made a loss that year was that the private butchers had undersold them. I dare say the Government would like to have the opportunity of fixing the price and having sole control, but even a Government such as the one we have must pause some time when they see the colossal losses they have made in their State enterprises.

Again, in the matter of our railways, last year the Secretary for Railways told us in effect that it was not really necessary for the railways to pay. He said they were a great national asset which developed the country, and, if they did not pay, the advantage to the country more than compensated for any loss. Last year we find that the railways had more than "gone a million"—they lost £1,300,000. Evidently the loss was so great that the Government put on their thinking caps to see what could be done, and we now find that they have increased freights and fares by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. One year the Government, which has such business capacity, tell us it is not necessary for the railways to pay; next year they come along and tell us that there must be an increase of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the freights and fares.

Perhaps good will come out of evil, because at last a certain section of the people who were always prepared to vote for the present Government will find that the increase in fares hits them in the pocket, and they will begin to study these gods they have supported for such a long time, and ask themselves whether they are worthy of their support.

When the Premier started his election tour he was quite prepared apparently to carry out the Emu Park Convention policy. And that policy was a pretty stiff one. We find now that on the Government side of the House there are two sections. One is what is

called a "Moderate" section, and the left wing is one which may be variously termed "Red" or "Advanced," or any other name that will convey the idea that they are prepared to go the whole hog. (Government laughter.)

We saw last year, and have noticed during the last couple of months, that there is a great difference of opinion between these two sections. I say that it is the duty of the present Government to carry out the programme on which they were elected. The Premier and his party have been doing their level best to water down the policy they said they would carry out. I give the Premier credit for watering down that policy, even during his election campaign, and by so doing he tried to persuade electors of the metropolitan area that he was a good democrat.

The Emu Park Convention carried certain resolutions, and certain hon. members on the other side of the House are pushing the Government along, and saying that they were elected on certain pledges, and that, if they are honest, they should carry out those pledges. The Government at the present time are between the devil and the deep blue sea, and do not know what to do. Whether they are going to carry out their policy or not this session will show. At any rate, this is the Government which claims to have such ability to carry on the operations of the State.

Right through the last few years we have found that legislation goes year after year in a certain direction. The Government were warned that legislation in that direction would be inimical to the State. A year or two afterwards we find a whole sheaf of Bills coming up, showing that the Government, either by hasty legislation or through incompetence or something of the kind, have found that the measures which they put before the House were incomplete and undigested, and experience shows that they were absolutely unworkable.

If the people of the State are satisfied with that sort of thing, they are easily satisfied. As a matter of fact—and various hon. members touched upon this—we find that throughout the country a mild revolt is going on. We see evidences of it in the papers every day, even in the Bible of hon. members opposite, the "Daily Standard"—a boiling over here and a boiling over there. Democracy has been befogged. The people have been told certain things, and those things have not materialised. The whole public service is in a state of seething discontent, and we actually find the police taking things into their own hands and asserting their rights. This session we are to have an amendment of the Police Act. Almost at the point of the bayonet these men are enforcing their rights, and the Government are slowly giving way. Their chickens are coming home to roost, and the Cabinet have to do these things whether they like it or not.

As a matter of fact, they brought all this trouble on their own heads because at a certain period they forced every man in the public service to become a unionist. Now these men are demanding their rights. The members of the Cabinet are taking up the attitude that the public servants should not press the Government too hard, but these men are saying, "We have been forced into

[*Mr. Kelso.*

unionism; we have our representation, and our representatives are going to insist upon our rights being observed." That is quite right. I think unionism is a good thing—not the brand that hon. members opposite stand for—

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: We know the brand you stand for.

Mr. KELSO: Where a few leaders bulldoze the rest—but I consider that a man is entitled to express his views and do the best he can for himself. The public are beginning to realise that they have been led by the nose for a number of years, and they are now taking charge. Why, even in the caucus the rank and file are taking charge. (Government laughter.) I am sorry that the hon. member for Bowen is not present, so that I could congratulate him. For a few hours he has been the leader of the Labour party.

Mr. GLEDSON: They put that into you, too.

Mr. KELSO: However, caucus members could not make up their minds; they had another vote, and things turned back again to the old order.

Mr. GLEDSON: By Jove, your leg is easily pulled.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: There was not much unity on your side last night.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that we on this side of the House were free to vote as we desired—

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I am not talking about that.

Mr. KELSO: And hon. members on the other side of the House were tied up. In spite of that to his credit be it said, one Minister got up and expressed his own views. He knows perfectly well what happened.

Mr. KERR: Jelly fish.

Mr. KELSO: They were not jelly fish; they were tied up so that they could not do anything.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is a new simile—a tied up jelly fish. I would like to see one.

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

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): Of all the huge bungles that the Government have been guilty of I suppose there is no greater bungle than the Beerburum Soldier Settlement. It has been said that we as a party are scared to touch this proposition, but such is not the case. Unfortunately, in the first place the Government were misled. I quite agree that the Government were misled as much as they were misled in connection with the cotton bungle; but at the present time the mistake is so apparent and the loss is so great that it is time the Government granted a Royal Commission of inquiry finally to settle the Beerburum problem. Some statements are in circulation at the present time that are misleading. One statement that is misleading is that what is known as Beerburum Settlement is a total failure. On some portions of the Beerburum land the settlement has not been a failure, and it is wrong and stupid of certain people to say that Beerburum Settlement is a complete failure. What I wish the Government to do, and what members on this side of the House, and particularly soldiers' associations have

been trying to bring about is for the Government to take stock—have a proper inquiry, and have the land that is unfit for use cut out completely and those settlers who have made an honest attempt at farming given the right to take up fresh land. There is any amount of land held by the Crown at the present time that is suitable for agriculture, and on which it would be wise to put these men. At the present time the men on blocks that will not produce are having their hearts broken, and they are becoming unfit to be farmers. We must admit that at the start many of these men were unfit to be farmers because they were mechanics and had never attempted to do anything of the sort, and had had no initial training in the work, and they were recognised to be failures from the start. But many men who were farmers were put on this poor soil. I say "poor," because an analysis of the soil proved that it is the second poorest soil in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: In the world.

Mr. WARREN: I will not say that, because I suppose some of the unoccupied country along the coast is as poor as any class of country anywhere. That country cannot and will not be used for farming or for grazing purposes. I must say that in the first place the Government acted in good faith, but, although the Secretary for Public Lands is a good business man, he has not sufficient strength to go into this matter and cut out the whole trouble. The loss has been too great. If you read the papers you will find every now and again that on Beerburum there is a sale of the horses and vehicles of departing soldiers—of those men who have been duped into taking up blocks where the soil is of no value whatever. The little bit of humus in it is not sufficient to produce a first crop. Never previously in any part of the world has settlement taken place on land of that description. We always reckon that land must be capable of producing the first few crops without fertilisation before it can be classed as agricultural land. But in this case the settlers had to fertilise to produce the first crop of pines. That is absurd. It is an absolutely stupid proposition, and the reason I am bringing it up to-day is because the settlers are still being kept there. Some of them are living on and working their farms in the hope of being granted an exchange; that is, that the Government will see fit to act in a kindly way towards those men who went on this land blindfold. First of all I want to contradict the statement that the Minister has refused to receive a deputation. That is not so. The Minister has merely put off the date for receiving that deputation. In fact, I understand the hon. gentleman is trying to work out a scheme to settle the Beerburum question finally. I hope that is the case. There are many ways in which the failure of this settlement is hurting the district. Not only does it hurt the district because the settlers are not making a profit, but only 55 per cent. of these settlers are paying their rates to the shire council, and the Shire of Landsborough, in which Beerburum is situated, has no money to make roads. In fact, the subdivision that Beerburum is in is indebted to the shire council to the extent of about £200. That is to say the ratepayers in other districts have had to put that much capital into the Beerburum settlement. That is not fair neither to the shire nor to the settlers who were settled in

Mr. Warren.]

this foolish manner; and it is the duty of the Government, when the thing is practically obvious, to meet the settlers and clear up the whole thing in a proper way. Several deputations have asked the Minister to receive them on this Beerburum question so that they can clear up the whole thing. I do not condemn the Government for putting the settlers there in the first place, but I do condemn them for continuing the error that was made in the first place. Not [2 p.m.] only has this Beerburum question been raised in the House on repeated occasions, and not from a political point of view at all, but different bodies and people in the country have taken it up, and, generally speaking, have given a very fair idea of the condition of the soldier settlements. I have here a copy of a letter, dated 14th July, 1924, which has been sent to the Secretary for Public Lands by the Sailors and Soldiers Fathers' Association of Toowoomba, which I wish to place on record—

“SAILORS AND SOLDIERS FATHERS' ASSOCIATION, TOOWOOMBA BRANCH.

“14th July, 1924.

“The Hon. the Minister for Lands, Brisbane.

“DEAR SIR,—By invitation of the digger settlers, we decided to pay a visit to the Beerburum Soldiers Settlement. Previously we had visited Cecil Plains and are pleased to know that on our representation your Government was pleased to relieve the settlers there over a critical period.

“We do so appreciate anything done for ex-soldiers. In sending you a copy of the report (read at our last meeting) we urge that you will see the wisdom of transferring those settlers who desire to go to other centres. We believe you will easily frame up regulations consistent with the Government's soldier settlement policy so that relief may be afforded these good fellows towards whom you have already shown goodwill. One need not be an agriculturist to recognise Beerburum is not worth all that has been sunk in it. The grass trees are an index to the spewy nature of the soil—everybody knows that it is no use cultivating where grass trees grow. We would suggest that you examine our report in connection with official figures you may have, and we believe, as we hope, that you will find a way out so that those men on Beerburum who have put their hands to the plough hoping to make good, should now be transferred to some other area in the Southern division or to the Tully River lands to be opened up on 24th July, to landless and approved ex-service men. If you are satisfied, as we believe you are, that these men have given Beerburum a good spin, we trust you will agree they are doubly entitled to your consideration, first, because of their war service, second, because of their dogged determination to profitably produce fruit on Beerburum when the elements were so mixed as to doom them to failure.

“We are sure a personal visit by yourself would lead to something being done that would give these men a fair chance and be a further indication of your goodwill.

[Mr. Warren.

“Thanks in anticipation of what you will do for them,

“Yours truly,

“(Sgd.) EDWIN PRICE,
“Hon. Secretary.”

I do not know whether Dr. Price and the gentlemen who went to inspect Beerburum are experts, but I am game to say that even the Secretary for Public Lands will not deny anything that is contained in that letter. I do not plead here for the soldiers—because no soldier could stand up and plead for another soldier; we do not come begging as soldiers—we think that we can come and demand fair treatment. We hear a lot about loyalty, and all that sort of thing, but I am convinced that no Government in the world have ever given the ex-soldier a fair “spin.” I say that the Government who place men on the poorest soil in Queensland, and ask them to scratch for a living—

Mr. HARTLEY: You said it was fine soil for citrus and pineapple growing.

Mr. WARREN: That is not true.

Mr. HARTLEY: I heard you say it, and others heard you.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member cannot say that with any truth.

Mr. HARTLEY: I can show it in the Press report of the opening of the Beerburum Settlement.

Mr. WARREN: My statement was that it was poor soil. My first statement was made in a paper called “The Leader,” published by the soldiers of Queensland.

Mr. HARTLEY: No. It was made at Beerburum at the opening of the settlement.

Mr. WARREN: I wrote down the facts for and against the settlement, and I pointed out that the soil was easily worked, and if the analyses had been satisfactory, it could have been worked profitably. The hon. member knows nothing about soils.

Mr. HARTLEY: “Second to none in Queensland for citrus and pineapple growing”—those were your words.

Mr. WARREN: Nobody in his senses would describe that soil or any soil of that description as good soil. We know that pineapples can be produced on what are commonly called weak soils, and I am convinced that at Beerburum there is land which can produce; but there is no comparison between Beerburum and the holding of the Secretary for Agriculture, and if you take the farm of the hon. member who has been interjecting, you will wonder that he ever went on to a farm, though you would understand him making interjections. It is absolutely inferior stuff that wallabies would not go on to.

Mr. HARTLEY: You cannot buy it, anyhow.

Mr. WARREN: I can understand an hon. member who has taken up a block of that description setting up as an authority and interjecting to a farmer.

Mr. HARTLEY: A farmer who has sold all his land.

Mr. WARREN: Anybody who has an interest in Queensland and in settlers generally—I am not going to say soldiers only—desires to see them prosper, because, after all, your business capacity will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that their prosperity means that Queensland is going to prosper.

It is the greatest mistake for the Lands Department to put men, whether soldiers or anybody else, on land where it is impossible for them to make a living. When there are thousands of acres of good land right along this coast, to let men occupy inferior, rotten stuff, is a waste of energy of the very worst description, a disgrace to the organisation of the Government, and calls for the greatest censure. I do not say that other places have not done the same thing, but I say that we have got so much good land that it is absolutely stupid and wrong to put men on land such as they are being placed upon at present. We have unoccupied houses on this land which are going to rack and ruin—I understand some of them are being shifted—and it is an eyesore for them to be left there. Where the analysis of the soil shows that the land is absolutely inferior, it would be far better to cut the loss and get rid of them.

After all, it is not a matter of my opinion or the opinion of hon. members opposite as to whether land is good or not. We have our Department of Agriculture and our agricultural chemists. In connection with the smaller soldier settlements the Government have cut the loss. Why, at Coominya, the soil was so poor that a worm would not crawl through it. The Government recognise that a large portion of Beerburrum soil is of no use, and it is a crying shame that they do not recognise that a proportion of these settlers are merely plodding along and just eking out an existence. The settlers have invested the proceeds of their war gratuity bonds in the settlement, and have given a good many years of hard work, together with every mortal thing they own, towards making it a success, and some of them have walked off the settlement without anything. Just the other day horses which a short time ago had been purchased for approximately £18 per head were sold for from 16s. upwards, and one of the settlers stated that he doubted if they were worth 16s. I do not want to do an injury to some of the settlers there who are able to carry on, but I want to emphasise that the poor sections of the area are death to everything that touches them. They are death to the Government, and death to the Lands Department. Why is it that the Secretary for Public Lands does not desire to receive a deputation from these men? It is not because he does not know the facts, but he is like Micawber of old—waiting for something to turn up. I consider that he wants to see these ex-soldier settlers starved off their holdings. The soldier was all right when he went away and risked his life; but when he came back he is regarded as a confounded nuisance, and the Government deserve censure for their actions in connection with soldier settlers, particularly during the past year. Matters have been getting worse and worse, and if the Minister does not make a move these men who are having their very life blood sapped out of them will become worse and worse citizens. They will probably have to start afresh as ordinary labourers, but what energy will they have after having been starved out of this miserable scheme? Then what is the financial aspect going to be? I recollect an ex-Labour Treasurer, when opening the Beerburrum Hospital—one hon. gentleman opposite can bear me out in this—saying: “The Government lost £500,000, but what is that?” He said it in just the same way as he would say “Come

and have a whisky.” What is £500,000 to a Government that are “gone a million”? The Government consider that that is nothing to them, as they are working on borrowed money. That is the opinion of a Government whose party policy used to be not to borrow. They are going to lose not only £500,000 but £1,000,000 on Beerburrum, and the sooner they cut the loss the better. I would give the Government credit if they would say: “We have lost £1,000,000, but we are going to make the very best of a bad job.” The Government have deemed it advisable to write down the cost of the Inkerman irrigation works by thousands of pounds, and I do not condemn them for doing that.

The decision of the Government in that matter was correct. But why treat the settlers up there different to the settlers on Beerburrum? We talk about the scheme of organisation or classification of land that was entered into at Beerburrum about a year ago, but the whole thing is absurd. The land is not worth anything. What business man would buy any portion of Beerburrum? It is a well-known fact that before this land was reserved for a soldier settlement it had been lying idle for years. Some of the forfeited selections are now being let to outside settlers, not for farming purposes, but for residential purposes, and a few areas are being taken up in that manner. The settlers are being charged quarterly rents, and it looks as if the Government are going to get the full year's rent out of them. Everything that can be done is being done in order to bleed the poor unfortunate men on Beerburrum. It seems to me it is death to attempt to grow anything on that poor soil. Anyone who has ever farmed land knows that a living cannot be made out of inferior land. I want to emphasise this point, that whatever the Government intend to do, the need of going into this question of Beerburrum is obvious to anyone who knows anything about the settlement. The very uncertainty of it is wrong. I ask the Government to take immediate steps to rectify the whole scheme of Beerburrum not only in connection with the affairs of the shire council, but in connection with the unfortunate men who were placed on that miserable soil. So far as the various failures of the Government are concerned, the Government have practically admitted that they made a failure in the case of cotton—a question which I am not going to labour—but the very first principle of decent and sane government is to face failure and get over the difficulty as quickly and easily as possible.

A lot has been said about the wonderful structures that have been going up in the various cities in Queensland. I am surprised absolutely at the Assistant Minister making the statement he did. We are not a manufacturing people. The statement that the buildings in Brisbane indicate the wealth of the State is very peculiar to me. It does nothing of the kind. It only indicates how much money the money lenders are prepared to lend those who are willing to put up these great business places. I came to the conclusion when I heard that the Federal Treasurer, Dr. Earle Page, made the statement that the great cities indicated the wealth of the country—he used this argument as a reason why we should have new States and further great cities—that he was taking up a wrong stand. I would rather see that money being used for the development of the

Mr. Warren.]

State and the establishment of secondary industries. That would show signs of solid progress. Why are we making the country so unattractive as we are doing? The country is less attractive to-day than it has ever been. There are a good many reasons contributing to this end, but one of the greatest reasons is the lack of interest the Government take in the country. What is the recent decision to increase fares and freights going to do? Will it make life in the country more attractive.

Mr. COSTELLO: No.

Mr. WARREN: The fares and freights already are altogether too high. I find that men are considering whether they will purchase motor vehicles in preference to using the railways. At the present time motors can compete from Redcliffe to Brisbane against the railway to North Pine. If this sort of thing is to go on, what is going to happen to the enormous debt on our railways, which is now in the vicinity of £60,000,000? We must have railways and trunk lines, but to a great extent we are overdoing our railway construction policy in so far as the development of the country is concerned. We should develop the land that we are already occupying. I will give an example. At Glass House Mountains there is an area of about 7,000 acres which is termed a swamp. The water overflows this area, and it is absolutely the richest land in Queensland. The land that was recently reclaimed at Coolumb, and which is growing such beautiful cane, is not half so good as this land. For the slight expenditure of £600 the whole of this 7,000 acres of land could be reclaimed, and we could put into that little centre hundreds of people. This would not entail one single sixpence of expenditure so far as the railways are concerned. I contend that it is a bad business that the Government are not developing the land along the railway lines.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The present Government do not show signs of improvement. Throughout my experience in Parliament I have endeavoured to keep an open mind in regard to anything the Government have attempted to do. I am sorry that this session they appear to be submitting a policy which endeavours only slightly to amend old errors, and which proposes to commit many more fresh errors. Their fresh errors outnumber proposals to amend old errors.

As we have seen from the daily Press, the Government of late—or the Ministers, at any rate—have shown some evidence of a desire for reform. We have also seen from the same authorities that hon. members supporting the Cabinet are still believers in the old system. They think they can have everything they want by simply grabbing it, or by passing a Bill to carry out their desire. Hon. members of the Cabinet have shown that they appreciate the possibilities of doing no good and a great deal of harm by their legislation, and it is a pity that they are not more successful in their endeavours to take their followers along with them. I wish them luck in their endeavours, and I hope that as time goes on they will be able to convince their followers that there is a necessity for caution and a more useful expenditure of money. It is not very likely that will happen, as I am afraid hon. members behind the Government are determined

[Mr. Warren.

to go the whole "hog," and do not care what the consequences are.

I shall take the errors of the Government in the past, and which they have shown some slight desire to amend. They found out that they made a tremendous error in connection with ratoon cotton. They were warned about this, and should have proceeded cautiously, but they were so obstinate in their desire to commit an error and so absolutely certain that they were in the right, that they would not listen to anybody, nor would they inquire. They simply had their own way, and the result is they had to crawl down. It must have been very humiliating to the Secretary for Agriculture. One day he said he was going to enforce the law, and the next day he said he was going to alter it. Then, later on, he said it was fully considered, and the Government were going to insist upon the law being enforced, and then a few days afterwards we learned that the law is not to be enforced, and that the growers are to have their own way. I hope the Government will remember that they put some cotton-growers to considerable loss, and that they will pay full compensation to those people who carried out the law, and thereby made a loss.

I notice from the Governor's Speech that it is proposed to bring in a Bill to deal with the apprenticeship question. I hope the Government will not make a bigger bungler of this matter than they did in the past, when their action absolutely stopped any apprentices being taken on at all. The trouble with all apprentices is that it does not pay a man to train a lad. He does not get anything out of it, and no man is going to take the trouble and go to the expense of training an apprentice unless he is likely to receive some benefit. I hope that, when we do come to deal with the Apprenticeship Bill, the Government will show some evidence that they do grasp the situation, and that they do know what are the reasons why lads are not being trained, and that they will seriously endeavour to make it possible for youths to be trained in the different trades. We have a number of boys growing up in the country who, under the present conditions, have no possible hope of learning a trade.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Whom are you talking to?

Mr. DEACON: I was talking to the Minister who has only just wakened up. I realise the Minister is a very hard worked man—one of the hardest worked in the Ministry—and I can quite understand his relaxation for the moment.

We have not heard anything from the Government in regard to an amendment of the Land Act Amendment Act or the "Repudiation" Act. We know that the Premier made certain promises to the financiers in England, and we have been told that it will not be necessary to make any amendment in the Act in order to give effect to the promise made. We do not know exactly what promise he did make. Probably his followers know, and no doubt the men with whom he made the bargain know. I am quite certain that the British financiers know exactly what they are to expect, but it would have been better for the sake of the country if that agreement were placed before the House in a Bill. We ought to

know just exactly what has been promised, and what effect it will have on the future revenue of the country. If the Premier has made a promise, it is best to let the people know what it is. It must be remembered that the present Premier may not always be there and the present Ministry may not always be there, and, if that promise was made with the intention of its being kept, then we ought to know what the promise was. If only for the sake of the finances from the revenue point of view, any future Treasurer should have it put beyond his power to make any infringement of the promise made by the present Treasurer, which it is intended should have full effect for a long term. The Premier says that the promise can be given effect to by administrative act, but nobody knows what has been promised, and it would be much better if the terms were placed before the House in a Bill.

I notice that His Excellency in his Speech congratulates the Government on the success of the main roads policy, but perhaps he does not know—perhaps Ministers do not know—just how much of a success the main roads policy has been. You can

[2.30 p.m.] see all over the country little bits of good roads here and there.

There is a large sum collected by way of taxes from motorists to keep up those little bits of roads, but I do not know whether anybody is getting any particular benefit from them. If one mile of really good road is made at a high cost while another 39 miles are not improved, and are not likely to be in the present generation, it is not much benefit to anybody. If a man cannot go in bad weather over the 39 miles of road, what is the good of having just one mile built well? I think the Main Roads Board could do much better work for the country if they would adopt a cheaper style of road and build longer lengths. They have excellent examples in the roads built by the shire councils at a cheap rate over long distances, which will carry all the traffic which comes along without any restriction. Those roads have stood the wear and tear of twenty years' hard work. Of course, I know that the Main Roads Board will show us some photographs which they have had taken of little pieces of road here and there, and say that these are typical of the roads built by the shire councils. They pick out a bad part and put a photograph of it in their report. Then they take a new road built by the Board at a very high cost, and say, "These are the roads that we are going to build." In the report last year I saw a great deal of misrepresentation of the situation—I do not say it is deliberately done, as I am quite sure that the members of the Board think that the illustrations given in their report are correct—but it so happens that there is one illustration given in the last report which is absolutely incorrect, and it has been repeated in several other Government publications, including the "Queensland Agricultural Journal." A little bit of road which I know quite well is shown. It is a very bad bit of road, and the Main Roads Board say, "This is an instance of a road built by a shire council at £25 a mile after wet weather." Then there is a photograph showing what they say is the same bit of road before wet weather; but it happens that they are not the same bit of road, but two entirely different parts. The road shown as a good piece of road is there yet, and has never been in a bad state. The illustration

which is given is very misleading. It would be very much better not to construct our main roads parallel with existing lines of railway, and rather than build the roads we are doing at such a high cost it would be much cheaper and better for the district to build a light line of railway. I am quite sure that there is no comparison between the cost of building a light line of railway and building a road, and a light line of railway would afford cheaper carriage and better convenience to the residents.

I notice that we are to have an amendment of the Income Tax Act. I hope that consideration will be given to equalising the taxation between income tax payers in the city and those in the country. The present system is altogether unfair to those who make their living off the land. It is impossible for a farmer to say exactly what his expenses have been over a certain period, but it is very easy for a man in a business to do so, as he has got his actual expenses clearly shown every week and knows where he is. It is altogether different when you come to deal with a farm business. A man may work the whole year on a farm, and may incur all his expenses in that one year, while the receipts for that year may not come in till the next year, the receipts for the two years all being received in the second year. I hope that an endeavour will be made to equalise matters in that direction.

I do not see any indication of an amendment of the land tax, which is a measure that ought to be brought in. No Government can be said to be justly considering all classes of the community when it imposes a land tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I thought you approved of the land tax?

Mr. DEACON: I do not approve of the land tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What taxation do you approve of?

Mr. DEACON: Income tax only.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Would you like that increased?

Mr. DEACON: Yes, and the land tax taken off.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What increase?

Mr. DEACON: I do not know—whatever is necessary. If you take off the land tax and put the amount received from it on to the income tax, it would be a much fairer way of raising revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must pay a higher income tax than land tax.

Mr. DEACON: I do not pay any land tax, but holding the position as I do of a member of this Assembly I have not to pay much income tax.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't you earn an income outside?

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman knows very well that no man can earn an outside income and attend to his duties in the Assembly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The business members did not say that last night.

Mr. DEACON: Hon. members opposite forget when they put a land tax on freehold land that in the case of the producer it cannot be passed on. The land tax paid by any business man in the city is added to the

Mr. Deacon.]

expenses of his business, and the buyer of the commodity he sells pays it. It is put on to the rent if he is letting a house, or on to the cost of the article he sells. But when you come to the land tax on the man who is getting his living out of the land, you find that it is not passed on.

Mr. COLLINS: You admit that a land tax cannot be passed on.

Mr. DEACON: It cannot be passed on by the primary producer. It can be, and is, passed on by the man in the city.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are wrong.

Mr. DEACON: I am right; and, if the hon. member had a house to let and he had to pay land tax, the very first thing he would do would be to add his land tax to the rent.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He cannot do that.

Mr. DEACON: He cannot do anything else. How could he pay his land tax unless he passed it on? For the sake of getting at one or two speculators, why put a land tax on to the man who is working the land? I do not hope to get any reform in this direction, because there is no hope of getting any reform from hon. members opposite. Put them in the minority, and then we may get some reform.

The biggest error the Government propose to commit during this session is to try to bring in a 44-hour week. I do not think that hon. members who have forced this on the Cabinet realise the full extent of the injury they are going to do to the country. We have only to quote the Premier and the Secretary for Public Works to show that it is going to injure industry, and to prove that hon. members sitting behind the Government do not take any notice of what their leaders say. They have no responsibility. They are determined to have a 44-hour week whatever the result. They tell us sometimes that the farmer will not be affected, but we know very well that he is going to be affected and brought under the operations of the Industrial Arbitration Court. We know for a certainty—so far as it is possible to say that anything is a certainty—that there will be an award for the farming industry. When we consider that the board making the investigation consists of four members—two from the Labour side and two from the farmers, with a chairman appointed by the Government—it is an absolute certainty that their recommendation will be in favour of making an award. And when it comes to a question of a 44-hour week for the farmer, it will be found that it will be impossible for him to employ men on the farm. It will simply mean that every man employed on a farm will have to find work and a living somewhere else. There has been no quarrel between the farmer and the man working for him. They have always been able to settle their differences and agree on reasonable wages and reasonable working hours. It will mean that the man on the land will have to go out of farming altogether unless he has a sufficient family to enable him to carry on without employing labour. If not, if he is a big man, he will have to go in for sheep raising; if he is a smaller man, he will go in for one-man farming; and, although one-man farming may be all right for the farmer, it is no good for the country. And after all, if we are going to be in a position to pay interest on the loans and make up the

shortages of revenue in the near future, we shall have to produce a great deal more and send a great deal more overseas, and get a great deal more money back than we have been doing. It would have been a great deal better for the Government to leave the situation in the farming industry as it is, and for employer and employee to agree upon their conditions rather than make them subject to conditions awarded by the Arbitration Court. One hon. member opposite said that the farmers ought to pay the employees higher wages. They do pay them fair wages at present, and they pay also their full share of the higher wages which are paid in every other industry. The men engaged in every trade—carpenters, bricklayers, and others—all get fair wages, and any man who is good enough to be called a farmer has to pay his share of those men's higher wages and shorter hours; and anything that is going to mean higher taxation of the man on the land and an increased cost of the article produced in the country must be borne by the farmer. The farmer will always pay his full share of taxation and of the higher expenditure which will be involved by the institution of a 44-hour week.

Then I want to have something to say about the Upper Burnett land settlement scheme. So far as I can understand, only 600 selections have been taken up, or only about half of the total number thrown open.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: More than that.

Mr. DEACON: I am near enough with my figures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. gentleman went to a bank manager for an overdraft, and said that a couple of hundred pounds extra made no difference, the manager would not agree with him.

Mr. DEACON: Perhaps it would be as well then to give the exact figures. Fourteen hundred blocks were thrown open in the first section, and not more than half were selected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: More than half were selected.

Mr. DEACON: Just a little more than half. We should compare the selection of that land with applications for land in other parts of the State. Sometimes there are a thousand applications for one block.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not a comparison—that is a "Golden Casket."

Mr. DEACON: In the Burnett district there was not the full number of applicants for the first section, and there are other sections to follow. Again, look at the advantages that are being offered in the way of the Government building railways and pushing them on with all possible speed, the building of butter factories, the making of roads, and the advancing of large sums of money in connection with the Burnett area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does the hon. gentleman not think that 800 new settlers in a new district in six months is good going?

Mr. DEACON: It is not good going; it is poor going.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is not that number of selectors in the hon. gentleman's district.

Mr. DEACON: Yes, there is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

[Mr. Deacon.

Mr. EDWARDS: If they are to be settled in the way that they were settled on the Coominya Soldier Settlement, it will not be much good.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were better settlers than the hon. member for Nanango.

Mr. EDWARDS: They "towelled" you up.

Mr. DEACON: If the Government had resumed land for settlement in other parts of the State, they would have had more than one applicant for each block, and the land would not now be lying idle. If they had opened up land elsewhere, they could have built hundreds of miles of good road.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are transferring the roads now to other districts. (Laughter.)

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman knows that things are not the same now as they were before the last caucus meeting. He cannot do as he likes now. At one time, if he proposed to do a thing, he did it, and his word was law; but it is not so now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't you give misleading facts on those grounds.

Mr. DEACON: I had hoped that the Burnett scheme would have been a much greater success. I do not know anything about the land, but it must not be too good, or it would have been a greater success. Perhaps the Government are trying to block settlers that they do not approve of.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is true. There are thousands of applicants.

Mr. DEACON: I cannot say whether it is true or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. gentleman would go to the Inquiry Branch of the Lands Department he would get considerable information.

Mr. DEACON: I have been there, and obtained full information on behalf of the settlers who went there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You were out in your first guess.

Mr. DEACON: I know from people who have been on the area that many settlers with very little money have been given blocks of land. The Minister has stated that there are 800 settlers there—I take his word for that—but I can safely say that when the Agricultural Bank commences to handle these men 400 of them will not be there. Let the Minister do his best, let the officers of the department to do their best, and choose the settlers as they may, still they will not all remain.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does the hon. gentleman say that the present settlers there will not be there later on?

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman can safely reckon on losing half of them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How will I lose them?

Mr. DEACON: There are some settlers to whom you cannot lend money at all, and the Agricultural Bank will find on investigation that the settlers have not the assets that they said they had.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are putting their own money in.

Mr. DEACON: I know that the Agricultural Bank generally makes pretty careful

inquiries concerning the men who go on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are doing that before they go on the land.

Mr. DEACON: It is impossible to say whether a settler can use an axe until you actually see him using it, or whether he can plough until you have seen him on his block. All that has to be inquired into, and the Minister will find that the Bank will turn down a lot of those selectors, and they will not remain.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. DEACON: I am explaining the situation to the Minister. When he likes to get out I shall tell him what I would do. He has got to deal with this scheme, and I think it is only right that I should tell him what I think. He should have his eyes opened, if they have not been opened already.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have to have your eyes well skinned these days.

Mr. KING: If they are not shut for you.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister has probably had his eyes opened already. I suppose some settlers have come along to him and asked to be allowed to be freed of their responsibilities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Tell us what you would do—that is what I want to know.

Mr. DEACON: It is a pity, for the sake of the money invested, that there does not seem to be any possibility of the scheme being the huge success that everybody hoped it would be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman has not told me what I should do. I will undertake to do what he suggests.

Mr. DEACON: When the other blocks are opened up the Minister should act on the advice that is tendered to him. He should read what was said when the scheme was first discussed in Parliament. Plenty of advice was tendered to him from this side on that occasion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Ask the hon. member for Burnett how the settlement is getting on.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman was told when the scheme was introduced that the areas were too small and that it was not possible for men to make a living on such areas. He did not listen to that advice, and some failures will be caused through the small areas.

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

Mr. LLOYD (*Kevin Grove*): I rise to oppose the amendment. It is unnecessary, futile, and most improper for the gentlemen—with their professions of loyalty—on the other side of the House to introduce it at this stage. The original motion is an assurance to His Excellency—

"of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of Our Most Gracious Sovereign."

Here are these gentlemen, who are ready to fight on the matter of loyalty, and usually go loud in their professions of it, ignoring the main issue altogether, and obtruding

Mr. Lloyd.]

their own imaginary and concocted grievances without giving a thought to the main issue before the House. It is hard to know where this kind of thing is going to stop.

Will they want to amend the [3 p.m.] singing of "God Save the King," and introduce a verse invoking Divine aid to scatter the officials of the Taxation Department in such a way that they will not be able to collect the land tax? (Opposition dissent.) I do not know whether I have in the few minutes I have been speaking wasted the time of the House, but I would point out to the hon. members opposite that people who live so obviously in glass houses cannot afford to throw stones. Having said what I have about the loyalty of the members on the opposite side of the House, I wish to refer now to general topics, the discussion of which is generally admitted at this stage.

I wish first to congratulate the hon. member for North Brisbane on his admission to the Cabinet. His presence there at this particular time will be most valuable because of his knowledge of the metropolis. There was a time when the metropolis got too much attention. When this Government came into power they endeavoured to balance that state of affairs by giving more attention to the outside districts, no matter whether they gave us political support or not. If we go much further in that direction, the balance will be in the opposite direction. The advice of the hon. member for North Brisbane will be most useful at this stage, when a serious difficulty is likely to arise through the action of the Brisbane Tramway Trust. The Brisbane Tramway Trust has introduced the thin edge of the wedge in the matter of increasing the fares. We have for years insisted that the maximum tramway fare for carrying a person from any part of the suburbs into and through Queen street should be threepence. That fact was clearly laid down by the Government to the late company. The Tramway Trust, after a few months of office, have come before us and practically admitted their inability to give the same service as the old Brisbane Tramway Company at the same rate.

Mr. COSTELLO: Hear, hear!

Mr. LLOYD: Drastic action is necessary on the part of the Government to deal with that matter. The Government apparently must have in some way given their general sanction to an increase in fares; but that sanction must have been obtained by misrepresentation on the part of those who got it. It certainly has been abused, and I hope that the Government will lose neither days nor hours in withdrawing that sanction. There is absolutely no justification for that increase. The Trust works under no disadvantages. In days gone by the control of a public utility by the public was faced with certain disadvantages. The Government paid better wages and granted better working conditions than the private company did, but for the last eight years, through the legislation of this Government, the company has been forced by the Arbitration Court, whether it liked it or not, to conform to the same conditions as public departments. The proposal of the Trust is unbusinesslike, and will not secure more revenue. It will lead to less revenue being received than if the maximum fare of threepence was maintained, because the people will not settle in

{Mr. Lloyd.

those outside places. The man on the basic wage will be compelled to live in the outer suburbs and pay the fare demanded. The increased fare has only recently been introduced with respect to the Ashgrove extension, the greater part of which is in my electorate. It is the thin edge of the wedge for a general increase in fares, as there is no reason whatever why Ashgrove should be treated differently to any other suburb. The proposal is unbusinesslike and opposed to the best interests of the community, and in particular to the class which this Government have been most concerned about. Last year we introduced legislation which fixed the minimum size of an allotment at 16 perches, and councils in their zeal for better housing conditions have gone further and, in some cases, made their minimum 24 perches. That will make the cost of land for building purposes dearer than it otherwise would be. The man on the basic wage who is looking for a piece of land on which to put his house will be obliged to buy, say, 24 perches if he wants to settle within a radius of 2 or 3 miles from the city. If he goes out further, then there is the Tramway Trust waiting for him there with the fourpenny fare. Between the two, unless he is a very fortunate man and a particularly thrifty man, he will have to do without a house of his own at all. He will have to revert to the objectionable practice, becoming all too common in the city, of two families living in the one house. It has been the special concern of the party on this side of the House and Government to provide better housing conditions for the worker on the basic wage, and splendid work has already been achieved in that direction. That will be largely undone if we permit the outer suburbs, which are attractive to the working man, to suffer these impositions. (Hear, hear!) The man on the basic wage for a few more years will be able to get a home within the inside radius of the city; but in the course of time he will have to fall back under these conditions to paying rent all his life. I am quite certain that it is only necessary to mention this matter here for action to be taken. There need be no misgivings as to the feelings of the public on the matter. In the municipality of Ithaca, part of which I represent, there is practical unanimity on this matter. I know that the whole of the members of the Ithaca Council are unanimous in their opposition to this measure, although only a small part of the municipality is directly affected or likely to be affected, because the greater part of it is well within the two-mile radius.

Passing from that matter on to one or two other matters in the Speech, I notice that mention is made of the Greater Brisbane scheme, and we see this—

"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."

It is satisfactory to know that the Government recognise the need of the people being fully aware of the great change that is being effected. Last year, speaking on the Address in Reply, I suggested that a Bill should be introduced one session, should be left for public discussion during the recess, and then should be submitted to a referendum of the people concerned, and I have in no way altered my opinion on that matter. In fact, everything I have seen since has confirmed

my opinion that the wisest thing for the Government to do with the Greater Brisbane scheme is to submit it to a referendum of the electors—not to a vote of the councils.

Mr. COSTELLO: To the ratepayers?

Mr. LLOYD: Not to the ratepayers—to the electors. We have had too much of the ratepayers in the past. I would therefore suggest that the Government consider the advisability of taking a referendum on the zone plan. If they take the inside part of the city first, regarding which there seems to be an almost unanimity of opinion that consolidation is necessary—then take one or more zones outside, and then frame their final measure on the evidence furnished by this means.

Mr. SIZER: If you adopt any smaller zone, what is going to happen to the piece you chop off?

Mr. LLOYD: I notice that the great evil of unemployment is referred to in the Speech—

“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.”

It is very gratifying that this has been the first Government that has done anything practical in the way of relieving the necessities of the unemployed. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. SIZER: It is the first Government that has created unemployment.

Mr. LLOYD: We have to recognise this most important point that the Government have taken responsibility for the welfare of the individual, and if they cannot find that individual any remunerative work, they realise they must protect him from want in a way that implies no stigma or humiliation. A step has been taken in that direction, but it is a small step, and I hope that more will be done in the future. We are humane enough not to allow the unemployed man to starve, but he should not be supported through the humiliating step of accepting charity from other people. We went to save him from that, and the way out of the difficulty is to extend the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act, and not by running unremunerative relief work. By the latter method the Government spend and waste ten times, twenty times, or perhaps one hundred times, as much as is necessary to effect the objective which they have in view.

At 3.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. G. Pollock, *Gregory*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. LLOYD: In that respect I hope that a little more liberal policy will be resorted to in the relief afforded to single men. The married man is given at least bare sustenance for himself and his family, but the single man is often reduced to that most objectionable of all expedients—that of soliciting alms from people whom he meets in the street. That kind of thing should not go on. We must at all cost find every citizen some sort of sustenance. It is a practice to send the indigent man from one centre to another

looking for work. That is no use; he cannot make work. He goes along to a farmer and asks for a job. There is no job, and the farmer gives him a feed. That is only an indirect form of begging. We shall have to face that position. I recognise that this kind of thing is very much abused, and it is almost impossible to prevent it; but some relaxation of the position in that direction appears to me to be very necessary until times improve a bit.

Touching upon matters of less pressing importance, reference is made in the Speech to the University site—

“My advisers fully recognise the need for removal from the present cramped building . . . The erection of 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.”

I am afraid that that phrase “will be kept steadily in mind” is painfully significant. We recognise that the need exists, but there is no money to go on with the improvements. What are we going to do in the meantime? I have a practical suggestion to put before the House. In Melbourne, when the question of housing the Commonwealth Parliament came up, the State Parliament moved out and gave their building to the Commonwealth Parliament. Now we are putting additions to the Treasury Building, and two floors on the State Insurance Building would amply accommodate this House. We have a great deal of space here at the present time that we do not want, and more still when we are not sitting. I do not propose this as a permanent change, but as a means of getting over the difficulty of the University Building. This building could be handed over temporarily to the University, and the need for another building for the University until we got back here would then be “kept steadily in mind” until something eventuated.

I wish to repeat what I said last year with regard to the saving of time at the opening of Parliament. We waste nearly the whole of one day over the Governor's Speech.

Mr. SIZER: Have you become disloyal?

Mr. LLOYD: The ceremony is out of date.

Mr. KELSO: What would you like—a vaudeville entertainment?

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member who interjects is far more ridiculous than a vaudeville entertainment ever claimed to be. Being ridiculous is not being humorous.

The time occupied at the opening of Parliament in reading the Governor's Speech could be saved by publishing the Speech in the “Gazette.” Then it could be read by hon. members, who could prepare their speeches before we meet in the House, and we could get a whole day's work in on the first day. Then this system of giving tickets as a privilege for persons to be present at the opening ceremony is objectionable. At any rate, it is objectionable to the principles that this party stand for, and I hope the Government will seriously consider the necessity of making some alteration in that connection.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): The hon. member for Kelvin Grove said he was opposing the amendment. It is just as well that he did say that, otherwise we would have been

Mr. Sizer.]

justified in assuming that he was prepared to join the ranks of the Opposition in condemning the Government for their acts of maladministration. In fact, I do not think he had one bright thought for the Government during the whole of his speech. The hon. member quite unconsciously condemned the Government for the attempt to increase fares in Brisbane by the Brisbane Tramway Trust, quite unconscious of the fact that provision to increase the fares was provided for in an Order in Council which was approved of by the Government of which he is a supporter.

Mr. LLOYD: I said so.

Mr. SIZER: That is one matter in regard to which he joined with us in condemning the Government, and we certainly thank him for providing further ammunition for our guns if it were needed.

Mr. LLOYD: You need it.

Mr. SIZER: He provided further ammunition to help us to force through this amendment.

A further question the hon. member discussed was the question of unemployment. I was very sorry the hon. member did not extend himself on that matter. He must have been unmindful of the fact that retrenchment is taking place at the present moment. He must have forgotten it. Evidently he did not read in the Press the other day that these retrenched workers up in the Winton district had called upon the Government to resign—(Opposition Members: Hear, hear!)—and that individual members sitting behind the Cabinet should restore the Collins-Payne Ministry. The fight which has been going on in the caucus during the last few days is only a replica of what is going on outside, and the inevitable will happen. Hon. members opposite have gone so far as to move the Premier out of the chair and to keep him out for twenty minutes. They have gone that far, and the time is fast coming when the people outside and the continual resolutions that are being passed by the men I have mentioned will bring about a drastic change, and I would advise the hon. member for Kelvin Grove to reconsider his position before he opposes the amendment, and I would suggest that he read up and get in touch with the movement that we stand for. I shall have much more to say on the question of unemployment before I resume my seat.

If ever an amendment was justified in this House of Parliament, it is the amendment which has been moved by the leader of the Opposition to-day. From the time the Government first took power up to the present day they have made one colossal blunder after another. A large majority of their acts have been wrong, and their badness is only a question of degree. This session probably will be the culminating point in their mistakes. As I mentioned last night, from the day Parliament opens till they go into recess they will be on the penitent's form repenting of their sins in the amending legislation which is to be put before us. Practically speaking there is no new legislation promised or likely to come before us. All we propose from beginning to end is to amend, amend, and amend. If we have in the Premier the wonderful administrative and legislative genius which we are led to believe—if he is the superman that some men sometimes suppose—why is it that we always

[Mr. Sizer.

have this amending legislation? Why is it that there is such a diversity of opinion in caucus? If he is the superman some men believe him to be, then why to goodness do not the party—which is supposed to be united—why is it they cannot agree to support him without carrying on these tremendous party feuds till the "wee sma'" hours of the morning? It shows conclusively that the decisions of the caucus are arrived at by a very narrow majority, and that sometimes the alleged superman has a majority and sometimes he has not. When he has a majority he carries on, and when he has not he calmly gives way and loses whatever power he is alleged to have. The power of this superman is an absolute myth, and the records of Parliament and the records of the statutes put into operation by this Government as time goes on will show more and more that, instead of the Government being a Government of exceptional ability, or the Premier being a man of exceptional ability, they have been a Government without ability, and that their acts will cause tremendous disaster in channels which at the moment we are unable to imagine.

I wish to review one aspect of this London agreement, as that probably is one of the main points that we must consider. Although we must agree with the Premier that he made a success of his mission, I say there never should have been any need for a London mission. I certainly do not consider that it is an act of statesmanship to pursue a course which you know leads to a dead end and to the doors being closed against you, and then, when the inevitable disaster faces you, to repent and give way. That is the position this supposed superman finds himself in. It is a position we have been forced to realise, and in the interim we have been subjected to unnecessary humiliation which could have been avoided had it not been for the obstinacy of hon. members opposite. By the time the whole monetary value of the concessions that have been granted has accrued the State will be in a worse position financially than if the Government had never increased the rents which caused all the trouble. The amendment of the Land Act which caused the trouble gave the Government for the time being a certain amount of new revenue, but I maintain that, owing to the harder conditions that have been laid down by the financiers and to the concessions entered into in London by the Premier, the whole thing will be a losing proposition from the financial point of view. I always understood that the party opposite was a party that did not believe in secret diplomacy. When we were discussing the question of peace or war hon. members on the opposite side of the House argued that one of the prices of peace should be the abolition of secret diplomacy. If ever in the history of Queensland there has been secret diplomacy, it is in connection with this London agreement, which the public should know more of, but for some reason unknown the Government seem to be afraid of giving it publicity. There is no gainsaying the fact, in the absence of all evidence, that tremendous concessions have been given.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Tell us what they are.

Mr. SIZER: That is the unfortunate part of the business—we cannot tell. The Agent-General wants to know more, and he was in London some of the time. The fact that

immense concessions were granted can be arrived at by the simple reasoning that the financiers evidently held the key of the position. That is self-evident. The mere fact that they relaxed the position is reasonable evidence that they were satisfied with the concession that they got. If no concession has been made, is it reasonable to think that men who were fighting for a principle, and who had the upper hand and the key to the position, would be likely to relax unless they were satisfied with the deal that they made? We should for that reason know more of those terms. If there was anything in the argument that the Premier returned from England in 1920 boasting that he had defied the capitalists and that his action was endorsed by the public, then by the same line of reasoning when he returns from London and admits that he has conceded terms to the capitalists, he must reap condemnation instead of the congratulations which he received in 1920.

Mr. FARRELL: That is hypocrisy.

Mr. SIZER: No; it is pure logic. One of the evidences is that a tacit understanding was come to between the Government's representatives and the people who were conducting the affairs of the Brisbane Tramway Trust, and that the tramway purchase price played a very large part in the negotiations in London. The evidence which I hope to place before the House will lead up to that point, and I hope to be able to quote London authorities to support me in this view. We know that at the time the two sets of negotiations were going on more or less simultaneously, and in December, 1919, the accountants who went fully into the assets of the Brisbane Tramways Company showed that the full amount expended by the company was £890,592. But at the same date the company's books showed that there were 149,893 shareholders with a share capital of £1,638,363. Thus there was a difference of £747,770 between the amount which the accountants said had been expended and the amount which the company showed. For that £700,000 odd there were the usual shares and debentures, but no tangible assets to place alongside, which is a fair implication that there had been a great deal of watering of stock. There was a further £75,000 which was paid in bonus shares in 1912. The point I am coming to is that on that date the Tramways Company had spent £905,303 on the whole tramway system of Brisbane, and would have approximately £120,000 worth of stores, making the total assets of the company at that time £1,025,303, or in round figures, according to the accountants, £1,000,000. Yet the Government, through their representatives, have agreed to pay £1,400,000, or £400,000 more than was supposed to be the total amount expended by the Tramways Company, and with no provision for depreciation. In round figures, there was a depreciation of £250,000, so that we probably gave £650,000 more for the tramways than it appears from the figures they were worth. My argument is that that was a portion of the concessions which have been granted—a portion of the price which has been paid—and that there was a tacit understanding that litigation would be dropped on account of that settlement, and that it would be used as a part of the means to re-establish Queensland's loans on the money market and to rehabilitate our posi-

tion there. That is a reasonable argument, and I can substantiate that fact by some comments of the city editor of the London "Times" who said, speaking of the tramway settlement—

"It is another indication that Queensland is at last improving her status on the British market by getting rid of all contentious matters."

There was no contentious matter as regards the Tramways Company. That matter was to come before a judicial tribunal which was actually sitting when the authorities on each side asked for an adjournment as negotiations were going on.

Mr. FARRELL: That happens every day in the week.

Mr. SIZER: It only proves that our side was willing to submit the matter to the tribunal. There was no dispute as to the basis of settlement. Undoubtedly arrangements were made in Lombard street, where financiers control the situation, that the pastoral matter and the tramway purchase were to be put side by side, and the Premier was compelled to make concessions in two directions. The pastoralists having succeeded in establishing the validity of their contracts, knew full well that they were going to reap tremendous benefits by the concession which has been made, and at the same time they were able to get an advantage of something like £600,000 in the purchase of the Brisbane tramways, the price of which was settled by compromise between the respective parties.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is untrue.

Mr. SIZER: I do not know that it is untrue. I say that the evidence points to it. The hon. gentleman says it is untrue. Will he lay before the House the whole of the negotiations in London?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Tramways Company's negotiations? Why not?

Mr. SIZER: The whole of the negotiations in connection with the Premier's London financial mission.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why not? You are making a wild assertion.

Mr. SIZER: It is not a wild assertion. If the hon. gentleman had been in the House, he would have understood it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I was.

Mr. SIZER: No, you were in the Minister's room, and did not hear my figures. If the hon. member had been listening to my remarks, he would have heard me say that the Government have agreed to pay £1,400,000 for an asset that is shown on the books of the company to be worth only about £1,000,000, without allowing for depreciation. Assuming a depreciation of £200,000 or £250,000, it appears that the people of Brisbane have paid £600,000 more than the asset is worth. Furthermore, I say that it was largely done at the instigation of financiers in connection with the settlement which the Premier had to make and the terms of which the Government will not disclose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It had no relation to it.

Mr. Sizer.]

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman may say so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sure of it.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member said, when the Premier was in London, that we had to have legislation to give effect to the arrangement. Will that be necessary?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The lawyers say it will not.

Mr. SIZER: Does the hon. gentleman say so?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I was wrong.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman admits he was wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course, the hon. gentleman does not admit that he was wrong.

Mr. SIZER: Unfortunately I have to admit that I am very often wrong, but I am not wrong on this point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are wrong about the tramways. You make the assertion outside this Chamber that the tramway arrangement had anything at all to do with the loan.

Mr. SIZER: I say that on the figures which I have put before the House and the comments of the city editor of the "Times" that they were interwoven.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were not. The Premier was not there when the arrangement was made. The Premier did not conduct these negotiations.

Mr. SIZER: Until we get from the Government the full facts of the London negotiations we are entitled to put whatever construction on them we can.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Before a trial you are going to condemn the prisoner. You are going to defame everybody without giving them a hearing.

Mr. SIZER: That is not so. But let me say that the hon. gentleman was on trial in caucus the other day, and he was found guilty, but he managed to get back again, and he evidently has not taken much notice of what happened.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you get out of it as well as I have done, you have nothing to fear.

Mr. SIZER: I quite admit that the hon. gentleman got out of it very well. It is a reasonable conclusion, in my opinion, notwithstanding what the hon. gentleman says, that the two positions were connected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I challenge you to make that statement outside, without living in a coward's castle. Make that statement outside, and you will see what will happen.

Mr. SIZER: I probably will make it outside. The value of the concession is a most difficult thing to estimate, but we can leave that to the imagination of the people, who know the tremendous wealth of the industries concerned, considering that some of the leases extend to 1952, that forty-five leases aggregating 16,272 square miles extend to 1948, and that eighty leases comprising 34,755 square miles extend to 1946. If we calculate on the basis of the values which the grazing farmers pay for similar areas of land, we shall get at a fair and reasonable

[Mr. Sizer.

idea as to the amount of the concession which has been granted. At any rate, I am pleased that the Government have rectified a wrong. We should never have been in the humiliating condition in which we found ourselves. All I hope is that they will now do the right thing, and follow on the suggestion of the Secretary for Public Lands and introduce legislation for the purpose of putting into effect the compromise agreed upon in London. I know that the proposal is that it can be done by administration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know that the arrangement definitely states that it is to be done by administrative action?

Mr. SIZER: Legislative or administrative action—whatever may be necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. SIZER: Whatever is necessary, the Government have to do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. It can be done administratively.

Mr. SIZER: The position would be more clearly defined if there was legislation setting out the rental exactly in an Act of Parliament and in the leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not the agreement.

Mr. SIZER: It is the spirit of it. The attitude which the hon. member and his Government are going to take up is that, now application has to be made to the Land Court by the Crown for a reappraisal of rent, they do not attend to appear in court and ask for a reappraisal.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very well.

Mr. SIZER: They assume that the lessees will not make any application either, and that therefore it will be a case, practically speaking, of "nolle prosequi," and the old conditions therefore will prevail. But suppose the lessee does appear and asks for a reduction of rent? The Crown then will have to come into the case and can argue for an increase of rent, and there is nothing to prevent the Land Court from giving that increase of rent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The pastoral people understand that.

Mr. SIZER: Nobody would ever have made a settlement in London on such a flimsy, loose arrangement. I can also see that the Government's attitude will be very much misconstrued in London.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is thoroughly understood by those people what the agreement is.

Mr. SIZER: Was it understood when they were asked to agree to it that it was not to be done by legislation?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The pastoral companies fully understand the agreement made.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is not prepared to say that that was the understanding arrived at.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Do not put words into his mouth.

Mr. SIZER: I do not want to do so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I suggest to the hon. member that he address the Chair, and not invite interjections.

Mr. SIZER: I want an interjection from the Secretary for Public Lands which he will not give, but which, I think, would be worth while. That is the method which the Government propose to adopt to overcome the difficulty to put into effect the arrangement which was made.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are noted for your imagination.

Mr. SIZER: I am not far from the right conclusion. Even my wildest imagination would never allow me to think that that is the spirit of the contract to which these people over-as agreed. I am inclined to think, imaginative or not, that the Government will probably be accused of quibbling and of another breach of the arrangement made in London.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You may be sure we will carry out the agreement.

Mr. SIZER: I do not think that everybody felt so sure, because the term of the loan is fixed at five years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is that why nearly £70,000,000 was offered?

Mr. SIZER: I sincerely trust the Government will bring in a definite proposal to clear the whole matter up. Although it may be quite clear to the present Secretary for Public Lands—he may be Premier in a short space of time, and may not be the Secretary for Public Lands when this question arises again—still somebody may put a wrong interpretation upon the best intentions of the Minister to-day. The whole affair should be made clear by Act of Parliament, and the intention of the agreement placed in the leases in some way, so that those concerned will know where they stand.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is quite obvious from the hon. gentleman's remarks that the Opposition would stir up the trouble again if they could.

Mr. SIZER: No. I ask the hon. gentleman whether the correspondence and other documents relating to the negotiations and to the agreement drawn up in London will be made available, or will be laid on the table of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You had better give due notice of that.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is quibbling again. I could quite imagine what an obstreperous person the hon. gentleman would be if he were in Opposition demanding information on a question like this.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: After the hon. gentleman's rash statement about the tramways, I would want to write out an answer to his question, because he would mislead. His imagination is running riot.

Mr. SIZER: As we are discussing a censure motion, another line of attack is in respect of the ratoon cotton question. The Secretary for Agriculture will probably think that he can escape criticism because he is introducing an amending Bill. He told a deputation that he could not waste twenty minutes of his valuable time in discussing this question, yet he has wasted days and weeks in destroying an industry by refusing to take notice of the evidence placed before him. When the time arrives for the men engaged in the industry to be com-

pelled to plead with him to save the State and save their own industry, he tells them in a blunt sort of way that they were wasting twenty minutes of his valuable time. Judging from the results that he has produced in connection with the cotton industry, his time is not very valuable. It would have been much cheaper for the State to have paid him a handsome sum of about £50,000 to have gone away, and never introduced his legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It may not be too late yet. (Laughter.)

Mr. SIZER: The greatest loss that there has been to the State has been through the Government bungling on the ratoon cotton question. There is no more new evidence to-day than there was twelve months ago when we debated this question. The only bit of evidence that is new is the price that Mr. Daniel Jones was able to get for ratoon cotton in Liverpool. Hon. members on this side assured hon. members opposite last year that ratoon cotton was legal tender and was a valuable product. Sample bales have since been sold, and the Government have been shown the price realised, but when the matter was before them twelve months ago, they refused to listen to what was said on this side. The loss that has accrued to the State is tremendous, and the setback to the industry is tremendous. If there is one question more than another on which the Government deserve to be defeated, it is the handling of the ratoon cotton. Imagine for a moment an ordinary chairman of directors so mis-managing an ordinary small business and presenting such a position as is presented by the Government with regard to ratoon cotton. He would be immediately passed from the position that he occupied. Yet a Minister of the State without any practical knowledge can sit down and dictate and rule to the detriment of the whole of the community, and bring hardship, penury, and want into the homes of thousands of people who are trying to do the best for themselves, and make them criminals for defying the law, and still be able to carry on smilingly, with no more comment than just a mere snigger about wasting twenty minutes of his time. If ever a Government stood condemned, or if ever a Minister stood condemned, the present Government and the present Secretary for Agriculture stand condemned for maladministration in refusing to listen to the advice given, and the Minister has proved himself entirely incompetent to occupy his present position. I am going to ask the Government what are they going to do with the experts, on whom they relied so much.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whose advice do you think we should have taken?

Mr. SIZER: Whose advice are the Government going to take now?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are we to take the advice of "pommies" like you?

Mr. SIZER: Whose advice is the hon. gentleman going to take now? He talks about "pommies." He took the advice of Mr. Crompton Wood. What is he?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SIZER: He came along and threw dust in the hon. gentleman's eyes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whom should we take advice from?

Mr. Sizer.]

Mr. SIZER: Whom is the hon. gentleman going to take advice from? He has taken the advice from one source, and it has taken him so far. Whom is he going to take it from now that he has lifted the ban?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What are hon. members opposite going to do with Mr. Elphinstone?

Mr. SIZER: He will speak for himself. Here is the triviality of a man who aspires to be Premier! He endeavours to pass the responsibility of the colossal blunder which he has made in this huge industry on to private members on this side of the House, and at the same time refuses to accept any advice from us.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no cotton grown in Queensland until I, as Secretary for Agriculture, took up the matter.

Mr. SIZER: It would have been a good sound policy if the Minister had left the responsibility of developing that industry to men who understood it, as we then would have made greater progress with the industry than we have done. Instead of the hon. gentleman making progress, he has retarded the industry. He has ignored facts. I want to ask him now what has become of his experts.

Mr. FARRELL: Sack them and get you.

Mr. SIZER: I am not a cotton expert, but I can use common sense when it is shown to me, and it was shown to the hon. gentleman and he could not use it. What greater charge of incompetency can there be than that? I repeat again that, if ever a Government stood condemned, if ever a Minister stood condemned, this Government stand condemned in the eyes of all the people on the question of their cotton policy.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

At 4 p.m..

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. SIZER: The Government also stand condemned in so far as its administration of the public servants is concerned. They have reduced their salaries and wages 5 per cent., and they have increased their hours 10 per cent., so that the public servants are 15 per cent. worse off under the present régime than they were under any other régime.

Mr. FARRELL: Which other régime—surely not yours?

Mr. SIZER: I have never been behind a Government.

Mr. FARRELL: I worked under your Government for £2 a week.

Mr. SIZER: Probably you were paid all you were worth. (Laughter.)

Mr. FARRELL: In the same degree you would be worth about a dollar a week.

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

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): I rise to support the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. Never before in the history of Queensland have a Government deserved a resolution such as this amendment more than this Government. In reflecting on the destructive policy pursued by the Government for a number of years in this State one cannot wonder at the Opposition, in the interests of the people of Queensland, mov-

ing to bring about some alteration, even though the Government may continue to hold the Treasury benches. When this Government came into office in 1915 there was a revenue surplus over a period of eleven years of approximately £200,000. The public debt totalled £56,000,000, equal approximately to an average of £1,000,000 per annum. The present Government have brought about during their nine years' reign in Queensland a net deficit of approximately £980,000, and had increased our public debt at the end of the financial year, 1922-23, to £88,000,000. The increase in public debt since they took office has approximately been at the rate of £4,000,000 per annum. Those points in themselves, taking into consideration the vast possibilities of Queensland, prove beyond all doubt that the Government have failed financially. If we have to take any notice of the statements of the Premier, and the ex-Treasurer, Mr. Pihelly, in days gone by—that "finance is a test of all Governments"—then the present Government have absolutely failed. If the statements which have been put forward by the hon. members of the Opposition from time to time had been taken any notice of by the present Government, we would have been in a very different condition in Queensland to-day. The Secretary for Agriculture, during the speech of the last speaker, asked, in connection with the cotton industry, whom the Government were to take any notice of, or whom they were to be guided by. If the Secretary for Agriculture refers to the debates in "Hansard" when the Cotton Industry Bill was going through the House, he will see over and over again the arguments put up by practical men on this side of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You were only showing your opposition to the Bill in the same manner as you have opposed every other reform.

Mr. EDWARDS: It was not opposition to the Bill. The Minister was asked over and over again not to impose the ban on ratoon cotton. If he had been advised, as he should have been, by men who know something about agricultural pursuits in Queensland—men of knowledge such as Mr. Daniel Jones—the present position in regard to the cotton industry would not have arisen. I remember the Secretary for Agriculture getting up in his place in the House during the progress of that Bill and stating that he himself knew as much about cotton as did Mr. Daniel Jones. Now, after twelve months of difficulty and trouble with the cotton growers of Queensland, he has had to come to the conclusion that, after all, the knowledge and experience of such men as Mr. Daniel Jones were well worth listening to. He has now come to the conclusion that it is necessary in the interests of that all-important industry to lift the ban off ratoon cotton. I hope the hon. gentleman will not only do that, but that he will entirely lift the restrictions from the people who are attempting to develop our primary industry, and leave them alone.

I am one who believes that no agricultural pursuit can possibly be carried out under the direction of departmental inspectors, and I think the Secretary for Agriculture would be well advised to lift all restrictions from the cotton-growers as I have suggested. I am satisfied they can be trusted as growers

[*Mr. Sizer.*

and agriculturists, and that they are not going to do anything to injure the industry of the State.

My argument is that it is the function of a Government to assist in every possible shape and form in furthering agricultural pursuits and industries with finance: that they should assist them, and not put restrictions on them which are going to be detrimental.

I will go a little further and deal with the manner in which the Government have conducted the affairs of our State. In 1914-15 our railways showed a clear profit of £42,000. Since then freights have been increased on an average of 55 per cent., and now further increases are to be made. The total losses over a period of eight years amount to £10,000,000. That in itself proves that the Government have failed so far as the running of the railways of the State is concerned. Not one man on the opposite side of the House can stand up to-day and say that the Government have made a success of our railways. They have made a total failure of them.

Mr. FARRELL: Don't be silly.

Mr. EDWARDS: Then we may look into the question of the development of the secondary industries in this State. In the Governor's Speech we find this statement—

“My advisers have endeavoured to keep as much work within the State as possible.”

To illustrate how they have succeeded in keeping as much work as possible within this State in connection with secondary industries, I will quote a few figures in connection with the increases in factories in Queensland as compared with other States—

“In Queensland, in 1923, there were 1,378 factories, employing 43,463 hands.

“In New South Wales, in 1923, there were 6,698 factories, employing 152,205 hands.

“In Victoria, in 1923, there were 6,753 factories, employing 144,870 hands.”

That proves beyond question or doubt that the Government have not been sincere in their policy of developing the secondary industries within our State. At the present time we are placed in the unfortunate position of sending our raw material from Queensland to New South Wales and Victoria, having it manufactured there, and brought back at a big expense to the people in our own State.

Mr. BEDFORD: What does that matter? It is in Australia. If our superior industrial conditions do that, good luck to them.

Mr. EDWARDS: If that is the hon. gentleman's idea of the way to develop this great State of Queensland, then it is to be hoped that he never gets on to the Treasury benches.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is your little mind I am exposing.

Mr. EDWARDS: I quite understand the hon. member has a very big mind, and, if he is not careful, the top will fall off. (Laughter.) I am advocating the development of the secondary industries of this State in order that our primary products may be manufactured within the State. I quoted figures to show the number of factories and the number of employees in the different

States. Now I desire to give the figures as to the different factories—

“Hide and skin factories—			
Victoria	...	...	48
New South Wales	...	...	18
Queensland	...	...	17
“Boot and shoe factories—			
Victoria	...	...	334
New South Wales	...	...	302
Queensland	...	...	36”

We must take into consideration, too, the fact that Queensland is the largest producer of hides and skins in the Commonwealth. The raw material required for the manufacture of boots and shoes is produced to a greater extent in Queensland than in any other State in the Commonwealth. Therefore, if the Government have any interest in the welfare of the business of this State, every consideration and assistance should be given to the development of the secondary industries within our own State. While I agree to some extent with the hon. member who interjected that it is better to have these goods manufactured in the Commonwealth than in foreign countries overseas, still it is far better, when we produce the raw material, to have the goods manufactured in our own State.

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the hon. member is not too careful when opening that trap-door, the whole top will fall off.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: You are as rough as sand-paper.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is no occasion for any sandpaper with the hon. member. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member for Warrego must cease interjecting.

Mr. EDWARDS: Now take woollen and cotton factories—

Victoria has established	...	...	19
New South Wales has established	...	...	9
Queensland has established	...	...	2

There has been no interest taken in the development of these industries to enable the raw material to be manufactured in our own State, and the time has come when the workers of this State should wake up and realise that they are not getting the consideration, so far as work is concerned, that they should get. Industries have been forced to the Southern States, and men who have ability have had to follow them down there if they require work. That is not a position that should be taken up in this State. If the business of the State counts at all in the development of the State, then the Government should use every means in their power to develop the industries of the State.

One could go on quoting figures in connection with land settlement and in connection with many other industries within the State to prove beyond doubt that the Government have not given the facilities for development that should have been given.

If one thing stands out more than anything else in the State to-day, it is the absolute failure of the Government in connection with soldier settlement. At Coominya there were thousands and tens of thousands of pounds spent, and until the hon. member for Stanley and myself went on to the estate

Mr. Edwards.]

and kicked up a row in the House there was no consideration given to those settlers at all. The Government only then woke up to the fact that it would be a good plan to get some of the soils at Coominya analysed. The analyses proved that the soils were of no commercial value whatever. That was after tens of thousands of pounds had been spent and years of hard labour wasted in trying to develop that estate. At the present time, I understand, there are only two settlers left at Coominya. Beerburum is another instance of failure. I say that these failures show that the Government should not only have a vote of censure passed upon them, but that the people of Queensland should wake up to the attitude of the Government in connection with land settlement and put them out of office.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: I think it would have been in the interests of Queensland if the Collins Government had taken charge, because the present Ministers are only throwing dust in the eyes of the people. They are being forced step by step into line with those people in this State who stand for extreme socialism. The Ministers know that they cannot stop the trend of that movement; but, rather than give up office and lose their emoluments, they still go on trying to throw dust in the eyes of the people. I hope the time will come when the Government will realise that this disastrous policy will have to be stopped sooner or later, and that it is time to cut it out and put the State on a business footing. When they consider the increase which it is announced is to take place in freights and fares throughout the State, they must realise that their present policy is disastrous. The primary producers in many parts of Queensland can scarcely get a crust to eat. It is no use talking of prosperity, because it does not exist in many places in Queensland. When the Government, after the trouble these people have been through, deliberately impose more taxation upon them in the way of increased freights and fares, it is evident that they are not going to consider the interests of the producer from any point of view. If the Government think that this is going to hit the large centres, they are making a great mistake. The people who will have to carry the extra burden of freights and fares are those who live in the country districts. The further they live from large centres the greater will be the burden they will have to carry in that connection. Anyone who travels on the railways must realise that the people are not travelling as they used to do, and the reason is that they have no money to do it. Travelling is very expensive, and something will have to be done before we can get the people to use the railways and make them pay as in days gone by.

There is another thing which should condemn the Government—that is the position with regard to closer settlement along the railways. Last session statements were made on the front Government bench that the Government were going to resume large estates in country districts for the purpose of settling people along existing railway lines. A year has elapsed since then, but there does not seem to be any more possibility of getting these estates cut up for closer settlement purposes than there was twelve months ago.

[Mr. Edwards.

There is another matter which, in my opinion, is going a long way towards condemning the Government. Soldier settlements and other settlements are taking place 30 to 40 miles away from a railway. Will the Secretary for Public Lands say that it is possible for a small farmer to grow produce under such conditions, cart it over bad roads, and then pay increased fares and freights? If these large estates which I have mentioned were cut up, and such farmers were settled on them alongside existing railways, it would be to the advantage of the people of Queensland in every way. It is pitiful to see men trying to grow maize and cotton and other products long distances from railways. It is quite impossible for them to make good under those conditions. This is a matter which should receive the best consideration of any Government as quickly as possible.

I repeat that before we can get a market for our primary products the Government will have to come to the assistance of the people who wish to build up the secondary industries of the State. The figures to which I have referred disclose a condition which has largely been brought about by the interference of the Government with private capital by taxation and in many other ways, with the result that expenditure has been curtailed by men who were prepared to build up secondary industries and employ our own men and find markets, but who have been driven away to New South Wales and Victoria, and even to other parts of the world. I hope that the Government will take all these matters into serious consideration, that they will drop their stupid policy of socialisation, and attempt at least to put this State on a business footing and run it as a State should be run.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Earham*): I suppose that parliamentary courtesy demands that, as leader of the House at the present time, I should say a few words in reply. Common courtesy in parliamentary procedure demands, too, that the leader of the Opposition should have at least given me some notice of his intention to move his amendment.

I want to say right here, however, that I am not in any way perturbed at the amendment to the Address in Reply, nor do I or the Government take the matter seriously. If any proof were needed of the want of sincerity behind the motion for want of confidence proposed to be sent to His Excellency, it is to be found in the fact that during the afternoon—and I have listened to most of the speeches—very little interest has been taken in the debate. Even when the leader of the Opposition was moving the motion only three or four of his supporters were present, and the Government party certainly did not take the matter very seriously.

Mr. MORGAN: There are only four Government supporters there now.

Mr. KERR: We had at least fourteen here when the leader of the Opposition was speaking.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a well-known fact—and I think it is well known to Parliamentarians like those who interjected just now—that when a vote of censure is before the House, all business stands still. On a previous occasion when

a vote of censure was moved in this House, my late esteemed leader, the Hon. T. J. Ryan, called attention to the inconsistency and the want of sincerity in those who moved it by relating the fact that during the currency of the debate he and other Ministers had been approached by country members and asked to go and open shows in their district a fortnight and three weeks ahead. If those hon. members had been sincere and believed that the vote of censure would be carried, they would not have made such arrangements. This afternoon, while I was sitting on this bench, some hon. members from the same party approached me on Government and departmental business.

Mr. MORGAN: Is not that playing rather low down?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In listening to the futile criticism and the Tory platitudes of hon. members opposite, and in noticing that they have to go back ten or fifteen years into ancient history in order to produce some evidence to support the want of confidence motion, and the contradictory nature of their complaints, it struck me that the Opposition resembled very closely a certain dog that the late Rev. Dr. Spurgeon wrote about. A farmer had a dog which howled all the time it was on the chain, and was perfectly miserable when it was let loose. Previously, hon. members opposite who have been criticising the Government this afternoon were perfectly miserable because they said the credit of the country had been ruined; now they are perfectly unhappy and are howling because the Premier has accomplished the almost superhuman task of undoing the work of their delegation. Not only was that delegation responsible for the trouble, but the delegation and their friends who sent them there continue to foul their own nest. They were unable to stop the bush fire that started before it reached the proportions it did reach on the other side of the world. Not only did the Premier of Queensland have a most difficult task on that account, but it was made more difficult for him by Tory Governments thirty or forty years ago in borrowing large sums of loan money without making provision for sinking funds or the maturing of those loans at an opportune time. Not only was the task a difficult one, but it was one that no other Premier has had to face, and he succeeded in a marked degree, and because he succeeded hon. members opposite, like Dr. Spurgeon's dog, are howling now because of his success. Those who have criticised the undertaking were very loud in their condemnation of the Government going to America for money. They talked about severing the silken cord, disloyalty, and the influence that America would have over this country if we opened up financial negotiations with that country. Now they have the green-cheek and brazen effrontery to suggest that the Premier should not have gone to London to secure the money there on favourable terms for the people of this State, but should have gone to New York. Hon. members opposite should take up one attitude or the other, and say that the Premier did right in securing the renewal of those loans in Great Britain, or that they were wrong when they condemned the Government in 1920 for going to New York to secure money there. I am not concerned about the ethics or ideas of good government as laid down by my opponents. The real question is: Given

a country and a people, the test of good government is how can those people so govern themselves as to give the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of men, women, and children within their borders? On that test, and that test alone, the Government were judged at the last elections, when they were returned with a very large majority. The Government have done nothing since the last elections to forfeit the confidence of the people of the State; in fact, we have evidence everywhere of increasing support, particularly from the rural community, because of our policy of agricultural development. The so-called Country party, when they composed their differences with the National party, surrendered all their Country party planks—I have seen evidence of that this afternoon—and gave over the whole control to the middlemen, exploiters, and profiteers. If they had not done that, but had had sufficient courage and [4.30 p.m.] manliness they would support the Government, who have done so much for the rural community. I submit that the real test of government is: Are the people better fed, are the people better housed, are the people better clad, and, generally, are the people more comfortably situated now than they were ten years ago when the so-called National party was in power?

Mr. KEHR: No, they are not.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There can be no doubt in the minds of any fair-minded, intelligent man or woman in this State that the common people, generally speaking, are better off. I do not for a moment claim that the Labour Government have accomplished the impossible. We have not brought about the millennium, nor a heaven on earth, but within the points of limitation of the system under which we live, I say again we have accomplished very much more than our predecessors did during the whole of their history.

Mr. KELSO: You have spent far more loan money than your predecessors.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not going to reply to the numerous budding Treasurers on the other side of the House who have criticised the financial position of the State, and the negotiations made by the Premier in regard to securing a renewal of the loans falling due, but I repeat again that few men, inside or outside the House, irrespective of their politics, could have done as well as the Premier, and no man could have done better. I say again that the position in regard to those loans was brought about by Tory Governments thirty and forty years ago. Much of that money was spent in a way in which it should not have been spent, and no provision was made for the loans falling due at a convenient time. The herculean task of securing a renewal of such a huge amount of loan money was left to the present Premier, and he acquitted himself in the task in an honourable and business-like manner.

Mr. CORSER: What provision have the present Government made for the redemption of the loans?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not going to reply, as I said, to the criticism of budding Treasurers. They had their opportunity in days gone by to do better, but they neglected it. They practically did nothing for the wage-earners, the

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

farmers, the miners, or the people of this country—the men who are carrying on the work of the country—but left them to their fate. It was left to the Labour Government to place the workers, the farmers, and all who are doing useful work on a better footing than ever before.

Mr. MORGAN: You do not believe that yourself.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Judging by their attitude and speeches, the Opposition still deserve the title of being the low wage, dear land, and profiteering party.

Mr. KERR: You are the wage reducers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is ample evidence in support for my statement. The Country party had some semblance of a policy before they amalgamated with the National party and sank their differences and became a United party. While they preserved their separate entity they did have some ideas about the farming community.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: You don't like it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Country party has now been absorbed by the middlemen. In this city of Brisbane there are more middlemen and profiteers than in the cities of Sydney and Adelaide together.

Mr. CORSER: They were created by your Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yet hon. members opposite bitterly fought the legislation I endeavoured to put on the statute-book in the last two years to remove the farmer from the influence of the profiteer. The Country party has now been absorbed and swallowed up by the middleman party, and we have the spectacle of those men trying to get up and convince this House that the Government does not possess the confidence of the people. In spite of the difficulties under which we have had to contend—first of all the war, then the aftermath of war, drought, and the heritage of job railway lines constructed by previous Tory Governments, the financial boycott, and the system of usury obtaining to-day—we have done more for Queensland during the period we have been in office than was done during the previous fifty years of Tory administration. After all, the prosperity of Queensland depends on her primary industries. Our secondary industries are really only in their infancy. The success of this State depends mainly on her primary industries. I want to give a few figures, first of all, to show how the Tory Government spent the loan money that the present Premier was able so successfully to renew. The loan was for £12,973,824.

OPPOSITION interjections.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Speaker, when this babble of voices discontinues I shall be able to get on with my speech.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to desist from undue interjections. For some time there has been a continual stream of interjections.

Mr. CORSER: And abuse from that man.

The SPEAKER: Order! If my call to order is not obeyed, I intend to have the

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.

hon. member responsible removed. I hope that hon. members will allow the Secretary for Agriculture to proceed. The hon. gentleman is entitled to speak without interruption.

Mr. CORSER: We do not want soap-box oratory; we want politics.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for calling hon. members opposite to order. Their behaviour is certainly not very creditable. The only conclusion I can come to is that my remarks are not acceptable. They are certainly damaging to the so-called United party in this House.

The figures I am quoting have been supplied by the Treasury. The loan of £12,973,824 which was converted in London by the Premier was spent in Queensland in the following way. I might mention that these loans were raised under three different Acts—1894 Act No. 1, 1884 Act No. 2, and the Loan Act of 1889. The total expenditures were:—

	£
On Railway construction ...	8,695,834
On Defence	100,000
On Loan deficits	155,000
On Electric telegraphs ...	335,000
On Harbours and rivers ...	666,000
On Immigration	1,400,000
On Loans to local bodies ...	515,000
On Public buildings	522,000
On Roads and bridges	235,000
On Water supply	300,000

Mr. KERR: Did not our Government pay their full interest before your Government came into power?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Contain yourself. It is quite safe to say that of the £8,695,834 spent on railways, much was spent on job railways—for there was no "betterment system" in those days, and there was no Public Works Commission to inquire into railway construction. Many of those railways were built for friends of the predecessors of hon. members opposite, and these are the railways which our Tory friends are pleased to call the "Gone a million railways." They talk about the railways not paying, and say that an effort should be made to place them on a sound footing; yet they dissent when it is proposed to increase freights and fares to bring about this objective.

Generally speaking, our railways are the cheapest railways in the whole world. Further than that, the late leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Windsor, in his policy speech last year forecast an increase in railway fares and freights. It is very difficult to say how hon. gentlemen opposite acted when they came together and arranged the differences between the two parties, but I have evidence that, so far as the Country party policy is concerned, it has practically gone out of existence; the middlemen now dominate it.

With regard to the loan conversion, not only did the bankers and the gentlemen representing the commercial interests of this city give the Premier a very fitting farewell and express the wish that he would accomplish the work that he set out to do, but they

have also since expressed their satisfaction and pleasure at the consummation of his mission on the other side of the world. Practically every paper opposing the present Government has been fair enough to recognise that the Premier did splendid service for the country, and splendid service for the people of this great State in bringing about a satisfactory conversion of these loans. Not only was he complimented by financial authorities in this State, but he was complimented by the governor of the Bank of England and the London Press itself on the very satisfactory way in which he managed the most difficult and delicate negotiations on behalf of the people of this State.

I want to give a few figures with regard to the progress of agriculture since this party has been in power. They show that the members of the "Jeremiah" and "stinking fish" party are prepared to foul their own nest in order to secure some political kudos and some credit in the eyes of the electors, and that they are prepared to damage this fair State. It matters not to them how much the reputation of this fair State is damaged. Like the delegation they sent to England in 1920, they are prepared at all times to damage the fair reputation of this State, as has been shown by their speeches this afternoon. I want to quote some official figures to show the progress agriculture, despite a series of drought years, has made during the time the present Government has been in power, and also to show that the value of agricultural products in this State has gone up by leaps and bounds, and to show further that because of the policy of organisation and stabilisation of prices brought in by this party in the teeth of Opposition and Country party members, we have been able to place agriculture in a better position and on a better footing in this State than it is in any State in the Commonwealth to-day.

Mr. SIZER: What about the pink boll worm?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. gentleman has probably got a touch of the pink boll worm on the brain. I will deal with the pink boll worm, and I will deal with the hon. member too. There are one or two members on that side of the House who, I take it, are fair-minded enough to want to know the exact progress that has been made with regard to agriculture while the Labour party has been on the Treasury benches. First of all, the policy of the Labour party is a decent wage to the worker, which enables the worker to pay a decent price to the farmer for his product, and secondly decent prices to the farmer for his product and good conditions for the whole of the members of the community, thereby making for the prosperity of the State. In 1914 the dairy products produced in Queensland were worth £2,390,000. But despite the various difficulties under which the dairy farmers have been working during the last twenty or thirty years, according to the latest figures the industry to-day is worth over £7,000,000. That shows very substantial progress, and I want to remind hon. members that the area under artificial grasses since this party came into power has increased by over 150 per cent., showing conclusively that the dairying industry is making rapid progress, and that this party has been responsible for the progress of this industry. The following table also

indicates that great progress has taken place in our primary industries:—

"Agricultural Crop.				
				£
1914	...	...	...	5,670,000
1921	...	...	...	10,500,000
"Primary Industries.				
				£
1914	...	...	...	59,000,000
1921	...	...	...	68,000,000
"Number of Owners Cultivating.				
1914	...	...	...	22,000
1921	...	...	...	24,500
"Number of Cattle-owners.				
1914	...	...	...	39,700
1921	...	...	...	48,700

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Do you take credit for that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member wants to know if I take credit for the progress shown by these figures. I leave that to the common sense of the people.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about wool?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The figures in regard to wool are still more convincing, and they show that the wool and sheep industry never was more prosperous. I say that the test of good government is whether the people are better fed, better housed, and better clothed. The very fact that this Government, notwithstanding the financial difficulties, built over 1,000 homes for the workers last year under the new policy brought in by my colleague the Secretary for Public Works—which is the most liberal of its kind in the Commonwealth—shows that we are endeavouring to house the workers of this State.

The figures I have disclosed with regard to agriculture show that the agricultural community have a great deal to be thankful for so far as the present Government are concerned. I am not going to say that there are not some country members opposite who, if they were free to do so and could get a numerical backing up in Parliament, would not have done something for the farmer, but they are associated with traditional enemies of the farmer—the middlemen—and are tied hand and foot, so that they will never be able to do anything for the farmers of this State. They know, of course, that there is no chance of carrying the country with them, but what they are alarmed about—and the same kind of alarm is to be found in the ranks of all anti-Labour politicians and anti-Labour newspapers to-day—is the rapid progress that is being made by democracy. What alarms these people is the fact that the principles of the true democracy are sound and invincible because they are right and just. They know that democracy is gradually but surely going ahead. We may expect set-backs—all progressive movements get set-backs—but slowly and surely democracy is marching forward because the principles of democracy are right. In Tory Great Britain Ramsay MacDonald is able to carry on because the people there realise that the only hope of peace in Europe is to have Labour Governments in power. Ramsay MacDonald has carried on in Great Britain without a majority in the House of Commons, and he has been able during the few months he has been there to do more to promote peace throughout the world than all the other Governments which have met at Westminster. In South

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

Africa, in France; in fact, all over the civilised world, there is evidence to-day of the gradual coming forward of the people's Governments. Under one name or another the workers are gradually realising that it is their right to rule in the interests of the workers and toilers. In the various States of the Commonwealth there is only one State—New South Wales—that is not ruled at the present time by a Labour Government. That is why those people who are represented on the other side are alarmed and concerned. Hon. members of the Opposition make a noise and go back into ancient history, and utter a lot of platitudes and shibboleths which they think will confuse the electors outside. The electors submit Governments to a different test to-day than they did when the party opposite was in power. They want the goods. The Labour party in Queensland have delivered the goods. The place of hon. members opposite is in opposition, and there they will remain for many a long day, unless they are able to put forward a policy which is democratic and which they have some chance of carrying into effect. They cannot agree upon a common policy or on anything for the benefit of the people of Queensland. The workers, farmers, miners, small business men, and the public service have had some reason to be thankful to the Labour Government of this State, though none of them may have secured all they would like or all they deserve.

With regard to education, we recognise that a highly educated people makes for better conditions. For that reason we have been able to find money for education, and to-day we spend considerably more than twice as much on the education of the children of this State as was spent by the anti-Labour Administration. Their concern for the children of this State is shown by the fact that they starved education. They were not prepared to look after the children in the way that we are looking after them at the present time.

I want to say one or two words about the sugar industry. If there is any party in this House which should keep quiet about the sugar industry, it is the anti-Labour party, which advocated black labour and said that the industry could not be carried on without it; in fact, their ancestors manured the fields of Queensland with the blood and bones of the kanakas, until public opinion ruled against them and required that black labour should be sent out of the country. Then they declared that £1 2s. 6d. a week was too much for a white worker. Members now sitting in Parliament declared that £1 5s. a week was too much for a man to be paid for working in the canefields. What did they do about the sugar industry? They left it to the tender mercies of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and it remained for this Government not only to protect the worker by allowing him to go to the Arbitration Court and providing for his adequate accommodation, but also to protect the farmer by extending the principles of arbitration to the price of cane and giving him the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. Why did hon. members not attempt to do something for the sugar-grower when they had the opportunity? I say that we have done these things. We have not talked about them—we have done them. We have accomplished more in a short space of nine years, in spite of all the difficulties with which we have been con-

fronted than all the other parties which ever came into this House, and the indications are that the people are realising that as time goes on we shall be able to do more and more for those who toil. As Secretary for Agriculture, it is my particular job to look after the worker on the land, and I believe that there is evidence that the farmers are waking up to the fact, and that the organisation of the farmers brought about by this party is going to be the first step in the direction of getting rid of the middleman and bringing the producer and the consumer together for the benefit of both. What about the attitude of hon. members opposite to the fruit marketing scheme? They opposed that because their middlemen were concerned.

Mr. CLAYTON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They said that it should not have been brought in. Now we have an organisation under that Act whereby the growers themselves are marketing their own fruit, and because it has been a success, they say—as they say about all our reforms after they have succeeded—that they believed in it all the time.

Mr. COSTELLO: It was supported by the Country party.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Now I want to say one or two words about what hon. members opposite are pleased to describe as the "cotton bungle." I suppose that they are not pleased at the action which the Government have decided to take, because they would otherwise have been able to get up in this House and occupy four or five or ten or twelve days in urging the Government to relax the embargo on ratoon cotton, and would have said, "We made you do it." I say that this is another evidence of the perverseness of hon. members opposite. If we had not removed the embargo, they would have criticised us; and now, because we have removed it or propose to remove it, they are howling the whole time. I make no apology for the legislation brought in last session, because I said then that the policy of the Government was "safety first." The embargo on ratoon cotton was brought in on the advice of the experts, who were brought here to advise us.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Very poor experts.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I presume that hon. members opposite are pleased that they advocated ratoon cotton, because the market for it to-day happens to be at such a high figure owing to the fact that the cotton crop in America has failed to a large extent. If these wiseacres, who urged the Government to relax the embargo because the farmers say they want it and it will have it, find in four or five years' time that the price of ratoon cotton will drop to a price which does not pay for cultivation with white labour, they—as I think it may—will not have such a lot to boast about. It is only reasonable to expect that the Arbitration Court in its wisdom will, sooner or later, provide an award for the cotton industry which will enable the workers in it to get a reasonable living wage—(Opposition interruption)—because no industry in this country is any good unless it can pay a reasonable wage. That is why we are endeavouring to place agriculture on a sound footing, guaranteeing prices, etc. We recognise that that time must come, and I hope that when an award is made in the cotton industry, and if in time to come the

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

price of ratoon cotton languishes and falls, these people, who this afternoon are making such an outcry over such a great victory, will be men enough to say that probably the Government were right after all in advocating the growing of the best. The farmers say to-day through the newspapers and their representatives in the country, "We want the embargo removed." The Government are going to remove that embargo, but they will have to protect those who want to grow annual cotton and who produce the very best article, because I believe that only by producing the very best article can Australian conditions be carried out in this industry. The Government are relaxing the embargo because the farmers have asked for it, but if in the course of three, four, or five years it is proved that ratoon cotton is a failure—we know that it is generally inferior to annual cotton—then hon. members opposite who have said so much this afternoon about relaxing the embargo will have to take the responsibility of saying that after all they were wrong, and the Government were right in their attitude.

Mr. SIZER: Are the Government going to compensate those who obeyed the law?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Give notice of that question. (Opposition laughter.) I might mention that, when the Cotton Industry Bill was before the House last year it was supported by the leader of the Opposition and by the hon. member for Oxley. The latter gentleman went to the old country with the one intention of finding out all about ratoon cotton, and has cabled out to say that the ratoon cotton embargo should be maintained, and he has not changed his view with regard to that. Having pointed out the inconsistencies and the hypocrisy of hon. members opposite who have spoken this afternoon on the vote of censure, and having dealt with all the other matters raised, I desire to say to the country that the policy of the Government is sound and just, and that we continue to stand for a fair deal for the people who are doing useful work in this country.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I have much pleasure in supporting the vote of censure moved by the leader of the Opposition. The Acting Premier, in speaking, said that we were not taking his remarks in an acceptable way. Naturally we were not, because he was failing to deal with the criticism advanced from this side of the House. He evaded all the criticism, and at the conclusion of his speech apologised for himself and his Government for their action in connection with ratoon cotton. I do not think the Acting Premier is in favour of ratoon cotton, and it was only through the fight that the Central Queensland cotton-growers put up, and the fight put up by hon. members on this side, that he was compelled to lift the ban.

Each speaker opposite has congratulated the Premier on his achievement in renewing the loan when he was in London recently, but they forget that the trouble was brought on by the Premier and his party.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You cannot wash your hands like that.

Mr. CLAYTON: There were other Premiers going home for loan money about the same time as our Premier, but the Queensland Premier is being made a hero of because he got the money, but it is forgotten

that he had to pay a higher rate because of certain legislation that he introduced into this House, and which we on this side warned him would react on him in the future. We have the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply saying that prosperity exists in Queensland, and that the position of affairs is infinitely better now than in years gone by.

[5 p.m.] There may be an artificial wave of prosperity, but why should there not be, when the Government are spending about £3,000,000 of loan money each year without making any provision for the day of reckoning?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON: The people are not satisfied with the conditions that exist. There are evident signs of discontent right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. Much has been said about the primary producer, but in certain industries there is no more discontented man to-day than the primary producer. There is discontent in the Police Force, the railway employees are at the throat of the Government making certain demands, the wages of the railway employees having been reduced as well as the wages of the Government employees generally. The matter of wage reduction came up at the Emu Park Labour Convention last year. Although it was adopted there, I would like to quote from the "Advocate," the organ of the railway employees, a resolution that was brought forward and debated there on this subject—

"That the Government restore the basic wage of £4 5s. per week until such time as the Arbitration Act is amended to include a provision that the basic wage be fixed on the standard arrived at by the Piddington Commission."

The "Advocate" prints the division list at the request of a number of members of the Queensland Railway Union for the information of members generally; and for the benefit of hon. members, and so that we can have it recorded in "Hansard." I would like to read out how the members of the Government party who were there as delegates voted on that all-important question. We have in the list of wage reducers the names of Messrs. T. Wilson, D. A. Gledson, J. Dash, E. G. Theodore, J. Larcombe, T. A. Foley, J. Mullan, A. J. Jones, T. Dunstan, G. Barber, V. J. Winstanley, W. McCormack, G. Carter, T. Farrell, J. Stopford, and G. Pollock, M.M.L.A.; also R. J. Webster, the Labour candidate for Nanango, and others.

Mr. FRY: What do you say they voted for—lower wages?

Mr. CLAYTON: Yes, those are the members of the Government and would-be members who voted for the reduction in wages. There were only two members of the Government party who voted for it, and they were Messrs. M. A. Ferricks and H. L. Hartley. I admire those two hon. members for the stand they took, because every one of the hon. members on that side of the House promised the electors when seeking their suffrages that he would do everything he possibly could in the interests of the workers. When they had an opportunity of doing something, this is what they did! That division list shows exactly who are the friends of the workers. I have done service to a great many workers in having

Mr. Clayton.]

those names inserted in "Hansard," so that they can see who are their friends in this House.

Mr. HYNES: The only thing you people won't do for the workers is get off their backs.

Mr. PETERSON: You have been on them for a long while.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Acting Premier dealt with the question of the cotton industry. It is pleasing to learn that the Government are going to lift the ban on ratoon cotton, because it is essential in the interests of the cotton industry that we should be allowed to harvest and market ratoon. The Acting Premier at a conference the other day thought he could round off the whole matter by simply saying to the delegates present, "Let bygones be bygones, and let us work together in the best interests of the State." I would just like to read one instance of thousands of isolated cases showing how the grower suffered through the action of the Labour Government in placing the ban on ratoon cotton. The instance I am quoting is of a grower in the Wondai district. A settler who is a large cotton-grower made this statement to the Wondai correspondent of the "Daily Mail":—

"In 1922 I planted 1,000 acres on newly felled scrub," he said. "It nearly all died and had to be replanted, and even a third time up till Christmas of that year. There was some rain and a few plants lived, which, when picked, showed a very small profit. In 1923 I made arrangements with share farmers to eradicate the ratoon cotton and plant seed cotton. They hoed out the ratoon, sometimes as deep as 3 inches, and planted seed cotton between the rows. Eventually they gave it up, for two reasons: One was that the ratoon cotton beat them, they could not keep it down; the other reason was that the seed cotton died. Then, in order to comply with regulations, I let the cattle in and sowed Rhodes grass to get a burn."

That was on account of the law that came into force at that time. This grower obeyed the law, and you will see how he suffered—

"The ratoon crop would easily have netted £2,000 after picking. I walked with one of the inspectors a mile to the end of the cotton field and back again, and we only discovered one grub. Then in 1923 I felled 1,100 acres of forfeited prickly-pear selections, thus eradicating the pear, turning a national pest into a national asset, and planted the area with cotton. Dry weather killed a lot. It was replanted and a lot more died, and all misses were replanted again. Then rain fell in February and March, and the plantings promised to be a splendid crop, experts estimating it would yield 750 lb. to 1,000 lb. to the acre. A frost came at Easter, and more frosts towards the end of May, and I doubt now if it will go 300 lb. to the acre. Every sort of pest seems to be on it slightly, while the previous year's crop as ratoon of 1,000 acres, as stated previously, is quite clean. I consider next year this 1,100 acres of newly-planted cotton, if allowed to be ratooned and picked will easily yield 600 tons."

"When asked if he would try cotton again, Mr. McConnel said: 'Certainly

[Mr. Clayton.

not, unless one could ratoon the previous year's seed cotton. Considering growers cannot be supplied with uniform pure seed, I think it hard lines that first ratoon should not be allowed to be picked."

"PERMISSION CAME TOO LATE.

"When permission was granted to pick and forward ratoon, most of the lint on Mr. McConnel's area had fallen to the ground, and pickers were unable to make wages. This meant a serious loss to the worker, and unless the Government recompenses Mr. McConnel he will suffer a great loss. The same applies to other growers in newly felled scrub land. Therefore, the State has lost thousands of pounds sterling from this district alone, and the pickers have lost an opportunity of a wider scope of employment. On the occasion of Colonel Evans' visit, some months ago, the Boondooma 1,100 acre block was inspected. It showed a fine healthy growth, was remarkably well balled, and a striking feature was the absence of grubs and other pests which played such havoc with the first year's planting, which was also inspected on the same occasion. This absence of pests has put all the experts' opinions in the shade, when it is remembered on their advice the Government made the question of pests one of their excuses why they would not encourage the growing of ratoon.

The point is this: The Government put a ban on ratoon cotton and made that ban the law of the land. This cotton had to be eradicated. Many growers did not obey the law, and the Government allowed them to harvest and sell their cotton; but those men who obeyed the law, as this man did when he let his cattle on to his cotton, lost all the money that they expected from their crop. Are those men going to get any compensation? I want to know how the Government are going to treat the men who obeyed the regulations and suffered a considerable monetary loss. I think we should bring that matter strongly before the Government, and see that these men get justice.

There is another matter in the Governor's Speech in which I am particularly interested on account of the needs of my electorate, and that is afforestation. In the Gympie district we have a very large area of land reserved for State forestry purposes. Some time ago that district was simply a gold-producing district, but owing to the failure of the mineral wealth we had to engage in agricultural pursuits, and we have done exceedingly well. When I state that the value of the primary products at the present time is greater than the annual value of the gold yield was in the past, hon. members will agree that we have expanded very largely there, especially in the outside districts. What we complain about is that the Government have shut up too much of the rich agricultural land which is adjacent to existing railways. Instead of spending huge sums of money in constructing railways into areas where the rainfall is very limited and confined to about two months of the year, the Government would be wise if they sent an officer through these State forestry reserves to ascertain whether they could not release some of the land for agricultural

purposes. The following figures will show the area that is locked up as State reserves:—

	Acres.
Fourteen forests with a total area of	87,075
Thirty-six timber forests with an area of	216,386
National parks with an area of	106
<hr/>	
Total reserves	303,567

That is the area reserved for reafforestation purposes. Although I believe in reafforestation to a certain extent, I think the Government would be wise if they were to release some of this land so that we could settle people on it. The land is exceptionally good. Only recently a private estate up there was cut up, and it brought a higher price than £16 an acre. That shows the value of the land the Government are tying up, and I trust the Secretary for Public Lands will listen to the representations that are made from time to time by the hon. member for Gympie and the people in the Gympie district, and do something to allow some of this land to be cut up for closer settlement. I am continually receiving letters from individuals and from associations in regard to this matter, but the Forestry Department cannot see their way to assist us in any direction at all.

While I am on the question of afforestation, I would like to bring a matter before the House that I brought forward last year. We are threatened with a shortage of timber in Queensland, especially of pine logs, yet members of the Government know full well that at a place called Manumbar, 36 miles from Goomeri, we have a very large area held by the Forestry Department, which contains 120,000,000 feet of matured timber. That is in addition to the timber held on private estates adjacent to that area, and it would be a very wise thing if the Government were to connect with that area by a light railway so that we could get to that timber. I have been informed, through the Forestry Department, that when one matured tree is removed Nature provides that three younger trees will come up in its place. Therefore, Nature is doing the work that the Government are spending many thousands of pounds on in and around Gympie. That scrub will return an income right from the date that it is connected with a railway, and if that matured timber is cut out we shall have another scrub coming on. Furthermore, it will be the means of allowing us to get timber into the sawmills in Maryborough and Bundaberg, and thus provide work for the workers there. We have three of the most up-to-date sawmills in Queensland in Maryborough, and they cannot get sufficient timber to supply their orders. One miller there told me the other night that he was forced to go down South and import 2,000,000 super feet of timber to supply an order in the North. It looks rather strange when we have all this timber standing there that we cannot get the Government to make that land accessible so as to allow us to remove an asset which is every day dwindling in value owing to the timber being in a matured state. I trust that matter will be dealt with, and that the Government will do something not only to relieve the sawmillers in Maryborough, but something also which will be beneficial to the State.

Another matter mentioned in the Governor's Speech is the dairying industry, which

is not at present in the prosperous condition in which we would like it to be. We have been through very adverse seasons, but the main trouble is that the overseas markets have been bad, and we have not had the stabilisation of prices throughout Australia that we should have had. We know that the Council of Agriculture is moving in that direction, and I feel confident that, if it can put a scheme before Mr. Bruce which the law will allow him to assist in, something will be done by the Federal Government. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was going through the House I, with other hon. members on this side, said that we would not be able to bring about the stabilisation of the price of butter until it was made an Australian concern, and I went further and said that we should combine New Zealand in our movement. Under the Federal Constitution we have free trade between the States, and each State is allowed to come into competition with the others. I favour each State having a board of control over its own affairs, and that we should all combine and have representatives overseas to see that our butter is put into cold storage and sold through co-operative agencies. The district I represent is to a great extent a dairying district. In the Gympie district we are putting up one of the most up-to-date factories in Australia at a cost of something like £64,000. We have provided that the cost of that factory will have to be taken from the cream cans. The Secretary for Agriculture refused the hon. member for Cooroora an advance for the renovation of the Gympie factory. The hon. member refused to approach the Minister again for assistance, and the farmers who will have to foot the bill, assisted by the influential citizens who stand for the progress of the district, are putting the factory up.

The cost of the Council of Agriculture to date amounts to between £50,000 and £60,000. I stand for the success of that Council, but it should be run on different lines. I am a member of a Local Producers' Association, and attend its meetings, but I do not think that sufficient business is done at those meetings to justify many people coming the long distance to the meetings that they have to come.

I contend that we should make our Local Producers' Associations more sectional, so that each association would deal with the industry in which its members are specially interested. The organisation of the United Cane Growers' Association is successful owing to this fact. The members of the local associations are all cane growers and the sugar question is discussed at their meetings, and their resolutions are taken to the District Councils and from there to the executive head. I think that, instead of combining industries, we should move in a sectional way. For instance, a majority of representatives on the Biggenden District Council are interested in the dairying industry, and the one sugar representative upon it has told me that it would be infinitely better if he could meet other delegates from a larger area at a meeting where sugar solely was discussed and allow the dairying section to discuss matters in connection with their own industry. I think a move in that direction would be beneficial to the producer and make for the better working of the organisations generally.

Although we have the Government telling

Mr. Clayton.]

us that they are going to do so much for the agricultural industry generally, we have the same Government coming along with an award for the employees engaged in it. Before they have achieved much that is beneficial the farmers are faced with the position of having to meet a claim brought forward in the Arbitration Court by the Australian Workers' Union. I know that the Council of Agriculture is going to finance the farmers in fighting the claim, and that exception is being taken to that course by a certain section of the Labour party. Mr. Dunstan—who is representing the Australian Workers' Union and does not know the conditions under which the farmer has to live or the limited income which the dairy farmer and others are able to make—states that farming employees should receive the same wages as workers in any other industry. I do not think any reasonable-minded farmer is opposed to paying fair wages, but until you can stabilise the price he receives for his commodity how on earth is he going to be able to meet the demands which are being made upon him by the Australian Workers' Union? Until something of a beneficial nature is done, you will find that farmers will not be able to employ labour, and that the demands that are made will be the means of putting more unemployed on the labour market and thus be a detriment to Queensland. When we are placed in the position of having a certain income, as in the sugar industry, we shall not object to going to the Arbitration Court, but until that is done we shall strongly oppose any claim which is brought forward.

Now I should like to deal with the fruit industry. The Committee of Direction are working to a certain extent in a very satisfactory way, and I am inclined to think that they may go further than is in their interests. They have provided, so far as may be, for the marketing of fruit right throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Just now I want to confine my remarks to the banana-growing industry. That industry is one which at the present time employs a great number, including returned soldiers. The Committee of Direction have moved in the matter of the limitation of agents in the South, but I am inclined to think—speaking solely of the banana industry—that, if they do not exercise the greatest care in such limitation, there will be a clamour by those agents and consumers for the introduction of the Fijian banana. We trust that such will not be the case. I have a newspaper report which reads—

“ Sydney, 29th July.

“ A deputation from the fruit merchants' section of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce waited upon the Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Pratten) this morning, and asked for the free importation of Fiji bananas.

“ The Minister, in reply, said that he was in sympathy with any object to supply bananas to the public at a reasonable price, and suggested that the Customs Department might meet the importers in the matter of a rebate on 'stalks.' So far as he was personally concerned, added the Minister, as long as there was a reasonable industry in Australia to support against an industry that depended on black labour, the present duty would remain on the statute-book.”

It is very pleasing to know that we have a

[Mr. Clayton.

Minister for Trade and Customs who is going to give us personal consideration in that regard, and who emphatically states that he is going to support white-grown fruit in preference to black-grown fruit if he possibly can. I think the Acting Premier will see that all the representatives from this side are anxious to protect those engaged in this industry. The position in the Gympie district with regard to bananas is not as good as we would wish, because recently we were troubled by a pest not very well known to the people of Queensland, and not very well known by the experts in the Department of Agriculture. In that district we are doing everything we possibly can to cope with this disease, which is known as banana rust. The hon. member for Gympie and myself approached the Minister recently with regard to taking certain action, and I must thank the hon. gentleman for the way in which he met our requests. He knows the seriousness of the position from what we told him, and we want to impress upon him and the department the necessity for pursuing those investigations, because I am inclined to think that, if we do not cope effectively with this disease, the existence of the banana industry will be at stake. The Gympie district has a lot of fine banana land and depends a great deal on the production of bananas, and if the pest is allowed to get a hold, then I can hardly imagine what will be the position of affairs in the future.

The SPEAKER said: Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on the 30th instant and of the motion agreed to at an early stage of this sitting, the House now stands adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.