

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 19 AUGUST 1924**

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TUESDAY, 19 AUGUST, 1924.

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

NEW MEMBER.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BURANDA.

The SPEAKER informed the House that on 2nd August last he had issued his writ for the election of a member for the electoral district of Buranda, and that the writ had been returned endorsed with the name of Edward Joseph Hanson.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PAPERS.

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

Regulations under the Explosives Act of 1906.

Regulations under the Income Tax Act of 1902 and its Amendments.

Regulations under the Land Tax Act of 1915 and its Amendments.

Regulations under the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act of 1922.

QUESTIONS.

APPLICATIONS FOR CHAIRMANSHIP OF STATE WHEAT BOARD.

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

"1. How many applications were received for the position of chairman to the State Wheat Board?

"2. Is there any objection to the names of applicants being published?

"3. Was the board asked to make any recommendation?"

"4. Did the Board make a recommendation?"

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

"1 to 4. Applications were not called for the position. The Act provides that the chairman shall be appointed by the Governor in Council, but before filling the vacancy the retiring chairman and board members were consulted, and they are in agreement with the Government in their choice of a successor to Mr. Morgan."

PINEAPPLES PURCHASED BY STATE CANNERY.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*), for Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*), asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. What quantity of pineapples was purchased by the State Cannery from growers for the year ended 30th June, 1924?

"2. What price was paid for it?

"3. What amount was paid to the growers as a bonus?"

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

"1. 43,246 cases.

"2. Winter pack, 2s. 6d.; summer pack, 3s. 6d. per case—at growers' station.

"3. Winter pack, 1s. per case, amounting to £1,457."

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 1.

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

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the receiving of resolutions from Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees; and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day."

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT—£4,709,000.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message recommending that provision be made on account of the services of the year ending 30th June, 1925, of a sum of £4,700,000.

Message ordered to be referred to Committee of Supply.

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message recommending that the necessary appropriation be made in connection with a Bill to authorise the raising of a loan for the public service of the State, and for other purposes.

Message ordered to be referred to Committee of Ways and Means.

POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Police Acts Amendment Act of 1921 in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

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

"That you do now leave the chair."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, there are a few matters upon which I would like some information and also a little discussion, as we have the right before you leave the chair to discuss grievances before we go into Committee of Supply.

The first thing we have to consider is the rather serious financial position into which the State has got owing, in my opinion, to the wanton extravagance and recklessness of this Administration.

The TREASURER: Those are rather sweeping charges.

Mr. MOORE: They are sweeping, nevertheless they are true. The position into which the State has got, where it has to

curtail expenditure and go in for a system of retrenchment and altogether reduce salaries and break the pledges given to the electors by the Government before the last election is, to my way of thinking, the result of the maladministration and extravagance of the Government. They have embarked upon State enterprises upon which up to the 30th of June last they had lost £1,910,104; and so long as those losses are continued it seems to me that we are bound to get into a much worse position. It is all very well for the Government to make charges and say that the position is the result of the financial hold-up in England and the scarcity of loan money. It is not altogether through the scarcity of loan money at all, but through the administration of the Government, which has made the expenditure leap up to such an enormous extent that the country has been brought to the state in which we now find it.

I can give figures to show that Queensland has had to pay a considerably higher rate of interest than any of the other States, although I consider that a State like Queensland, with all the wonderful resources behind it, should be in a position to secure money at the same rate of interest as any other State of the Commonwealth or the Dominion of New Zealand. It is only because of the maladministration that has taken place during the last eight or nine years that we have had to pay that extra cost for money. The Secretary for Public Lands, when speaking a few days ago on the Address in Reply, pointed out that during one year when he was in charge of the Home Office the Government had expended £177,000 on outdoor relief, due to the short-sighted policy of the Government and the fight they had put up with financiers in the old country.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** Who said that?

**MR. MOORE:** The Secretary for Public Lands. If the Secretary for Agriculture will read the speech delivered by the Secretary for Public Lands on the Address in Reply, it will probably do him a great deal of good, and he will find the candid admissions made by his colleague in that debate give great food for thought, and that the Government are practically condemned out of the mouth of one of the Cabinet Ministers for putting up a useless fight. The Secretary for Public Lands stated that he saw the uselessness of it because he saw that other people were suffering, and that it was time to put an end to it. He justified the action of the Premier in London, and in doing so pointed out that a fight with the financial interests only had led to unemployment and enormous increase in the expenditure on outdoor relief, and he for one was going to back the Premier in what he did. The hon. gentleman did not go so far as to say that the loss in connection with State enterprises was also folly and was tending to bring about a loss to this State from which it will take a long time to recover. He did not go so far as to say a lot of things that he might have said, but he did say some things that should furnish food for thought on the part of some of the people of this State.

**MR. COLLINS:** Especially the Tory section.

**MR. MOORE:** I think what was said should give some food for thought to the new leader of the party opposite who was elected for one hour. I think the speech

delivered by the Secretary for Public Lands should give the hon. member for Bowen considerable food for thought, and should give food for thought to other people who think along the same lines as the hon. member for Bowen.

Let us see the position that the State is getting into. In 1915-16 the taxable income of individuals as distinguished from companies amounted to £12,272,576, whereas last year it amounted to £10,905,944, or a reduction of 11.1 per cent. In 1915-16 the amount received from taxation from that source was £246,900, and last year it amounted to £871,723, or an increase of 253 per cent. In 1915-16 the taxable income of companies amounted to £4,674,500, and last year it amounted to £6,057,795, or an increase of 29.6 per cent. The amount received in taxation from companies in 1915-16 was £210,806, and last year it amounted to £852,683, or an increase of 304.5 per cent. When you find an increase in taxation and a diminution in the taxable income of the people it certainly shows that taxation is becoming so high and development has been arrested to such an extent that, instead of prosperity following the administration of the Government, we have retrogression and stagnation.

In taking into consideration the credit of the country with regard to the fixing of the price we have to pay for money the state of the prosperity of the country must be considered. In Brisbane a certain amount of development is going on—to which I shall refer later—but in the country development is not taking place to the extent that it should, and we have the country now becoming overrun with pests of all sorts, because of the fear by investors to lend money for the development of the country and because of the high cost of carrying out such work. The Government have been exceptionally favourably placed with regard to their revenue. Last year there was an increase of £828,636 over the revenue for the previous year, and the revenue last year exceeded the estimated amount of revenue by £353,939. The expenditure last year exceeded the expenditure of the previous year by £630,950, and exceeded the estimate of expenditure by £358,269. In spite of this increase over the estimate, which is a remarkably big one, the Government still find themselves in the awkward position of having to increase railway freights and fares, of not being able to allow the increases to public servants, and in such a position that they are having to make excuses for almost every act. When an increase in revenue amounting to £300,000 over the previous year is obtained, it surely shows that taxation is having a deleterious effect upon the people, because nearly the whole of that increase is secured by taxation and not through the prosperity of industry.

One of the results—and the worst result—that it is going to have is the curtailment of advances to settlers. The perpetual lease policy of the Government has made it impossible for settlers to go to anybody but the Government to secure advances. When a man had a freehold he had a security on which he could go to a private institution and secure assistance. Under the perpetual lease policy the private institutions do not consider the security good enough, consequently that previous source of assistance to the settler is cut off. We now find that, owing to the curtailment of funds, the

*Mr. Moore.]*

Government are unable to supply the necessary assistance for those settlers to carry on. That is bad enough as regards the ordinary settler, but it is causing an immense amount of hardship and trouble to the soldier settlers. I will take but one instance where this hardship is being experienced; that is, the soldier settlement at Cecil Plains. In my opinion, when a soldier settler has received the maximum advance of £625, the Government, instead of writing to him and saying he has exhausted the advance that he is entitled to, should make inquiries into the position of the settler to ascertain whether he is a capable and efficient worker, whether he is likely to succeed if he gets a little more assistance, and whether the assets he has accumulated on his farm since he took it up are sufficient security for more money to be advanced to him. I know of many cases where, owing to the last two bad seasons, the settlers have lost large numbers of their cattle, and it is only reasonable, when they make application to the Government, that the supervisor of the settlement should be consulted as to their financial position and the possibility of their making good. If the report of the supervisor is favourable, the Government should assist those settlers, instead of practically pushing them off their farms. Many of them are being forced off their farms through no fault of their own, and simply through the maladministration of the Government in finance and the carelessness of the Government in not asking the supervisor, who was there and who was in a position to know, whether these men were in a position to make good or not. I have had many applications sent to me lately by various settlers on Cecil Plains, and, so far as I can make out, they are in a very precarious position. Many of them are hard workers and men with experience, and would probably make good provided they got further assistance; but they have been unable to get assistance outside of the Government owing to the tenure under which they took up their land. Last year the Government brought in an Agricultural Bank Amendment Bill, under which all sorts of promises were made, but, so far as I can see, no funds have been made available to carry out those promises. Promises were held out which, if carried out, would possibly enable these men to make a success of their land. Now, owing to circumstances over which they have no control, they are being forced into the position of sacrificing the land and the work they put into it. They have to leave their holdings through the loss of stock, and will now be unable to get any income. It is not a question of making much money available. I admit there are some cases where assistance should not be given, as some settlers are so far behind that they have no opportunity of making good, but there are men who are good workers to whom advances should not be curtailed to enable them to pull through the bad seasons they have just passed through. Those remarks apply particularly to the soldier settlers on Cecil Plains, although there are other places in which a similar procedure may be carried out. The Government should ask the supervisor to advise as to the chances of the man concerned pulling through. If the report is favourable, they should make the necessary advance to enable that man to make good.

The other day the Treasurer was fulminating against the banks sinking money in the

city and not making money available for the development of the country—

The TREASURER: I was not criticising the banks on that account, but rather for the way they were criticising the Government.

Mr. MOORE: The reason the banks are lending money for the development of city properties is the high land tax. The older buildings will not return an amount adequate to the money invested in the property, and pay the high taxation, and the only thing to be done is to erect higher buildings. The Treasurer was attacking the banks for advancing money to develop Brisbane properties—

The TREASURER: I said the banks have no grounds for criticising the Government.

Mr. MOORE: I have pointed out that the banks have every ground for criticising the Government. The Government have cut off the man on the land from assistance from private banks. They have also placed such a high tax on city properties that the owners have had to put up higher buildings and have had to go to the banks for the money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do they think country investments are not good enough?

Mr. MOORE: Because of the perpetual lease policy.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They would not advance on freehold properties.

Mr. MOORE: The Government have placed the farmer in such a position that he is threatened with awards which will cripple him. He has no security to offer, and naturally the banks are shy of lending money to such men.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Government themselves will not lend the farmers money.

Mr. MOORE: That is so. The whole policy of the Government has been towards the restriction of private financial institutions. Their policy of paying 6 per cent. and 6½ per cent. over the counter has restricted the capacity of private financial institutions. Who is going to lend money for the development of country outside the city when he can get 6 per cent. to 6½ per cent. tax free over the counter from the Government? Again, the Government are so extravagant in using their money; they have tied up such a large amount of money in State enterprises and in works that are problematical so far as financial returns are concerned—at least for a number of years—that it is only natural that money should be dear. Instead of endeavouring to improve the position, the Government are continuing to waste money on useless and unprofitable work. They should be assisting the man on the land by advancing him money, rather than placing him in such a position that he has to leave his land.

The sum of £74,000 was sunk in the Willowburn railway works merely to help the hon. member for Toowoomba to hold his seat. About £160,000 was sunk in the new Ipswich Railway Station, which has been lying idle for years. On neither of these is interest charged? Money can be found for that class of work, but it cannot be found for giving assistance to bonâ fide settlers who have been induced to settle on the land.

Another thing that is causing a good deal of distress and unemployment is the shortage of trucks in the Railway Department. Only

[Mr. Moore.

the other day a man wrote to me complaining that he would have to dismiss fourteen hands from his brickworks near Toowoomba. He said he had been endeavouring to get trucks for three weeks, as he had 400,000 bricks to send away, but trucks could not be secured. Then again, the coalmines in my own district are working short time, not because orders are not available, but because trucks are not available to take the coal away. Surely that shows that the short-sighted policy and maladministration of the Government are aggravating distress at the present time, and not assisting to bring about a better condition of things, because we have not sufficient trucks to carry produce or take away the articles that are produced. We have known for a long time that there is a tremendous shortage of cattle trucks, and cattlemen have had to hang on to their cattle long after the period when they should have been sent to the market. That all means loss—loss to the individual and loss to the State. This position has been brought about by the extensive railway construction policy of the Government, while they have not built rolling-stock in proportion. In connection with any railway policy, it must be recognised that it is absolutely essential that sufficient rolling-stock should be built even if it means a curtailment of the construction of lines.

I notice that a great deal of money is being expended on the Southport-Burleigh road and bridge, and I should like a little information in connection therewith. That road was to have been opened last Easter, but it is not open yet. Whenever one goes to Southport one hears remarks about the fearful waste of money on that road. It is being built by the Government, and the Southport Council have no occasion to worry, because it has to pay a stipulated sum, and the balance of the cost is going to fall on the Government. As a result of the way in which the work is being carried out, it will cost an enormous sum, and the people have grave doubts as to when the road will be opened. Some say it will not be opened for five years; others say it will not be opened for twenty years. So far, the road has only been constructed to Meyer's Ferry, which is only 4 miles, and it has to go another 8 miles past that. The Southport Council do not take over the road until it is completed by the Government. I was told the other day that it has cost £80,000 up to the present, but I have no definite information as to what it has cost.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not correct.

MR. MOORE: They tell me that the night watchman, whose duty it is to see that nobody walks across the bridge between 8 o'clock in the evening and 5 o'clock in the morning, receives £9 2s. a week. I do not know if anything is to be got out of that. I have seen the road, and I know that an enormous amount has been spent on it. I saw the steam roller that was taken down there to roll it, and when they put the roller on, it went through the road, and they had to use an ordinary horse roller. The cost is out of all proportion to the benefit to be received.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The cost is a good deal over the estimate.

MR. MOORE: If it was finished, we would have something to go on. Presumably, now the Government are going to curtail expenses in other directions, they will not be able to complete this road promptly. To my mind,

it will cost the Government an enormous sum.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you suggest we should do?

MR. MOORE: I do not know that the supervision has been adequate for the carrying out of the work.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Whose fault is that? That is the fault of the engineer.

MR. MOORE: The supervision has been faulty.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The real difficulty has been in connection with the quarry.

[10.30 a.m.]

MR. MOORE: That may have been one of the difficulties. If the Minister, instead of going down as Secretary for Public Lands and getting a garbled report made to him, would go as a private citizen and see for himself, I think he would get his eyes opened.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have been there, and my eyes are open.

MR. MOORE: I am glad that the Minister's eyes are opened, because possibly he will make some alteration. At present no alteration has been made, and the same extravagance and waste is going on to-day as was going on six months ago.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Main Roads Board engineer reported on the matter, and the Board is now building the road from the other end and getting the stuff from the quarries.

MR. MOORE: The waste has not been obviated. The Minister should see that the work is carried on in a more economical and efficient manner than it is at present. It is a pure waste of money which can be obviated. When we see this continuing waste of money, even after the Minister says his eyes have been opened, it is time some other method was adopted in the construction of Government works. The whole thing has become a mockery and a byword around the country. People are pointing out the way in which the Government are recklessly expending public money, and there is a good deal of disgust over the whole question.

There is another matter I would like to call attention to—that is, in connection with the regulations which have been placed on the table. I say that the Government are altering Acts of Parliament by regulation. The regulations under the Sugar Workers' Perpetual Lease Selections Act have altered the Land Act in so far as the percentage of annual rents is concerned. Instead of being 1½ per cent. on Crown lands and 3 per cent. on township allotments, they have all been placed at 5 per cent. It goes still further than that. They have altered the Local Authorities Act in regard to the method of valuation. That Act distinctly states that perpetual lease selections shall be valued as freehold; but the new regulations under the Sugar Workers' Perpetual Lease Selections Act have altered that, and they have gone back to the old principle of assessing the capital value at twenty times the annual rent. I strongly object to this principle of altering Acts of Parliament by regulations, which are just put upon the table in this House, and people do not look at them. I was surprised to find that the Land Act and the Local Authorities Act could be altered by

Mr. Moore.]

regulations under the Sugar Workers' Perpetual Lease Selections Act. I do not think that regulations were ever meant to apply in that way. If the Land Act says that perpetual lease selections are to be taken up and the rent is to be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the capital value, it does not mean that regulations may be made afterwards under another Act to provide that it shall be 5 per cent. It is not right, when the Land Act provides that the rents are to be based on 3 per cent. of the capital value for township allotments, that they should be made 5 per cent. under another Act; but that is what has occurred. We shall get into a muddle with regard to the fixation of rents if we are going to have the provisions of one Act altered by regulations made under a subsequent Act. The principle is wrong, and should be objected to. I suppose it is no good objecting to regulations which have been placed on the table. So long as the Government have the numbers to carry them through, they will go through; but it is only right that attention should be called to the principle, which is going on more and more every year, of government by regulations. Regulations are made under an Act as a method of rectifying anomalies and to assist in carrying out the provisions of the Act. They are not meant to alter the whole basis on which previous Acts of Parliament had been passed; but that is what has been done in connection with the two sets of regulations I have mentioned. We should have some explanation as to the reason for the differences in regulations in connection with these Acts. We may have another opportunity of discussing these matters, but I would like to know how the Government can justify the making of these regulations.

I do not know that it is necessary for me to say very much more. I have pointed out some of the things which are affecting the people closely at the present time. One thing that affects the people in the country more than another, and on which it is necessary for some of us to dilate, is the curtailment of advances to settlers. I know that advances to workers for dwellings have been curtailed also, but their position is not like that of the settlers in the country. Many of them are in the position that they have already got advances from the Government, and they therefore cannot get assistance from anybody else but the Government. I think it is most unfair that they should have been led on in the hope, based on the Acts which have been passed, that they would be able to secure sufficient assistance from the Government to carry on, and then have that assistance denied them owing to financial stringency. I know that numbers of them have been turned down, and it means that many of them are going to be forced off the land. I think it would be well for the Government to consider whether it is not better to endeavour to keep those settlers already on the land rather than start new settlers. I do not ask the Government to give them advances indiscriminately, but inquiries should be made into the conditions affecting every one who asks for an advance to ascertain whether he has sufficient assets to justify that assistance which is necessary to enable him to carry on his activities—that is, to encourage him to go on rather than to leave him in the lurch.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I want to air one or two grievances. First of all, I would like to

deal with the question of the soldier settlements. Although we have had in Queensland a change in the directorate of soldier settlements, it is purely with the Government policy that I wish to deal. Although of recent years we have had one or two changes in the Minister in charge of these activities of the Government, that is no reason why we should not criticise the Government policy, and ask them to do the right and proper thing. I want to refer to one or two remarks made by the present administrator of the settlements. He had this to say about them—

“These criticisms about soldier settlement are hardly fair to me.”

We may acknowledge the justice of that remark, but that is no reason why we on this side of the House should not say that, nevertheless, the right thing has not been done by the Government. These settlements have been in existence for some time, and it is pretty late in the day to reply to our attacks in that way. The Minister in charge of the settlements also said in regard to the transfer of certain men that it was a doubtful and costly proposition. So long as the Government take the view that it is a doubtful and costly proposition to place soldier settlers on decent land, so long will the soldier settlers not be put in the position in which we ought to see them. The time is ripe for the Government to do something more than sit back and say that it is doubtful and costly, and that they are willing to write millions of pounds off the settlements. The best way to tackle the question is not to talk about the costliness of a solution, but to give the men who have taken up land a real chance to make good. The Treasurer also had something to say in regard to soldier settlement. He had this to say—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in referring to a previous debate of this session.

Mr. KERR: I am not referring to a statement made in this House by the Treasurer. His statement was to the effect that the soldiers would not make as good settlers as the ordinary person going on the land. I have yet to learn that such is the case.

The TREASURER: I said that there probably would be a bigger percentage of failures with soldier settlers.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman said that the soldiers would not make as good settlers as the ordinary person.

The TREASURER: That is absolutely wrong. That is a garbled report. I admit that I said that there would probably be a bigger percentage of failures with soldier settlers because of their inexperience.

Mr. KERR: Because their selections would not be so good in the first instance. At the time that I read the hon. gentleman's remarks I took strong exception to them. Let me examine the position and see if the Government are justified in their action towards the soldier settlers. There are two kinds of settlers—those who have been settled under the group settlement schemes and those that have been settled under the State Advances Act. Under the State Advances Act, 2,172 men were settled on the land, and were advanced £998,000, of which they have repaid £132,000 in interest and redemption. These men were not settled in groups by the Government, but took up selections for themselves, and 2,000 of them

have made good and have repaid the full amount of interest and redemption, and in no case are there any arrears of payment. That indicates that the soldier settlers are as good settlers as any other settlers going on the land to-day. Under the group settlement scheme the sum of £1,242,000 has been expended, and only £27,800 has been received in interest and redemption, which is about one-fifth of the amount received from those who selected their own blocks. On some of the group settlements some of the settlers have made good where they have been able to produce a marketable commodity in connection with cattle raising, sheep raising, dairying, pig raising, and the growing of maize in the Atherton district. Many hundred settlers are doing well on those settlements carrying out those pursuits. They have been able to make good on fairly suitable land; but on the land supplied by the Government—which is of second quality or no quality at all—they have not been able to make good, and the Government are not making an attempt to transfer settlers from such places as Beerburum. I know that at Coominya and one or two other places, where about forty settlers started on the land, there are to-day no settlers on those blocks. Hundreds of houses have been erected and are now empty. Hundreds of chains of fencing have been erected at a cost to the Government, and no use is being made of them to-day. If places like Beerburum were only being given a trial, I would not raise this question, but the same state of affairs exists year after year. The settlers have met in conference and have approached the Minister by means of deputations, and are still dissatisfied because that which should be done has not been done. I know that something has been done to try and alleviate the position, but the main thing is to take those who cannot make a living at Beerburum and place them on decent blocks. It is wrong to say that the whole of the country at Glasshouse Mountains and other places is composed entirely of sandy ridges. Action should be taken to transfer settlers from some of the blocks on Beerburum; but some of the land in that vicinity is most valuable, and is occupied more or less by independent growers. One should not take up the attitude that the whole of the land in the district is unsuitable, because by doing so it will have a depreciating effect on the good blocks there. I will not deal any more with soldier settlers, other than to ask the Minister definitely, before Supply is granted, whether he will make arrangements to transfer to decent blocks those men who have made such a request. It is better to cut the loss now than to continue it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not cutting the loss.

Mr. KERR: What does the Minister suggest?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is creating a new liability. Where are the Government to get the money?

Mr. KERR: I remember pointing out to this House that the Government had not taken advantage of all the money that was offering from the Commonwealth Government for a couple of years. That is a fact, and to-day they are not going to take any of that money at all, and, as a result, the settlements are going to be a failure. If the hon. gentleman will turn up the pages of

"Hansard," he will find where I dealt with this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh!

Mr. KERR: Yes, the figures will be found there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I ask you now where you got the information.

Mr. KERR: I obtained the information through questions that were asked on the subject in the Federal Parliament, and from Federal "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are entirely wrong.

Mr. KERR: I am not. I know how much each individual settler was committed to under the advance, I also know how much the Government received, how much the other States received per settler, and how much their soldier settlers received. If it is not possible for one to make a comparison on those figures, it is not possible to make any comparison at all. Unfortunately, during the last twelve months the people of Queensland have had a good deal to put up with, and, before Supply is granted by this House, we can very well ventilate what is happening in this State. First of all, we have had various Ministers taking up an attitude of personal aggrandisement, such as the Secretary for Public Works usurping the functions of the Treasurer. We have had other Ministers talking on the exchange problem.

Mr. COLLINS: And the hon. member for Enoggera writing an article to "The National Review" on Queensland finance. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: And a very good article, too. While we have had this State constantly struggling in a state of financial chaos caused by the maladministration of the Government, we have had the Secretary for Railways in constant "holts" with the unions in his department. These unions have been pulling him and his Government to pieces, and Ministers have been giving the whole of their attention to these unions to the detriment of the State. We have had the spectacle of the Secretary for Agriculture vacillating over the ratoon cotton question—a question that is of paramount importance to Queensland. We have also had him declaring that he had no knowledge of the levy made on the cotton industry, and attempting to put the blame for the whole matter on to the Commonwealth Government. We have had the Government appointing boards on their own administration—boards to go into the position of the soldier settlements—and, after the boards have been operating in certain directions, no result being obtained from them. We have also had the faking of propaganda for the elections of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board by allegations as to discrepancies in regard to works carried out by contract and day labour respectively. We have the Government now facing a financial position which they should have faced instead of wasting the country's money by bringing up such arguments as were introduced to influence the elections of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. It seems unthinkable that a Government should rake up the mud they did in those elections simply to assist their party to get into power on the board.

We have also had the unfortunate episode in regard to the position of Agent-General. We have had all these things going on

Mr. Kerr.]

indefinitely, and, interwoven with them has been the internal strife in the ranks of the Government party. The position has been brought about by the Ministers seeking their personal aggrandisement. We have the Premier seeking a transfer to the Federal sphere, and the Secretary for Public Lands, the Secretary for Public Works, and the Secretary for Agriculture, all seeking to occupy the position the Premier now holds.

While all this internal strife exists within the ranks of the Government, the State is drifting and drifting into financial chaos, and soon the Government will no longer be able to carry on. We have been told definitely during the last week or two that there is a breach in the Labour party. We have had the Address in Reply moved by the hon. member for Townsville. At the termination of the hon. member's speech he declared that the inspiration to countless workers is to be found in socialism. No wonder the Government have taken their present attitude! No wonder they have come to their present state of chaos! To-day they are quibbling and finding excuses. They are telling the workers that the employer and the rate of exchange are responsible for the shortage of money. That shortage of money referred to in the State finances has only been brought about by the attitude adopted by the Government and by their administration of this State.

Dealing with the question of immigration, I would like to know if the Treasurer, when he was in the old country, was in agreement with an Act that was passed in Great Britain in 1922. That Act provided that an expenditure of £1,500,000 for the first year and £3,000,000 a year for the fourteen succeeding years was to be spent on the Dominions. I want to know if Queensland is going to take its share of the immigration provided for by that Act. I venture to say that, if our politicians bow to Trades Hall domination, they will not give attention to the expressions of opinion made by the Treasurer in the old country on this matter. It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to discuss the problem at dinner parties and other gatherings on the other side of the world, and to say that immigration is necessary if we are to maintain a white Australia. What are we doing to bring about that immigration? Are we going to take advantage of Great Britain's offer?

MR. HARTLEY: Do you want the money or the immigrants? I do not think you know.

MR. KERR: I do not know what the hon. member is looking for. Some action is absolutely necessary in regard to immigration, particularly in regard to our secondary industries. We must endeavour to stop what is known as the "drift to the city." Many hundreds are coming to the city and are finding it impossible to get work. We are not dealing with that danger in any shape or form. Rather than tackle the question, the Treasurer blames the banks for not lending money to those concerned in our primary industries. Our secondary industries are equally as important as our primary industries. If we had no secondary industries we would have to depend on the world's parity much more than we have to do at present. No attention has been given by the Government to the encouragement of secondary industries in Queensland. The Government could stop the drift to the city if they appropriated more funds for the assistance of the man on

the land. Income tax, land tax, and other taxation must be brought to a lower level if our secondary industries are to increase.

I want to recall the fact that I previously mentioned that advantage was not being taken of the Australian tariff passed by a Nationalist Government. We are not taking the advantage that we should of that tariff. We have everything in our favour, and we could very well start industries in this country. Let us take tanneries for a start. Out of 164 factories in Australia Queensland has seventeen only. The value of the output of tanneries in Australia amounts to five and a-half millions sterling, and in Queensland—the State which should be well ahead in this regard—the output is less than half a million. No attention has been given to these matters by the Government. Then take the soap and candle trade. The output for Australia is something like £3,000,000, while for Queensland it is £280,000—one-eighth of the Australian output. The value of agricultural implements produced in Queensland is only £100,000, while for Australia the output is £3,000,000. We are a primary producing country and will produce later on, I hope, a value equal to, if not greater than, the value produced in any State in Australia; yet to-day we are only manufacturing £100,000 worth of implements out of £3,000,000 manufactured in Australia. Then if we take engineering works, iron works, &c., we find this State is producing goods to a value of £1,150,000, while the output for Australia is £21,000,000. While all this is going on, a great deal of credit has been taken by the Government for placing orders locally. I venture to say that, if hon. members opposite will turn to the reports of the Agent-General for a number of years, they will find goods to the value of tens of thousands of pounds have been imported from Great Britain, and this is still going on. When they say that they are placing orders locally they are only dodging the issue, and not stating the position honestly.

Then in regard to railway and tramway workshops, while we have the largest mileage of railway in Queensland, yet we are only spending £1,000,000 on railway workshops as against £11,000,000 spent in Australia. It is the same if you take biscuit factories, jam factories, pickles, and boots and shoes—in fact, everything that you could possibly mention in connection with secondary industries. These matters are not receiving the attention that they should receive from this Government. The time must come when the primary products of the State will have to be exported and our producers will have to accept world's parity, which will be considerably lower than the local market price under a policy of fixation of prices, unless we give every encouragement to secondary industries by a reduction of taxation. That is one of the simplest forms of encouragement. Another is security or a guarantee of good faith. Unfortunately our socialistic Government have not given that guarantee of good faith. It is well known that various firms from the old country have established factories in various States in Australia, but unfortunately they have not come to Queensland. Some of the British chocolate firms have spent millions of pounds in establishing factories in the Southern States. Unless the Government are prepared to give ample security and, if necessary, a reduction of the whole of the taxation for any new industry for at least five years, no new industries will

[Mr. Kerr.]



be started in Queensland. Our policy is to relieve from taxation for a period of five years any new industry starting in Queensland, and something like that will have to be done by the Government. If that were done, we should not have our primary producers seeking oversea markets for their produce, but rather would we have a larger consuming population. South Australia is a much more progressive State than Queensland, possibly because they have a different Government in that State, and they have had to bring out trained artisans and skilled men. It must be remembered that every artisan brought out here provides employment for men who are unskilled and also for the primary producers. It also increases the consuming power of that particular State and of Australia. The development

[11 a.m.] of secondary industry should receive our best consideration, and some definite action should be taken by our Government which want to make this State what it should be. Unless we establish factories in this State we cannot make satisfactory progress. To ignore secondary industries and concentrate on primary production alone shows a very narrow vision, and the Government should rise to the occasion as other State Governments have done, and as the Commonwealth Government have done by their protective tariff. We should make every effort to co-ordinate the people in their work, and not split them up in sections. We should not give more attention to unionism and class organisation than we give to the organisation of secondary industries. If the Government do not wake up to the position in that regard, the fact that people outside are unemployed, that boys cannot get work, and the lack of markets for our products will react on themselves at the next general election.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I desire to say a few words in respect to matters of interest to Queensland generally and my own electorate in particular. I would like to mention one or two matters in regard to which, in my opinion, the Government are not doing their duty, and with a view to bringing about an improvement. First of all, I would like to draw attention to what has happened in the Tara district with respect to the construction of the Tara-Surat Railway. That railway has been in course of construction close upon eighteen months. In reply to a question which I asked the Secretary for Railways a few days ago, the hon. gentleman told me that, notwithstanding the fact that this railway has been under construction for the last eighteen months, only 6 miles of rails have been laid. Only a very small number of workmen are employed, but there is a large staff of officers engaged. The officers could easily employ 500 men; yet, taken all round, they have not been supervising the work of more than 100 men during the period occupied in construction. When we find such a large staff of officers engaged to supervise such a small number of men, is it any wonder that the cost of construction on that particular line—and this applies to other lines in Queensland—is going to exceed by 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. the amount which it should be necessary to spend on the cost of construction.

I also wish to refer to another important matter—that is, with respect to the expenditure on the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme, information about which has been supplied

to me. I have been told by reliable persons that at the commencement it was costing 7s. 6d. per yard to remove the mullock from the channels. Contractors were prepared to do the work at 2s. a yard, but, owing to the interference of the A.W.U., who would not allow the Government—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who told you it was costing 7s. 6d. a yard?

Mr. MORGAN: I got it from the workers themselves. Before I conclude I am going to ask the Minister to have an inquiry made into what is really happening in respect of money which is being expended in that scheme. I am going to make other statements. I have obtained information from men whom I know myself, and they are reliable men.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Unless you give me some definite information as to who the men are, I will not take any notice of that.

Mr. MORGAN: In the first instance, I was told by a man employed on pick and shovel work that it was costing 7s. 6d. a yard to shift earth by pick and shovel when it could have been moved at 2s. a yard with horses and ploughs and scoops. Will the Minister deny that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I could make good money myself at 7s. 6d. a yard. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: This work was not done by contract—that was the unfortunate part of it. The A.W.U. refused to allow the work to be let by contract, and it was done by day labour, with the result that it cost 7s. 6d. a yard to shift the mullock when the work could have been done by more up-to-date methods at a cost of 2s. a yard. I have had experience of the cost of shifting dirt in the construction of tunnels. In the Wimmera district in Victoria, where I came from, I was a member of an irrigation trust, and several million pounds were expended in channelling in the mallee country. They were mostly larger channels than are being constructed at the Dawson Valley scheme, but in some instances they were, perhaps, smaller, and on the average the mullock was being shifted at a cost of 9d. a yard.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; under sweating conditions.

Mr. MORGAN: Not under sweating conditions. Of course, work was done ever so much cheaper then than it is to-day. Work which cost 9d. a yard at that time would cost 2s. to-day. It is the same with ringbarking. When I came to Queensland first, I called tenders for ringbarking, which I could have got done at 9d. an acre; but a man would require 2s. an acre now in order to provide for the increased cost of living.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do I understand that you vouch for the statement that it cost 7s. 6d. a yard?

Mr. MORGAN: Several of the workmen who are employed on the construction of these particular channels say so. At any rate, I understand that the Minister is going to take a party with him to look over the works at the Dawson Valley.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am taking them next week. All arrangements are made. I will answer your criticisms on the job.

*Mr. Morgan.]*

Mr. MORGAN: If the Minister is going, and I am able to accompany him, I shall only be too pleased to do so, because I am interested in this work. Another reason for making these criticisms is that I do not want the Dawson Valley scheme to be another Inkerman affair. I do not want the estimate to be exceeded by 200 or 300 per cent. When the time comes, owing to the fact that the water is so dear to the men who take up the blocks, I do not want to see them coming to the Government and asking them to wipe off 60 or 70 per cent. of the capital expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Nor do I.

Mr. MORGAN: I want the Minister to listen to criticism.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I want the criticism to be fair.

Mr. MORGAN: I am prepared to produce the men if necessary. The information I got was given to me by men employed on the work. I was told by a man who was engaged there with a horse and team and scoop that it was discovered when one of the channels was nearly completed that it was on the wrong lines. That man is a resident of my district; I know him well, and he would not tell me a lie. If that is so, the Minister ought to know in the interests of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There have been quite a number of engineers sacked on that job since I have been Minister.

Mr. MORGAN: I am glad to know that. My experience is that generally, when an engineer or someone in a responsible position is making huge blunders, costing the Government hundreds and thousands of pounds, there is nothing said about it, and that official is left to go on perpetuating his mistakes in other places.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That happens in the case of private enterprise.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly, but, unfortunately, the Government may only haul the man over the coals by letter and he does not have to suffer the penalty. First of all, we should endeavour to get men of proper qualifications on our jobs, and then, if a man makes a blunder and it is proved that he has done so, he should not be retained longer at that work. I do not say these things with the idea of gaining any advantage over the Government; I know the Minister is not responsible. My object in drawing attention to this particular matter early in the day is that the work, which is perhaps going to cost millions of pounds, shall be done in the proper way, and that the money shall not be uselessly expended, as was the case at Inkerman. The Minister cannot deny that we have had a terrible waste of money at that place.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why do you not go down to the Murray River and see some of the irrigation settlements there?

Mr. MORGAN: I admit that in the early days, I think under Mr. Deakin, the Victorian Government had to wipe off several millions of capital expended on irrigation works. But why do the Queensland Government not endeavour to benefit by the mistakes made by Governments in other parts of Australia instead of going on and paying for their own experience? It is said that experience you pay for is the best experience. I

[Mr. Morgan.

do not think so. I think that if other Governments have made mistakes, we should not follow them, but that we should benefit by their experience. We should not do the same thing as was done on the Murray River or in other parts of Victoria and New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Each new proposition brings new problems.

Mr. MORGAN: I admit that, but it is only right for members of Parliament to draw attention to these things when the work is in its infancy. If the hon. member for Bowen had drawn attention to such things when the Inkerman irrigation scheme was in its infancy, it is probable that the same amount of money would not have been expended. That is why, at this early stage, I am repeating what I have been told on good authority—I have not been at the works myself. I have also been told by a man who knows the country exceptionally well, and has seen it under all conditions for the last thirty years, that the township site is subject to flooding; in fact, he says that he has seen it under water. Of course, when the Nathan Gorge is dammed and the flow of water is prevented from coming down indiscriminately, the flooding will be regulated, and the township site may not at any time be under water.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I had a special investigation made of that matter by surveyors in my department. They say that the Irrigation Commissioner was wrong, and he says he is right. What am I to do?

Mr. MORGAN: It is a very difficult matter, I admit, but I think it is my duty to point the matter out. As one who has had considerable experience in water conservation, I am prepared to admit that with the controlling of the water it may be possible for the Commissioner to prevent the flooding of the town, but all the same it cannot be denied that the site has been flooded on very many occasions, and the same thing may happen again.

I want to mention one other matter which comes under the control of the Secretary for Public Lands; that is, the withholding from settlers who have applied for the wire-netting provided by the Commonwealth Government because they owe the Government for rent for perhaps one, two, or three years. I have had occasion during the last few weeks to place several cases before the hon. gentleman's department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not able to do anything; the law is against it. When the rent is not paid there is no security.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister could strain a point and allow the settlers to get the netting.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I cannot break the law.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman is breaking the law by not forfeiting their selections. It is only a question of straining a point. I have visited the department on several occasions about other matters, and the officers concerned have been agreeable to straining a point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Queensland is the only State which has taken full advantage of the Commonwealth's offer.

Mr. MORGAN: We are not in the same position as they are in New South Wales

and Victoria. In Victoria everyone has his five or six wire fence and he does not need netting, but Queensland is the home of the dingo.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot get netting for every pastoralist who has a five-wire fence.

Mr. MORGAN: I certainly agree that the money was not given by the Commonwealth to assist the big man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you can induce your friends in the Commonwealth to give us £100,000 worth of it, we will take the lot.

Mr. MORGAN: I would like to see the Government take, not £100,000 worth but £1,000,000 worth of wire-netting, because wire-netting is going to be the salvation of Queensland. This State is the home of the good sheep—the merino—and we must recognise that, whereas we cannot always settle people on land to put it under the plough, because conditions are not suitable, yet wool-growing is profitable, and a man can make a good living out of 1,000 sheep and upwards. On the other hand, men who go in for growing wheat and other crops every year make a loss. It is not a bit of good to say that wheat-growing will turn out a profitable industry. Take my own district as a case in point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have succeeded at Roma.

Mr. MORGAN: They have been growing wheat at Roma for about fifty years, and, with the exception of about half a dozen, all the people engaged in the industry are growing poorer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why? Because they will not cultivate their land.

Mr. MORGAN: Because the conditions are not suitable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do those six or seven men continually get crops?

Mr. MORGAN: These six or seven men are enthusiasts—I know them myself. They work their land night and day. But even though they are growing wheat successfully, can they be compared with the men alongside them who have sheep—on the same area of land? The Minister cannot get out of the position. It is no use trying to make the land produce what nature did not intend it to produce. I say that in Queensland we should go in for small sheep farms. If we can combine wheat with woolgrowing, well and good; but wheat will only be a side issue; this year it may be profitable, but next year it may be a failure. If we can have small sheep farms and raise sheep and wool in that way, we can make use of a lot of the land of Queensland to the best advantage. It does not pay to harvest the crop in some cases because the price is so low. Everybody must admit that with 2,000 sheep a man can make a decent living. If I had 2,000 merino sheep at the present time, I would be prepared to get out of Parliament. I would be able to make more money with 2,000 sheep than I can get by being a member of Parliament.

The TREASURER: Surely the hon. gentleman is not in Parliament for what he can get out of it?

Mr. MORGAN: No; I am here for the good of the country. I have not made as much out of Parliament as the Treasurer has

done. I am not jealous, but I wish I was in the same boat as the Treasurer.

The TREASURER: I thought you said our boat was sinking.

Mr. MORGAN: There is no need for any personalities in connection with this debate. (Laughter.) Generally speaking, the people outside form the opinion that members are in Parliament for an ulterior motive. Perhaps that impression is created by the Press and others, but I can honestly say that Parliament has done me very little good financially, and I think that has been the case of other hon. members.

Let me now deal with the cattle industry. The Treasurer has taken a certain amount of interest in this industry; but he should take a lot more interest and recognise that the cattle industry is the second most important industry in the whole State. The rest of Australia is in no way dependent upon the cattle industry like we are in Queensland. When we find that the second largest industry of the State is threatened, and has been threatened for many years, with complete extinction, then the Treasurer should take a greater personal interest in the matter with a view to bringing about a better state of affairs. At the present time huge fortunes are being made out of the industry by those engaged in what might be called the secondary industries of the cattle industry. The producers and the fatteners of cattle are losing money and becoming poorer and poorer year after year. The State stations are a guide to what is happening. The Government are the largest cattle owners in Queensland, if not in Australia, and the Treasurer, having the State stations as an example to follow, should take a keener interest in an endeavour to bring about a better state of affairs. I am not saying that the consumers of Queensland are getting their meat too cheaply. I believe they are paying plenty for their meat; but the trouble is the increased cost between the time the beef leaves the paddock and the time it reaches the plate of the consumer. Huge profits are being made by intermediaries. We could increase the price to the producer by at least 5s. per cwt. without increasing the price to the consumer at all, and that would place the industry upon a favourable foundation. It is because of the existence of State butcher shops that private butchers are allowed to make huge profits. Price-fixing has been done away with in connection with the sale of meat in Brisbane and suburbs, and the State butcher shops have been allowed to extort high values from the public so as to be able to make a profit out of that enterprise. It is because of that that the private shops are making the huge fortunes they are making to-day. Imagine fillet steak at 1s. per lb., and rump steak at 9d. per lb., when the butchers are to-day, and have been for years, buying their weekly supply at 2d. per lb., with the by-products thrown in. That statement cannot be refuted by the State butchers or anybody else. This is a circular which I received which was issued by W. Angliss and Company, Victoria, last December—

“We have for years endeavoured to cater for this increasing demand and have made arrangements this year for almost unlimited supplies of the various lines for which there is generally the greatest call, but in view of the unusually

*Mr. Morgan.]*

large orders already received for Queensland ox tongues, which at the price quoted are exceptionally good value, would strongly advise you to order early so as not to be disappointed."

The above circular was sent to one of the country butchers in Victoria. The price quoted for ox tongue is 10d. per lb. The average ox tongue weighs from 5 lb. to 6 lbs., and in Victoria the producer would be paid 5s. or 5s. 10d., each, whereas in Queensland the producer would receive about 6d. In Queensland butchers can buy their beef at 2d. per lb., with the by-products thrown in. If a tongue is to be sold to a retail butcher at 10d. per lb., then goodness knows what the consumer will have to pay for it. That shows what is happening generally throughout the industry in Queensland, and the Government are doing nothing to try and obtain for the producer a fair return for his cattle so that he can meet his liabilities to the Government, instead of having to come cap in hand year after year asking for terms, and asking to be allowed to go free of the 10 per cent. penalty for late payment of rent. It is a dreadful thing to find that such a large industry is in the deplorable condition that the cattle industry is in at the present time.

The Secretary for Agriculture has caused to be brought into this State six draught stallions, and, whilst I admit that they will do some good, still they are not going to do very much good towards the improvement of the breed of horses in Queensland for some time to come. The hon. gentleman should double or treble that number. I understand that the stallions cost 5,000 guineas, and I expect the upkeep is at least £200 per annum. Would it not have been better if the Government had subsidised some person to the extent of £150 per annum for three years where that person brought into a district a stallion approved by the Stallions Board, which I understand is now defunct? In that case it would have cost the Government £150 for three years, and with the same amount of expenditure incurred in the buying of six stallions they could have had thirty stallions in Queensland to-day instead of six, and the Government would have been bringing about a real improvement in the breed of horses in different parts of Queensland. The cost to the Government would have been less than the amount they have expended to date. I believe it is a very good thing for the Government to endeavour to improve the breed of horses, and they are justified in any action in that respect, but they should make the money at their disposal go further than is the case to-day. The Government are in the wrong in the methods that they have adopted up to the present time.

We have only got to take the illustration of the State butcheries having lost £10,000 last year, and the only excuse offered by the Commissioner for Trade [11.30 a.m.] was that an individual of South Brisbane competed against them and they had to reduce the price of meat all over Brisbane. Just imagine one private butcher shop at South Brisbane compelling the State butcher shops to reduce the price of their meat in Brisbane and the suburbs to the accompaniment of a loss of £10,000! A private person owning thirty or forty shops would have dealt with that situation by selling meat at a low value in a shop in close

[Mr. Morgan.]

proximity to the price-cutting shop and not in the whole of his shops. The position is that, if any of the private butchers resolved to lose £2,000 or £3,000 by selling meat at a cheaper rate than a State shop in close proximity to it, they could force the Commissioner for Trade to lose a large sum of money.

Mr. COLLINS: You must have been reading the history of the Standard Oil Trust.

Mr. MORGAN: No, I have been reading the report of the Commissioner for Trade.

Mr. COLLINS: Those are the methods of the Oil Trust.

Mr. MORGAN: That condition of affairs is ridiculous, but it is the same in connection with the whole of the State butcher shops. We cannot get the right men for them. If we do, they are interfered with by others until they refuse to remain in the employ of the State. The losses on State enterprise amount to over £1,000,000, and we are paying 5½ per cent. interest on that loss. Why? Simply to try and justify the Communistic policy of the Labour party—a policy which the Communists of the party are not satisfied with. I gather from their debates in the street that they are dissatisfied.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Did you stand and listen to their speeches?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, I was with another hon. member who does not sit on this side of the House. Some of the speeches were interesting. It appears that a circular had been issued to the public giving the names of hon. members on the opposite side of the House who favoured high and low wages. Mr. Thomas, one of the speakers—and it would be of interest to know whether his statement was a fact—made the statement that the police had been detailed to gather up the circulars to prevent them being circulated. If that is a fact, it is deplorable.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: The police in Victoria would not have much time to gather up circulars. They are kept too busy hunting for criminals.

Mr. MORGAN: It is deplorable to think that the police should be engaged in such ridiculous work.

Mr. CARTER: We have a few Victorian members here.

Mr. MORGAN: There are some, but the Premier is not a native of Queensland.

Mr. CARTER: No, but he comes from a country that is free from crime.

Mr. MORGAN: The speakers also contended that their permits to hold meetings were conditional on their criticism of the Government being moderate and not too strong.

Mr. CARTER: They are Victorians.

Mr. MORGAN: I remember the time when a previous Government arrested certain men for speaking without permits. Those men chained themselves to the posts. I well remember hon. members opposite raving at what they called the injustice that was done to those men by interference with the freedom of speech.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the subject-matter before the House.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not want to sit down before referring to the interference

with freedom of speech by the Government, as I believe it is one of our most important liberties.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I am democratic enough to think that you, Mr. Speaker, would not interfere with the freedom of speech of anybody, especially hon. members in this House.

There is another matter I wish to refer to, and that is the shortage of trucks for the railage of stock. It is very difficult for the small owner to get trucks because the big firms, including the meatworks, order trucks in advance and practically monopolise the whole of the available trucks. If a small man wishes to send one or two truck-loads of cattle to Brisbane, he has at times to wait six or eight weeks. If he approaches the Commissioner, it is just possible that two or three trucks are made available to him. Is that just? It is only right that the large firms should get their cattle down to the market, but the whole supply of trucks should not be reserved for them to the detriment of the small man. I suggest to the Minister that in future when allotting trucks he should not allot the whole of the trucks each week to those firms who desire to monopolise them, but that he should reserve a few for the small man.

I also desire to draw attention to the condition of some of the State schools in the electorate of Murilla. It is probable that State schools in other electorates are in just as deplorable and dilapidated a condition, but I am speaking particularly on behalf of the people I represent. Some of the schools are so overcrowded that the children are compelled to be taught underneath the schools. It very often happens that after rain the condition of the ground underneath the school is such that the children cannot be taught even there. The work of the school is thus retarded, and the conditions are a disgrace to the department. Every effort should be made to make the conditions healthful to the children. There seems to be no difficulty in spending thousands of pounds in constructing large schools and play-sheds in the city and suburban areas, but anything seems to be good enough when it comes to the country districts. I do not object to the city and suburban children having all the comforts that are necessary, but it is not right that they should have them to the detriment of the country children. Before the city children have such comforts, the children in the bush should at least have bare necessities. They are entitled to them, and their wants should be considered before the Government decide to spend the large sums of money they are doing on buildings in the city. Take, for instance, the construction of that large building at the corner of Queen and George streets. It may be necessary; but why spend close on £200,000 on that building when money is scarce and when most of our country schools are languishing for bare necessities? I am sure that there are many schools in the electorate of the hon. member for Balonne that also require attention. Many of them should be burnt down, as they are not fit for the children to assemble in. The same thing applies to the Murilla electorate. I hope that, when the Government are allocating the amount of money they have to spend this year, they will give every consideration and attention to the requirements of the people who live in the bush.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I would like to get some information from the Government regarding land settlement. I know that the Government have sufficient force behind them to put their platform on the statute-book of Queensland, but they certainly have no desire to do that. They also have power to bring about the necessary reform regarding land settlement. I look upon the land settlement of Queensland as something much more comprehensive than the mere settlement of ex-soldiers on the land. I consider that the mismanagement of the Government in regard to land settlement has been very considerable.

Many things have been done by the Government that have made the lot of the man on the land a very hard one indeed. The Secretary for Public Lands will take no blame upon himself. The hon. gentleman has the business capacity to effect a remedy. He asked a little while ago, in interjection to a speaker, "Where will I get the money?" That is the whole rub. In the first place, the whole scheme of land settlement by this Government is wrong. The scheme of group settlement is nearly always bad. Very rarely has a group settlement been successful. Take the group settlements that were put into operation by the Hon. J. T. Bell when he was Secretary for Public Lands. It will be found that hardly any of those settlements have been successful. I point this out because the present Government are making the same mistake and perpetuating the same blunder. I do not blame a Government for making a mistake in the first place. Any man or Government can make a mistake; but that mistake should not be continued. These mistakes in land settlement are not only a loss to the Government, but to the individual settler. The man who is placed on land that is unfitted for cultivation, and who spends some years of his time and all his money on that land, will not again take up farming operations, even on better land, with the same heart as before. Therefore I say that the Government are making a very serious blunder, and should review the whole of their land settlement scheme.

To start off, we should have a survey of the whole of the land of the State that is ready for farming operations, not only that which is allotted to soldier settlements. We should not put men on inferior land. It seems to me to be absurd to put men on land that is unfitted for the purpose and is unproductive. You will not only cause those men to lose money, but you are taking them away from better and more productive operations. We have any amount of good land in the State, so these men are not going on poor land because there is a lack of good land. Instead of waiting, like Micawber, for something to turn up, the Government should do something. I agree that the Secretary for Public Lands has a big problem to deal with, particularly while he is short of money. I do not sympathise with the Government because they are short of money. The waste that has taken place during the last few years would make any Government short of money, but it would be cutting the loss if we placed men on good, productive land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where are you going to get the new money to put those men on other blocks?

*Mr. Warren.]*

Mr. WARREN: You appear to get some money for all your wild schemes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Commonwealth Government have laid it down definitely that they will give no more money for soldier settlement.

Mr. WARREN: I think we have gone past the stage of soldier settlement. Although they say the soldier has been a failure as a settler, I contend that he has been no more so than the average man. In many cases the wrong man was chosen to go on the land. He was unfitted from health and other reasons to go on the land. Did anyone ever hear of such a thing as picking settlers? As a rule you do not pick settlers: they go on the land haphazard; you take them as they come. If there have been failures in the soldier settlements in greater proportion than in other settlements, it has been due to the type of man chosen and to the inferior land and general bad management on the part of the Government. Take those settlements in rotation, and you will find that the worst was Coominya, then Beerburum, then Stanthorpe. If you take the settlements throughout the State, you will find they got worse as the land got worse. Where they did best the land was best. This proves conclusively to any reasonable and thinking man that the fault was not with the settler but with the system and the quality of the land.

The Secretary for Public Lands knows perfectly well that he is only waiting for these men to be starved off. That is the plain truth. The hon. gentleman appointed a Commission to inspect the settlements and make recommendations, and I defy him to put the records of that Commission on the table of the House. The hon. gentleman knows that he dare not do it. That report would condemn him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What report?

Mr. WARREN: The report of the Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have not got it.

Mr. WARREN: I know all about it. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that certain recommendations have been made, and that those recommendations have not been followed out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why have they not been followed out?

Mr. WARREN: I suppose the hon. gentleman will say on account of shortage of money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The writing off has taken place.

Mr. WARREN: I am not talking about writing off.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is what the Commission was appointed for.

Mr. WARREN: Yes, the hon. gentleman evaded the issue. The Commission did not evade the issue. The Commission knows perfectly well that there are settlers on soldier settlements to-day that have no possible chance of making a living from the land, because there is not sufficient plant food in that land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the Commissioners have supplied you with infor-

mation that they have not yet supplied to me, they will hear about it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are officers in my department, and I will dismiss any officer in my department who has supplied such information.

Mr. WARREN: I do not know about dismissing; I want to know if the Secretary for Public Lands is going to follow out the recommendations of the Commission. It is quite time that the report of the Commission was laid upon the table of this House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has not been given to me yet.

Mr. WARREN: It ought to have been. It is downright bad business that that report has not been presented to this Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are going to get someone into serious trouble.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. gentleman is no more sincere in his present statement than he was sincere in appointing that Commission, and he will not be more sincere when the report is tabled. He knows perfectly well that he is up against a proposition that he is not prepared to face. It is no use any outside organisation trying to smooth the Minister down. It is just as well for the hon. gentleman to face the position, and it is just as well for the Government to face it. I am not going to mince matters with the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman is responsible for the actions of Mr. Coyne, and he is also responsible for the actions of Mr. Hunter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are getting on a different track now. You know the Commission was appointed to do a certain thing.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. gentleman evaded the principal issue. Instead of giving the members of the Commission a free hand, he muzzled them. I am game to say that the members of this Commission are going to make a certain recommendation. At any rate, if they do not, they will not be doing their duty. It would be a wise thing if the Government, with all their strength behind them, would show a little heart and a little decency towards these settlers. I want to emphasise again that there are portions of the settlements that I am speaking of that are not bad, and with sympathetic treatment the settlers would make a success of the business. So far as land settlement generally is concerned, unless there is more liberal treatment in the matter of railway freights and in other ways, we are going to have a big set back. We know perfectly well how few of the people at present on the land pay income tax. It is absolutely astonishing how few do pay income tax, and it would be a very sane business proposition if the Government, before it is too late, made the country a little more attractive. In spite of all their schemes, the man on the land is not getting a fair deal. He is not one penny better off, but he has to pay greater taxation. What is going to happen as a result of the increased railway rates? Whom are they going to hit? They are going to hit one class—the man on the land. The Government, without any thought and without any consideration, simply say, "We have to find so much more money." Why have they to find this money? It is because of their own recklessness. We heard a dialogue between the Secretary for

[Mr. Warren.]

Public Lands and the hon. member for Murilla about the method of excavating the channels in regard to the irrigation works. The Minister must know that the use of shovels on excavation works is an obsolete method.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who said they were using them?

Mr. WARREN: The hon. gentleman knows they were using them. The hon. gentleman could easily have said, "We are using scoops," or "We are using some different method," but he did not. He evaded the issue. He started to argue whether it was 7s. 6d. or whether it was 2s. a yard, or something else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about Warren's Folly?

Mr. WARREN: Never mind about the folly. The issue was whether these men were using scoops or whether they were using shovels. It is well known that the Government always adopt old out-of-date methods. I do not want to be too hard on the Main Roads Board, because it is a new institution, and the Board had to find engineers to carry out its works; but I was informed by the chairman of the Landsborough Shire Council that the first three miles of the road over the Blackall Range cost £40,000. It was not all on the mountain. Can you imagine three miles of main road costing £40,000? That is another way in which they are going to bleed these people. The Government should not be pushed into indiscriminate waste and extravagant expenditure by their followers. They should realise that they should adopt business methods, and it is about time the people of Queensland rose up and said, "We will not have this sort of thing." If the Government desire to carry out their socialistic platform, they could put the whole of their platform into operation during this session, but they are not sincere. They are no more sincere than the Secretary for Public Lands was when he talked about this Commission that he appointed and which he nullified. He is not sincere about the irrigation works.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. WARREN: I want to deal with these irrigation works. As a matter of fact, we cannot sell the produce we are growing at the present time, and the Government are building large irrigation works although they know that irrigation settlements have been a complete failure wherever they have been tried in Australia. Yet in spite of that the Government are spending an enormous sum in connection with a water conservation scheme that will be more expensive than the Burrumjack scheme and more expensive than the Mildura scheme. The workers of Queensland are so blind that they cannot see that in the near future these things are going to fall back on themselves. I hope that the Government will be wise, particularly in the matter of soldier settlement and land settlement generally, and that they will adopt better business methods.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): At the outset, I want to support the remarks of other soldier members in this Chamber in advocating that, instead of the Secretary for Public Lands allowing soldiers to starve on poor land that will not grow anything, he should use the advantage that he has in office—his personality, if he has any, and his sympathy, if he has any—to transfer these men from

Beerburrum and other settlements to land on which they can make a living. It is the desire of the people of Queensland, and of Australia, that these soldiers should have better conditions than those which have already been given to them. When the soldiers were being placed on Beerburrum, the hon. member for Murumba said that it was a most deplorable gift of the nation to her soldiers.

Mr. HARTLEY: He did not say that. He said the land was second to none in Queensland for citrus fruits.

Mr. FRY: "Hansard" will bear out what I said just now.

Mr. HARTLEY: What you said is not true.

Mr. FRY: It is perfectly true. This is a question that must be faced.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The Governor-General said that the Queensland soldier settlements are the best in the Commonwealth.

Mr. FRY: We know that when the Government take people out to show them the land, they show them the best part of it. When I went up to the Beerburrum settlement I was taken to the most successful settler. I said to the officials, "You have been very kind to me this morning. I would now like to look round [12 noon] myself." I and those with me then went round ourselves, and we saw the other farms to which we had not been taken, and we got the version of the settlers there, which was quite contrary to the version given by the agent of the Government. As a matter of fact, one man said, "How did you manage to get round to see us?" and I said that after thanking the officer who was showing me round I had told him that I wanted to look about for myself. He said, "If you had not come by yourselves, you would never have seen these farms." I support other hon. members in advocating that these men should get better consideration and be transferred to blocks which are more suitable.

Mr. KERR: And have a proper advance made to them.

Mr. FRY: I want now to refer to a matter in which the Premier is concerned, an account of which appears in the "Australian Seaman's Journal," of 1st August, 1924. A most serious statement is made there, and, if it is true, it is a sorry thing for the State and for the Premier. It is signed by a Mr. O'Sullivan, who declares it to be true. It is published in "The Seaman," the official organ of the National Seamen and Firemen's Union of Great Britain, by Thomas Walsh for the Federated Seamen's Union of Australia, at the head office of the Union, Trades Hall, Melbourne, Victoria. The paper which publishes it knows that, if it cannot justify these statements, it is liable for criminal prosecution for defamation. In the interests of the public life of Queensland the statement should be denied if it is not true. The Premier should make a statement, and if it is not true, he should take action against the paper, and the person who is responsible for the statement should be prosecuted. I view the matter from a most serious standpoint. I have brought the matter up here, so that the Premier may have an opportunity of denying the statement; otherwise, it must go out to the world as being an absolute fact—a sworn statement published by a unionist journal. This is

*Mr. Fry.]*

the statement, which is headed "King Theodore"—

"To the Editor, 'Seamen's Journal.'

"My name was mentioned in an article by J.H.C., under the heading 'King Theodore the First,' in your July issue.

"To those unacquainted with the full facts of the matter it may appear that I played a shady part, or, at least, participated in certain deals referred to by your correspondent."

Just to show that this is dealing with the finances of the State, later on there is a statement made that the Premier had promised to pay certain moneys out of the finances of the State—

"In order to save any possible misunderstanding as to my appearance in Brisbane at the time mentioned by J.H.C., and my activity there, I ask you to be good enough to publish the following statements. They are extracts from a sworn statement I made before Mr. Arthur Rae, J.P., of 'Common Cause,' at Sydney, on 24th December, 1923:—

"I called at 'Smith's,' . . . in November, my object being to get fixed up with a job, and thus establish continuity of employment . . . which I felt would justify me in demanding 'Smith's' redemption of their promise to pay my fare from London to Sydney. I asked McKay for the job that I had been promised by cable. He said . . . he wanted me to go to Brisbane as editorial representative of 'Smith's Weekly.' I said that whether I would go depended on what the job was worth. He said £20 a week . . . Confidentially . . . we are backing Theodore. Next year he will leave the State and go into Federal politics, and . . . he will be the next Labour Prime Minister. . . . It will be your job to, under the lap, help Theodore, and openly in the paper support. . . .

"If you take this up, and if you like it," continued McKay, "there will be a safe Labour seat in Queensland Parliament for you at the end of it, and I assure you that Theodore will do anything you want." I said I found it more interesting to observe politics than to participate in them. . . . McKay replied, "So do I." . . . I said "It sounds good, and I think I'll go." . . . McKay added that the matter was not finalised with Theodore, but that in a few days . . . he would let me know.

"I returned to my holiday, and . . . wired . . . asking if the matter were finalised. . . . McKay wired "Am now in correspondence on subject, and when finalised will advise." . . . McKay wired again, asking if I could come up to Sydney and see him. . . .

"I saw McKay, who appeared to be more curt than formerly, and who greeted me with "Well, that job is now worth £16 a week. . . . I suppose you should know . . . of that £20 Theodore was to pay £10 a week. Apparently he has been thinking over it. . . . he can only do £6 a week. . . . I don't know, but I suppose it's because he thinks that's about all he can go, and that, perhaps, he has less to gain out of it than "Smith's.""

[Mr. Fry.

. . . McKay again assured me of the certainty of Theodore standing to the arrangement. . . .

"I returned within a few hours and reopened the matter with McKay. . . . We had another long and heated argument . . . After a while . . . I agreed to go up at £16 a week. He said, "All right, that's settled. Theodore will pay you the £6 every week and we will pay you £10. You will be put on the Government list for publicity." . . .

"I took the train to Brisbane. . . . Theodore asked me at the outset if I were aware of the exchanges of notes between himself and McKay. He then opened a general conversation on what he termed was a false view prevailing in the South regarding Queensland. He said, "We are not Bolsheviks, and we want that made plain, for instance." We talked of the matter . . . and . . . Mr. Theodore's . . . attitude. . . . He said, "I want you to go easy on that, because all the time we are in correspondence governmentally and confidentially on the subject." . . . He showed me this . . . as his helper under the lap . . . He said I was not to appear to have favoured entree. "But," he said, "as I want you to use your judgment and discretion if ever you think that a situation warrants a special statement from me, you can draw it up, type it out, and submit it to me, and if I think it is O.K. I will let it go through. . . . By the way—the matter of money. There is only one way I can fix this. I will arrange . . . to pay you . . . out of the special contingency fund of my office, which will not be subject to scrutiny by the Auditor-General. This is the best way."

"On Monday (the Monday after my arrival in Brisbane) . . . when Mr. Hincheliffe, business manager (of 'Smith's') told me he had no letter for me on the subject of my fare refund, I showed my letter of 28th November, and dictated . . . a collect telegram addressed Packer-McKay, in which I said "Received no acknowledgment from you my letter dated twenty-eighth. Unless you refund by 2 o'clock my fare, as promised by cable, I cease work this afternoon."

"Theodore 'phoned me, and said, "Mr. O'Sullivan, I received a wire from McKay this morning, asking me to hold in abeyance that arrangement with you until I hear further from him. . . . It's rather cryptic." . . ."

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member if the extract is very much longer. It appears to me that the hon. member, under cover of a discussion of grievances, is making a personal attack on the Premier, which I deprecate exceedingly.

Mr. FRY: We are asked by the Government to vote money for their use, and in doing so we are entitled to ask how they are handling the money. So far as I am concerned, I know nothing about it. I ask the Premier to defend the honour of the State and of himself as Premier by instituting a prosecution against the people who make these allegations or in some other way. If it is true, we ought to know all about it.



The TREASURER: I will give you every opportunity to investigate it.

Mr. FRY: I do not want to make any investigation at all, but, as I have the greatest respect for the Premier, in his interests I want to give him the chance of replying. (Laughter.) I may say that it is signed by Chris. O'Sullivan, and concludes—

"The original from which these are taken is in safe keeping. For reliable, open investigation, I am prepared to produce it."

and this man to-day is employed on the staff of the Sydney Labour daily newspaper. I am here as a representative of the people, and I am only asking for information. I do not want under any circumstances to throw suspicion upon any one; I want to clear the matter up. I want to have the matter elucidated, and I hope that the Premier will clear it up.

Touching the general prosperity of Queensland, I want to say that we have nothing for which to thank the Government. The prosperity that we see about us is due to natural causes and to the productivity of the State. The State abounds in natural wealth from north to south and east to west. Everywhere there are opportunities to produce those things which we can sell overseas and which we need ourselves, and it is the duty of the Government to foster their production. Have they done so? I say that any prosperity which is evident in Queensland to-day is due to the State's own natural resources and to the expenditure of a huge amount of borrowed money. During the Buranda by-election last week I went round and listened to some of the speeches—I did not take much part in the contest myself—and if the people only knew what Labour members were saying and the truth which was not divulged, they would have something worth thinking about. This is a matter on which we should censure the Government, because, if they give false information to the people, how can the people trust them or how can the people trust us? Let me quote a few figures, to show how the position of the State during the last eight or nine years compares with its position during the eight years before this Government took office. From 1907-8 to 1914-15 the receipts to the credit of consolidated revenue amounted to £46,237,378, as compared with £62,299,638 during a similar period from 1915-16 to 1922-23. For the first of those periods there were eight surpluses totalling £179,957, whereas for the corresponding later period there was a net deficit of no less than £952,048. That reflects no credit on the Government, and it is naturally a cause for complaint by hon. members on this side. From 1907-8 to 1914-15 direct taxation amounted to £5,749,437, whilst in a similar period this Government collected £21,310,473, and that despite the fact that all taxation falls eventually on to the shoulders of the producer and the consumer. The taxation per capita in 1914-15 was £1 8s. 2d., and in 1922-23 it had risen to £4 4s. 4d. The total loan indebtedness increased during the same period from £55,000,000 to £83,000,000, and the annual interest bill had grown from £1,000,000 to £3,500,000. The interest on the public debt payable from revenue during the same period increased from £257,000 to £2,131,000.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER interjected.

Mr. FRY: They are true. They are supplied by the Auditor-General, and I suppose that if the Auditor-General supplied the hon. member with information, he would not question it. The Government have lost upwards of £11,000,000 on the railways while they have been in power. And, by the way, when hon. members opposite were talking about the industries of Queensland they did not tell the workers over in Buranda that they had let contracts for iron and steel bridges to English firms when Queensland firms could have done the work just as well for a slight increase which was due to the difference between the wages of the workmen in England and those here, and the fact that over there they work longer hours. The increase in fares and freights on the railways since this Government have been in power has been upwards of 55 per cent. on the average, although the Government told us last year that it was 17 per cent. and 12 per cent. respectively. Since the beginning of this month there has been a considerable increase, especially in fares which have to be paid by people who travel on our trains, amounting to 7½ per cent. Moreover, we find that the losses upon the enterprises controlled by the Commissioner of Trade amount to £567,355 and the profits to only £10,611. The indebtedness to the Treasury of those undertakings is no less than £2,214,751. On the mining enterprises the losses have been £362,207 and the profits £8,993, with an indebtedness to the Treasury of £1,114,503. On the sawmills there has been a profit of £13,414, but the State traveler and steamer shows a loss of £48,560, and the indebtedness to the Treasury in respect of that undertaking is £45,792, making a total indebtedness to the Treasury of £3,454,814—a sum which will become a dead loss, as it is not possible to pay it back from losing concerns. These are some of the things which they did not tell the people during the Buranda by-election. The net loss on the State enterprises amounts to no less than 1,010,104, to which have to be added unpaid income taxation (which would have been paid had they been run by private enterprise) amounting to £164,925, and unpaid interest on capital of £97,425. That makes a grand total loss of £1,272,454.

Then, let me touch on agricultural production. We had the Secretary for Agriculture telling us through the columns of this morning's paper that we are not producing sufficient wheat for our own consumption.

It makes one wonder why that is so. It should be the duty of the Government to assist development so as to meet the demands of the State. It was an awful admission on the part of the Minister to confess to the Housewives' Association of Kurilpa that such a large and fertile State as Queensland is not producing sufficient wheat to meet local requirements. I am inclined to think that the shortage has been created by the exportation of wheat, and we have now to rely on the Southern States for our supplies. During the period 1907-14 there were 20,257 selections of agricultural Crown land taken up, which comprised an area of 11,518,780 acres. For the period 1915-22 the number amounted to only 10,542, and the area selected was only 5,221,024 acres. There we have good cause for complaint, and those figures disclose a grievance which the people have against the Government for the way in which they have carried out their duty.

Mr. Fry.]

The hon. member for Bulimba, when speaking on the Address in Reply, referred to the number and output of factories. The other night at Logan road I heard him referring to the unemployed insurance and the maternity benefits brought about by this Government, but he forgot to tell the people that an Opposition member—myself—in 1920 advocated unemployment insurance in this House. Two years afterwards the Government thought fit to bring it in. Hon. members on this side advocated unemployment insurance at that time because unemployment was so acute, and is so to-day. I suppose there are about 20,000 unemployed in Queensland to-day. The same conditions exist to-day as existed when I made the suggestion about unemployed insurance, provision for nursing the poor, which included maternity nursing, bush nursing, and the extension of the operations of baby clinics, which was asked for in 1920 by me and made law three years later, but no credit is given to me—they claim the lot. During the period 1914-21 the increase in the number of factories was shown by the following figures:—

Victoria	...	1,103
New South Wales	...	1,087
Queensland	...	14
South Australia	...	109
Western Australia	...	199
Tasmania	...	83

Queensland shows an increase of only fourteen, whereas little Tasmania, which has very little resources to support industry, has an increase of eighty-three. The increase in the number of employees employed in factories during the period 1914-21 was—

Victoria	...	25,477
New South Wales	...	32,265
Queensland (decrease)	...	1,034
South Australia	...	4,297
Western Australia	...	487
Tasmania	...	1,205

Queensland is the only State in the Commonwealth which showed a decrease in the number of employees employed in factories during that period. This statement shows the comparative number of factories dealing with primary products that are largely produced in Queensland:—

Factory.	Victoria.	New South Wales.	Queensland.
Hides and skins ..	48	80	17
Boots and shoes ..	334	302	36
Wool and cotton and tweed mills	19	9	2
Bacon curing ..	22	19	6
Flour milling ..	45	62	11
Jam, fruit preserving, and pickles	50	41	16

In connection with the latter we have only sixteen factories in Queensland, notwithstanding that we are producing fruit to such an extent that it is going bad on our hands.

Let me now deal with taxation, which is a most serious matter affecting the wage-earner. I have pointed out on many occasions that if a man is on the basic wage of £4 per week, and taxes to the extent of 4s. to 5s. per week are levied upon him, then his effective wage is only £3 16s. or £3 15s. per week. By the time he pays £1 10s. per week for his house—which is an average rental—and by the time he pays for food and

clothing and other necessities of life for his family, matters press very heavily indeed upon him, and he is compelled to ask for an increase in the basic wage. The amount of taxation received has increased from £954,457 in 1914-15 to £3,330,885 in 1922-23. Those figures indicate that in 1914-15 the amount of taxation per head per annum was £1 8s. 2d., which, for a family of five persons—the basis adopted in fixing the basic wage—amounts to £7 0s. 10d. per annum, or 2s. 8d. per week. In 1922-23 it amounted to £4 4s. 4d. per head per annum, which means, for the same family, £21 1s. 8d. per annum, or 8s. 1d. per week. If the wage-earner has to foot such a heavy taxation bill, then, instead of getting an effective basic wage of £4 per week, he receives less than £3 12s. per week. The public debt has increased from £56,869,000 to £38,005,000, or an increase of £31,136,000 in eight years—approximately £4,000,000 per annum. The average increase under all previous Governments was approximately £1,000,000 per annum. The annual interest on the public debt has increased from £1,975,000 to £3,589,000, or an increase in eight years of £1,614,000. In other words, the annual interest bill has almost doubled in eight years. It is just as well that the public should know the increase per head in the interest on the public debt, so that they can "call the bluff" of hon. members opposite.

The interest on the public debt for the year 1914-15 was £2 18s. 5d., and for a family of five persons £14 12s. 1d., equal to 5s. 7d. per week. In 1922-23 the interest on the public debt was £4 10s. 10d. per head, or £22 14s. 3d. per annum for a family of five persons, equal to 8s. 6d. per week.

When the Government come and [12.30 p.m.] ask for an advance, these facts make us wonder whether we are altogether justified in giving them what they ask for to continue the government of the country in this way. We want better and more efficient service shown. We want a service that is going to be of benefit to the State. We want to get a broad national outlook upon the State, its advantages, and its opportunities. Let us do something to help on the State in that direction.

The wage question was settled in this House last week, and it is therefore hardly necessary for me to draw a comparison between the wages paid in Victoria and Queensland, but in every case, with one or two exceptions, Victoria stands in the better position. Surely, if Victoria can pay these wages, Queensland, with all the resources it has at its disposal, should be able to pay similar wages. What do we call an effective wage? I would like to know from hon. members on the Government side their views on the question. We have seen them vote on the question. We have seen men with heads of brass and feet of clay standing up before us and delivering speeches, but immediately criticism was directed to their weak ankles they tumbled down. Would they like to be living under present conditions and endeavouring to keep a family on a small wage while the Government were mismanaging the affairs and wasting the substance of the State? These things can be remedied by better management, organisation, and administration.

Let us take the figures in relation to the cost of living. The following figures are taken from the report of the Commonwealth

[Mr. Fry.]

Statistician for the quarter ended 31st December, 1923, page 71, and show the increase in cost of food and groceries in the various States since 1st July, 1914:—

	Per cent.
Queensland ... ..	65.3
Victoria ... ..	59.5
New South Wales ... ..	58.1
Tasmania ... ..	58.0
South Australia ... ..	52.4
Western Australia ... ..	28.2

Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia up to that time were controlled by a Nationalist Government. South Australia, however, was governed by a Liberal Government with Sir Henry Barwell as Premier. Queensland has always had the lowest cost of living and still has, because it is a primary-producing State. We are producing right at our doors the very foodstuffs we consume. For that reason we should be able to live very much cheaper than other States, but the cost of foods is steadily on the increase. The Government came into office on the promise that they would reduce the cost of living by giving to the people cheap food, but they have failed to carry out that promise. In view of that, it is worthy to note that the Secretary for Agriculture has confessed that we are not producing sufficient wheat to supply our own demands. We find also that the very boots we are wearing—not my own, because I try to buy local ones—are imported. Our hides are sent down South, and are returned in the finished manufactured article of boots and shoes.

Mr. KERR: Why?

Mr. FRY: Let the Government answer the question. These are questions which require very serious consideration from those who have the welfare of the community in their trust. It is possible to remedy this state of affairs.

There are other matters which should be ventilated before this House votes the Government any more money. One important matter is that of facilities in South Brisbane. I come on to this matter, not because it is altogether one which I, in preference to other hon. members, should deal with, but because it is a national question. There is a dry dock in South Brisbane, but its capacity is so limited that it does not permit large vessels to be docked there. I might in this connection quote from the remarks of Mr. C. Burke, the Secretary of the Seamen's Union. He estimates the loss to Brisbane through the lack of adequate dock facilities at £250,000 per annum. This means that our foundries are idle when they should be working, and ironworkers and dock hands are forced to take holidays when they should be earning wages. There can be no gainsaying the fact that there has been wasted on socialistic experiments, motor cars, and other luxuries sufficient money to have built a first-class dock capable of meeting the requirements of the State for many years and thus providing permanent work for hundreds of men.

We know that many of the State schools are in a dilapidated condition and require painting. We know that many of them are overcrowded. I hope that I am quoting the late Secretary for Education right. I saw from an extract of a speech he made at Woolloongabba that he said it was criminal to send children to school when they could

not be properly housed through the schools being overcrowded. If that is so, why are parents forced to send their children to overcrowded schools? That is a just grievance for hon. members on this side of the House to ventilate.

There is also another matter in connection with South Brisbane that is of vital importance, and that is the question of the removal of the railway level crossing at Woolloongabba. It is a dangerous crossing, and affects four or five street intersections. I have experienced the trouble that occurs there. I have viewed the pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and I say that, if money had not been squandered by the Government in their administrative acts and wild-cat and speculative schemes of various descriptions, but had been saved, this difficulty could have been remedied.

I wish to say in conclusion that we must pass this motion to give the Government money to go on with, for two reasons. The first reason is because the Government have the majority and can outvote us.

The second reason is that, if we do not do so, the public servants will not be paid. We want to see them paid. We believe that every employee in the public service is efficient and worth his job. If he were not doing his job, then the Government would have told us so. If he is doing his job, he should be well paid. I think that, if he has always been doing his job, he should not have been subject to the 5 per cent. wage cut. I am not a supporter of low wages and of long hours. I think that a man is worthy of his hire. If a man uses his brain to improve his job and the work he is doing, then he is entitled to the best pay. If he is merely going about the job carelessly, that is a matter for the attention of the supervising organisation. The attack should be made upon the organisation, and not upon the individual. We must vote this money to allow the public servants to get their pay and keep their wives and families going.

Regarding the question of the 44-hour week, I do not think it is asking too much. As I have said before, a working man who has a family to keep is entitled to every consideration. Only yesterday a man came to my place looking for work. That man wanted work badly. I had pity on him, and without going too far into the case, I may say that he merited the assistance given to him. He did not want money; he wanted work. I got him work. His case is the case of many thousands of men in Queensland. Thirty thousand unemployed is the estimate put down for the State of Queensland. All those unemployed are not registered at the Labour Bureau; many men say that it is useless to register—that they cannot get work by doing so, and those men are endeavouring to get jobs for themselves.

Whilst we are called upon to vote this money for the use of the Administration, we should not let the vote go through without severely criticising the Government and the careless and inefficient methods they have applied to their administration in the past.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): Before rising to speak, I gave hon. members opposite a chance of rising and ventilating their grievances. We all know that hon. members behind the Government have many more grievances than hon. members on this side of the House, and it is desirable that they should express those grievances. I will endeavour to do what I can to assist them while I am speaking.

Mr. Deacon.]

I think that, at least, hon. members opposite and I have one common grievance. We would both like to get rid of the present Ministers. There is one thing that is keeping the Ministry in office—a thing that is not at all fair and which should be remedied—the present state of the constituencies. I shall give the numbers on various rolls and draw a comparison between country and city electorates. It was understood that, when the electorates were rearranged by a Commission, that Commission allowed one-fifth above and one-fifth below the quota in order to arrive at the difference between city and country electorates. My comparison will show how the scheme works—

COUNTRY.		CITY.	
	No. of Electors.		No. of Electors.
Aubigny	6,002	Brisbane	5,831
Cunningham	6,292	Mackay	5,083
Wide Bay	6,397	Gympie	4,973
Carnarvon	6,270	Townsville	4,478
Warwick	6,336	Rockhampton	4,836
Dalby	6,055	Maryborough	5,958
Nanango	6,603	Cairns	5,911
Murrumba	7,092	Bundaberg	6,793
		Toowoomba	6,962
Cooroora	7,837	South Brisbane	6,478
Burrum	6,242	Keppel	5,787
Fassifern	6,364	Ipswich	6,479
Burnett	5,848	Eacham	5,530
Lockyer	5,754	Charters Towers	4,237
Albert	7,524	Biranda	6,804
Murilla	5,131	Maranoa	4,969
		Flinders	2,161

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Are you advocating another redistribution?

Mr. DEACON: I am advocating a fair distribution—something that will give country members a fair representation in this Parliament. All through the country electorates the proportion is very much the same, and it is scandalous to think that the country people have so little representation as compared with the towns.

Another grievance that the country has against the Government is because of the increase in railway freights. The Government, in order to raise further money, have increased freights, and the trouble is that in many instances they have increased freights with falling prices. I have often heard the Secretary for Railways say that the Government believe in running railways in order to encourage settlement in the country. They have evidently given up that idea now, because in some instances they have increased the freights although prices have been steadily declining.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Wool, for instance.

Mr. DEACON: Wool can bear an increase very well, but in other cases prices have been falling for the last twelve months, yet the freights have been increased. The policy of the Government in regard to the railways certainly needs altering. If it is necessary to get more money from the railways, then the increased burden should be more fairly distributed, and industries that are hard pushed at the present time should be given a little relief. At the present time industries in the city are favoured as against country industries. Under the present system it is almost impossible for a flour-mill to exist in the country unless it has sufficient local trade for its output. There is no possibility of a country flour-mill securing an export trade except at a great disadvantage as compared to the city mills. That is an unfair distinction to draw between city and country mills.

[Mr. Deacon.

At present every country mill is discussing ways and means of shifting to the city. It is not a good thing for the city to have everything brought to it, and it is not a good thing for the country, and the Government should devise some means of assisting country industries.

We are voting the Government a large sum of money, and some of it will be expended on the Council of Agriculture. When we are spending money on that body, we should insist that it should make better use of the newspaper published by the Council. It is not an agricultural newspaper at all. The articles contained in that paper are not always correct, and they are very often unfair. They are always semi-political, and the paper is regarded with a great deal of contempt by the members of the Local Producers' Associations. It does not occupy the position it should, and it is a pity to vote any sum of money to be wasted in that direction. I hope something will be done to improve that paper.

I am sorry that, in spite of all the money the Government are spending, it is not intended to buy any further stallions. I do not want to discuss the stallions purchased last year, but it is a pity they bought such stuff. The Government could do a large amount of good by introducing one good horse a year. It would be much better to buy one good horse than six inferior horses.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: What was wrong with those purchased last year?

Mr. DEACON: They were very inferior horses.

The PREMIER: The authorities who were advising the Government said they were very excellent stock, and they were purchased by an expert.

Mr. DEACON: I never heard any good judge of stock say they were excellent stock. I understood the man who bought them said they were the best he could get for the money. He was sent to buy six horses, and he bought the best six he could get with the money, but they are just ordinary stud horses. They would be all right for an ordinary stud farm; but when the Government introduce stallions, they should introduce high-class horses. There are plenty of fair stud horses in the country.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If there are plenty of good stud horses in the State, there is no occasion for the Government to purchase any.

Mr. DEACON: There are plenty of fair stud horses in the State, but there is the greatest difference between an ordinary fair stallion and a stud horse. Any breeder understands that a stud horse is one that is used for getting stallions while these others get horses that are only fit for geldings. If the Government are going to spend any money at all in this direction, they might as well spend £1,000 on a really good horse.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are a very ungrateful man.

Mr. DEACON: I am not ungrateful. If the hon. gentleman wants to see what a good horse is like, he should look at the illustrations in the "Australasian" a few weeks ago of horses imported into Victoria. Those are high-class horses.

I do not want to criticise the Government in regard to any other matter, but I would like a railway or two in my electorate, and

I hope that will be borne in mind. I want several schools, and also want a number of schools painted. I want to see the public buildings in all parts of the country kept up as they ought to be kept up. The Government are allowing public buildings to deteriorate, not only in my electorate, but in all parts of the State. Even in the electorate of the Secretary for Public Instruction there are buildings that need painting and repair. It is not a wise policy to allow these buildings to deteriorate for the want of a little expenditure.

[2 p.m.]

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): In speaking to the question, "That you do now leave the Chair," Mr. Speaker, I think this is an opportunity that we on the Opposition side should avail ourselves of, more particularly in view of the events which have taken place and the admissions that have been made recently by the Premier and the Secretary for Public Lands. Speaking the other day at the official luncheon at the Exhibition, the Premier made use of certain phrases which have been ably dealt with by the leader of the Opposition; but, notwithstanding that, I propose to state my own viewpoint in that connection. During the course of his speech, the Premier is reported in the "Daily Standard" of 14th instant as saying—

"There is one difficulty which is causing a little anxiety. I refer to the monetary stringency. The scarceness and dearth of money is hampering development in rural industries and the position is accentuated by the adverse exchange situation between England and Australia. The banks attribute the difficulty to over-expenditure by the various Governments and the excessive issue of Australian loans in London. Personally, I do not believe that is the correct explanation. Assuming that over-expenditure has imposed too heavy a drain on the credit resources of the country (which, I believe, accounts for the present stringency), I am of opinion that the banks and private concerns, and not the Governments, are principally to blame."

It seems to me that that is just like the little boy who, finding himself in a very difficult position, made an excuse. If the Premier with his colleagues can only transfer the blame from themselves and put it on to the banking institutions, he naturally thinks that they will be doing something wonderfully clever. I want to tell the hon. gentleman that the objective of the Labour party is something that does not make for the advancement of the industries of Queensland. It is admitted by the Labour party that they are out for the socialisation of industry. It is all very well for the Premier to blame banking institutions and private companies, but I say unhesitatingly that those institutions have done more and will do more for the advancement of this wonderful State of ours than the gentlemen who are occupying the Treasury benches. I do not suppose it is possible to get hon. members sitting behind the Premier to accept the dictum that we are living in a fool's paradise, but the sooner the people of this State realise that the better it will be. When the Premier made the speech I referred to, it was followed by a very able speech from his lieutenant, the Secretary for Public Lands, which was couched in very strong terms. Hon. mem-

bers will remember the remark which the Secretary for Public Lands made. He said, "I suppose some of you think that I ought to go on the Opposition side and make this speech," which led one to believe that he was practically criticising the Government in regard to the spendthrift attitude which they had adopted. The sooner the Premier and his colleagues face the situation, as I for one thought they were going to face it the other day when the Secretary for Public Lands told them that owing to adverse circumstances—owing to the stringency of the money market—it was an impossibility to do certain things which were part and parcel of the platform of the party, the better it will be for the country. When the hon. gentleman said that I was under the impression that he saw a way out. I thought that he had seen the light. I do not know whether he is buoyed up by the victory which has been accomplished in Buranda or not, but the fact remains that until the Government and their followers realise the danger of the position—and evidently the Premier does—so long shall we be up against this position. Undoubtedly the Secretary for Public Lands did right in trying to draw the attention of his followers, and indeed the whole of the Governments charged with the administration of public affairs right throughout the length and breadth of Australia, to the fact that their continual flooding of the money market to get loans is not going to do any good. Furthermore, the borrowing craze of the Government seems to me most peculiar in the face of their policy, according to which they do not believe in borrowing at all. In that connection you may remember the attitude that was taken by the Premier-Treasurer and Mr. Fihelly in that wonderful pamphlet issued by them before the 1915 election, in which there is just one clause to which I would like to draw the attention of the Premier. Dealing with what they termed the spending habits of the Liberal Governments who preceded them, they said—

"No matter how you look at Liberal Finance, its blunders are amazing and appalling. Those who reap the advantages of its looseness are the land monopolists, the powerful financial institutions who opposed the formation of the Commonwealth Bank, and Vested Interests generally.

"It is to their advantage to have this scandalous Deficit and Loan system perpetuated.

"The worker is the person who suffers; the producer is the person who pays."

Contrast that with what they did when they attained office. In 1915 the public debt of Queensland was left at £56,869,000 by the Liberal Government. This Government—which talked about proper methods of finance being the test of government—raised it to £88,005,000 in 1923. The interest in 1915 was £1,975,000, and in 1923 it had increased to £3,589,000. Now I want to emphasise that point. If, as they say, the worker is the person who suffers and the producer is the person who pays, how do they think they have treated the worker and the producer? In 1915, £56,869,000 spent according to them in gross mis-management by Liberal Administrations! In 1923, they have increased that amount to £83,005,000, and they are still looking for more money! The interest

Mr. Maxwell.]

charge on revenue for periods of eight years under the two Administrations was £3,259,000 and £13,544,000 respectively. And it is not as if this Government had not had plenty of money to spend. In 1915 the revenue was £7,202,000, and in 1923 it was £12,599,000. The Government cannot say that they have not had plenty of money to play with, and, when the Treasurer makes the statement that the banks are to blame, I say unhesitatingly that he can only blame himself and his colleagues on that side of the House.

The TREASURER: You did not listen to my remarks very carefully.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did listen to the hon. gentleman, and I have always listened to him, but I really and truly do not know how to take him, because one day I find him saying one thing and the next day he is indicating something else. One day I look upon him as a strong man, and the next day—I would not like to say he is a jellyfish—he is very, very slippery.

The TREASURER: I did not criticise the banks. I explained that they had advanced £2,000,000 and at the same time they were criticising the Government for over-expenditure.

Mr. MAXWELL: Why should they not criticise the Government? The business men in the community do not come to the Government to help them to conduct their businesses. They go to the financial institutions. If the Government or any other Government are going to do anything that is going to retard development, then the banks and private companies are perfectly justified in criticising the Government. After all, did not the Treasurer have to make an arrangement with the private companies and the banks in England in connection with the renewal of loans?

The TREASURER: They are not criticising us for our public expenditure in Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am glad the hon. gentleman admits that. I was under the impression that, when the hon. gentleman went home, there were a number of companies who were doing that.

The TREASURER: No—The Australian banks. As a matter of fact, I have received a letter from a banker in Queensland since I made my statement, and he says that he entirely endorses what I said.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am dealing with this matter from my own viewpoint, and in my humble opinion the Treasurer is excusing himself for something that has eventuated, and now wants to shift the responsibility from himself and his colleagues on to the banks and private companies.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman is misquoting the position.

Mr. MAXWELL: How is it possible for the Government to assist in the development of the industries of the State under their policy? We must look to the financial institutions and private companies for money to do that. We hear a lot of talk about capitalists, but I consider the only capitalists we have to-day are the financial institutions. Take our business men of to-day—the men whom an attempt is being made to strangle in their own industries. I say without fear of contradiction

[Mr. Maxwell.

that they, like the Government, are dependent upon financial institutions to carry on their business, and the sooner the Government realise that the better it will be for Queensland, and the sooner they wake up to the fact the sooner they will get out of the fool's paradise in which they are living. I was very much impressed by the speeches delivered by the Treasurer and the Secretary for Public Lands the other day, and I felt that we were at last getting somewhere; but it seems to me that the admissions that we got from the hon. gentlemen were only made in order to whip some of their supporters into line.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. gentleman must have had some experience of whipping in his time.

Mr. MAXWELL: I have never had as big a whipping as the hon. member for Bowen had. He was well and truly whipped.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: No, he was not.

Mr. MAXWELL: I notice that, whilst he was a good squeaker some time ago, he is very, very silent now. The men whom the Treasurer wants to deal with are men on his own side, and not on this side. I suppose the Treasurer considers that, having explained the financial position to the satisfaction of the Central Political Executive, all is right, but all is not right to the satisfaction of hon. members on this side.

Mr. KERR: Or Queensland generally.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not detracting from the good work which the Treasurer did in London, but I want to emphasise that it is a pity that he did not take the same course in 1920. I believe that he would have done so had it not been for those behind him.

Mr. KERR: Not according to his speeches.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Government have sunk a lot of money in State enterprises. Some time ago the Treasurer admitted that the whole position in connection with State stations would have to be reviewed. How much further have we got in that connection? The money of the people is still being thrown into these enterprises. I find that up to 30th June, 1923—the latest figures available—the position with regard to State enterprises was—

Enterprise.	Net Profit.	Net Loss.
State Stations .. ..	..	572,818
Butcher Shops .. ..	1,703	..
Produce Agency .. ..	..	4,777
Cannery .. ..	..	53,964
Hotel .. ..	8,475	..
Fish Supply .. ..	..	35,796
Railway Refreshment-rooms	30,433	..
Sawmills .. ..	18,414	..
Coal Mines .. ..	..	40,100
Arsenic Mines .. ..	..	7,631
Chillagoe Mines and Smelters	..	178,656

We all know of the statement made by the Secretary for Mines that this enterprise was going to be conducted on business lines, but, if a business man had conducted his business on the lines on which the Chillagoe smelters and several of the other enterprises have been conducted, he would have had to file a

petition in insolvency. The other figures are—

Enterprise.	Net Profit.	Net Loss.
	£	£
Irvinebank Treatment Works	..	32,665
Batteries .. .. .	..	5,706
Iron and Steel Works .. .. .	..	49,042
Roma Bore .. .. .	..	35,897
Palmer Gold Mines .. .. .	..	5,220
Retail Stores .. .. .	1,703	
Trawler and Steamer .. .. .	..	48,560
	60,728	1,070,832

The summary of these figures shows a net loss of £1,010,104. Under ordinary circumstances the business man competing with these State enterprises would undoubtedly have to pay income tax, and it is a fair proposition that income tax should be attached to these enterprises, in which case the tax payable would amount to £164,925. It is also reasonable and just to add interest, which would amount to £97,425, making a direct loss to the State of £1,272,454. But that is not the worst viewpoint of the whole business. We find that the capital tied up by the Government in State enterprises amounts to £3,455,000.

Mr. COLLINS: What would you do if your party got in?

Mr. MAXWELL: How is it possible for the Government to continue in the way they are doing—bulldozing and doping the people outside?

Mr. COLLINS: They would not listen to your dope at Buranda the other night.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not give them dope; I gave them facts. I told them something about the hon. member at the same time. I may say that statements that I make are backed up by facts. I do not say that the hon. member for Bowen does not do the same, but sometimes to me his statements appear somewhat exaggerated. We were told of the wonderful opportunities that existed so far as Bowen was concerned in connection with the State iron and steel works, and we have had an experience of it that I have read out.

We have also been told that prosperity is rampant throughout the length and breadth of this State. I differ entirely from that. I only wish it were true. We have statements made by the Treasurer and the Secretary for Public Lands which contradict that. Those statements deal with the condition of affairs existing to-day. I have a vivid recollection of reading in "Hansard" statements made by both those hon. gentlemen when on this side of the House in regard to the disgrace attaching to any Government having even one unemployed man in the State. Look at the attitude which is being taken up by men in the Labour party in the Southern States with regard to unemployment. They blame their Governments. I do not know whether that is dope or what it is, but they persist in their attitude. When the hon. gentlemen opposite were on this side of the House they twitted the Government because no arrangement was made to deal with unemployment. Now we have the Premier excusing himself and his Government on the ground that they cannot do certain things. In the face of that we are told that this is

the best State in the Commonwealth so far as living conditions are concerned. When the Labour party took over the reins of government in 1915 they told the people they were going to have cheap food. I shall refer to the Commonwealth statistics to June, 1924, to show the increase in retail prices of food and groceries since July—

State.	Increase.
Tasmania .. .. .	54.3 per cent.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are the seventh hon. member to use those statements.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am following a good example set by the late Hon. T. J. Ryan—"to repeat over and over and over again, and to emphasise all the time." When I was speaking on this matter the other night, someone challenged me and told me these statements had never been made in Parliament. I am going to make them in Parliament now. I am going to present my own opinion on behalf of my electors. These figures show an increase in retail prices of food and groceries since July—

State.	Increase.
Tasmania .. .. .	54.3 per cent.
Queensland .. .. .	54.2 per cent.
New South Wales .. .. .	47.5 per cent.

The TREASURER: What July is that?

Mr. MAXWELL: This is from "Commonwealth Statistics" to 30th June, 1924.

The TREASURER: You said "since July." What July?

Mr. MAXWELL: I said these were the figures from "Commonwealth Statistics" to June, 1924.

The TREASURER: Since when? Compared with what date?

Mr. MAXWELL: The increase in the cost since 1915.

The TREASURER: Since 1915?

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman may turn up "Commonwealth Statistics" and read the figures for himself.

The TREASURER: When the hon. member started he told us that this was the increase since July. What July was it?

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not say since July. I said that they were the figures from "Commonwealth Statistics" to 30th June, 1924, showing the increase in the retail prices of food and groceries since 1st July, 1914.

The TREASURER: That is what I wanted to know.

Mr. POLLOCK: You said that it was since the last increase.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not say that. (Laughter.) One can quite understand the hon. member for Gregory taking up an attitude in the House similar to that which he takes up at the hustings.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: The hon. member tried to make you state facts.

Mr. MAXWELL: I always do state facts. I have nothing to gain by misleading anybody. I am not going to allow any hon. member opposite to misrepresent me. My comparison will show that, when an appeal is made to the Arbitration Court by those who are interested, if they are successful, it results in Queensland showing the highest cost of living in the Commonwealth. (Government dissent.) What is the use of talking? Owing to the cost of living being the

*Mr. Maxwell.]*

highest in Queensland, the workers base their applications for increases. When an increase is granted, we continue to be the State in which the cost of living is the highest in the Commonwealth, and we must give credit to the Labour party for accomplishing that.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is wrong in saying this is the dearest State.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not say it. I said that, when hon. members on the other side go to the Arbitration Court to plead for their unions, they point out to the powers that be in the Arbitration Court that this is one of the dearest living States in the Commonwealth, and they contend that because of that they are entitled to higher remuneration, and, when they go to the electors to state their case in order to get a continuance of power, they tell the electors that the cost of living in Queensland is the lowest of any State in the whole of the Commonwealth.

Then again they said they do not believe in such extravagant borrowing—they believed in limited borrowing. What do we find? Public borrowing was only to be done for reproductive work. Do they call State enterprises reproductive work? The amount of money that is tied up in State enterprises is £3,454,814, and I say unhesitatingly that that money would have been better in the hands of private enterprise to develop the whole of the State. As the hon. member for Enoggera said, why not treat the soldier settlers in a better manner than they have been treated in the past? We have heard a lot about Beerburum. Some hon. members say that the land is no good, while others say that the land is good. The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it, and a number of these settlers cannot get a living. What did the Secretary for Public Lands try to do this morning when the hon. member for Murilla was speaking? He pointed out that in Roma there were only six people who could grow wheat to advantage, and wanted to convey the idea that the rest of the people did not try. God knows these settlers have tried, and it is the duty of the Government—because the Federal Government have been backing up this Government in certain things—to assist these men on the land. I have a very vivid recollection of what the Secretary for Public Lands said when they were opening up the Dawson Valley lands. He said it was proposed to take a number of these unfortunate men who had been put on bad lands and place them in the Dawson Valley. I also have a very vivid recollection that the hon. gentleman promised that members of this Parliament, after the House rose last session, would be given an opportunity of going through the Dawson Valley with a view to seeing what was done. The invitation has not been extended to us, so we do not know what has been done in regard to the Dawson Valley lands.

I now want to deal with the question of borrowing for reproductive works. The public debt under a Labour Government has increased by £3,891,994 per annum as against an increase of £1,000,000 per annum under previous Governments, and the interest payable out of revenue has increased from £267,852 per annum to £2,151,397. The interest on public debt per head has increased from £2 18s. 5d. to £4 10s., and finance is still the test of Government.

[Mr. Maxwell.]

Then again I want to deal with the position so far as factories are concerned, and I am sorry to say that the position in that respect is not as good as I would like it to be. We were told some years ago that the Federation would accomplish something great—that our factories would go ahead by leaps and bounds. The following table gives a striking illustration of the results of Labour administration:—

—	1914.	1922.	In- crease.	De- crease.
Factories—				
Victoria ..	5,650	6,753	1,103	..
Queensland ..	1,796	1,810	14	..
Employees in Factories—				
Victoria ..	118,399	144,876	26,477	..
Queensland ..	43,282	42,248	..	1,034

That is not the only thing. We find that in connection with our boot factories the position is somewhat acute. I would ask hon. members opposite if it is not better to encourage industries like these than to be bolstering up and playing with State enterprises and wild-cat schemes as they are doing? The chairman of the Queensland Chamber of Manufactures, Mr. Watson, said in his address on 13th September, 1923—

“We employed 1,565 employees in 1900 in the boot trade, and to-day we employ 1,136. The reason given by the union secretary in the ‘Industrial Gazette’ is that the retailers are buying from the South.”

The other day I noticed in some of the union reports that, owing to the information given by them to the ‘Industrial Gazette’ being used in this way, they were not going to give any more information. I suppose they are perfectly justified from their own standpoint because they see the position in which they find themselves. They say that, owing to the competition from the South, the people here cannot make any headway.

Then let us look at the results of Labour administration in connection with the Queensland railways. In 1914 the trains carried goods and live stock to the extent of 4,970,875 tons, and in 1922-23, 4,208,989 tons, or a decrease of 761,884 tons. There is something wrong there. It [2.30 p.m.] certainly must be on account of the administration of a Government like this that that condition of affairs has been brought about. We are told that our prosperity is reflected in the Show which has just been held, and that our prosperity is very great. I wish that were true. If the Premier and some of his colleagues were to visit some of our merchants’ offices to-day, they would be told what I know to be a fact—that a number of commercial travellers have never opened their books to take orders during the last few weeks. Things are not as good as they appear to be on the surface. The leader of the Opposition, in dealing with the prosperity which was supposed to exist in Brisbane, said “Prosperity seems to be in existence in Brisbane, but that condition of affairs does not obtain in the country.” I say that, until the Government wake up and realise that we are living in a fool’s paradise, so long will this condition of things continue.



Then I want to emphasise the fact that the Government should give an opportunity to our own industries. I stressed the point on the want of confidence motion, and I again stress it this afternoon. I say unhesitatingly that the action of the Government in sending overseas to England for bridge material which could have been constructed here and kept our foundries going and at the same time circulated money here is undoubtedly a disgrace to the Government. I realise the difficulties in which the Government are placed—which are of their own creation—but, when we find the Government and their supporters saying that they stand for the manufacture of Australian articles in general and Queensland articles in particular. I say, "By their works ye shall know them." They are not true to themselves in this connection. Even if the Government gave an extra £2,000 to some of our local industries, would it not be better to do that and show that they have faith in the ability of the Australian worker? I am not saying a word against the British working men, who are very good; but they are working under different conditions altogether. They are working for lower wages than our local men are getting. There are instances where our foundries are practically idle. Of course we know very well that some men have received assistance in the shape of Government contracts, but undoubtedly the first consideration of the Government at all times should be to do their very best in the interests of the State.

Mr. COLLINS: What did the hon. member for Wynnum do about German dredges?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not dealing with German dredges—I do not deal in German stuff at all. And in that connection, I would refer the hon. member to the speech made by his colleague, the hon. member for Warrego, who, when I was dealing with the question of bridges, said, "Yes, and most of them are manufactured in Germany." How does the hon. member for Bowen like that statement? I stand all the time for the British manufactured article, and I say that the Australian workman is just as good as the next workman, and the Government should have shown their sincerity and given a guarantee that they have faith in the workmen of Queensland to build these bridges.

Mr. COLLINS: Is this a criticism of the Federal Government?

Mr. MAXWELL: This is a criticism of the State Government, and the hon. member knows the bridges to which I am referring—over the Johnstone, Kolan, and Yandaran Rivers. Mr. Gunn, when leader of the Labour Opposition in South Australia, criticised and chastised Sir Henry Barwell's Government for going overseas to import railway engines, and practically put them out of office for doing so. Compare his action with the action of a Labour Government in Queensland sending overseas for bridges! There is only one construction to put upon it. I do not want to impute motives to hon. members on the other side, but it seems to me that, when they could not get certain concessions from men in America, they naturally had to send their orders to England, to the detriment of the workmen of Queensland, and that, too, notwithstanding the arguments of a deputation which waited on the Premier and pointed out to him the bad effect the action of his Government would

have—not because of the non-circulation of that money but because of the bad example that Labour would set to its own people. I endorse the criticism of the leader of the Opposition, and I hope that before very long the Government will realise that they are living in a fool's paradise and accept the statement made by the Premier and set the example by abolishing a number of the State enterprises. I believe that they were established merely to carry out the policy and objective of the Labour party for the socialisation of industry. I realise too that, although some hon. members on the other side may not think it, others believe that, if they can only manage to control the financial institutions of this community, all will be right. They say to themselves, "So soon as we can get control in the Federal Parliament and get our hands on the financial institutions all will be well." But the Premier will find that, instead of leading his supporters to the Promised Land, he will take them into a wilderness, where indeed he has already guided them. He led them practically up to the gates of the Promised Land, and then he told them, "Neither I nor any of the members of my Cabinet are game to open the gates. If you are game to do so, go in and see what is there."

We have got to such a dead end in Queensland that there is financial stringency, and the Government employees cannot be given an increased basic wage or the benefits of a 44-hour week. The Government cannot grant those concessions notwithstanding that, whilst the Arbitration Court compels the private employer to comply with the law and work under a 44-hour week, the Government are not compelled to do so. The Arbitration Court is there to hear and determine what the rates shall be and what the conditions shall be, but an opportunity should be given to Government employees to go to the Arbitration Court. If we have arrived at a position of financial stringency, as the Treasurer states, then undoubtedly the Labour party who are in power to-day and have been since 1915 are absolutely responsible for the position.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): We have had a Labour Government in power since 1915, and during that time they have introduced certain legislation which has been claimed to be in the interest of the man who is down, in the interests of the man who wants work, and in the interests of the workers throughout the State, so that there will be no unemployment. Legislation has been put on the statute-book which is claimed to do away with the position of a man unsuccessfully looking for work. Loans have been floated to enable the State to find work for the unemployed. Certain conditions have been laid down by the Arbitration Court extending many facilities to the workers to enable them to work shorter hours and to enable further work to be carried out.

My object in rising is to advocate certain things for my electorate, but before doing so, although I am a country member and one dubbed by hon. members opposite as a Tory—which term communists attempt to apply to anyone with a fair and honest mind—I want to say one word in the interests of those who are out of employment. We know that there is a certain section in Brisbane to-day who are claiming work and assistance from the Government, and their claim is being ignored. Although we have

*Mr. Corser.]*

heard so much about what has been done during the time Labour has been in power, we know that there is a greater amount of unemployment to-day than there was in the past. These unfortunate individuals, in attempting to ventilate their grievance and to give some publicity to the actions of the Government, have distributed little leaflets; and it is only victimisation on the part of any Administration to call upon the Police Force to take the names of those who are distributing these leaflets. Whether the act of distributing those leaflets be good or bad, I say that in the interests of the community we should at least give the bottom man a fair go, and there should be no such victimisation. What might this victimisation mean? We hear lately that one individual who, when wishing to voice the claims of the unemployed of Brisbane, was told that, if he was allowed to speak and address the unemployed and the citizens of Queensland in a public highway, even though permission had been granted for the meeting, relief would be denied to his comrades. I think it must be agreed that that is a case of victimisation by a Labour Administration. I sincerely hope that no such victimisation will be brought about as to deny the right of free speech—whether for us or against us—and that the unfortunate man who is out of work will be given an opportunity of addressing his fellow men in the open street. That is the least we can give him. Whether his case be right or wrong, it is unfair for the Administration to deny him any rights and privileges which he might have of addressing a meeting.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Is the leaflet authorised?

Mr. CORSER: Yes, by "J. W. Thomas, on behalf of the Unemployment Committee."

Mr. W. COOPER: Who printed it?

Mr. CORSER: Jackson and O'Sullivan, printers, Brisbane.

Mr. RYAN: And they are unemployed!

Mr. CORSER: Does the hon. gentleman insinuate that it was paid for by anyone else? It is certain that the Government members did not pay for it.

Mr. RYAN: No—the Opposition.

Mr. CORSER: One section of the Government party might have paid for it, for there is one section that does not let the other know what it is doing at the present time; but I do not think they would offer that help. We heard "Hear, hears!" from the cross benches of the Government party and not from the front Government bench when the result of the Buranda election was announced this morning. The hon. member for Buranda is one of those who voted at the Emu Park Convention for a living wage. He is one of the men of whom the Unemployment Committee boasted. He is not one who voted for what they claim to be a starvation wage, but who voted for what they claim is a living wage of £4 5s. per week. The "Collins Government" will thus have another adherent, and it is no doubt a bit of a setback to the front Government bench. This election has proved at any rate—

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Where the Opposition are.

Mr. CORSER: That the hon. member for Buranda voted for a proposal at the Emu Park Convention which the Government claim to be an impossible one.

[Mr. Corser.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Why did your party oppose the living wage?

Mr. CORSER: Why does the hon. gentleman sit behind the Premier and his Cabinet if he thinks it is possible to give a living wage?

Mr. KERR: Because he has got a good job.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Buranda and the Assistant Minister do not agree.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I was supporting him, and that is why he got in.

Mr. CORSER: Let the hon. gentleman support what is claimed to be a living wage and he will find a solution of the trouble within his party without asking me. The hon. gentleman once told us that he could save £250,000 in the Railway Department. He is now getting nearer the position which will give him that opportunity.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: One thing is certain, and that is that I cannot politically save you.

Mr. CORSER: No, because the hon. gentleman cannot save himself. I am particularly interested in the scheme of the Government to open up the Upper Burnett. I think it was in 1917 that I moved a resolution in this House condemning the soldier settlement scheme of the Government at Beerburrum.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is pretty handy to you.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman got someone to do a thing in an underhand way, but I do it in my own way. He got someone to write a letter for him when he was frightened to do it himself.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is not frightened of you.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman's actions indicate that he is. The criticism that I passed upon the Government at that time has proved to be true. I said that the people who were going to suffer would be the soldiers taking up the land. That statement has been proved to be correct. They are the sufferers. The suffering throughout the soldier settlements is a direct result of the refusal of the Minister and the Government to take notice of practical experience when it was put forward. Even to-day we find that a boast is made that the Queensland Government have done more for the soldiers than any other Government in Australia. They have spent certain sums of money in roads and engineering, but they have not done anything for the soldiers in comparison with what has been done in the other States—

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Nonsense!

Mr. CORSER: You cannot find anything to equal the failures in soldier settlements that have occurred in the State of Queensland. It is unfortunate that the soldiers have had to suffer through the actions of this inexperienced Government.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You are a Jeremiah.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: Whether I am or not, what I predicted regarding the intended soldier settlements has come about. I predicted that they would be a loss both to the soldier settlers and to the State. The Government have boomed the supposed assistance that they have given. They have advertised throughout the

State and paid for the advertisements; but we know that in reality the unfortunate soldiers have not received the assistance at all. I sincerely hope that the Government scheme of settlement in the Upper Burnett is going to be a success.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who is making it a success?

Mr. CORSER: I hope the scheme may be broadened to the advantage of the intending settler. Up to the present time there have been allotted 650 of the 1,400 blocks that were opened some months ago. Previous to the allotment of those blocks the Treasurer made a statement in 1913 in Victoria that in catering for the settler in that area schools would be provided right away, and the Government would take the necessary steps to establish butter factories on a commercial basis in the area. Months after some of the settler had arrived I took the late Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr. Huxham, through the area of the Upper Burnett. I did this in the interests of the settlers and in the hope of securing assistance in regard to schools. In some portions of that area there are no less than forty children waiting for school accommodation. In face of the Government's claim that provision had been made in this matter, it is unfortunate that those schools have not been provided. So far behind are the Government in providing this school accommodation that we find that the Secretary for Public Instruction, in an answer to some representations made to him recently, claimed that the carrying out of certain works which had been promised with regard to schools depended upon whether public funds were available or not. Yet we have had this scheme before us for three years. Application has been made to the Department of Public Lands for a school reserve. When opening the settlement surely the Department of Public Lands could have worked in conjunction with the Department of Public Instruction and provided school reserves before the settlers arrived at all. School accommodation is now being held up because application is being made by the Department of Public Instruction to the Department of Public Lands asking that reservations be set aside in one locality at a time in the interests of the schools.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We had to borrow the money from America to provide those facilities.

Mr. CORSER: The Treasurer does not claim that. He claims that the Government had the money to bring about the opening of the Upper Burnett scheme, yet we find that the Government made no provision for the setting aside of Crown lands. I tell the Secretary for Public Instruction that no money was required from America or anywhere to provide Crown lands for schools. There is plenty of Crown land available, and only 5 acres of that land need be set aside for this purpose.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Have you been refused?

Mr. CORSER: I am appealing for greater haste in the matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you say that no land is available for schools?

Mr. CORSER: No. I have not said that. It is held up, and I have here a letter which says—

"An application has been made to

the Lands Department for a school reserve on the area described above, and the department has been requested to furnish advice as to whether a site will be granted."

That is a letter from the Department of Public Instruction on 1st August asking the Department of Public Lands if a site for a school will be granted, and this is the great Upper Burnett scheme that for years the Government have said is ready! I am not making any political appeal. I am making an appeal in the interests of the families there to-day, and some of whom have been there for six months. In some of these groups there are forty children who have been there for months ready to go to school and there is no school. When I personally took the Minister to the site, he approved of schools, and after a lot of formalities we are told that a school is approved but the carrying out of the work will depend on public funds being available. How did the money come from America if the funds are not available yet? On top of that, further delay is caused when the Department of Public Lands is being asked if a site for a school building is available?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know you are talking pure bunkum about the site.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman does not understand the extreme difficulty and privation experienced by the outside people through having the department administered so far away. I am putting in an appeal to the department to shake up the department that has to do with the providing of schools, and I want to instil into the Government the necessity of not waiting one day longer than is essential in providing schools for the new settlers who have been put on these new areas under a scheme that is supposed to have been ready for five years.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know very well there are no churches in that area yet.

Mr. CORSER: I did not know that the hon. gentleman was going to establish them. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have been to me for sites for them.

Mr. CORSER: I have been to the hon. gentleman, and asked him to make available the town sites that have been surveyed for a long time right through the Callide and the Upper Burnett and other portions.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not built yet.

Mr. CORSER: You cannot build a church or a school until you get the land for it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is plenty of land.

Mr. CORSER: I do not want to enter into a controversy with the Minister. I only want to impress upon him the necessity for providing at the earliest possible moment educational facilities for the youngsters in these new settlements. In one instance, we know that the Department of Public Instruction asked the settlers to build a temporary building and they would send up the furniture and teachers; but the settlers have not buildings sufficient to accommodate their own families in the comfort that the ordinary worker in town would require, so you cannot expect them to provide school buildings. I hope that the Minister will give these

*Mr. Corser.]*

requests for schools in these new areas his early attention. Schools are [3 p.m.] being asked for at Jambin, Bell's Creek, Prairie Vale, and Lake Pleasant in the Callide and at Mulgildee, Three Moon, near Dumbaco, Waratah, and Ceratodus, in the Upper Burnett Valley. The Minister has tacked on to my electorate, important as it has always been, this new province of the Upper Burnett and Dawson Valley. I will ask the House to assist me in my representations for new settlers in new conditions, and I will ask Ministers to help me in the Government departments. I want to see established things which are essential to the success of the electorate.

One of the earliest things which these new settlers in our scrub areas want is wire netting to keep from their crops the vermin which have been there ever since the blacks left that territory; but, when they make application to the Lands Department for netting, they find that the department has not got any. The Commonwealth Government are advancing a certain quantity of netting, but though I have put in applications, they have been refused.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:**  
By the Commonwealth Government.

**MR. CORSER:** Let the hon. gentleman listen to what I have to say; he can make his remarks afterwards; I am responsible for what I say. It is the Lands Department, and not the Commonwealth Government, which has written this letter—I am not giving the name of the settler—

“With reference to your representations on behalf of a settler on the Rannes-Monto line, relative to his application for wire netting under the Commonwealth Advances to Settlers Act, I am directed to inform you that the Minister for Lands cannot at the present stage see his way to approve of this application.”

What is the reason for that? It is because he has not got a title. Under any other Act a title would be given to a settler from the date of the license to occupy. No lease is issued under the Burnett scheme until a settler has done six months' apprenticeship on that land. During those six months he must spend his own money. He may have felled the scrub and have 40 or 50 acres available for planting, and he makes his application—as the settler I have referred to did—for wire netting to protect himself from the ravages of wallabies and other vermin, and he is turned down because he has not got a title—because he cannot sign a mortgage. As the land belongs to the Crown, why does the Crown not protect itself, as it could do, and allow the assistance granted by the Commonwealth to be made available to these settlers? Further than that, the Lands Department should provide netting for these settlers, as was always the case in the past. Under the scheme the netting should have been provided, and there is no reason why we should be depending only on Commonwealth netting when we are going in for these huge settlement schemes.

The Minister also has provision in his Act for the establishment of butter factories in the Upper Burnett and Callide districts, but up to the present there has been no move by the department in the direction of establishing them, and I want to remind the hon. gentleman of the necessity for doing so at the earliest possible moment so that

[*Mr. Corser.*]

they will be ready when the stock is available and the cream is there. It is anticipated that in this coming spring a greater number of the settlers will be in a position to supply cream to factories, and I would ask the Minister to collect information at once, select sites and draw up plans, so that everything will be in readiness to start.

We find, too, that the progress with railway construction is causing some anxiety amongst the settlers. From Rannes the railway has been constructed through to Prairie, but some of the settlers have been sent to the foot of the Dawes Range in the south, and they are anxious that they should have railway communication as soon as possible.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:** Do you think that the Burnett scheme is so good at all, and that we should close down on it?

**MR. CORSER:** I do not agree with the hon. gentleman on that. We also have the railway commenced from Monto to Rannes, but the settlers think that more push could be put into the work, and they feel that more sincerity could be shown of the Minister's desire to serve them with railways than is the case at present. I say that it is a fair thing to push on with these railways and give the settlers what it was understood they should have when the scheme was started.

The next necessity in these areas is for the creation of more justices of the peace. We know that, when advances are made to these settlers by the Government, every one of the selectors must have his mortgage signed and his signature witnessed by a justice of the peace.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** Why do you not submit names?

**MR. CORSER:** I put in a list of about twenty, and the Government gave me about three, but none of them were in the Upper Burnett. I made an appeal by way of letter that they were required in the Upper Burnett and Callide districts, which extend over a distance of 140 miles, and I submitted the names of settlers which had been given to me by the various new organisations, but not one of the settlers in the Upper Burnett was placed on the list and only one of the Callide selectors, although a week before the selection of these names I received intimation from the Chief Secretary's Department that four names of men at Mundubbera had been suggested by the local labour organisation.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION** interjected.

**MR. CORSER:** Stop braying and I will get on. Two out of the four names submitted by a Labour political organisation at Mundubbera, were placed on the list, but not one in the Upper Burnett. I ask the Minister to give this convenience to these settlers. Each of them will have to sign his mortgage to the State—a mortgage of the State's land of which he has a perpetual lease—and why ask him to go 50 or 60 miles when a distribution of justices throughout these areas would be of such great convenience and the absence of one or two more in the older towns would not be felt? The Secretary for Public Instruction is annoyed when one is endeavouring in this Chamber to emphasise the needs of people who are away out in our backblocks and far from railway communication, but I am not here

to please the Minister but to express my own opinion and the opinions of the settlers who have been placed there by the State, and to advocate those things which will help to make country life easy and the conditions of settlement more favourable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. gentleman is against the scheme.

Mr. CORSER: I have always supported the scheme for the opening of the Upper Burnett district, but there are principles in the scheme which I do not stand for in the interests of the settlers. I think the scheme should have been made easier and should have been considerably broadened. I think that the Country party's policy of giving greater facilities to the settlers and to make their conditions easier from the start would have been better. I have not entered into that controversy, but I must for the present accept the scheme as it is, and I am giving to intelligent Ministers some suggestions that might help to increase the comforts of the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley settlers. There are a number of women in that area who are not accustomed to country life. Some of them have approached me with regard to the possibility of securing bush nursing assistance. Through the kindness of the secretary of the Queensland Bush Nursing Association, Nurse Macdonald, I was able to supply them with considerable information as to the establishment of bush nursing centres from 40 to 60 miles and more from the rail head. All this depended upon financial assistance from somebody, and it is to be hoped that whilst the settlement scheme does not provide for bush nursing centres, a subsidy in this direction will be provided by the Government when applications are made. We have in our cities baby clinics, hospitals, maternity homes, and assistance by ambulances, but nothing is provided in the Burnett scheme for rendering the same kind of assistance in that area.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Money was provided last year for bush nursing.

Mr. CORSER: Again I say that there was no money provided under the Upper Burnett-Callide Valley settlement scheme for bush nursing centres or any such facilities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There will be.

Mr. CORSER: Let us have them now. The Burnett Ambulance Brigade is certainly doing its best to bring comfort to those people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Government propose a scheme in the hon. gentleman's electorate, and he wishes to take all the credit for it.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman has just said I was against the scheme. I am trying to obtain benefits for those who have settled there, and I want to do my best for them without creating any hostility. Those settlers have to look to the Government for financial assistance to enable them to proceed with improvements on their land. Last year a Bill was rushed through to make it possible to advance to each settler a sum of £1,700 instead of £1,200, as was the case under the old law. Although it was rushed through, and although it was claimed by the Opposition on that occasion that it would be far better to advance the full £1,200 than to provide a sum which the settlers were not likely to get, that Agricultural Bank Act has

not yet become law. The present Act is a good one, but we want it more leniently administered. The regulations under the Act do not give the greatest beneficial results to the settler. Another thing which tempted the settlers to go on the Upper Burnett land was the provision enabling a landholder to apply for an advance of £200 without any security under the Co-operation Advances Act, provided that he did not own more than a minimum number of stock. The regulations under the Act provide that security must be found. The Upper Burnett settlers who have made application under the Act have for the most part been refused any assistance at all on stock. Some of the settlers have been asked to secure from private people the loan of some cattle or to purchase cattle on terms. Several of them have done so, and they now want an advance to pay for these cattle. I am only bringing this matter before the Minister in order that he may put out of operation the regulations which are preventing this Act of Parliament from being administered as leniently as Parliament decided it should be. Security has been demanded. The land that the settlers under the Upper Burnett scheme selected was said to be first quality land, and the areas were said to be living areas.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Is it not first quality land?

Mr. CORSER: Some of the land is the best in the State. I was stating that the land was claimed by the Government to be of first quality and the areas to be living areas; yet they are not making the advances to the settlers in those areas that the Act intended should be made. We know that in the past applications for advances have been turned down because the land was not worth it, or because the area was not a living one, or because no water supply was available on the land, or because the settler was not suitable. Those reasons should not exist in the Upper Burnett scheme, because the Government have administered the whole of it. Why then are not the Acts on the statute-book being made available to the settlers? Assistance in the earliest portion of the life of a settler is the very best assistance that can be given. It is far better to assist a settler to-day than to keep him waiting for five years. Early assistance will enable a settler to convert his selection from an unproductive to a productive one, to purchase implements and horse power to convey produce to the factory and thus keep the flour bag full, to improve his farm, and to make life more comfortable. We should not be too hard on the settler by not providing sufficient money to enable him to build a home. We know that the Workers' Homes Act contains lenient provisions which are commendable, but in the administration of the Advances to Settlers Act the same leniency is not shown to enable the settler to enjoy the comfort of a home. There are many cases of workers receiving advances of £500 with which to build a home. I have letters from settlers in the Upper Burnett who have applied for an advance of £50 to improve their holdings and been offered £32. Why should we not provide a scheme to enable them to have a comfortable home so that the children should grow up in the comfort that homes should have? I appeal to the Government with all hope to liberalise these regulations so that the settlers will have the assistance that Parliament claimed was essential for their good. I sincerely hope that

*Mr. Corser.]*

the remarks I have made with regard to the Upper Burnett are going to be taken in the spirit in which they have been made, and that these people and those who come after them in this huge Upper Burnett scheme are going to get full benefit by it. We know that the Minister has claimed that 1,400 blocks are open and another 1,400 blocks are promised to be opened about the end of this year: so the scheme is assuming some proportions. Whilst the settlers are being selected let us see that we assist them to remain there and make the scheme a good one for the State and the people who have gone there.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I have a few grievances which I would like to ventilate on this occasion. My chief grievance is the improvidence of the Government in the past. I sincerely trust that, when money becomes more plentiful, it will be spent more carefully by the Government than has been the case in the past. I have only to look round each week when coming down to this House to see some very glaring instances of the improvidence of the Government staring me in the face. The first one to be seen is in Toowoomba, and is known as "Brennan's Folly." (Laughter.) The other day we received information that something like £74,000 has been spent in making a loop for one portion of the railway line adjacent to Toowoomba, somewhere around where the Secretary for Public Instruction has his electorate. So far as I can see, the whole of the earthworks are going to pieces. We have what in the future might turn out to be a very nice tennis court or cricket pitch. The buildings may be erected in the sweet by-and-bye. At the same time we find that the old engine sheds are being patched up time after time, notwithstanding the expenditure of this £74,000. This work has taken about four years so far as it has progressed. The only time that you ever see a stir there is just before an election.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about the Drayton deviation? It took seventeen years.

Mr. VOWLES: It was completed. I say that the £74,000 of capital which is lying idle on what is known as "Brennan's Folly" is a disgrace to any Government. It will take another £74,000 to put the buildings there—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It will take more—about £250,000.

Mr. VOWLES: If the hon. gentleman says that, I venture to say that it will cost about £500,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: A good job, too.

Mr. VOWLES: Is it a fair thing to have £74,000 lying idle for four years without any interest or use of any kind except during elections?

Again, talking of improvidence, look at what is going on in regard to the Tara line. Previous to last election a host of men were taken into that electorate. Those men were put on the roll, booths were erected all along the line, and the men were compelled to vote whether they liked it or not. They had a holiday, of course. Since the election the number of men has dwindled down, and is now practically negligible. After all these months—I think it goes back two years—the whole practical result of that work is 6½ miles of additional rails laid and going nowhere in particular—rails which

one could make no use of. That is not good business, and it is due to this House to avoid that sort of thing in the future.

Again, coming down to Brisbane by rail, we find in the vicinity of Ipswich something like £100,000 being spent on the erection of a new railway station. That capital is lying idle. I venture to say that in these three items we have nearly £350,000 worth of non-productive capital for which we are paying interest on borrowed American money at the rate of 6½ per cent. or 7 per cent. This is the time when these matters should be dealt with by the Government. We have been told in effect that the Government are going to mend their ways, and that they are going to live within their means; but, if the Government are going to spend money, it is a matter of indifference whether it is a large sum or a small sum, unless they see that they get proper value for the money expended. That is why the Government have accumulated such big amounts on account of loan money, and why the public of Queensland are asked to pay such enormous extra taxation to pay the interest on these moneys that have been unwisely expended.

Looking through the regulations that have been circulated since this House met, I find that hon. members will have to be very careful and watch regulations when they go through. It has already been pointed out that, by virtue of one Act, other Acts are being amended by regulation. I find that the Land Act is being amended by regulation passed under the Sugar Workers' Perpetual Lease Selections Act. The fact is that, whereas under the Land Act the rental on perpetual leases was limited to 1½ per cent., by virtue of these regulations which are superseding an Act of Parliament, the rental has been increased to 5 per cent. That is very significant. The Government may have a reason for it. It may mean that the money invested in this particular way is paying a higher rate of interest. If that is the reason, why not say straight out that it is so, and alter the original Act. The reason I mention the matter is this: On Jimbour, which is in the district I represent, there is a large number of selectors who hold perpetual leases. The Jimbour Selections Act has been repealed, and the settlers now come under the Land Act. By this amendment the Land Board has the power for the second term to increase the rental value from 1½ per cent. up to 5 per cent., and, if there is an indication from the Government by altering other Acts of Parliament by regulation to increase the rental up to a definite 5 per cent., all I can say is that it will be an indication to the Land Court that the Government desires that the 5 per cent. should be charged. If that is done, the rental will become absolutely prohibitive. It is based at present on a fictitious capital value, but on account of the rate being small it is not as oppressive as it might be; but, if it is going to be increased, not one selector will be able to carry on under the increased rental.

I notice, too, that under the Workers' Accommodation Act it is necessary for an employer to provide a veranda space of 5 feet by 7 feet for every man.

Mr. POLLOCK: Not in all places.

Mr. VOWLES: As I read it, that is so.

Mr. POLLOCK: It applies mostly to the Downs, where it is necessary to have the accommodation.

[*Mr. Corser.*

Mr. VOWLES: I do not say the Act is carried out in every direction, but, according to the regulations so much space must be allowed for each person living in the place. If this is good for the worker, why should it not also be good for the school children on the Downs? I have an instance at Milmerran. I was down there with the late Secretary for Public Instruction when he opened the new Milmerran State school, and the accommodation that was provided in that new school, as they term it, was not sufficient for 75 per cent. of the children attending the school, and, so far as veranda accommodation is concerned, instead of having a space 5 feet by 7 feet, there is a space of about 5 inches by 7 inches. I suppose the reason is because the children have no vote, but I hope they will remember these things in the future.

Reference was made previously by one hon. member to the want of sympathy on the part of Ministers we have had in the Department of Public Instruction towards the children in the country. It is all very well for Ministers to tell us that children

[3.30 p.m.] in the country are getting a high education by means of correspondence circulars which are sent round in cases where there are not sufficient of them to form a school. I admit that that is better than nothing, but you have to realise that in country districts—more particularly in farming and dairying districts—two things have to be taken into consideration in the children's interests. The first is that the parents have the capacity and education to teach their children, and secondly that they have the time. From what I have seen, after the day's work is done under bad conditions—and particularly in view of the prices that are being received for their produce—the hours are so long that the parents are dog-tired when the day is over. It is not an 8-hour day with them; it is nearer to an 18-hour day. They neither have the time nor in many cases the ability to teach their children under this system. I say that, whenever the numbers approach a reasonable thing, the department should supply the necessary instruction, because if they do not do so, they are depriving those children of the very best asset that any Australian can have. We have a good system of education here, and that system should be open to the children in the country as well as to the children in the towns. (Hear, hear!)

Reference has been made to the State Advances Department. I do not know what is wrong with that department. There seems to be a good deal of sympathy expressed by the heads of the department when applications come along, but for some unknown reason the money never seems to be available. If we are going to have a State Advances Department, we should have a real live one. You only have to look at the transactions going through to find that on every occasion a selector can be compelled to refund any portion of his principal if he sells. If "A" wants to transfer to "B," the first question is, "How much money are you getting?" We want a portion of it. You must reduce the debt by that amount." It appears to me that the only funds which the department has to carry on with are the quarterly or half-yearly payments which come in from their various accounts, and the amounts they can get on transfers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You can see how much we spent last year by looking at the Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: I know how many applications were turned down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I can assure you we exceeded the Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: We want to develop Queensland, and not to retard it. We ask people to go on the land, and the Government come out with a programme and say they are offering every inducement. They even advertised at one time in the old country what a wonderful system they had here in connection with the State Bank. If men are induced to come and select and put their little capital into the undertaking, it should be on the understanding that, when they have done certain classes of work, they will get as a matter of right certain funds from the Government to help them. Then there is a moral responsibility on the part of the Government to supply those funds to these settlers if they are suitable persons. I regret to say that has not been done in connection with ordinary settlers, nor has it been done as far as soldier settlers are concerned.

I would like the Secretary for Public Lands to take into consideration a request recently made to him by the soldier settlers on Cecil Plains. I have previously referred to this matter when discussing grievances on the Lands Estimates; I have made requests to the late Minister by letter, and so have the settlers; and promises have been made by the Minister that he would visit the settlement and judge the cases on their merits. A similar request is now being made to the present Minister. The settlers are asking that the arrears of rent which they owe should be funded—they are not asking to be let off—or tacked on to their liabilities at the end of the term, in order that they may be placed in a better position than they are to-day and so may be able to carry on. I hope that, when the Secretary for Public Lands gets the petition—I have already received it—he will have an inspection and report made and go into the whole thing himself. I think he will find the representations made are genuine—I know no more thrifty lot of settlers—and I sincerely hope that he will meet their request when he gets the opportunity.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I suppose that not even the most ardent admirer of the Government, whether in the House or outside, would for one moment say that the money appropriations to which we have agreed in the past have been rightly spent. The ardent desire of individuals both here and outside, when it comes to spending the people's money, must surely be in the direction of having it rightly expended, in a way which will mean the development of enterprise, the helping of our industries, the creation of employment. Yet I take it that no man here can possibly justify the actions of the Government heretofore. At any rate, the sequel of the whole thing is bad. After having spent millions and millions of money almost beyond count, there is a state of unrest everywhere, unemployment is more rife, and consequently one's anxiety becomes more acute than ever. It is therefore all the more necessary that in consenting to the expenditure of money we should proceed towards the ideals which the people and the Government of any country should have in view. I take it that,

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

when the appropriation of public money is going to help the consolidation of settlement and the encouragement of enterprise and the absorption of the unemployment, then it will receive the blessing of every man on this side of the House. We have just listened to a speech by the hon. member for Dalby which indicates a very serious and shocking expenditure of public money upon one item alone. If the £74,000 to which he referred had been expended in other directions, employment would have followed, the country would have been developed, the trade of the State would have been fostered, and generally speaking a degree of prosperity would have ensued.

I have in mind the extension of the railway line from Dirranbandi over the Moonie River—a line which should have been proceeded with years and years ago. I think that the expenditure in connection with that railway amounted to something over £100,000. The late Mr. Thallon, when Commissioner for Railways, pointed out that a railway going into that area would secure an enormous amount of trade for Queensland, and he became very enthusiastic over it. That trade would have been secured to Queensland, to which State it belongs, if £74,000 or £100,000 had been expended. That is where expenditure of the public money concerns this House. If the money is wisely expended, then it is going to bring in a return; but, if it is unwisely expended, then the work on which it is expended simply becomes a white elephant. It is unwise to expend money in a certain direction unless the Government are prepared to carry the work to a completion. What we do want in connection with our expenditure is to see that it is going to bring in a return that will help to pay the interest on the money expended. I very earnestly urge that in considering our appropriations we should link up and build railways along the border of Queensland which will conserve to Queensland the trade of Queensland, and will benefit the State to a very large extent.

Let me now deal with the question of the erection of public buildings. The intense interest in regard to building generally seems to be in the city. If there is anything in this world that is disturbing the man in the country at present, it is that endless improvements are going on in the city, whilst the country is being neglected completely. I know that hundreds of thousands of pounds are being expended in the city, and, no matter how much you urge, you cannot get sufficient money to build a small veranda on a school in the country or sufficient money to paint a building fast going into decay. We have country people pointing this out, and it is having a tremendously disturbing influence in the country; and, unless the Government of the day turn their attention in connection with appropriation of money to the painting and building up of country centres and the development of the country generally, then they must expect dissatisfaction to rule everywhere. What applies within the compass of my own views applies everywhere, and does not apply to this State alone. It applies everywhere. The time has come when the earnest attention of the Legislature must be given to consideration of those things that lead to the development of the country, and then the development of the cities will take place afterwards. If the Government do not do that and thus

[Mr. G. P. Barnes,

retain such trade as I have just referred to, then they cannot have enterprises started in the greater centres, nor can they hope for reward for the individuals who want employment on the land.

Mr. HARTLEY: What does the hon. gentleman suggest should be done that the Government have not already done?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If the hon. gentleman had been listening to me, he would have heard me pointing out that the Government have done the things which they ought not to have done, and he would have been told of something that they should have done. Because of a number of things that they have done which they ought not to have done, they are staggering the community.

Mr. HARTLEY: Tell us something we ought to do.

Mr. MAXWELL: Abolish the State enterprises.

Mr. HARTLEY: I know what we ought to do—stop your middlemen charging the prices you do.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What is the Commissioner for Prices doing?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. member for Fitzroy seems very much disturbed about the middleman, but I could very well entertain the House this afternoon by pointing out that the middlemen have served the country better than the Government which the hon. member supports.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, you could not.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: All the arch exploiters in the State are to be found on the Government side.

Mr. HARTLEY: We ought to deport all agricultural agents.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The chickens are coming home to roost. I see that the Secretary for Agriculture has just entered the chamber, and that reminds and forces me to compare matters about ten years ago, when the cry of the party opposite was for cheap beef, butter, bread, and so on, with to-day. Apparently they missed the path. They have got away from the conditions on which they got into power. Only yesterday the Secretary for Agriculture was approached by a deputation and asked to make cheap certain articles of production. He wisely replied to that deputation. It is like a boomerang. The boomerang has come back and lodged at his feet. Certainly after going through a course of making butter, beef, and bread very cheap the Government turned their attention to the man on the land to see what they could do for him. Now, having given him his turn, the boomerang has returned again to their feet.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you ever hear me in this Chamber agitate for cheap land, cheap food, or anything cheap.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am not quite sure that I have, but I do know that the hon. gentleman has been a most ardent supporter of many who have advocated a cheap article. He cannot deny it. I do him this honour, that he has certainly conceived the idea of striving to serve the man on the land, but he realised, as he did yesterday, the extreme impossibility of his position. I feel sorry for him. A man cannot move two ways.



The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is what I have always said in this Chamber—that it is impossible to serve the middleman and the farmer. (Government laughter.)

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am afraid that the hon. gentleman, with all his good intentions to serve the farmer, has proved most expensive. I do not know of any man who has been more influential in the direction of exploiting the man on the land than the hon. gentleman.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You forget yourself.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am not forgetting myself. Now that I have been drawn off the track—I know what I am talking about—will the Minister tell the House that he is satisfied that the owners of wheat in the years 1920 and 1921—and I was as warm a supporter of the wheat pool as any man in this House—got full value when the Government gave a guarantee of 9s. a bushel for wheat, and they only got 8s.?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Since this Government came into power the wheat farmer has got a fair deal.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They did not get a fair deal. I will go further—and this is more to the point: The men who had No. 2 milling wheat received 5s. 7d. a bushel, and those who had No. 3 received 4s. 10d. Will the hon. gentleman tell me that when the price of wheat was 9s. a bushel the man who got 5s. 7d. for No. 2 wheat got a fair thing? My belief is that he did not. The thing is an outrage. To think that with a protection up to 9s. a bushel a man who had wheat worth within 3d. a bushel of prime wheat got only 5s. 7d.! If the hon. gentleman will say that those men got a fair deal, I will sit down immediately.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They got a fair deal.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They did not. It was the most shocking bit of exploiting that I know of. I can readily prove that the owners of wheat of fair average quality certainly lost no less than £100,000 as a result of the management of the Wheat Board of that day.

Mr. HARTLEY: There would have been no difference under your Government.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I know what I am talking about. I am satisfied with the Minister because he is a practical man.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Do you really think he is a practical man?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Well, I did think so. When a man has wheat worth within 3d. a bushel of the price for prime wheat, and he gets 2s. 5d. a bushel less, he is not getting a fair deal. This is a question upon which I am at home.

The deputation which interviewed the Secretary for Agriculture yesterday appealed for cheaper bread. Why? The Secretary for Agriculture and the Government are aware of the reason. How did they exploit the man on the land—the people in the country? Can anyone explain why wheat should be worth 6s. 4d. in the country and 7½d. less when delivered in Brisbane? Why should a higher price be fixed upon the article in the country than in the city? Can

anyone explain why the consumers outside were exploited to a great extent, because every 1d. a bushel means 4s. in the ton of flour, and, if you multiply that by 7½, you arrive at £1 11s. a ton? If the farmers gained in the end, I could understand it, but that is not so. This is what happened. That very year 1922-23, when that kind of thing was done and when there was not enough wheat in the land for the people, 1,000,000 bushels of wheat were exported and 1,000,000 bushels of wheat imported. The result was that the wheat sold abroad netted to the farmer some 2s. a bushel less than the pool demanded for it in Queensland. Had that wheat been sold at a fair price the consumer, on the one hand, would have got a cheaper loaf, and the farmer, on the other hand, a better price.

I now want to say a word in regard to taxation, and I am extremely anxious to know whether the Treasurer will be able to follow the good example of the other States, and whether he will be able to indicate to the House and to the country that there is likely to be a reduction in taxation. The Federal Government have set a very fine example in that regard. They are reducing taxation by something like £2,000,000, and the incidence of that reduction is going to be very widespread.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Whom is the tax falling on through the Customs? It is falling on those least able to bear it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If I understand rightly what is being done by the Federal Government, they are relieving the people of a very large amount of direct taxation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, and they are getting huge sums through the Customs.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The amount they are getting through the Customs is certainly a very large sum, and that is paid by the people generally; but direct taxation is being reduced to a very considerable extent. All persons receiving net incomes up to £1,200, or 95 per cent. of the taxpayers, will benefit through the raising of the exemption from £200 to £300. Persons numbering 260,000 will be relieved altogether of the payment of income tax, and 180,000 others will obtain a reduction of taxation. The tax on incomes generally will be reduced by 10 per cent. This will benefit 200,000 taxpayers. Then there is another point which is worthy of note. The profit on gold mining is to be exempted from income tax until the whole of the working capital invested in the industry has been returned to the owners. That is a very wise thing to do. I think one hon. member this morning advocated that persons engaging in new industries should be exempt from taxation for a number of years. That is a thing that should receive consideration. In the matter of income tax we should follow the English example as far as we can. In England, a man with a family escapes taxation to a large extent. A man with a wife and family pays less than a single man, because the former is presumed to have more family charges on his income. For the same reason a married man with no children pays less than a single man. A single man earning £250 a year must pay £10 2s. 6d. income tax, whilst a married man with no children receiving a similar income pays nothing. A single man with an income of £500 a year is called upon to pay £45 11s. 3d. in income tax.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

A married man without a family earning £500 a year pays £25 6s. 3d., while a married couple with three children drawing the same income pays £15 3s. 9d.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Work out what a man with five or six children pays in taxation through the Customs Department.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES: A very considerable sum. We are living in a protected country, and if we are to develop our industries and create new enterprises, we must protect the industries of the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You must remember that the Commonwealth Government have sole control of the tariff duties.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: One must concede that the Commonwealth Government have the means of raising revenue, and it is one of the regrets of members of State Parliaments that that source of revenue has gone from us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Instead of being a protective tariff, it has become a huge revenue tariff.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes; but on the other hand you cannot pay the high wages ruling in industries now without that high tariff.

I am hopeful that the Premier may be able to indicate whether his Government are likely to participate in connection with the amounts which will be forthcoming under the British migration scheme. It is said that some £34,000,000 is going to be distributed in that way. Are the Government so concerned in settlement generally—I judge by the Premier's remarks that he is interested in the matter—that they are going to participate in this scheme? It seems to me that in these days of stringency, when the raising of money is going to be a growing difficulty, we should participate to the fullest extent in any scheme that may be forthcoming.

There is another thing which is very pertinent to the man on the land, and that is the rural credit savings bank proposal which has been introduced by the Federal Government. We have lost our Government Savings Bank, and are not able to manage our own affairs in connection with moneys forthcoming in that direction as we were at one time. Seeing the Government Savings Bank is going to be concerned with the rural credit bank system, it will be interesting to know how the Government are going to be influenced, in view of the fact that they have the right to utilise 70 per cent. of the deposits of the Government Savings Bank in different directions on their own account. We want to give all the attention we possibly can to this rural credit business. I have just turned up a speech that I made in 1920, when the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Bill was before the House. At that time I advocated very strongly that the savings bank deposits in the country districts should be made available for expenditure in the district in which the money was deposited. You can see what a very fine thing that would be. If money deposited in country centres was made available for the farmers and local authorities in those centres at a low rate of interest, it can be easily seen what a great development would take place.

Mr. BULCOCK: How would newly settled districts get on under a scheme of that kind?

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The revenue would come from those interested in the district. At any rate, the Government are coming round to my way of thinking, and surely nobody could be more interested in the right use of money than the man who puts it into a savings bank. Why, his interests would be increased by the development of the country round about, due to the expenditure which had taken place as a result of the investment of his money. During the discussion of the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Bill, I said:—

“I feel I would like to say something on this matter. I believe that the idea is to centralise things, so to speak. I differ entirely from such an objective, because I believe that if the people are to be served as faithfully as they should be served in the direction referred to by the leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Dalby, just now, of helping development and the advancement of the State, we should aim at decentralisation in the application of moneys which come into the various savings banks of the State. I tried to find out during the elections the amount which came in to the Savings Bank at Warwick. The figures were not available, but I did ascertain that in 1915 the sum of £155,000 over and above withdrawals was retained there. I found, further, that over the whole period of seventeen years the total sum made available from the Savings Bank to the town and district of Warwick was only £45,000. I contend that a moiety of the amounts deposited in the various Savings Banks centres should be made available for the development of those respective districts. I know that there is a scheme for a rural bank; but I want to know whether a scheme of that kind will receive due protection when the Bill is before the House. I maintain that if in these days of the dearth and dearth of money we are to consider the true development of our country we must use the moneys that are immediately at hand. I maintain that no community has a better right to first consideration in the allotment of the funds of that community than the depositors themselves. I listened to the Premier yesterday, and he delivered himself in some respects in a way which met with the high approval of members of this side of the House. He referred, for instance, to irrigation. Why should not a moiety of the funds coming into the Warwick Savings Bank be made available for the development of a scheme such as he hinted at yesterday as being one of the great developmental schemes of the State? (Hear, hear!) I think the House should demand from the Minister information as to whether, in the direction to which I have referred, full protection is going to be given to the requirements that may arise in special districts. I consider that we would be giving effective attention to the matter if we secured from the Minister a promise that at least a moiety of the moneys coming into the various centres of the State would be applied in the way I have indicated.”

I also made a speech on the same matter, reported on page 236 of the same volume of “Hansard,” and it is rather interesting

to find that the trend of things after four years is following along the identical lines which I urged the House to take in the interests of the man on the land. This course is more urgent now than ever, and it would be extremely enlightening if the Premier delivered himself to some extent on the question.

At 4.19 p.m.,

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

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I admit that the Government were elected on certain promises and received their instructions at the Emu Park Convention in connection with certain legislation, but I am particularly glad that they have decided that some of that legislation is impossible and have more or less put the plug in. They have let up on the Land Act Amendment Act, and I am hoping that that is a forerunner of a further letting up on their instructions. I am hoping that they are going to see the error of their ways in regard to perpetual leasehold, and that they will let up on that, because they will help in the development of the State. Sooner or later they will have to abandon that principle in the interests of the people in the country, and I am hoping that it will not be long before they do so. Before the Government are granted this sum of money it is just as well to impress upon them that, notwithstanding the huge resources of Queensland, development is not taking place to the extent that it should.

The other day, when speaking of the Brisbane Valley line, I pointed out that there was a loss of about £40,000 per annum on the running of that line, and I pointed out that, if there was an alteration in certain grades and curves, that loss might be saved. I pointed out that, if there was an expenditure amounting to what now represents one year's loss, instead of that line being run at a loss year after year, as is the case now, it might possibly be made a paying concern. That line carries as much traffic as the engines are capable of drawing. It was very noticeable during the past holiday week that about 700 or 900 people from Yarraman and the vicinity visited Brisbane to view the festivities and travelled down by motor car. If you had 700 or 900 people travelling by rail, the finances on that line would be considerably improved. With the present conditions of travelling on that line it is only to be expected that the people will avoid travelling on that line if they can do so. I daresay that next year, instead of 700 or 900 people travelling by car, the number will be increased to well over 1,000.

The hon. member for Dalby made some reference to the expenditure on the new Ipswich Railway Station. I would like to emphasise his remarks by stating that I think it is a calamity for a Government to allow the railways to be run in such a way as to have a very large sum of money practically idle in a structure a very short distance from the present Ipswich Railway Station. It might just as well be put out of sight for all the good that the money is doing at the present time. If one would only have a look through the Ipswich railway refreshment-room and the kitchen where the employees are asked to cook and prepare foodstuffs for the travelling public, I think they would agree that it is a crying shame to have such dirty and dilapidated premises in a city the size of Ipswich. I am mention-

ing this particularly because quite a number of people travel from the top end of my electorate. They are ten hours in a train, which averages about 10 miles an hour. They arrive at Ipswich, and have to take the food that is prepared for them there. The room in which it is served has the most miserable accommodation possible. Women travelling with children have not room to stand even along the bar, if there are several of them. It is time that something was done to build a new station and provide decent accommodation for the public at such an important centre as Ipswich. Yarraman has become a little town. It has grown to a certain extent, but since there has been a dearth of freehold land in its vicinity the banks there are not favourably disposed to consider the prospects of that locality unless some further freehold land can be opened for selection, or unless they can at least be assured of the likelihood of the Government making some alteration in their forestry policy as regards that locality. A number of selectors established there are in a very precarious predicament, and at the present time are being forced to realise on their furniture and homes at a particularly low rate. A number of the men in that locality, including lengthsmen, are anxious to get advances under the Advances to Settlers Act or from the Corporation that is going to take over that business. Many of the settlers have continued working for the improvement of their land and are continuing to-day in the expectation of receiving this monetary assistance; but so far very little of such assistance has been forthcoming. The Secretary for Public Lands interjected early in the afternoon that the expenditure under that head had very greatly increased. The expenditure under this head should very greatly increase, because it is one of the Acts which should be a potent force in the future development of the State. Many of the men right along this valley are working to-day in the hope that to-morrow—and a very early to-morrow—they will receive assistance. Quite a number of these men have been dependent for the last few years on stock that have been loaned to them. They were on the land when rain came, and, although they had very good feed, they were unable to purchase stock. Some of the residents in the locality loaned stock to them, and they are working on that loaned stock at the present time. When the Advances to Settlers Bill was going through this Chamber I got an assurance that it would not be long after it was passed before it would be put into operation, and that some good would accrue directly to the settlers expecting assistance. Although that Bill was passed a considerable time ago, we find that very many of the applications put before the Advances to Settlers Corporation are hung up simply through want of funds.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true. If the hon. member is referring to the Burnett scheme, funds are available.

Mr. NOTT: I only hope that the hon. gentleman's interjection that funds are available is correct, and I hope that those funds will be made available immediately. I know there are many people particularly anxious to be kept going by an advance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am only referring to the Burnett scheme.

Mr. NOTT: The Burnett is not the only place in Queensland. Other places are just

*Mr. Nott.]*

as important. The Government would have had a great deal more value for their money had they taken the trouble to look for land adjacent to the existing railway system and developed that land before embarking on the Burnett scheme.

There is one thing that happened quite recently that sticks in my gizzard somewhat. Quite recently the Secretary for Public Lands spoke on the financial position, and explained that the inflated currency did not injure trade, and so on. In that I thoroughly agree with him.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** It does not injure trade to the extent that it does salaries.

**MR. NOTT:** I know that we as a State will have to pay increased interest on the money that has been borrowed. It has been indicated that this increase is not to be obtained by way of taxation, but by an increase in freights. I think that imposition on the freights throughout Queensland is particularly irksome and very unjust to the people living away from the cities, because it is making a direct charge on those people who are developing the country. It will hurt farmers, timber-getters, and other workers established some distance from the metropolis. Those are the people who will directly pay this increased cost. Seeing that the Government have been claiming that they have done everything to assist the man outside of the metropolis, it is strange that at their very first opportunity they make those people pay an extra £300,000 or £400,000 per annum. I contend that it is not altogether just that the increased cost should be met by way of an increase in freights instead of by some other method whereby the people living in the cities would contribute to a much greater extent than they are at present likely to do.

At 4.25 p.m.,

The **SPEAKER** resumed the chair

**MR. EDWARDS (Nanango):** I wish first of all to complain of the lack of interest shown by Ministers in the discussion that has taken place to-day. It is deplorable to see the attitude of Ministers in connection with the important matters brought before them during such a discussion as we have had this day. To-day practically the only Minister who has taken any interest in the proceedings has been the Secretary for Public Lands, and many of the huge mistakes that have occurred during the last few years have been largely caused through the lack of interest on the part of Ministers in the discussions that take place in this House. There is no doubt that on several occasions very important matters have been discussed by members on this side of the House, but they have been treated with contempt by Ministers of the Crown, with the result that at the present time Queensland finds itself in a most deplorable condition from the financial point of view as well as from many other points of view. I hope that from this out Ministers will take more notice of men who have had practical experience, and who realise the urgent necessity there is for assistance being given to outback settlers and people who are struggling on the land to-day.

I want to bring before the notice of hon. members the unfortunate position, from a railway point of view, that the people of Southern Burnett are placed in. For years

past the necessity of having the connecting links between the Brisbane Valley line and the Southern Burnett, and between the Downs and the Southern Burnett, have been brought before the Government, but so far nothing has been done. While I agree with other hon. members that the time has come when we should go into the railway construction policy very carefully indeed before miles of railways are built under the present non-paying system, yet I still believe that these links are absolutely necessary, not only in the interests of the settlers who are struggling miles away from a seaport and from their principal market, but they are necessary also for the economic working of the railways. The very matter that was mentioned by the hon. member for Stanley in regard to the slow running of the train from Yarraman Creek to Ipswich proves the necessity for the link between Nanango and Yarraman Creek. If the Government were to construct that link, which is so urgent in the interests of the economic running of the railways, it would bring the people of the Southern Burnett 100 miles closer to their market, and it would be doing a big thing in the interests of the railways of Queensland. The same thing applies to the link connecting the Southern Burnett with the Downs. At the present time railway freight has to be paid for 225 miles from Nanango to Brisbane, whereas, if that link were constructed, they could get to Brisbane in a little over 100 miles. The increased rate that has just been imposed by the Government is not going to make it any better for the settlers in those areas. The same remarks apply in a larger way in regard to produce sent from the Southern Burnett to the Southern Railway line. At the present time this produce has to be railled 326 miles from Nanango to Toowoomba, whereas it is only 100 miles across country, and if these two links were constructed, it would make the position a great deal better for the settlers in those districts and assist in the economic working of the railways. I hope the Government will seriously take these matters into consideration. Before I leave the

[4.30 p.m.] railways I want to point out that, if the Government had taken notice of what the Opposition said some years ago in connection with the workings of the railways, they would not have had to increase the fares and freights, the burden of which will have to be borne by the people in the country districts. That is a matter which has been brought up on this side of the House over and over again. We have repeatedly told the Government that the railways should have been run under different conditions, and that greater consideration should have been given to settlers along existing railways so that they could produce greater quantities of produce for conveyance on the lines. There would not then have been the loss on the working of the railways which has taken place.

There is another matter I wish to refer to. The Premier has been told from this side of the House a score of times that he would ultimately come to the position to which he came recently in London in connection with the loans. That is a real grievance on the part of members on this side. We told the Premier in 1920, when the loan was turned down in London and he had to go to America, that he would eventually have to come to the present position and that he would have practically to repudiate the legislation then brought in, which he has done to-day. I am not blaming

[*Mr. Nott.*]

the hon. gentleman for doing that, as I think he did the only thing possible under the circumstances; but in the interests of Queensland we can justly blame the Government that it was not done years ago—that the credit of this State was not maintained, and that private money was not allowed to flow into the State for development purposes. It would not only have been better for the producers and business men, but it would have been a thousand times better for the working men in connection with the establishment of secondary industries and in other ways. There has been a diminution in the investment of private money in this State for a number of years, and that has been detrimental. It is to be hoped that the Premier and the Secretary for Public Lands will take a firm stand and see that there is no interference with investors, and that every encouragement is given to private capital in the starting of secondary industries, so that the primary producers who are battling in Queensland can get a better market for their products.

The matter of country schools has been mentioned this afternoon and on previous occasions. It is unfortunate that the Government do not take greater interest in these matters when they are brought before them from time to time. While the people in the country districts are getting some assistance from the Government from an educational point of view, they are not getting the same deal as city people are getting. That is natural when we remember that where people are combined together in great numbers they can get greater facilities. Every consideration should, however, be given to the settlers on the land in the way of schools. In many of the country districts the schools are in a dilapidated condition, having gone for fifteen to twenty years without repair. The argument that a school should not be built in a given country district because the population may be shifting away is so much rot, because it is not a great deal of trouble to build a school which can be hooked on to a bullock team and dragged to some other place if the department finds that the attendance is not up to the standard. I hope that in the near future the Government will wake up to the position, and not merely declare that a school shall be built, but also build it and see that the country children get a fairer and a squarer deal than in the past, so that they will be put more on an equal footing with the city and town children.

I want to say just a few words about soldier settlement, although it has been brought up here on many occasions. I am not going to criticise the Government for what has been done—they have been criticised enough, and the Secretary for Public Lands blushes almost every time we mention the subject—but I want to say that the soldiers who are on the land and are trying to make good should not be let down by the Government. I hope that every assistance will be given to them, and that because some settlers who have not come up to the standard have not been able to carry on, those who are left on the land will not be denied any consideration that can be given to them.

Let me air my grievances in connection with the Agricultural Bank Act, which we have been talking about for years. As someone who knows something about agriculture and the pioneering part of it, I believe that

that Act is the only legislation which is going really to develop the backblocks of Queensland. We have asked for an agricultural bank for years—for something which would give immediate assistance to settlers—and in 1923 the Government came forward with an Agricultural Bank Bill, which practically did away with the State Advances Corporation and the Co-operative Production and Advances to Farmers Act, and we naturally thought that what we wanted was going to be realised. But twelve months have gone, and we still have no agricultural bank. I would ask the Secretary for Public Lands, as one who is interested in the land settlement of Queensland, to use his influence, not only to have the Act brought into operation at once, but—what is more important—to see that money is made available immediately for those people who desire it in order to enable them to carry on. A lot of the handicaps upon the agriculturist could be removed if you gave him a fair and honest deal in financing him. If it were possible in the interests of the State, I would get rid of the State enterprises to which the Government have been hanging on and put the money into the agricultural bank or some such institution by which the settlers could be financed, and then leave them alone to work out their own destinies. The better part of people, whether agriculturists or industrial workers, can well be left alone to work out their destinies in the interests of themselves, their families, and the State. The agriculturists are not getting the assistance they should at present, although the officials are doing everything they possibly can. Applications are hung up for months and months for no other reason, to my mind, than the lack of funds. As one hon. member on this side said this afternoon, there is some reason why the thing is hung up which is not quite clear on the surface.

Mr. COLLINS: You have had all the say on that side of the House.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is quite noticeable how docile and quiet the hon. member has been since he was Premier of this State for a brief interval.

In conclusion, I want to say that I hope the time is not far distant when the Government will realise the necessity for another redistribution of seats. As already mentioned, the country people are not getting a fair deal in the matter of representation. It is impossible for the representative of a country district, who has to travel miles and miles to the different parts of his electorate, to give the same attention to it that a member in the metropolitan area is able to give to his electorate. If the Government are sincere in their desire to build up, develop, and help the State as it should be helped, then it is time for them to be up and doing, so as to place the primary and secondary industries upon a proper footing, whereby we can compete with the Southern States and manufacture our raw material and employ our men within our own State.

Question—That the Speaker do now leave the chair—put and passed.

#### SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—VOTE ON ACCOUNT. £4,700,000.

(Mr. Pollock Gregory, in the chair.)

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

“That there be granted to His Majesty

Mr. Nott.]

on account for the service of the year 1924-25 a further sum not exceeding £4,700,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The Treasurer has not stated what period this appropriation is to cover. I am rather surprised at the amount of £1,200,000, which is to be appropriated for loan expenditure. At the May Day celebrations the Acting Treasurer pointed out that loan expenditure must be kept within certain limits if the Government were going to carry on. I cannot see from what direction the Government are going to obtain money for such expenditure, yet the expenditure is to go on in just the same way. We were told by the Treasurer, and by the Secretary for Public Lands when he came back from the Treasurers' Conference in Melbourne, that loan expenditure would have to be curtailed to a minimum. We had the Treasurer saying that £5,000,000 per annum was necessary or the Government would be faced with disaster. Then we had the Secretary for Public Lands stating that the Government must carry on within their financial resources and must cut down loan expenditure to £1,250,000. I cannot see what position we are getting into. We know that in connection with the last conversion loan we shall have to pay an extra £214,000 in interest, to which must be added the interest of the loan money expended last year, which will bring it well up to £300,000. The annual interest on loan money in 1922-23 amounted to £3,589,714, and, after deducting an amount of £1,459,517 returned from works constructed by loan money, there is left a charge on revenue of £2,130,397. To-day loan work is being continued at a very high cost, and we find that last year £4,656,000 was spent on loan work, and there does not seem to be any curtailment in that direction. The Treasurer has given us no inkling as to how the money is to be found. The hon. gentleman makes a considered statement in which he says that the financial resources of the State will not bear this increased expenditure, and expenditure from loan funds must be curtailed. This is the first appropriation since that statement was made, yet the Treasurer is asking for £1,200,000 to carry on in the same way as last year. I want to know what the position is that we are getting into, and where the money is to be found to continue this expenditure. The House should know what provision the Government are making, and whether they are going to carry on until they reach a dead-end and then stop. The Treasurer might give us a little information when asking for an amount of money such as this as to the time it is to be used in and what steps are being made to meet obligations. In the face of the recent statements of the Treasurer, some explanation is necessary when an appropriation such as this does not provide for any decrease in the loan figures.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The hon. member for Aubigny is not correct in assuming that this, the first Appropriation Bill of this session, provides for a greater expenditure than we made provision for last year. It is impossible for me at this stage to go into details and in that manner to anticipate the Financial Statement which I hope to deliver on Friday next.

Mr. MOORE: How long will this carry us on for?

[*Mr. Moore.*

The TREASURER: The amount which it is proposed to appropriate will carry us on at least until October. The rate of expenditure from the Loan Fund Account may not be any less than it has been of recent months, but the final amount of expenditure necessary during the financial year will be less than what was necessary last year. The amount of appropriation sought for is £2,000,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £1,500,000 from the Trust and Special Funds, and £1,200,000 from the Loan Fund Account. The aggregate rate of expenditure from the Loan Fund Account may not be very much different from that for the corresponding period of last year, but the expenditure of loan money for the year will certainly have to be curtailed. Loan money will be strictly limited, and, as our resources are of a limited nature, loan expenditure must also be limited.

Question—That the resolution be agreed to—put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

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

The resolution was received, and agreed to.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE—VOTE ON ACCOUNT, £4,700,000.

(*Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.*)

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

"(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account, for the service of the year 1924-1925, a further sum not exceeding £2,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account, for the service of the year 1924-1925, a further sum not exceeding £1,500,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account, for the service of the year 1924-1925, a further sum not exceeding £1,200,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account."

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the sitting.

The resolutions were received, and agreed to.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, No 1.

##### ALL STAGES.

A Bill, founded on the foregoing resolutions, was introduced, and passed through all its stages without discussion or amendment.

## WAYS AND MEANS.

## RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(Mr. G. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.)

## GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL.

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

“That a sum not exceeding £9,000,000 be raised by the issue of Government stock or of inscribed stock secured upon the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland and bearing interest at a rate fixed by the Governor in Council according as necessity demands, to defray the cost of public works and services, the total sum authorised to be raised to include such additional sums as may be necessary in order actually to produce to the Treasury the said sum after providing for all costs, charges, and expenses connected with the raising thereof or with the redemption, retirement, or renewal of the Government stock or inscribed stock issued or created in respect thereof; and for that purpose to authorise Government stock or inscribed stock to be issued or created in excess of the said sum of £9,000,000; and that, pending the final disposal of any Government stock or inscribed stock authorised to be issued or created, the Governor in Council may obtain temporary advances from any bank, corporation, or financial institution for such period and on such terms as to interest or otherwise as he thinks fit.”

This is the usual motion in Ways and Means preliminary to the introduction of a Loan Bill. I ask the Committee to allow the matter to be advanced by this stage, so that a date may be fixed for the introduction of the Bill, when members will be given an opportunity of discussing the proposal in detail.

New authority is required to borrow money. The last Loan Act was passed in 1921. The authority under that Act is becoming exhausted, and in order to get the necessary authority to carry through the loan transactions that will be required for this financial year both here and in England, it is necessary to get a fresh authority. It has been usual for Parliament to authorise the borrowing of a certain sum of money, necessitating the Government asking for fresh authority before that amount is exhausted. I think it is not unreasonable to ask for the amount set out in the motion.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I did not quite realise that this Bill was going to be introduced to-day, but I recognise that none of us can stop it, and that authority must be given to the Government to borrow the requisite amount of money to keep the loan works going—at any rate, until they can be reduced without serious loss to the State. It appears to me to be rather a large sum in the present state of our finances in Queensland to ask for, but, of course, if it is going to come before the House at the various

times the moneys have to be raised, there is not such an objection to it as there would be if we were asked to authorise a loan of £9,000,000 straight off—not that there would be the slightest opportunity of securing that large amount, judging from the scarcity of loan money and the difficulty in obtaining it. I do not suppose that this is the occasion on which we can criticise the way in which

the loan money is to be spent, but when that opportunity does come, and the Bill is brought in, hon. members on this side will have something to say.

The TREASURER: If I may be allowed, I would suggest that the debate on the Financial Statement would be a better opportunity for the discussion than we can have on the Loan Bill.

Mr. MOORE: Possibly, on the Bill we shall be able to have a certain amount of discussion which will be useful to the Government if they will take notice of it. Unfortunately, the Government have not been ready to take advantage of our criticism previously.

The TREASURER: I think the hon. gentleman is not justified in saying that. Since his leadership of the Opposition we have accepted any sensible advice he has tendered. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: If the advice we have given had been followed by the Government, we would not have had the unfortunate financial position we are in to-day. We are asking for a large amount of money, considering the authoritative statements made by the Treasurer and the Secretary for Public Lands as to the difficulty of securing money.

The TREASURER: I think that in times past the amount asked for has not been less than £9,000,000.

Mr. MOORE: In the past there has not been the same difficulty in securing money, and the rate of interest was not so high. I consider that at the present time, when we take into consideration the condition of Queensland and the authoritative statements which have been made by the Treasurer and the Secretary for Public Lands, it is a vast amount of money to ask for in view of the small return we are getting from loan expenditure. When we get the Loan Bill we shall be able to bring forward concrete cases in endeavouring to point out the extravagant way in which loan money has been expended and on which there will be no return to the State for very many years. It is a question whether the State can continue the rate of borrowing we are going on with to-day. I do not think it can. I am sorry to see such a large amount asked for, because it only means encouraging the Government to secure larger sums of money than they are justified in getting when we take into consideration the financial position of the State.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

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

The resolution was received, and agreed to.

## GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL.

## FIRST READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, (*Chillagoe*)) presented a Bill founded on the resolution agreed to in Committee of Ways and Means, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

Mr. Moore.]

## DISEASES IN PLANTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Before clause 3 is put, I desire to move an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no clause 3. The hon. member has lost his opportunity.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## APPRENTICESHIP BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.)

Clause 1—"Short title and construction of Act"—put and passed.

Clause 2—"Interpretation"—

Mr. KERR (*Knoggera*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

On line 17, page 1, to omit the word "under," with a view to inserting the words—

"not less than fourteen years and not more than,"

The clause will then read—

"Minor" means a person not less than fourteen years of age and not more than twenty-one years of age."

In the past it has been the practice for a boy to start as an apprentice at sixteen years of age. For many years hon. members on this side have been considering that age in relation to the compulsory education age of fourteen years. A lad may leave school at fourteen years, but no provision has previously been made for the employment of that lad during the two following years, and it has been a catastrophe for the boy and for the State. After representations had been made from this side, the Government issued a regulation in September, 1923, providing that a minor shall be a person not less than fourteen years of age and not more than eighteen years of age. Perhaps the Minister will give some reason why in this Bill he has made no reference to the minimum age of fourteen years. I think that we are justified in pressing for such an explanation, and, seeing that we are dealing with a Bill to regulate the employment of apprentices, we are justified in asking for the inclusion of that minimum age in the Bill. Some hon. members opposite have charged myself and other hon. members on this side with seeking to exploit child labour. I am sure hon. members who make that accusation have not read the law relating to employment in factories, which states that no person under fourteen years of age can be employed in a factory except by permission of the Minister, and then that person must not be under thirteen years of age. We have had a Labour Government in Queensland for a number of years, and, with the exception of New South Wales and South Australia, Queensland is worse off than any other State in regard to legislation prohibiting the employment of persons under a certain age. In Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania, no boy under the age of fourteen years and no girl under the age of fifteen years can be employed.

[Mr. Kerr.

This is a very important question indeed. In my opinion, it is one of the most important questions in this Bill. It is closely associated with the maximum school age. The Minister possibly will refer to clause 20 and say that what I request may be done under the Bill. While I recognise that fact, the inclusion of the amendment I have moved will indicate to the authorities concerned that a boy over fourteen years of age can be employed in that capacity. If the age has been specifically omitted from the Bill, then it is an indication that that is not the age of apprenticeship. I want to read an extract from a report of a conference in Scotland which seems to me to sum up the position. It says—

"In Scotland, where very close attention has been paid to the question of apprenticeship in the engineering trades, it is considered that, notwithstanding the great advantage that accrues from a boy beginning his apprenticeship only after he has been carried on at school to the higher age of fifteen years, and has taken the intermediate certificate of the Scottish Education Department, boys should enter the employment of the firm with which they are going to train immediately on leaving school; and that the period of unemployment between school and apprenticeship should be abolished. Whatever education a boy may have, and even if his journeymanship will be acquired before he reaches his majority, he should, it is thought, enter the employment of the firm as an apprentice immediately on leaving school."

I want to press the consideration on the Committee of allowing a boy to be apprenticed when he leaves school. There are too many dead-end jobs in this State. A boy must be allowed to take a job. Many boys at fourteen years are more physically fit to take a job than many boys of fifteen. We shall find later on that the physique of the boy must be a factor in his apprenticeship. If the Minister says that there is no bar, then there should be no objection to including this age. I again say that we should not permit the Arbitration Court to be the deciding factor. If it is the intention of the Minister to permit an apprentice of fourteen years being employed, that intention should be specifically stated in the legislation; it should not be left to the Arbitration Court. If it is to be left to any body, that body should be an executive composed of experienced employers and employees, but I contend that it should be specified in this Bill. I hope that the Minister will give a satisfactory reason if he will not accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment, which is quite unnecessary and somewhat outside the scope of the Bill. The hon. member claims as his reason for moving it that anyone under fourteen years of age can be engaged in any industry. The question of the compulsory training of boys and the age at which they should leave school is not dealt with under this Bill at all. It is dealt with under the State Education Acts, and if it is desired to increase that age to fifteen or sixteen years, it should be done in the proper way by an amendment of those Acts. I think a good case may be advanced for increasing the school age. Personally, I would like to see the time come when



education may be carried on until the lad reaches the age of sixteen years, which I consider the best age at which to commence training for a trade. Something might be done between the ages of fourteen and sixteen in the direction of technical training to fit a boy for the trade he will follow later. We know the compulsory school age is now fourteen years, and I think the Arbitration Court should determine the age at which a boy should commence a trade. There is no reason in some callings why a boy should not commence a trade when he leaves school. The reason why we provide in clause 20 that the court shall deal with this matter is that the conditions operating in various industries are different. Take, for example, any trade or calling that involves classes of work which it is not desirable that a boy should commence too young. It is a matter that should be thrashed out in the Arbitration Court with all the available evidence before the Court. For that reason I do not propose to accept the proposed amendment.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I cannot quite agree with the Secretary for Public Works. At first my impression of the amendment did not convey to me its real importance. We know that, while an Act of Parliament may really read in one direction, there are such things as regulations issued by the Governor in Council, and the unfortunate part is that a regulation issued by the Governor in Council may be open to the construction that it is not advisable for a lad to be engaged in a calling until, probably, he is sixteen years of age.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is to be determined by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. CORSER: That is so, or it may be fixed by regulation of the Governor in Council—that is the unfortunate part. We know that government by regulation is a matter hampering us at the present time, and I am somewhat concerned in that regard. It may be better to make it quite clear that when a young lad is prepared to leave school, or so long as the State regulations permit him to leave school at the age of fourteen, he should be enabled to enter a trade. I think most hon. members agree that that is the intention of the Bill, and there should be nothing to prevent us accepting this amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Under this Bill no boy under fourteen years of age can be indentured.

Mr. CORSER: That is a reason why there should be no objection to the amendment. The amendment does not go beyond that. It fixes the age at not less than fourteen years to not more than twenty-one years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Bill says "under twenty-one years."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 31st July, I will now leave the Chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked leave to sit again.

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

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.