

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 1924

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TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER, 1924.

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

QUESTIONS.

CLERICAL STAFF OF MAIN ROADS BOARD
AND BASIC WAGE.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. Is the clerical staff of the Main Roads Board subject to the Public Service Regulations?”

“2. Is he aware that the basic wage is not adhered to in this Government Department?”

“3. Will he issue instructions for this to be done, and make such payment retrospective?”

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

“1. No.

“2. Basic wage is adhered to except in one instance by inadvertence.

“3. Provision has been made on the Estimates for rectification of the anomaly, which will be made retrospective.”

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER TO CAIRNS OF
POLICE OFFICER O'HARA.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Is it correct that a police officer named O'Hara has been promoted or is about to be promoted to the rank of inspector and transferred to Cairns?”

“2. Seeing that Sub-Inspectors Thompson, Campbell, Head, McCarthy, and Dillon are senior to O'Hara, will he state the reasons why their claims have been ignored?”

"3. Is it not true that O'Hara's promotion and appointment to Cairns, as well as that of Detective O'Driscoll, are of a political nature, and have been carried out to assist a certain candidate seeking selection in the Herbert Labour plebiscite to be held in October next?"

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

"1. This officer has not been promoted. His claim will receive consideration with other officers when vacancies occur.

"2. See answer to No. 1.

"3. See answer to No. 1."

PROMOTION OF DETECTIVE SERGEANT O'DRISCOLL.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. A detective named O'Driscoll is reported to have been recently promoted to the rank of sergeant. On what ground was that promotion made?"

"2. Was the promotion recommended to the Commissioner by any officer of the department?"

"3. What police service has O'Driscoll, and how long since he was previously promoted to the rank of detective acting sergeant?"

"4. Is it not a fact that there are three or four detective acting sergeants who from points of seniority, experience, and suitability are more entitled to the promotion than O'Driscoll?"

"5. Is it true that the Minister or his friends promoted O'Driscoll at this juncture in order to avoid an appeal under the Police Amendment Bill now before the House?"

"6. If not, will he grant the right of appeal to the aggrieved detectives against O'Driscoll's promotion?"

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

"1. On grounds of efficiency and merit.

"2. No.

"3. Sworn in on 29th January, 1912; promoted to rank of detective acting sergeant 17th February, 1923.

"4. (a) In seniority, yes; (b) in experience and suitability, no.

"5. No.

"6. No."

PAPER.

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

Fourth Annual Report of the Public Service Commissioner.

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—FIRST ALLOTTED DAY.

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

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

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

"That £3,500 be granted for 'His Excellency the Governor.'"

Question put and passed.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

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

"That £110 be granted for 'Executive Council.'"

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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

"That £22,712 be granted for 'Legislative Assembly.'"

Question put and passed.

CHIEF SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

CHIEF OFFICE.

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

"That £12,277 be granted for 'Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—Chief Office.'"

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): On the 14th of last month, in answer to a question which I put to the Premier, the hon. gentleman had this to say—

"If the hon. member for Enoggera will raise the question on the Estimates, I shall endeavour to furnish the information he seeks."

I think that this is the Estimate on which we might receive some information with regard to the Premier's recent mission to the old country, particularly in regard to the question which I asked—

"In view of the facts that the total expenditure on the tramway system to the date of acquisition by the Trust was £1,028,503 (see Appendix to the 'Brief History' compiled by Messrs. Macfarlane and C. A. Murton), and the straight-out settlement being for the sum of £1,400,000—"

The PREMIER: It would be more in order if the hon. member would raise the question on the Home Secretary's Estimates.

Mr. KERR: I shall be quite satisfied to raise it on the Home Secretary's Estimates, but we know that since the day sittings came in it has been usual for only one Minister to be in the Chamber.

The PREMIER: I can assure the hon. member that the information will be given.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: The Minister will have to be here when his own Estimates are on.

Mr. KERR: The Home Secretary will be here, but not necessarily other Ministers. However, as the Premier has given that undertaking, I will raise the matter on the Home Secretary's Estimates.

While on this subject there is another matter that I desire to have a few words upon. It will be noticed that there is an item in these Estimates of £5,000 for "Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses." For years I have raised the question as to why more detail is not given in regard to this incidental and miscellaneous expenditure. I have gone to the trouble of looking up the Estimates of the various States of the Commonwealth, and I find that practically in no instance is Parliament asked to provide such a sum as £5,000 without having full details of the expenditure shown. We realise that recently an accusation in a certain direction has been made—and possibly this particular item, "Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses," is the vote which is referred to—about expenditure which it is alleged is not subject to the scrutiny of the Auditor-General. If the Premier desires to make a public statement in regard to that accusation about the way these funds have been utilised for improper purposes, there is now an opportunity to deny the statement, which has gone not only through Queensland but has appeared in most of the Southern papers. It is a pretty definite accusation when it is said distinctly, on sworn statements published in the Press, that certain funds of the Chief Secretary's Office have been utilised without being perused or checked by the Auditor-General. I think that the Premier might make some statement in regard to that.

One of my complaints in regard to the Estimates generally is that we find huge sums of money—amounts of £5,000 and running up in one Estimate to as much as £22,000 for "Incidentals." I think that, when the Premier is giving instructions for the Estimates to be submitted to Parliament, he should show more detail as to what is being done. The Premier will say that we can ask for information in regard to any items shown on the Estimates as we proceed; but if we get up every time "incidental" items are before the Committee, it will take up most of the time allowed by the Standing Orders to explain the items. In my opinion it would be a saving of time if we were provided with a more detailed schedule showing how the "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses" are made up.

I hope that the Premier will take this opportunity of explaining the accusation which was made in regard to certain remarks published in "Smith's Weekly." The public are demanding that the hon. gentleman should make some statement to vindicate the honour of the State and also to vindicate the Auditor-General, who is a man appointed under an Act of Parliament and who practically is outside the scope of Parliament in regard to criticism to any great extent. I think that the Premier should clear up the situation.

Whilst I am on my feet I want to have a word or two to say about the Commissioner of Prices.

THE PREMIER: On this Estimate?

Mr. KERR: Yes. There is no other provision. I think that of recent date the Premier has taken action to do away with the department of the Commissioner as a separate entity. It appeared on the Estimates as a separate entry year after year, but to-day it is covered by the salary of one officer—the "Under Secretary and Commissioner of Prices." I venture to say that,

although the Profiteering Prevention Act should be kept on the statute-book, some of its operations should be suspended. It is most ridiculous that the Commissioner should give authority for the issue of some two hundred or three hundred price lists and one hundred or two hundred other schedules to which he attaches his name, and which have the effect of rather giving protection to a profiteer than of carrying out the intention of Parliament. I venture to say that he is not in a position to subscribe his name to the prices of many hundreds of articles, which nevertheless he is doing. Under the scheme of a price-fixing authority the people of Queensland to-day are paying higher prices for their goods than if open competition were permitted. That is proved by the report of the Commissioner himself, in which he quotes the following opinion:—

"The tendency all over the world was for the principle of competition to disappear."

And it is disappearing in Queensland to-day. If you go into a printer's shop and ask for a quote for any work costing over £2, you will get your quote, but you cannot go to another printer in the same district and get a different quote. The printers have their association, and immediately you ask for a quote the printer rings up the association's office, with the result that every other printer in Brisbane follows the quotation which has been given. The simple explanation is that the employees demand that the employers shall charge certain prices for certain work, and then, when they go into the Arbitration Court, they claim that the industry is of more than average prosperity and they demand higher wages. Between the two of them the Commissioner of Prices, who should, if necessary, be in a position to handle the affair, has no jurisdiction, and the result is that prices are kept up. That is just one typical instance of what goes on. This legislation, in my opinion, has created large combines which are in a position to fleece the producer and the consumer. The Commissioner in his report says—

"Similar attempts are now being made in America to deal with combines acting in restraint of trade. Imprisonment and fines are being inflicted on individuals and corporations for fixing prices, restricting output, and stifling competition."

A grocery distributor for the whole of Queensland is able to fix prices irrespective of competition, which, after all is said and done, is the soul of trade and the one thing that will regulate prices, whether there be a Commissioner of Prices or not. You also have a fixation of prices of goods coming from the Southern States into Queensland. There is no border tariff. There is interstate free trade, or there is alleged to be interstate free trade. Sellers in the southern part of Australia fix their prices, and the Commissioner cannot operate. On the whole, there is a great restraint of trade. We acknowledge that there should be some legislation to deal with people who are profiteering.

It is necessary to have it on the statute-book, but this Act is having a detrimental effect in Queensland because of the way it is being administered. I think it is having the opposite effect to what was intended when it was passed through this Chamber. The question of the cost of living is part and parcel

Mr. Kerr.]

of those things which concern the Commissioner of Prices. In comparison with the other States of Australia where they have no Price Fixing Commissioner, and where price fixing does not operate to the same extent as in Queensland, although the other States have somewhat similar legislation on their statute-books, we find that in Queensland we do not occupy any outstanding position from the point of view of the cost of living. I have taken the purchasing power of the pound sterling for the March quarter, 1920, and the March quarter, 1924, affecting food and groceries, and I find that there has been a greater improvement in Brisbane than in any State of the Commonwealth; but, if you take the whole period of the Labour Government in Queensland, you will find that there is a vast difference in the other direction. While the cost of living may be less in Brisbane, the standard of living is lower in Queensland than in Victoria.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: I know I am sailing pretty close to the wind, but it would not be fair to compel me to stop at his juncture.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: There is a difference of 7d. in the pound in Queensland. But, if you take every factor into consideration, you will find that, although there is a decrease in the cost of living for the quarters that I have quoted—I quoted them to be quite fair—it will be found that since the Commissioner of Prices has been in existence Queensland has derived no compensating benefit. We are in an entirely different position. From my personal business knowledge in coming in contact with these matters week after week I am of the opinion that this legislation buoys up various dealers, traders, and business people because certain prices are approved by the Commissioner of Prices and nothing can be said against them by the consumer. I am satisfied that the master printers do not want a Commissioner of Prices. They would prefer to have the Commissioner of Prices completely wiped out and be allowed to operate on fair grounds and on a competitive basis. As I said before, this legislation has a tendency to create combines and compel employers to organise into associations, have a central office, and increase prices to the detriment of the general consumer. We know perfectly well that with competition and free trading between employers the employers will get a fair living. They will go out of business if they do not. Common-sense and business instinct indicate to them that they are there to make their fair ratio of profit, and they will do so if operating on sound business lines. The Commissioner of Prices should not be allowed to legalise unjust prices, and thus wipe out competition, thereby enabling the employers concerned to have one fixed price throughout the length and breadth of Queensland because of the fact that the Commissioner of Prices had fixed such and such a price. I hope the points that I have raised will receive favourable consideration.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): When this vote was before the Committee last year it included an amount of £389 9s. 2d. for the cost and despatch to London of 10,000 copies of "Smith's Weekly" newspaper containing a special article on the Queensland cotton industry. We have had it repeatedly stated

[*Mr. Kerr.*

by Ministers that they are out to assist local industries and leave the money of the State within the State wherever it is possible. "Smith's Weekly" is not suitable for that class of advertising. There seems to be some special reason why it was selected for such purpose, and the Premier should inform hon. members why he selected "Smith's Weekly" in preference to a paper circulating in Queensland. He could have given the money to the "Daily Standard." That course certainly would have been preferable to spending such a large amount of money out of Queensland. The Premier, in replying recently to a question by the hon. member for Stanley as to what amount was paid or due by the Government in respect of last financial year to "Smith's Weekly" newspaper, said that the amount was £171 16s. Why has that amount been paid to that paper? The total amount that we have got figures for proves that the amount paid to "Smith's Weekly" during the last two years has been £560. Is "Smith's Weekly" so important a publication that £560 should be sent out of the State to subsidise it? The Premier should inform the Committee why he selected "Smith's Weekly" as a medium to spend so much of the taxpayers' money. Certain remarks have been made by the "Australian Seamen's Journal" and reprinted in a dodger that has been circulated in Brisbane that the Premier has been spending certain money with "Smith's Weekly" for the purpose of advertising himself. The hon. gentleman should not remain dumb on this matter. Parliament should know the reasons for the expenditure of this money. The amount set aside for "Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses" is £5,000, and I would like to know from the hon. gentleman if any money has been spent from that vote in respect to "Smith's Weekly."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It would not take long to get the details.

Mr. MORGAN: It would not. I am one of those who are out for information.

Mr. HARTLEY: You mean you are out in your information.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Government are out not to give the Committee the information.

Mr. MORGAN: There should be no hesitation on the part of Ministers controlling public funds to show to the last penny how a vote is expended.

The PREMIER: Hon. members know that the details are given every time a question is asked.

Mr. MORGAN: That is so, but I would like the hon. gentleman to give the Committee details in connection with this particular vote. As he knows, certain criticism, of which he is the centre, has arisen about this matter, and there is no doubt that £560 has been paid to "Smith's Weekly" during the last two years. That fact cannot be denied. I would also like the Premier to inform the Committee of the amount of travelling expenses allocated to himself for this year. He has given that information on the last two Estimates. A motion has been carried unanimously by Parliament for the tabling of a return showing the expenses of each Minister. If the hon. gentleman intends to lay that return on the table, then there will be no necessity for him to give the details of his own expenses on this vote.

The PREMIER: The table is being prepared, but it is not ready yet.

Mr. MORGAN: Then it is the intention of the Government to supply that information?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: If that is so, I do not wish to ask for the information to be supplied on each departmental vote, but I would like the Premier to explain the large expenditure in respect to "Smith's Weekly" newspaper and why local newspapers were denied this privilege.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): No doubt the hon. member read a few days ago articles which some of the newspapers used when they saw the opportunity of launching a personal attack on myself. He appears to be harping on the same question. Surely no rational or reasonable person believes the innuendoes contained in the attack on me that has [10.30 a.m.] been made by those more or less scurrilous publications referred to. A statement was published by one Mr. O'Sullivan, in which he set out extracts from what was alleged to be a sworn declaration before a justice of the peace in regard to some arrangement said to have been made between O'Sullivan and the editor of "Smith's Weekly." I cannot vouch for the truth of that statement, because the declaration refers to the details of transactions between the editor of "Smith's Weekly" and O'Sullivan. An allusion was made, however, to an arrangement between Mr. Mackay, the editor of "Smith's Weekly," and myself with regard to some work that was to be done on behalf of Queensland in the nature of a publicity campaign.

There is some substratum of truth in that, but the arrangement was not entirely as set forth by Mr. O'Sullivan. That is to say, I did have an arrangement with Mr. Mackay, of "Smith's Weekly," for him to select a good officer to get particulars in connection with Queensland and whose articles would be published in the South. Mr. O'Sullivan was engaged to do this work in Queensland, but no arrangement was made with Mr. O'Sullivan or anyone else to give me a personal "boost" or in any way to direct his publicity to myself personally. The arrangement was that Mr. Mackay should select a man accustomed to publicity writing, and that the Queensland Government should assist in shouldering the cost.

Subsequently I got a wire from Mr. Mackay stating that he did not think that Mr. O'Sullivan was likely to prove satisfactory, and I told O'Sullivan that, pending a settlement, he would have to consider himself relieved of his duties. I heard nothing further from Mr. Mackay on the subject, nor have I had any further communication with Mr. O'Sullivan. The suggestion that Mr. O'Sullivan conveys by innuendo—that he was to be appointed in some kind of secret manner, and that his fees were to be taken from some secret fund—is entirely erroneous. Anyone who understands the manner in which public funds are administered in Queensland will give no credence to such a statement. All public funds are subject to the Auditor-General's scrutiny. They are entirely subject to the control of the Auditor-General and his officers so far as examination is concerned. There is no secret fund from which payment may be made, nor is there any payment under Government administration that cannot be examined by

the Auditor-General, or upon which information cannot be sought and obtained by hon. members while the Estimates are under consideration. This Committee sits for the purpose of enabling Ministers to supply any detailed information sought by hon. members.

While on this subject I might say that since I have been in office as Chief Secretary no money has been paid for publicity of the kind that I was going to try out when I had O'Sullivan engaged. I refer to the writing-up of Queensland in Southern or any other journals. Heretofore there has been no expenditure of that kind, and none exists at present, because O'Sullivan "fell down" on the job. Whatever publicity exists is usually done by advertising, mostly through the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau. Occasionally, as in the case cited by the hon. member for Murilla, when a newspaper has the enterprise to write up any particular industry, we take advantage of that publicity and purchase a number of copies of the paper. In this case, "Smith's Weekly" went to considerable trouble to boost the cotton industry in Queensland. I think the article ran into four pages, and it was done entirely on their own initiative. "Smith's Weekly" made all arrangements and collected all data, and the result was a very interesting one. We thought it advisable to buy 4,000 or 5,000 copies and distribute them in England. No one can cavil at that. That sort of thing happens occasionally. We have purchased special issues of the "Daily Mail" and sent them to England. There is quite a big demand for publications of that kind in England. So long as there is a fair distribution, the cost of the purchase of the issue is well worth while.

With regard to the details of the item £2,000 for "Railway Fares and Freights, Printing, Stationery, etc." and £5,000 for "Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses," which members will persist in regarding somewhat as a mystery, as I have already mentioned, detailed information as to these votes is always given to hon. members who are curious enough to question them when the Estimates are before the Committee. The items which go to make up the first amount of £2,000 do not contain much in the way of interest to hon. members. The amount is made up as follows:—

Government Printer—Printing reports, Acts, and stationery—£622.

State Stores—Purchase of stationery—£42.

Concessions to Allan Wilkie, charged against the Chief Secretary's Department by the Railway Department—£216.

It was considered that Mr. Allan Wilkie was doing a certain amount of educational work.

Fares to blind men who were collecting on behalf of the Institution—£216.

Freight on books sent to the country by the Bush Book Club—£157.

Bush Nurses—£28.

Fares, Captain Wilkins's expedition—£86.

Fares, Young Australian League—£32.

This was for expenses in connection with the visit of a party of young Australians from New South Wales.

Fares to sailors from visiting warships—£87.

Annual passes for Children's Hospital organisers—£90.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

There are sundry other items of very small significance. The amount voted last year was £1,500, and the amount expended £1,990.

The amount voted last year for "Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses" was £5,500, and a sum of £5,120 was expended, which was made up in this way—

14th September to 15th October, travelling expenses of Premier and party (Cairns, Innisfail, Chillagoe, and Townsville)—£213.

November last year, Visit of Premier to Stanthorpe—£10 19s.

Visit of Mr. W. N. Gillies, while Acting Premier, to Toowoomba, Northern New South Wales, Sydney, etc.—£161.

New motor car for His Excellency the Governor—£700.

Motor car hire—£866 (which includes £100 17s. 6d. for visitors).

Maryborough Grammar School, grant to provide increased accommodation—£500.

Mount Morgan School of Arts—£200.

Blair Athol, Loan to erect a hall—£200.

Chillagoe smelters, Relief to sufferers from fire—£112.

The school of arts at Mount Morgan was burnt down, the hall at Blair Athol was destroyed by a cyclone, and there was a serious fire at Chillagoe.

Funeral, Sir Pope Cooper—£78.

Expenses, Innisfail celebration—£50.

Gratuities—£50.

Ingham Royal Commission—£181.

Petty cash, postages, telegrams (approximate)—£300.

Refreshments—£220.

Visit of Victorian Parliamentary Delegation—£156.

C. Smith, watchman, "Lucinda"—£98.

Fare, Archie Day, pianist—£33.

That item may require a little explanation. Archie Day is a Queensland youth who won a Trinity College scholarship worth £100 annually and tenable for three years in London. His parents were unable to finance the boy's passage, and the State paid for two third-class passenger fares to London for the boy and his father. Archie Day has completed his course and obtained a fellowship at Trinity College. (Hear, hear!) He desired to return to Queensland, and his return passage cost £35. There were allowances to Mr. J. Matthieu, a blind man, and to Mrs. Nash, the widow of the discoverer of Gympie, of £52 each. There are a number of small items, amounting to £746, for wages of temporary messengers, overtime payments, books and papers, including the Colonial Office list, English parliamentary papers, charges in connection with workers' insurance compensation, New South Wales Government fares to live pass holders, contribution to Premier's Conference expenses, £20; relief to a deserving case in Stanthorpe, £22; steamer fares, railway fares, stationery, and a grant to the Petrie Memorial Fund. That makes up the full total of expenditure last year. Reference has been made to my own travelling expenses incurred within the State—£213 15s. 10d. In addition to that, the Chief Secretary's office had to incur the expenses of my visit to England this year,

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

the total cost of which was £3,334 6s. 9d., made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Hotel expenses	646	8	5
Wireless cables, postages, etc.	62	5	3
Motor hire	42	13	4
Cartage, portorage, etc. ...	53	19	2
Railway fares	21	19	10
Head tax, U.S.A.	7	0	0

That applies to the whole of the party—

Miscellaneous expenses ...	15	18	3
Advances to Premier	586	0	0

Allowances to—

G. L. Beal ... £190 2 0

Mr. Beal, the Under Secretary to the Treasury, accompanied me—

F. J. Dodsworth £176 10 0

a total of 367 12 0

Steamer fares to

London £928 10 0

Less refund on account of Canadian portion ...

86 0 8

842 9 4

The explanation of that being that the Canadian Government were good enough to give us free passage over the Canadian railways—

Railway refreshment-rooms

(hampers) 5 3 10

Passport fees 1 0 8

Motor-car hire in Sydney ... 6 1 0

Steamer fares to

Brisbane from

England ... £553 0 0

Less refund on account untravelling

portion of journey

(Melb urne to

Brisbane) 16 0 0

537 0 0

Motor hire in England and

elsewhere 137 8 0

Railway fares to and from

Holyhead 1 10 4

Total £3,334 6 9

That may appear a large amount, but it is impossible for a Premier to travel at less cost under the circumstances in which I was travelling, accompanied by my wife and two officers and in view of the very high steamer fares which prevail between here and England, especially on the American route. The fares and expenses are much more reasonable on the direct route via Suez, but it is impossible to manage a tour of that kind, which lasted for six months, on a smaller bill than that. I can assure hon. members that there was no extravagance in England indulged in by the party.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) who was received with Opposition cheers, said: I am pleased to be back again in this Chamber after my absence from Queensland. I just want to say a few words in reference to some remarks made by the Premier in regard to the "Smith's Weekly" episode. I, personally, have no desire to refer to unpleasant matters which have been raised by those who on some occasions are not prepared to disclose their identity. Reference has been made to the sworn affidavit of the gentleman whose name has been mentioned, making all kinds of innuendoes and suggestions regarding the

Premier. A great deal of secrecy has been shown in reference to the matter. We are told that an affidavit has been sent to London for protection and all that sort of thing—at least, that is the story that is going round—and it is quite time that the matter was cleared up. I presume that the Premier this morning has laid all his cards on the table, and, if that is so, we should make every effort to see that this story is stifled, because it is not exactly pleasant. The atmosphere in England at this stage with regard to Queensland is particularly happy. The Premier, assisted by others whom I do not intend to name just now, was imbued with a desire to put Queensland on its feet, and he has succeeded in leaving a very pleasant impression at home. The part which he played was particularly favourable, and the steps which he took and the reasonable arrangements arrived at were in my judgment unquestionably the right ones. I am pleased to say that, because I have read the speeches that have been made in this House on this subject. The feeling in England with regard to Queensland is, "Now that you have acknowledged that you have no desire to repudiate contracts and are prepared to make some reasonable concession to those that have been affected, we are prepared to forget all about it." I make this brief reference to the matter in view of the fact that such an excellent atmosphere prevails and that Queensland's credit has once more been re-established in England, and because, if affidavits such as are referred to and similar unpleasant documents are floating round with reference to the head of the Government and his character, it is the duty of everybody to do what he can to remove the impression. I hope that due publicity will be given to this debate and that the Premier's statement will receive due weight.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

AGENT-GENERAL FOR THE STATE.

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

"That £11,995 be granted for 'Agent-General for the State.'"

Hon. members will see that there is an increase of £1,050 in this vote. There is an increase in the salary of the Agent-General from £1,250 to £1,500. Hon. members who know anything about it will be aware that housing and the cost of living generally are very high in London, and it is thought only fair that this increase should be given. The salary now provided is little enough to enable the officer who is carrying out the function of Agent-General to maintain the office in a proper manner. There is an increase also in the vote for "Rent, Printing, Stationery, and Incidentals" from £5,400 to £6,000. Last year we spent £6,894, but it is thought that this year £6,000 will be sufficient.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I do not think the Premier has given us as much information about the Agent-General's office as we are entitled to get. If the Agent-General is competent and is prepared to carry out his work properly, then he can be of very great advantage to the State. Considering the authoritative statements that have been made since the late Agent-General came back as to the uselessness of the post and as to the recommendation which he made to the Premier for its abolition, it appears rather

wonderful to see an increase in salary now. That is an item that I take exception to. This Government appointed Mr. Fihelly as Agent-General at what was considered an adequate salary, and sent him home to represent the State. Without asking permission of any sort, he simply leaves his post at the very time it is considered he should have been there to assist the Premier. Mr. Fihelly made the statement that if the Premier pleaded with him he would not go back with him. I cannot imagine the Premier pleading with Mr. Fihelly in New York to go back to London and help him. Evidently Mr. Fihelly suggested that there was such a possibility, and said that even if that did occur he would decline to go back. Mr. Fihelly then made an absurd statement about Moses having ten commandments, President Wilson having eleven points, and he having three children. That was a most extraordinary excuse for an Agent-General to make when leaving his post in such an extraordinary way. It seems to me that this billet is being made a sort of stepping stone to get inconvenient members of Parliament out of the way. It is an absurdity to appoint a man to a position and for him to leave the post at an inopportune time without asking for any permission and say, as Mr. Fihelly has stated—

"I was fed up with the job. That is all. There was too little to do, and too long to do it in. The job was a sinecure and overrun with graft."

He comes back to Queensland, but does not make any report to this Parliament as Agent-General. When he is asked when he intends to make that report, he says that he is making the report to Cabinet. It is usual for a man who has been appointed Agent-General for the State to report on his return on the activities he was engaged in when occupying that position. We have a report from the Acting Agent-General, Mr. J. P. Dillon. That is an interesting report in its way, but anybody could have got the same information from books on statistics. There is nothing in it that the Agent-General ought to give to the Parliament of the State. There is nothing about investigations into marketing. We simply get the bald statement of how much meat, butter, and cheese has been handled, and what was the state of the markets twelve months ago. That is of very little benefit to this State. We want an Agent-General who is going to give some assistance. If, as Mr. Fihelly says, after practically two years' experience in the office, that the position should be abolished, that there is too little to do and too long to do it in, and that it is the home of "graft," then very serious consideration should have been given by this Chamber before any fresh appointment was made. Instead of that, we have an appointment made as soon as the Premier arrives in Queensland. That appointment was made in the face of the definite statement by the late occupant of the office. We have far too much expenditure in connection with these appointments. Mr. Hunter was appointed in 1919, but he was not able—through ill-health or otherwise—to occupy the office for his full term; but when Mr. Hunter returned to Queensland he looked perfectly capable of being able to fulfil the Agent-General's duties to the satisfaction of the State. His expenses in going to England amounted to £2,413, and Mr. Fihelly's expenses amounted to £1,726. The return of Mr. Hunter entailed the cost of £494.

Mr. Moore.]

We have the expenses incurred by the return of Mr. Fihelly to come yet. In connection with the appointment of Mr. Hunter there is an item of expenditure amounting to £121 for a banquet and a band. All that extraneous expenditure should not be a burden on the State. The most important point is that we sent a man who was supposed to be a man suitable for the position, and he comes back and makes the definite statement that the position is a sinecure, overrun with "graft," and should be abolished, and before that statement is considered and before any report is received from him as to the reasons why he considers the office should be abolished—we merely have newspaper reports on that matter—another appointment is made.

The Agent-General is an officer of the State, and is appointed to represent this State in England. We are entitled to get a report of his doings there and some reasons why he recommends certain things to be done. We are not supposed to find out from reports and letters written to the newspapers what were his reasons for his statement that another Agent-General should not be appointed. When such an appointment is made, it is the right of hon. members to receive a report as to what the retiring Agent-General considers should be done in the light of his experience, and whether a business man should be appointed to look after the welfare of the State instead of leaving it to an official who has been in the office in London for a number of years. I admit that the report of this official is interesting enough, but the expenses attached to the office are great, and the Committee and the taxpayers are entitled to greater consideration from such officers than they have been receiving. I do not suppose that any other officer would be allowed to throw up his position in the manner that the last occupant of that office did. The expenses of the late Agent-General were paid until he reached Queensland again. The Committee should know the reason why he should suddenly throw up his job in such a way and at such an inopportune time. He has given some absurd reasons for his action in returning to the State, but no authoritative statement has been made by the Government. Hon. members are left entirely to newspaper reports as to the reasons which induced him to throw up his job. It is due to hon. members that a fuller statement on the matter should be made by the Premier, who might also explain why another Agent-General was appointed at a higher salary in the face of the definite statement made by the late occupant that such an appointment was unnecessary.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I can say no more in regard to the relinquishment of the office of Agent-General by Mr. Fihelly than I have already said on the matter. I met Mr. Fihelly in New York on my way to England as he was returning to Australia. He told me just what has been published in the Press as to his reasons—that he had left the office and resigned purely on personal and private grounds. I did not go into those reasons with him.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Did you not know previously that he was retiring?

The PREMIER: I received a cable at Vancouver saying that Mr. Fihelly had resigned

[*Mr. Moore.*

his position, and later I received a cable from Mr. Fihelly himself advising that he would meet me in New York. He told me there that for private reasons he had decided to resign, and asked me to get the Government to accept his resignation.

Mr. CLAYTON: Did he draw his salary up to the time he returned to Queensland?

The PREMIER: Mr. Fihelly did not go into his reasons, as he told me they were private and personal; it would have been impertinent for me to have gone into those reasons. I take it that they were personal, otherwise he would not have resigned. It is true that we paid Mr. Fihelly's

[11 a.m.] expenses back to Queensland, as it is usual to pay the expenses of the Agent-General to London, and when his term of office expires, to pay his return expenses. I could not see any reason to depart from the usual practice and to decline to pay Mr. Fihelly's expenses. Whatever criticism may be levelled against Mr. Fihelly from one source and another, I always found Mr. Fihelly to be a capable officer. I always found that during his term of office he was quite capable and supplied whatever information was required of him.

It is true that Mr. Fihelly told me when he saw me in New York that he intended to make certain recommendations in regard to the office, based upon his two years' occupancy of the position. He intimated that he would advocate the abolition of the office of Agent-General, and he mailed from Panama a report which I received in London. That report briefly set out what he thought ought to be done with regard to the Agent-Generalship. He thought that during recent years the value of the office had declined, that it should be abolished, and that Queensland should be content to take up quarters in Australia House. He advocated that Queensland should be represented by some minor officer—perhaps, a commissioner—who would look after the interests of the State. In certain circumstances that advice might be good. Had we, unhappily, not been able to adjust our financial business in London it would have meant that our future external financing would have to be adjusted on other than the London market. In such circumstances it would have been foolish for the Queensland Government to continue the upkeep of the establishment of an Agent-General in London. In such circumstances the value of the office would have been minimised, and there would have been no justification for its maintenance. The circumstances have been changed by the recent arrangements in London. We still have vast interests in London of a commercial and trade nature, also considerable financial business in England. The Agent-General is an important functionary while we are financing in London and doing business in England. He can be of considerable advantage to Queensland when we are doing business in connection with land settlement proposals and other matters of that kind. He is an officer on the spot, who can discuss matters with Imperial Ministers officially and who can speak and act authoritatively in negotiations with the bankers and brokers of the Government in England.

Mr. KELSO: Did Mr. Fihelly give any assistance in that direction?

The PREMIER: So far as I am aware, Mr. Fihelly gave whatever assistance was

asked of him during his two years' occupancy of the position in London. During those two years, of course, we did not enjoy our present position in London. I think the hon. member for Nundah is uncharitable in making such suggestions. I am not making such a suggestion. I found Mr. Fihelly most attentive to his duties, and I suppose I am the Minister best able to know, because I was in constant communication with him.

It is true that Mr. Fihelly has made some criticisms since he came back, but it must be borne in mind that he is speaking in the capacity of a private citizen and not with the authority of an officer holding a position. It is true that he remarked that the office is a sinecure, also that it was "overrun with graft," but I am sure that Mr. Fihelly did not speak discreetly or wisely when he made those comments.

Mr. KELSO: You insinuate that he has slipped since he came back?

The PREMIER: I do not wish to take any responsibility for Mr. Fihelly's statements since he resigned his office. I am quite willing to accept responsibility for his actions during his period of office. It must be remembered that he is now speaking as a private citizen.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: And it may be from knowledge gained while Agent-General.

The PREMIER: It may be. All I know is that there is no justification whatever for suggesting that the office of Agent-General for Queensland is either "overrun with graft" or in any way subject to "graft." Mr. Fihelly's remarks may have been intended to apply generally—not merely to the Agent-General's Office of Queensland—I can only speak for Queensland. I would not be impertinent enough to offer any such information in regard to the Agent-Generalship of any of the other States. So far as Queensland is concerned, there is no justification for the suggestion that "graft" is in operation in any sense in connection with the office of Agent-General. The only way in which the office of the Agent-General could be involved in a system of "graft"—that is during recent years—is through the performance by officers of their duties when passing material or produce on behalf of the Queensland Government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Have you any suspicion that commissions have been offered?

The PREMIER: I think there is no justification at all for assuming there is any foundation for the charge of "graft." If there were any shred of foundation in the charge, I would have heard something about it during the three months of my visit to England. Normally, of course, the position of Agent-General involves association with great transactions, especially during loan negotiations. The recent conversion loan involved a sum of £12,700,000, and similar transactions of the past have involved very large sums. If people are scoundrels and are deliberately dishonest, there is possibly room for dishonesty, but that applies to every position of trust, either within or without the State.

Mr. KERR: Mr. Fihelly was very much hurt that you went home at all, was he not?

The PREMIER: I have no knowledge of that. I am sure that the suggestion of "graft" in regard to the Agent-General's

Office was made without the slightest warrant, and I think that applies not only to Mr. Fihelly's term but to the terms of previous Agents-General.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We are face to face with the fact of it having been made by the previous occupant of the position.

The PREMIER: I am sure that it is entirely without justification.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I wish to be quite candid about the matter. I did not quite follow the Premier's remarks in connection with Mr. Fihelly. As a private citizen Mr. Fihelly would be perfectly justified in expressing the opinion, if he had such information, that the office of the Agent-General was full of "graft."

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member use the exact words?

Mr. MAXWELL: That the office was "a sinecure overrun with graft." It is an important matter, and I think it should be cleared up as much as possible. When a public official makes a statement such as has been made, I think that such opportunity should be given to him either to substantiate it or to retract it. I asked the Premier the following question on 7th July, 1922:—

"Will he lay upon the table of the House the papers dealing with the resignation, deflation, or otherwise, of the late Agent-General (Mr. Hunter), and the appointment of Mr. J. A. Fihelly as Agent-General?"

The Premier replied—

"It would not be advisable to table these papers, but questions relating thereto will be answered when the Agent-General's Estimates are under consideration by the Legislative Assembly."

Mr. Hunter was looked upon as a very excellent man for Queensland in that position, and I would like some information this morning as to whether Mr. Hunter was removed or deflated—practically at a moment's notice—and Mr. Fihelly appointed. I can quite understand the attitude taken up by Mr. Fihelly. Hon. members will remember that when he was appointed it was said—I believe by the Premier himself—that what we want in the position of Agent-General is a man who is au fait with the financial position of Queensland, because, when loans are to be renewed or arrangements made for new loans, who can better deal with the question than a man who has occupied the position of Treasurer in Queensland? Yet, in spite of that, as soon as it was necessary to renew a loan, we had the Premier and Treasurer, Mr. Theodore, going home immediately—I do not find fault with him for going home—and I can quite understand Mr. Fihelly's attitude in that connection. I would like to know why Mr. Hunter—a man possessing ability—retired from that office. Mr. Hunter was a commercial man, who had done good work for Queensland in approaching financial magnates and had given sound advice as to legislation that was passed. We ought to know whether he was retired with a view to securing the position for Mr. Fihelly or not, and also whether Mr. Hunter was satisfied. Many of us who meet Mr. Hunter in our daily walks in the city to-day must be impressed with his qualifications for continuing in that position. It is a great

Mr. Maxwell.]

waste of public money that a man possessing all the qualifications that Mr. Hunter has should be brought back from the position of Agent-General and somebody else appointed to the position, and I would like to know from the Premier why a man possessing the qualifications that Mr. Hunter had was deflated and the late Treasurer appointed.

On 30th August, 1922, the hon. member for Oxley, asked the Premier—

“1. Can he give the House any information in regard to the intentions of Mr. Fihelly in his capacity as Agent-General for Queensland?”

“2. What expenditure did the State incur in regard to his appointment in the way of travelling expenses and allowances?”

“3. In the event of Mr. Fihelly relinquishing his position, at whose expense will he return to Queensland?”

“4. Upon what terms and conditions was Mr. Hunter's appointment as Agent-General terminated?”

“The PREMIER replied—

1. His expressed intention was to do his best as Agent-General to advance the interests of Queensland.

2. £1,063 9s. 7d.

3. At State expense, if he holds office for the full period of his appointment.

4. Salary for the whole of February, 1922, and expenses of him and family in returning to Queensland.”

According to the remarks of the Premier, Mr. Fihelly only occupied the position for two years, and, notwithstanding the answer given to the hon. member for Oxley in 1922, the State was put to the expense of bringing him back again and of sending another man overseas to take his place. I can quite understand a man separated from his family desiring to come back to see them, but I object to the State being compelled to pay the whole of his expenses on the trip back. I want to protest against conducting the business of the State in such a slipshod manner. As soon as some individual member of the party expresses a wish for a certain position he gets it, and, irrespective of any arrangements that have been made for him to occupy that position for a certain period, he throws it up owing, as has been stated in the “Daily Standard,” to the environment not being too nice. If Mr. Fihelly, after occupying that position for two years, found that the office was “a sinecure overrun with graft,” one of his functions undoubtedly was to have communicated immediately with his chief with a view to having the matter cleaned up. He has given, as the Premier stated, certain advice as to the desirability of abolishing the Agent-General's office. The “Standard” of 2nd February, 1924, has this to say on the matter—

“But in England Mr. Fihelly has had time to consider the position, to study the chart, to calculate the swing-back of the tide, and to determine the exact moment for coming in on the crest of the breaker. It was unthinkable that he would stay in England to see the whole term of the appointment through. The stodginess of the office would have been in itself unbearable for one of Mr. Fihelly's temperament. The whole cause and effect of everything he has touched has relation to temperament.”

[Mr. Maxwell.

They were dealing with the aspirations of Mr. Fihelly for Federal advancement. I have nothing to say about that, because if a man has no ambition he is not of much use to the State. I do not mind a man in that sort of position giving way to these temperamental fits, but I take very strong objection to the State having to pay his expenses after he has only been two years in the office.

I was reading a short time ago the comments that were made by Mr. Robert Joyce, who visited London, on the question of the handling of butter in Great Britain, and it seems to me, in the face of the statements made by Mr. Joyce—and he knows what he is talking about—that there is a necessity for the appointment of an expert or for some better handling of that commodity. It seems to me the time has arrived when there should be a general overhaul of the Agent-General's office. There is an amount asked for each year for that office, and the Premier considers that it is very necessary to have an Agent-General in London. I have read Mr. Dillon's report, and I have yet to come to the conclusion that under existing conditions the expenditure is warranted. I remember on a former occasion when this vote was being discussed, the desirability of having Queenslanders sent home to man the office was stressed. That is the proper attitude for us to adopt. I am not saying anything derogatory of the people overseas, but if anybody can give information as to the desirability of having a certain class of immigrants brought into Queensland, it is our own kith and kin. Mr. Dillon in his report deals with the question of immigration, but we know full well that the attitude taken up by the Government is not in favour of immigration at all. Some of us have a vivid recollection of certain resolutions passed at a convention held in the Trades Hall in 1921. One resolution that was passed on that occasion was that, when the unions decided the time was ripe for immigration, immigrants would be allowed to flow into this State. How are we going to lessen the burden of taxation on the people if encouragement is not going to be given to a desirable class of immigrants? I am not one who advocates the bringing into the community of an undesirable class of people who will only be found standing at the street corners. I think arrangements should be made and every opportunity given to people to come here and bring fresh capital. I do not agree with what was stated at a Labour meeting held in the South a few nights ago, where a woman moved that no domestics be allowed as immigrants unless they had £400 each.

In face of the evidence submitted, I would stress upon the Premier the desirability of bringing this office up to a proper standard. We have wonderful activities and potentialities in Queensland of which the people on the other side of the world know very little. It seems to me that the Agent-General's office is not doing very much in assisting to bring that position about. What we want is the infusion of some new Queensland blood.

Mr. COLLINS: That is what is the matter.

Mr. MAXWELL: I find that there is an additional item of £295 for a private secretary to the Agent-General. Perhaps the leader of the Government will be able to give some reason why this appointment has

been necessary. I would ask the Premier to give every consideration to widening, if possible, the scope of the activities of the Agent-General's office. The new Agent-General has got an increase of £250 in salary. I am not finding fault with that at all—I am one of those who believe that the workman is worthy of his hire. Men who leave this State to take positions in new spheres of activity are always going to do some wonderful things. I remember that Mr. Fihelly, when he went across, was going to do a wonderful amount of good in connection with the office; but he evidently got fed up with it after two years there, and came back here at the expense of the State. I certainly hope that opportunities will be given to Queenslanders to get positions in the office—that is, if it is the intention of the Government to continue this office.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I think that in dealing with the question of the late Agent-General's retirement the Premier showed that generous spirit of charity which is somewhat characteristic of him, but from the information which we have gleaned, I think he dealt much too generously—in fact, much more generously than under similar circumstances Mr. Fihelly would have dealt with him. I do not think the occasion should be allowed to pass without comment. I am quite sure the Government have done right in continuing the office. I think there is great scope for a man of the right type in the office of Agent-General, and that great advantages can be reaped to the State by having the right type of man in London looking after the business of Queensland, particularly in regard to purchasing and selling.

Mr. KELSO: You mean a commercial man.

Mr. HARTLEY: I mean a commercial man, and that is why we have appointed the present holder of the office. As regards Mr. Fihelly's statement, I think that it was very unfortunate that he resigned when he did; in fact, that the Government have been unfortunate in their last two appointments. Mr. Hunter, the previous Agent-General was a good man, and one who would have given good service to the State as Agent-General if it had not been for the unfortunate breakdown in his health. It is no use hon. members attempting to mislead the public outside by insinuations as to why we retired Mr. Hunter. It is well known amongst members and amongst Mr. Hunter's intimate circle of friends that he had a grave breakdown in health, and could not at that time, at any rate, continue the office. It is quite apparent that he has made a wonderful recovery. That might give credence to the suggestion that he was unfairly dealt with. Personally, I think there is nothing in that. Mr. Hunter could not at that time, on account of his health, have carried on the office, and it did not look as if the wonderful recovery he has made was at all likely then.

With regard to Mr. Fihelly, his action in retiring at the time that he did, and his subsequent statement that the office was "over-run with graft," was an abject admission of failure, if nothing else. If Mr. Fihelly was the man he was taken to be, he would have made the office more than a sinecure, because any man of vision and business ability should know intuitively the wonderful scope which is offered in the way of advising the State as to the best markets to buy in, the best class of manufactures to buy, and to see that they

are bought to the best advantage, and in advising as to the best method of organisation for sale and distribution of products in order to get the best return. That is one point I make in connection with Mr. Fihelly's retirement from the office of Agent-General—that he simply admitted failure to handle the position. The second point is his statement that the office is "over-run with graft." What would a man with any regard for the welfare of the office and for the good name of this Parliament and the welfare of the State do in a similar position? In my opinion, it was his business to get straight down and clean the business up, and not to get out. That is what I would have done if I had been in the position. If I could not cope with it, I would have intimately and in detail advised the Government of the position, and recommended that a staff sufficient to clean the business up and bring to book the people who were responsible for the graft should be sent over—not come back, and after he had landed here, put this slur on the office itself, and subsequently on this House, because, after all, I consider from the statement which has been made that the responsibility rests with this House to see whether there is any foundation for the statement. If there is, then the matter should be cleaned up quickly. Personally, I think that, if the wrong class of official were in charge of an office like that of the Agent-General, it would present channels for graft. I can quite see that in connection with the acceptance of contracts for the supply of requisites for the State there could be an opportunity given for certain officials to earn commissions by recommending certain firms. If that was the position, and Mr. Fihelly had any knowledge of it, his business was not to keep silent until he got here, but either to advise the Government or clean the thing up himself. I claim that his statement of the position bears on its face its own condemnation: it simply shows that there was very little in the matter. I hope the Premier will make the strongest representations to the new Agent-General to have a careful search made into the question, and that if there is any suspicion of graft, very direct and drastic methods will be taken to expose it, and to punish the people who are guilty of it.

I think that we might also have a statement upon the question of immigration, which has been raised already, although I do not suppose that the vote for the Agent-General's office is the main one on which [11.30 a.m.] to deal with it. My own opinion is that, until this State can show by the establishment of secondary manufacturing industries that it is able to absorb immigrants, we shall be unwise in bringing them here. There are plenty of persons, natives of this State and of Australia, who can adequately fill any avenues of employment offering in the State, and until there is a much wider field we would be foolish in any way to attempt to induce other people to come here; and I want to say that the people who are coming here are not the right class of people.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that he is not in order in discussing that question at this stage. On page 107 of the Estimates he will find the vote for "Immigration" under the head of "Trusts and Special Trusts." I was not aware of that fact when the hon. member commenced his remarks on the subject.

Mr. Hartley.!

Mr. HARTLEY: I was aware that that vote was there, but I wished just to refer to the matter in a general way, and to say that before anything is done in that connection we have to go much further than we have in the way of making provision for immigrants. I wish also to say that, in my opinion, all the departments of the State could buy better if they had extra officers in the Agent-General's office for the purpose of giving them advice. Particularly is that so in the case of the Railway Department. I do not know what the department buys through the Agent-General's office, but I do know that in many cases it buys a very big quantity of goods, and if it had an agent dealing with the wholesale houses buying could be done much better than if it were done locally. After all, the department simply buys locally from the Brisbane or Australian houses what they have already imported from England.

The PREMIER: They do buy through the Agent-General's office.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am very glad to hear it, and I hope that the practice will be continued.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think that the statement which has been made by the late Agent-General should not be passed over lightly. I have not the remotest idea whether he has quite correctly stated the position, but the fact remains—and here I differ from some other hon. members—that the ex-Agent-General has made a statement as a private individual which carries in the minds of the community a feeling that there is something improper in connection with the office. I agree absolutely with the last speaker that the late Agent-General did not do the right thing. It was his duty to probe the matter to the bottom and find out what was going on. However, the fact remains that a gentleman is living in our midst who says that "graft" has been proceeding. If his words mean anything, they mean that— that someone, somewhere in connection with some of the transactions, has been receiving "graft." I take it that Parliament cannot sit down quietly to a statement like that. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has said that instruction should be given to the Agent-General to be particularly careful, and I agree with him; but the statement which has been made has been made by a man who, when he sat in this Chamber, was not regarded by us as being one of its weakest members. I take it that he was one of those who always took a very keen part in proceedings. I think the very fact that he was selected by the Government as Agent-General indicated that he was the most able man available for the business. I take it that that was their view; if any other reason actuated them, it should be made known to us. That gentleman comes back, and says that things are not right. In the face of that statement, does the Premier not think that the late Agent-General should be asked by the Government to lay his cards on the table? Surely, as a citizen of Queensland, he should be sufficiently interested in Queensland to say: "I know these things. Here they are. Look into them and have them adjusted." I say that that is a reasonable stand for any member to take in the Committee.

I do not believe that the office should be discontinued. I think it is absolutely essen-

[*Mr. Hartley.*

tial in the interests of the State that we should have an Agent-General, and that he should be a commercial man. A great deal of buying is done in the old country, and is it not necessary to have someone there able to buy in the best interests of the State? Then there is the other side of the question. I hold in my hand the report of the Acting Agent-General, in which he says that last year Australia supplied only 2 per cent. of the imports of cheese into the old country, and New Zealand 52 per cent. We could have supplied that 52 per cent. If there is one thing Queensland wants more than anything else, it is getting people into agricultural pursuits. Quite recently—let me mention it by way of illustration—a number of members of Parliament went to the Central district to see what is being done in the direction of irrigation. Is there not a big opening for an Agent-General to see whether we cannot get more of the trade in cheese, for instance? I am prepared to admit that fluctuation of prices may be the secret, but surely Australia ought to do better than 2 per cent. Are there not two reasons why we want a live Agent-General—one that he may see that all purchases for Queensland are made in the very best interests of the State, and the other that he may further the vital necessity for helping our industries? I am not blaming the Government, but there is a screw loose somewhere, and we want somebody in the old country who is alive to see that our interests are attended to.

My view this morning strongly is that the State requires an Agent-General. I think it would be a huge blunder to do away with that position. We should have a live, capable man, ever looking after the interests of Queensland. I can quite understand that something may crop up to-day and something may crop up in two weeks' time—which you never expected to crop up—and the Agent-General has to be cabled to and asked to look into the matter in the interests of Queensland.

There is another matter that I desire to refer to. The Premier might suggest that it could be more conveniently dealt with on the Estimates in connection with the Treasury, and, if he desires that, then that can be done so far as I am concerned. The Acting Agent-General makes some reference in his report to finance. He says—

"The available Government balances were employed on loan to the market through the medium of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia during the year under review, as provided in the agreement between the Government and that bank."

He further says—

"Interest on these balances at the rate of 1½ per cent. per annum was earned from the beginning of the year until 5th July, 1925, when, upon the bank rate being raised at that time from 3 per cent. to 4 per cent., the interest rate was increased to 2½ per cent. per annum, at which it remained until the close of the year."

I take it that, when the Government Savings Bank arrangement was made, there was a contract with the Commonwealth Bank that all business was to be done through that bank.

The PREMIER: All Government business.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is freely rumoured—I do not say it is true—that, as a result of that arrangement, an amount of money has been lost by this State in England. The Premier should tell us this morning what have been the respective rates allowed on balance in the Bank of England and the Commonwealth Bank in England. How do they compare for the period mentioned? It would strike me that the rate of only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum—I admit there is an increase to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum for another period—is altogether out of proportion to the value of money in the old country. I trust that the Premier will see to it that he gives us that information, and that he will explain why there has been such an apparent difference in the rates of interest that have been allowed.

I now want to get down to what is a somewhat smaller matter in connection with this vote. The vote goes to show two things—one, that the men who are getting good salaries have all got increases, and, two, that the storemen, messenger, and the typist, presumably find it easier than the others to live in the old country. They have received no increases at all, and I would like to know why that is the case?

At 11.45 a.m.,

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

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am very glad that the office of Agent-General is under review. On previous occasions I have made reference to it, and have referred to the changes made in the occupant of the office. One appointment was a very unsatisfactory one. One of the appointees caused the State a considerable amount of unnecessary expenditure because of the fact that he did not carry out his contract to the Government, and we have been put to three lots of expense instead of one in transporting the officers together with those who accompanied them, to London and back. I have often wondered whether we were appointing the right class of person. Take the appointments that have been made, say, during the last ten years. Did those officers possess the necessary qualifications, and is it on account of the want of qualifications that the office is falling into disrepute and has become a sinecure, as Mr. Fihelly describes it? When Mr. Hunter was appointed, we concluded that he would be more a general agent than an Agent-General. After the mysterious termination of his services Mr. Fihelly was appointed. He was a gentleman with no commercial experience at all. So far as I was able to learn, he had clerical experience and nothing more before entering politics. We follow that up by appointing another ex-Minister whose commercial experience I understand is confined to the selling of toys. If he were being sent as an Ambassador to Germany, I could quite understand it.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: His experience is far more extensive than the experience of the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. VOWLES: Instead of having a commercial man with the proper qualifications to fill the position, the office, so far as I can gather, is becoming a dumping ground for discarded politicians. It seems to make a way out for some so as to let others in. That is the opinion that I formed from the appointment of Mr. Hunter. There

seemed to be a desire to get rid of him. There was undoubtedly a desire to get rid of Mr. Fihelly, and for the same reason Mr. Huxham has been pushed into the same position and pushed out of politics evidently so that others may climb the ladder and gain the vacated position.

Mr. COLLINS: Your Tory Government appointed Sir Horace Tozer. What qualifications had he? He was a solicitor.

Mr. VOWLES: The late Sir Horace Tozer was appointed to the advantage of Queensland, and I would like the hon. gentleman to show how the recent appointees have been an advantage to Queensland. There was never any suggestion of graft going on during the occupancy of the position by the late Sir Horace Tozer. I regret that such a charge has been made in connection with the office, but it must be remembered that it is not the man in the street who is making it, but one in a position to know. He was a recent occupant of the position, and a man who would have a better opportunity of knowing on account of the time that he had been in London than the Premier, who was more of a casual visitor to London. It is not as though Mr. Fihelly were an irresponsible person. He says that the office is "overrun with graft."

The PREMIER: What are the exact words that he used?

Mr. VOWLES: I have not got the exact words.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: He did not say that "the office was overrun with graft."

The PREMIER: I do not think he used that phrase. I do not think he was referring to the staff of the Agent-General's office.

Mr. VOWLES. He says, "It is overrun with graft." That has only one meaning. It would be very hard to suggest that Mr. Fihelly is irresponsible.

The PREMIER: I would ask the hon. gentleman to read the whole of the report on that point. I do not think Mr. Fihelly is referring to the staff of the Agent-General's Office.

Mr. VOWLES: The report says—

"MR. FIEHELLY WAS FED UP WITH THE JOB.

"MR. FIEHELLY AND THE AGENCY-GENERAL.

"Mr. Fihelly shrugged his shoulders. 'I was fed up with the job, that is all; there was too little to do, and too long to do it in. The job is a sinecure. It is overrun with graft.'"

The PREMIER: The inference during this debate has been that the staff is subject to graft, and suspicion has been cast on the staff.

Mr. VOWLES: I suggest that there is a serious charge or insinuation made against the office by the late occupant of the position. This should be inquired into. It is not as if this statement has been made by a man who has got into bad odour with the Government. He was the representative of the Government in London. Mr. Fihelly made a declaration in the "Daily Mail" that the Prime Minister of Great Britain (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) offered him the Under Secretaryship to the Colonial Office, but he declined because he had to return to his children. Here is a gentleman who was offered that position vacating his position in London, and we are supposed to believe that he is not a person who would give us the true facts so far as that case is concerned.

Mr. Vowles.]

I would like also to refer to the salary of the Agent-General. I have often wondered whether the selections for that position are due to the paucity of the salary. These Estimates provide for an increase in the salary from £1,250 to £1,500. The cost of living in London to a man who has to carry out the functions of that office must necessarily be much higher than it is in Queensland. I would like the Premier to inform the Committee whether the salary is subject to taxation on the English or the Australian basis.

The PREMIER: The salary of the Agent-General is not subject to income tax in England.

Mr. VOWLES: Is it subject to Australian taxation?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. VOWLES: When we find a salary of £5,000 a year being offered in connection with commercial concerns in Queensland, it has often occurred to me whether we are catering for the right class of man in providing a salary of £1,250 for the Agent-General. Some men would be worth considerably less than £1,250, but if a man is required to do good business for Queensland, a much higher salary will have to be provided to enable the occupant to carry out the functions of the office. On every occasion that reference is made to our primary products hon. members are told that a big drawback to increased production is in not having markets, and in not having floor space to display those products overseas. Hon. members realise that is so, and that Queensland is consequently suffering at the hands of her rivals. We do not put the brains into advertising our goods that others do. If Queensland is going to get a proper return from the office of the Agent-General, then the occupant will have to go into places where he is supposed to go and do those things that have to be done by a man who looks after the business side of the job. To accomplish that end we should look around, not for political appointees but for an experienced commercial man with the necessary capacity to fill the position. I am not speaking against the present occupant of the office personally, for he is a man with whom I have never had a cross word and for whom I have the greatest respect. If he has the ability to discharge the functions of the office as they ought to be discharged, I shall be surprised and pleased. It is not the individual in the office that I am criticising, but the principle. It is regrettable that it should have been a political appointment, and that the office should be a dumping-ground for politicians who have been discarded.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is a very unfair statement to make.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): When I was across the water I came in very close contact with the Agent-General's Office, and I naturally formed varying opinions regarding its efficiency, and I have no hesitation in giving the Committee those impressions. From a social point of view there is no question that the office is most useful to visitors who go from Australia to England. There is no question that the officials lay themselves out to make the visitors' stay a pleasant one. From a business point of view I formed the opinion that the office was almost a sinecure, and in that regard I must endorse the remarks that have been made by the late Agent-General. It seems to me

[*Mr. Vowles.*

that, so long as the practice prevails of recruiting the Agent-General from politicians, we shall never get the efficiency that we are looking for. The politician looks too much for public favour and public expression of opinion instead of doing the hard and rough things that ought to be done by a man in that job who looks after the business of the State. There is no doubt that since this Government came into power the office of the Agent-General has been looked upon as a dumping-ground for politicians who have outlived their usefulness, or whom the Government wish to get out of the way.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is not correct. That statement might apply to your own party.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is the impression that has been formed, with the result that the general opinion prevails that the office, by reason of the political appointees who have recently occupied the position, has outlived its usefulness to a very large extent. I do not say that Queensland is the only offender in that regard. My remarks are simply confined to the efficiency of the office. The Government have done wisely in raising the emoluments of the Agent-General. As the Premier has pointed out, living and travelling in England is most expensive. Just in passing, it is pleasing to find that the cost of living in Queensland, generally speaking and with very few exceptions, is much cheaper than it is in England to-day.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am pleased to come back to conditions which make me feel that, when I chose Queensland as the land of my adoption, I made no mistake. I do not say that all that should have been done has been done during the last nine years, but hon. members on this side of the Chamber will greatly improve them when the opportunity occurs.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You are the first optimist we have heard on that side.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: When one comes back to the sunshine of Queensland he cannot help being an optimist.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The great need in regard to the Agent-General's office is to make products from Queensland available and popular. The whole trouble in England to-day—and it to a very large extent affects immigration—is that Queensland is not getting a fair deal in the marketing of her products. I say that most emphatically. The whole identity of our products is lost in London.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is so in regard to butter.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: And in regard to everything else. There is no business control of our products. The broker, middleman, or agent who is handling our products in London has not the sentimental interest in Australia which the consumer has, and which he would exercise if he had the opportunity of getting our products. Time and time again I was asked where were the products of this State, and if one ventured into the various retail shops, he would find the identity of Australian products lost. The Wembley Exhibition has been a wonderful advertisement to Australia, and has made the name of Australia better known in Great Britain than ever before. During the debate on preference in the House of Commons, Australia was

on practically every speaker's lips, and was more prominently mentioned than any other Dominion. The popularity of Australia in England, as a result of these matters, is right at its zenith.

Mr. FOLEY: Does that cut any ice in business?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am trying to make suggestions as to wherein and by what means we may take advantage of the present favourable position. If we continue to market our products in England through an Agent-General, or through any office that is not

[12 noon] capable of doing justice to our products, or through the existing brokers or mediums at present in practice, then the identity of our goods is lost, and the consumer at home, whose heart and sympathy lies with this great Dominion, will have no opportunity of purchasing our products.

The question arises: How is the position to be altered? Without any hesitation, I say that it should be altered by taking our products right to the homes of the people; by establishing sequences of shops in Great Britain and efficiently administering those shops.

Mr. HARTLEY: Look out! You are getting on to State enterprises.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the hon. member has any doubt in that regard, I say that if the scheme is going to be interfered with by politicians or the Government, it is going to be abortive. My suggestion is that producers should look after their own business on the other side, and I do hope that if anything is done, the Government and politicians will be kept absolutely out of the scheme. Once they have anything to do with it efficiency will absolutely go. In making that statement I am not referring in particular to any party. I do not believe that Governments or professional politicians are capable of running successful businesses.

Just imagine for one moment, if you can, the centre of Manchester where, within a radius of 15 miles, there must be 9,000,000 or 10,000,000 people. That is a place where depression reigns supreme; where the climatic conditions are so depressing that one's outlook becomes pessimistic. Hordes of people are in that area eking out a living. They are distressed because of the great depression existing in regard to the cotton manufacturing industry.

I venture to say that, if that were taken as a centre, and a sequence of Australian shops were established in those cities where the people are congregated in such numbers, the turnover in such shops would be very surprising. I make bold to say that if those shops were to take the spirit and atmosphere of Australia into those areas, if they were brightly decorated, properly prepared and conducted, they would be a remarkable success. Again, if those shops took upon themselves the sale of Australian products generally—not confining themselves to meat, because I think that would be a great mistake—an extraordinarily profitable marketing of our products would soon follow.

I think the outlook with things as they are is very oppressive. On the other side one hears frequent complaints about Australian commodities. To me it does not seem that those complaints are ventilated in the manner they should be. If we had a sequence of

distributing centres, we could get into direct contact with the consumer himself, and by means of the control which would be established, could attend to the complaints of the consumer when they arose. By efficient handling of the problem we could take advantage of an encouraging demand in the old country, and so give our producers here that opportunity which is so sorely needed, and at a profitable price. At the same time we would carry the word "Australia" right into the centre of those millions of people, who at the present time are prepared to receive Australian products. If the Empire Exhibition has done nothing else, it has certainly given the people of England an opportunity of becoming fully acquainted with this great continent.

From time to time one was asked the question why we persist in maintaining a "White Australia" and keeping our population so low. Invariably my reply was—and I suppose that of the Premier was similar—that we have fixed ideals, and that sooner or later the overcrowded section of the British Empire settled in Great Britain will find it necessary to seek other lands. For that purpose Australia is being kept "white," so that we may make room for this extra population, which sooner or later must find its way here.

It is no good our building upon that ideal unless we find some solution with reference to the marketing of our products. Those products are keenly desired by the people on the other side. Instead of building upon a policy of preference and imposing upon the worker of England a greater cost of living than he at present bears, we should do something more in keeping with the dignity of this country. We should devote ourselves to the successful and profitable marketing of our goods.

During a debate on preference in the House of Commons, reference was made to the fact that it would be more in keeping with the dignity of Australia if we found markets for our products instead of asking the people of England to subject themselves to a preference tariff. Such a tariff means that the cost of food consumption to the worker of England is increased. At present the worker of England is bearing as many burdens as he can reasonably be expected to bear. I therefore urge all those who are interested in this marketing problem, which has a very direct bearing on the destinies of this country at the present moment, to consider these remarks seriously. I venture to say that the money at present spent on brokerages and commissions might be very much more profitably spent in having our products passed direct to the consumer, without going through the uninterested middleman. The object of the middleman, of course, is purely business. He should be avoided, and the products taken direct to the consumer, whose mind is at the present moment concentrated upon Australia. He looks upon this continent as a very important part of the British Empire, and is ready to take our goods.

At present the identity of our goods is submerged. If you go into a grocer's or a butcher's shop, or anywhere else, and ask for Australian goods, you cannot discover them except in a few isolated cases. If those goods were properly and attractively handled and marketed, their Australian identity could be forced upon the consumer.

Mr. Elphinstone.]

Mr. HARTLEY: Why do not you do it? That has nothing to do with this Government. Get your private enterprise companies to put the products up like that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am making these statements as the outcome of convictions which have been impressed upon me during my visit home. If the hon. member thinks that we, who are supposed to be the leaders of thought in this State of Queensland, cannot assist with advice in carrying out whatever may be in the interests of our State, then I think it is a sorry position. Personally, I think we can improve the position. It is not a party question, but one in which all parties are greatly interested. I maintain that these suggestions are worthy of consideration.

I sincerely hope that Mr. Huxham will make a success of the venture he has undertaken. There are certain things in the Agent-General's office which undoubtedly require attention. Complaints were made that recommendations were sent from London to the Government as to what should be done to remedy certain defects in products which are sent over for marketing, and it was stated that those complaints have been pigeon-holed and have never seen the light of day. I heard things in the Agent-General's office which a visiting member of Parliament is quite entitled to hear. It is just as much the duty of the Opposition to find out these things as it is the duty of the Government to do so.

The PREMIER: Visiting members of Parliament have no trouble in getting information.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Certainly not; I admit that. I merely say that I am perfectly justified in making this reference to the Agent-General's office. Personally, I found the officers at all times courteous and obliging. This is one particular illustration that was given to me. Some few months ago—perhaps years ago—the dehydration of pineapples was a development which some looked upon as being so promising as to relieve the glut of pineapples at certain times of the year. A sample of dehydrated pineapples was sent to the Agent-General's office to test the market. This particular sample arrived in a most unattractive condition, was wrapped up in bits of paper, and was so unrepresentable and so full of weevils when it arrived there that the Agent-General's office could do little, if anything, with it. They then advised the responsible officers at this end—whether they were Government or otherwise I cannot say—and further samples were sent over in glass jars. These were so improperly packed that, when the glass jars arrived, the bulk of them were smashed to smithereens. That shows a shocking conception of what is necessary. If you are going to ascertain the market possibilities of your Queensland products in Great Britain, you must present your samples in such a way that they will look attractive.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that these dehydrated pineapples were not packed by the Government.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not making any charge against the Government; I do not know who packed them. I am making these general statements so that those who were responsible may take advantage of the information now put before them. I again repeat that there are great possibilities for

[Mr. Elphinstone.

our products in England and in Great Britain generally. The fault that they are not taken greater advantage of lies with us, and not with the consumer in England. Whether we propose to take advantage of this remains to be seen. I am certainly of opinion that time would be well spent in advocating some system whereby we could carry our Queensland and Australian products nearer to the home of the consumer in Great Britain than we do at the present time.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I want to reply now to one or two points that have been raised by members of the Opposition. With further reference to the statement made by Mr. Fihelly, and referred to by the hon. member for Dalby and other hon. members, that "graft" is rampant in the Agent-General's office, I think it is due from me, in justification of the staff of the Agent-General, to say that I do not think Mr. Fihelly intended the inference to be drawn that his remarks were intended to reflect on the staff of the Agent-General's office. Of course, I have no grounds for saying what is the correct inference to be drawn from his remarks. I only know what was stated here and what I have seen in the paper myself in regard to his charge. Mr. Fihelly has not furnished any report to the Government dealing with the matter, nor in any correspondence that he has had with the Government has he suggested that improper practices are indulged in in the Agent-General's office, and my own interpretation of his charge, judging from the context of the statement, is that he meant that the position of Agent-General in London—not only the Queensland Agent-General—the position of Agent-General in London as it at present exists for the six States—is one which is "overrun with graft." It is not a charge against the officers of the Agent-General's office; not a charge meaning that the more or less responsible officers in the Agent-General's office are in the habit of accepting commissions for carrying out their duties.

Mr. KERR: That is what he means.

The PREMIER: I think he means that the Agent-General himself—the person who occupies the position of Agent-General—is open to graft, and in some cases it is accepted.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: All the more need for inquiry if that is so.

Mr. KELSO: Accepted by whom?

The PREMIER: I do not know; but, if my interpretation of his charge is correct, it is a charge against the system of Agents-General as it applies to the whole of Australia—that the Agents-General themselves indulge in improper practices. But that is not a question for us to investigate, because we cannot investigate the position in every Agency-General.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: If that is so, don't you think it is a case of "Like master, like servant"?

The PREMIER: If that is so, it is a very deplorable state of things. Personally I have no ground for believing that that kind of thing exists. Naturally one cannot assume that Mr. Fihelly was accusing himself, and it was very improper for him to accuse his brother Agents-General without being more specific in his charge. The

charge he brought is so vague and so indefinite that we cannot proceed further in the matter. I have visited London on two occasions, and I am sure that, if graft was practised in the Agent-General's office, I certainly would have heard of it, and no doubt the hon. member for Oxley also would have heard of it on his visit.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I do not think that imputation is a fair one at all.

The PREMIER: I do not think there is any justification for the charge.

With regard to the inquiry of the hon. member for Wynn as to whether we are not losing by the system of making short-dated loans in London, I do not think any loss is being suffered. It is true we have an arrangement with the Commonwealth Bank whereby they manage that part of the business. They employ the available balances in London by making temporary advances, most of the loans being very short-dated.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I referred to the rate of interest being obtained by the Bank of England.

The PREMIER: The loans are made for very short periods or under conditions similar to deposits at call. Since the Commonwealth Bank have managed the business, they have been managing it just as profitably as it was previously managed by the Bank of England. The interest, of course, depends largely on the conditions of the loan, and we cannot hope to earn more than we are now earning.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The conditions were the same when the Bank of England did the business. I think the rates of interest were higher then.

The PREMIER: There is no difference. I am sure we are getting the same return that we were getting when the Bank of England managed the business for us. They are short-dated advances—sometimes only for a few weeks—and the average rate runs out at the figure the hon. member quoted.

The hon. member for Oxley referred to the position of the Agent-General and his relationship to the trade and commerce of the country. It is true that the Agent-General ought to be of very considerable advantage to the exporters and traders in Queensland produce, but, of course, the Agent-General cannot take full advantage of the position he finds himself in unless the producers at this side and those engaged in exporting Queensland products make use of his services. I have invited the chambers of commerce, exporters, and people doing business with London to make full use of the Agent-General's presence in London, for that is one of the important functions that he has to carry out. The Agent-General on his own initiative can do very little. It is true he can watch the trend of the markets; he may call attention to certain movements in the markets in London and he can report annually, but that is of very little use. I recognise that. If the persons concerned in particular lines of produce, whether it be butter, cheese, meat, hides, leather, or whatever it may be, were to ask the Agent-General to inquire into the market conditions, or to make representations in certain quarters, or to get reports or to make investigations, the Agent-General would be only too willing to do so, as that is what he is there for.

Unfortunately the interested parties at this end have not heretofore fully utilised the services of the Agent-General.

I agree also with the statement of the hon. member for Oxley as to the means by which we can get better marketing facilities and better market prices. It does not mean that the Agent-General, by any action he takes, can get a higher price for butter or a better reception for meat or anything of that kind. It depends almost wholly on the action of the producers here. They want organisation. They may have to co-operate with the Government, and the Government would be willing to co-operate with them in every sense; but they want organisation and representation in London—active work done in London on their behalf and probably financed by themselves. It is no use thinking that by correspondence, or by acting through agents and brokers at the other end, they can get full recognition of Queensland products. Of course they recognise that fully themselves. I am sure that the meat people have recognised it. One of the things which is happening to them at the present time is the difficulty of obtaining the necessary financing to establish thoroughly Queensland's position in the meat market in London. It requires a considerable amount of capital, but it seems to me that that is the way to proceed. It would be fatal to expect that an Agent-General, who has multifarious duties—governmental and semi-public—to carry out in London, could act on his own initiative with his small facilities and make any fundamental change in marketing conditions. He can advise and he can co-operate, but the producers themselves ought to recognise that the marketing problem in England is one that involves millions of pounds, and that they would be warranted therefore in starting in a big way and carrying on considerable expenditure in the initial stages. The Australian products are quite up to the standard required in England. No doubt packing and grading have to be attended to, but the public have no prejudice against Australian products. A great many of the dealers, if they have any leaning, seem to have a leaning towards products of other countries, and in many cases they do not want to handle Queensland products. I had a case which may not be very singular or typical, perhaps. The chairman of the Stock Exchange took me to the Produce Exchange in Manchester. It was a most edifying spectacle to see the people doing their business on the floor of the Exchange with the most meagre samples of the products being sold. He took me to a number of commission dealers operating with canned goods. I asked each one whether he stocked any Australian canned goods, and one or two of them said they did not because they did not consider they were worth stocking as they were inferior products. Of course, Manchester is the very home and centre of free trade conditions and free trade thought, and they would not give the slightest consideration to any suggestion that they ought to give a preference to the products of the Dominions of the British Empire. They most unblushingly stated that they would not stand Australian meat because they did not think it was good enough. If that is the impression in the minds of people doing business, it is evident that that impression must have been created by improper representation of Australian products in England somewhere, and

possibly to a large extent that wrong impression will be dispelled through the very creditable displays and representations which we have had at Wembley Park Exhibition.

I do not think there are any other points which have been raised so far that I need refer to. If hon. members require any further information, I shall be very happy to give it.

At 12.24 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundab*): The debate this morning has shown a lively interest to exist in connection with the office of Agent-General. It seems to me that the Premier in his explanation has been what we might call ultra-generous to the late Agent-General in connection with the relinquishing of his office. I think the people of Queensland were absolutely shocked at the laxity of the holder of that office in regard to his position. He knew that something of a menace was in the air in connection with the great loan scheme going through, and that it was very desirable, considering all the circumstances of the case and the uneasiness which had been evident for some years on the part of the financial public of Great Britain, that the Premier himself should go home to try and allay any anxiety there might be in the minds of the financial public. Like a bolt from the blue, without the slightest explanation, the late Agent-General relinquished his post. One would have imagined that, at any rate, he would have hung on to office until his successor was appointed, or until the Premier could be in Great Britain in order to make temporary arrangements for the carrying on of the office. Yet the Premier this morning in his ultra-generosity actually tells us that he paid the expenses back to Queensland of the late Agent-General. I think that never in the history of Queensland have we had a public man dealing so lightly with an important public position as the late Agent-General has done.

The statement of Mr. Fihelly with regard to "graft" has been very fully discussed. It is an extraordinary position for that gentleman to take up. The more we probe into the matter the more we are in a difficulty as to what the late Agent-General really means. Dealing with the suggestion which he made that the office of Agent-General was a sinecure and should be abolished, I would ask the Premier if the report which he says he received from the late Agent-General on the matter could be circulated among hon. members.

The PREMIER: I am quite willing to lay it on the table.

Mr. KELSO: Is it a fair thing, after saying that the office was a sinecure, for a man to continue to hold the office for a portion of two years? It could not have taken him two years to find out that it was a sinecure, but he continued to occupy the position and draw his salary for an office which he says is not justified. That surely is not the action of an honourable man, and, as I said before, without any warning he goes off and leaves a subordinate temporarily in charge. The office is one, I think, that is capable of being made more effective than it is at present. Unfortunately, for some years past it has been looked upon as a safe retreat for a politician.

Mr. COLLINS: Especially in the old Tory days. They were never known to appoint anyone else.

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*]

Mr. KELSO: Mr. Hunter was appointed as a good commercial man. It was argued that we must have a good commercial man in London, and personally I quite agreed with that. But, when it was thought desirable to remove Mr. Fihelly to another sphere—for reasons probably which were satisfactory to the Government—he may have been a thorn in their side, or there may have been some other reason why he should be translated to London—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do not jump to conclusions.

Mr. KELSO: I am not jumping to conclusions. Then the statement was made to the country that it was a splendid thing for us to have a good financial man in London—that London was the centre of things, and it was necessary in the interests of Queensland to have a good financial man. That is a very peculiar kind of argument, because, if the holder of the office is to be there because he is a good commercial man, then the Agent-General cannot be a good financial man. If you send a good commercial man home, then apparently the interests of the country are suffering because you have not a good financial man.

I think that much good could be done in the office of the Agent-General along the lines suggested by the hon. member for Oxley. What we are relying on at the present time is not merely the matter of production. A good many hon. members have taken recently a trip to Castle Creek—the "Castle Creek comrades" I think they now call themselves. They have been charmed at the prospect, and can see great possibilities in the irrigation scheme. The Secretary for Public Lands says that enough lucerne can be grown at Castle Creek to provide for the whole of Queensland. If that sort of thing goes on, the great question will be that of markets. We can get the production all right, but when it comes to the marketing we are all at sea. I think the most prominent example we have is the question of butter. Unfortunately the poor farmer seems to be struggling along and placing himself unreservedly in the hands of agents. I am talking of a subject of which I have had a little knowledge, and it seems to me that in this particular matter there should be a combination of the efforts of an up-to-date Agent-General's office with business experts who will give the whole of their time to finding out the possibilities of marketing in Great Britain and send us reports. I do not think we are getting full value by having only one annual report. I think I am right in saying that we only get one annual report.

The PREMIER: No, there are plenty of reports from the Agent-General.
[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. KELSO: If we got quarterly reports I think the system would be very much more useful; quarterly reports could be made of very admirable use in Queensland.

The PREMIER: There would be no necessity for that, because the Agent-General sends out reports and they are immediately published in the press.

Mr. KELSO: There is no doubt that we could get good value for the money we spend in England. It is recognised that the Agent-General's office is not what it was many years ago. The hon. member for Oxley says that there are social duties attached to

the office, but we have to recognise that the glory of the Agent-General's office in that respect has been overshadowed by the office of the Commonwealth High Commissioner. I think the Premier himself will agree with me in that respect, if in nothing else. I have even seen it stated in the papers that from a social point of view the most effective way of getting entrance to society is through the Commonwealth office, and that the State Agents-General are only very minor factors socially in London.

The PREMIER: We do not want them to be otherwise.

Mr. KELSO: Nevertheless we can get great advantage out of this office, and I think it must lie in the direction of finding markets for the great primary products of this State in order that they may be brought to the front. As to butter, it is well known that perhaps a dozen old-established firms in Tooley street can rig the market just as they like. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that we cannot assure any market of a regular supply throughout the year. We have our winter, during which the supply of butter goes down so low that it is very difficult to find enough to supply the local demand, and in the summer time, which is the winter in England, we have the competition of the butter produced in Europe, which has been improving year by year, more especially since pasteurisation has been introduced. The quality of our product is no doubt up to the standard of Danish butter, but it may be that it does not top the market because Denmark is a regular supplier. It could be shown absolutely that our product is as good as anything turned out, but in distribution there may be a few secrets to learn. That is where the office of the Agent-General can do a great deal. Until lately it was considered that London was the great distributing market, but now it appears that other great cities are making a claim to be great distributors also; and, if we had experts all over Great Britain in order to find out not only the best markets but also the best way in which to market our commodities, the office could be made a very useful one indeed. I believe that the office of Agent-General is capable of very great expansion, but it must be done in a businesslike way, and, with all due respect to the gentlemen who have held the office and the gentleman who now holds the office, the point is whether the money which is being spent on the office is going to give us a good return, and that depends on whether it is conducted as a purely commercial business and the money is spent on a commercial basis. For some years past it has been merely a stagnating place for politicians whom the Government wanted to get rid of.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): After listening to the hon. member for Oxley, I came to the conclusion that a trip to the old country was a good thing, although he afterwards qualified what he had said in answer to an interjection from me, and apparently the hon. member for Nundah has arrived at a similar conclusion by different means. When I heard the hon. member for Oxley speaking of the possibilities of expansion of the Agent-General's office and the way in which our goods were being submerged by the influx of goods from other countries, but how it would pay to spend money to put them on the market, I thought we had a new convert. But then by way of interjection he

said he did not want any politicians or any Government interference, and I realised that his was the unfortunate position of the man who saw the disease but was afraid to apply the remedy. The hon. member for Nundah bears out that statement when he follows the hon. member for Oxley. He wants the Government to expand this office and appoint business experts so that they may decide not only where to find markets but also upon a proper system of distribution. Hon. members opposite are on the horns of a dilemma between State socialisation and private enterprise. They can see that the speech of the hon. member for Oxley might very well have been delivered to a body of State socialists, if he were prepared to accept the one method by which his scheme could be carried out. It was a direct and very definite admission of failure on the part of the producers and the manufacturers of this country adequately to market their goods in any centre more than a few hundred miles from their own back door. I am of opinion that the speech of the hon. member for Oxley should be delivered to the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufactures, and the various Local Producers' Associations in the State. In spite of the conclusion at which he eventually arrived, I hope that before very long we shall see hon. members on the opposite side realising that the State is in the best position to establish these distributing agencies. The divided efforts of a number of producers cannot have the same effect as if they were all centred under one head as a State distributing agency, such as the Agent-General's Office in London could be. I congratulate them, however, on their advance towards socialism even now.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): For many years I have spoken on this vote. I was surprised that the Premier, on his return from abroad, did not take into consideration the recommendation that the Agent-General's office in Great Britain be reorganised. I think he paid too much attention to the social side of the position and not sufficient to the commercial side. We do not want men to attend banquets, champagne suppers, and make after-dinner speeches. When Mr. Fihelly went away, he said that he did not intend to attend champagne suppers. We have the Commonwealth representative, Sir Joseph Cook, who is quite capable of attending all the social functions on behalf of Australia, and making very nice after-dinner speeches. We cannot afford to have too many representatives making after-dinner speeches in the old country. We want workers there, and not too much speechifying.

The PREMIER: An hon. gentleman opposite has suggested the importance of the social side.

Mr. MORGAN: I have yet to learn that much business is done after dinner, when persons are more or less filled with champagne. Those representing huge undertakings do not want to talk shop. A lot of money is wasted in mere talk. It would be of some importance if we had what we might call a commercial traveller representing the State, who would go into the business premises of the importer who is prepared to give him orders. It would be far better for him to engage in business transactions with the importer during the proper hours of business rather than meet him at a social function and talk business over a glass of champagne. We should have a real live

Mr. Morgan.]

commercial traveller to represent us—a man who would be able to discover what is required in Great Britain, and who would advise the Australian or Queensland manufacturers as to what is necessary. We should have monthly reports from the Agent-General. I mentioned it to the Premier some time ago, and he thought it was a good suggestion, and said he would try to bring it about. The Agent-General should send monthly reports, and they could be handed to the Press to be published. The reports should inform us as to the quantity of butter held in store in Great Britain during a period—the same with regard to meat and other products that we are interested in—so that we would be able to know whether we should export this month or some other month in order to benefit by the best markets. We very often send our butter over there, and it strikes a bad market, because we are not informed that a lot of butter is to arrive on a certain date. If we had that information we could regulate our supplies, and we would know what to do. We could then export our products to such markets as would bring us a fair return, instead of shipping produce at the wrong time and throwing it on to a glutted market, and have it returning a small price to the producer, as at present. I would like to quote what the hon. member for Cooroora had to say on the matter. We all know that Mr. Walker is not a man to go over to Great Britain merely to attend to the social side of affairs. He would go over there with a view to looking into matters properly. He has had considerable experience in the co-operative handling of the farmers' produce. In a letter to the leader of the Opposition, he says—

"When you said that a commercial man should be put in charge of the Agent-General's office in London you hit the nail right on the head, for at the present time the way it is carried out is only a farce. . . ."

Mr. Walker says the same thing as the ex-Agent-General said.

Mr. COLLINS: Mr. Walker, being a politician, you would not take his word into consideration after listening to the speech by the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. MORGAN: I know Mr. Walker, and the hon. member knows him, too. We know him as a practical man, and one who would not go over to the other side of the world merely to ride in motor-cars and attend champagne suppers. He would go there to get all the information obtainable—with his coat off, so to speak. He would get right down to bedrock to understand the exact position with regard to produce, in which he is interested in Queensland. He further says in his letter—

"The opinion which I have got on the butter, meat, cotton, and other industries of Queensland should have all been given to us by an active commercial man without asking one to go into these questions, more particularly on a pleasure trip."

He admitted that he could not get the information that he wanted on the important matters of butter, meat, and cotton. He had to go round fossicking it out for himself, because the information was not available at the Agent-General's office. If that information is not available at the office, then we

must come to the conclusion that the office is not up to date, and is not carrying out the duty which it was primarily established to carry out. Mr. Walker further says—

"Do your best to alter the whole position, and see that a commercial man be appointed to that position, and I am sure that an active commercial man would be worth thousands to the State regarding the getting over of many of our troubles, and the means of conveying to the producer markets which he does not know at the present time."

This is a point that I have made for several years: There are many markets in England for the produce in Queensland, which the Agent-General should be able to discover, but, unfortunately, the Agent-General does not carry out that work. Unless he does perform it, I would sooner see the position abolished altogether. We are spending about £12,000 per annum on this office, and, unfortunately, we are not getting the results that we should.

The PREMIER: The Agent-General's office was not established solely, but only partly, for the purpose of promoting trade.

Mr. MORGAN: I think the promotion of trade should be the most important consideration. If it is not there solely for that purpose, then four-fifths of its functions should be in connection with promoting trade.

The PREMIER: Four-fifths of the staff are employed on Government indenting.

Mr. MORGAN: We should have monthly reports from the Agent-General. We sometimes get contradictory reports about market values, and they might be inspired. A great deal of money can be made by men cabling out the value of a certain commodity in London, inducing the people to sell their products at a low cost because of a glut on the market as alleged by the cablegram. The cablegram may not contain a true statement as to the market value of a commodity, and a great deal of money is thus made by those "in the know" buying that commodity in Queensland. Those things do happen, as no doubt the Premier knows. Even in our local saleyards we found it necessary to have our own representatives to quote the true value of sheep and cattle, as certain individuals were in the habit of reporting fictitious values. We found it necessary to get our own reporters to make a separate report to the public. There are some people operating at the yards who give information to the Press and state the values received at 2s. to 3s. per 100 lb. in excess of the real value obtained, with a view to keeping up those values.

Similar influences may operate in London. We have no reports to guide us as to the position of the markets there. It would not cost a great deal of money to secure this information, which could be published in the same manner as the other reports. It would greatly assist primary producers if quotations were received regularly from London as to the position of the markets. We were told that, if the exporters made their meat more attractive, better prices would result. The graders and exporters are of the opinion that the meat exported from Australia to-day is of the finest that has ever been sent to Britain, or other parts of the world, and that it reflects credit on the producer. Have the growers received

[Mr. Morgan.]

any more for that beef? The price of beef has not advanced for eighteen months or two years, although it has been made more attractive in appearance. The cost of the preparation of the beef has gone up, although the price has not, and the result has been that the producer has not got the same value for his cattle as he received previously when the meat was not got up so attractively. If the people handling meat in Great Britain receive a greater inducement or commission to handle other beef, they will not handle Australian beef. The Premier has told us that, when he was in England, he went into certain places and on inquiring for Australian canned meats was told that they were not worth stocking.

The TREASURER: That was not canned meats; it was canned fruits.

Mr. MORGAN: They may not have been worth stocking from a commercial point of view because they would not have returned the same profits as similar articles from other parts of the world. That is what we have to contend with. The position of the meat industry will not improve until we establish our own shops to handle our meat. A great number of the retail meat shops in England to-day are "tied" shops. They can only handle Argentine frozen or chilled meat. They cannot handle Australian meat, even if they desire to do so, and must sell such meat over the block as is provided them by the suppliers. They are in a similar position to "tied" public houses. It does not matter in those houses if there is a demand for a certain beer; they must take the beer supplied by the brewery controlling that house, even if the article be an inferior one.

I am pleased to note that the Government did not exhibit the same tendency to spend money when sending away the last two Agents-General as they did previously. I am pleased that the Government realise that those expenses ultimately fall on the general taxpayer. When the Hon. J. M. Hunter was appointed Agent-General, he was given a banquet in the Parliamentary refreshment-rooms, for which a band was engaged, at a cost of £121 15s., while a similar function, given on the eve of the departure of Mr. Fihelly to London, only cost £33 15s. No band was engaged for Mr. Fihelly. Mr. Huxham was sent away without either a dinner or a band. (Laughter.) We are beginning to be sensible, and realise that the people who are struggling outside are the ones who have to foot the bill.

	£	s.	d.
Catering for the farewell function tendered to the Hon. J. M. Hunter at the Exhibition Hall	97	10	0
Band, rent of hall, and sundries	49	4	0
Travelling expenses to enable Hon. J. M. Hunter to visit Roma and Canungra	53	5	4
Railway refreshments, etc.	15	6	1
Special train	22	6	10
Expenses of voyage to England—			
Fares	653	7	6
Advances	923	1	10
Bags, insurance, and sundries	153	7	3
Attendant	64	16	0
Additional fares from New York to Southampton	259	0	11
Total	£2,413	0	9

The Government supplied the then Agent-General with bags. I wonder whether those bags were returned when that occupant completed the term of his office. The cost of returning the Hon. J. M. Hunter was £494 5s. 8d. The expenses in connection with the appointment of Mr. Fihelly in 1922 were—

	£	s.	d.
Expenditure prior to departure—			
Hotel accounts	25	0	2
Car hire	66	3	0
Dinner, Parliament House...	33	15	0
Expenses en route to England—			
Steamer fares	606	18	0
Railway fares, etc.	99	4	9
Sundries	49	9	4
Cash advances	300	0	0
Incidental expenses	7	17	6
Balance of expenses	67	12	10
Return passages to Brisbane—			
Mrs. Fihelly and three children	408	10	0
Nurse	62	0	0
Total	£1,726	10	7

The Government had no need to send a nurse away with Mr. Huxham. (Laughter.) There will, therefore, be a saving in that direction. It cost £494 to bring the Hon. J. M. Hunter back to Queensland, and we have also been told that the cost of returning Mr. Fihelly to Queensland has also been defrayed by the Government. I would like to know whether the salary of Mr. Fihelly ceased when he resigned, or when he arrived at Brisbane.

The PREMIER: His resignation took effect on the day he arrived here.

Mr. MORGAN: Then his salary continued during a considerable time when he was not performing the work. That is wrong. In future it should be made plain to the occupant of the office on being appointed that, if he resigns without notice, as Mr. Fihelly did, or deserts his post, he will not be entitled to his expenses back to Brisbane, and his salary will cease immediately he closes the door of the office he vacates. The Government should not stand that sort of action from a man occupying a high position any more than it does from a man occupying a humble position. If an official receiving £250 to £300 per annum resigned in the same manner as Mr. Fihelly, he would only be paid his salary to the time he ceased to occupy the position. There should be no difference between the treatment of officials occupying high or low positions. The Premier was wrong in deciding that Mr. Fihelly was entitled to his salary up to the time he reached Brisbane. Mr. Fihelly was also paid his expenses back to Brisbane. Taken altogether, he was an expensive Agent-General.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to lay on the table a memorandum received from the late Agent-General, Mr. Fihelly, containing proposals for the reorganisation of the Agent-General's office.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Having regard to the statement made by the late Agent-General, it must be apparent to everyone that something more than a mere tabling of his proposals should be made. Mr.

Fihelly indicated to the public [2 p.m.] Press that the office of Agent-General should be abolished; that it is a mere sinecure; and he drew attention

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

to the matter of graft. A good deal has been said this morning with regard to that matter, but no explanation has been given that can be regarded as satisfactory either to this Committee or to the country. When the Premier speaks again I hope he will let the Committee know if any similar charge has been made by any other retiring Agent-General. If such is the case, the statements made by Mr. Fihelly will be substantiated.

The explanation given by the Premier seemed to indicate that the Agent-General, whilst Agent-General, may speak with one voice, but immediately he retires from that office he is licensed to speak in another direction. Two things like that cannot obtain. Either the conditions are right or the conditions are wrong. Certainly, a report has just been laid on the table carrying recommendations with regard to the administration of the Agent-General's office.

When the Premier was speaking he outlined the very numerous duties that attach to the office of the Agent-General. I can see that even the broad statement of the duties could be very much enlarged upon. I cannot understand how any man could feel that he had conscientiously carried out the many duties of that important office, and say that it is sinecure. To me that is a puzzle. The thing that struck me in connection with the Premier's statement was that Mr. Fihelly had fulfilled the conditions of service attaching to the Agent-General's position to the satisfaction of the Premier, and he knew of nothing that could be said against Mr. Fihelly. The singular point is that, if he filled the office satisfactorily, how could he fail to realise the importance of that office to the State? It would appear from the duties outlined by the Premier that the Agent-General had ample to do. In face of that, instead of now indicating that the office is a mere sinecure, surely Mr. Fihelly would have found it to be an office full of activity even for a mind such as he possesses.

The position is serious. The statement has been made by Mr. Fihelly, who is recognised as being a responsible man, or does responsibility cease when a man leaves office? We should ascertain exactly where and how we stand in this matter. According to our way of thinking, there is abundant scope for the activities of a good man at home. The Premier has also indicated that that is his opinion. The position of Agent-General has been a lifelong one, and most of the States have found that their Agents-General had sufficient to do. No one should suggest abolishing that office in these days of development, when it should be of more and more service to the country. The benefits to be derived from the Agency-General will increase as the country grows.

With regard to the charge of graft, the Premier has indicated that the only opportunity for graft is in connection with the purchase of goods required for Queensland. It would appear that the purchases in the old country during this last year have not been very great and only amount to about £280,000. Certainly commissions could be paid in connection with those services, and it is one of the things that have to be fought against. Occasionally it is found that commissions are allowed in connection with such purchases. That is morally wrong, and inquiry should be made of Mr. Hunter as to whether he is possessed of any knowledge

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

whatever of such a practice. Mr. Huxham is a man we can trust, and he could be asked to report on the matter—that is, if the Committee is not disposed to go further; but these things should be cleared up once and for all. I take it that the Government, no matter what they may determine to make known to the public, will certainly not allow the matter to rest where it is. The duty devolves on them to go to the very bottom of the statements made, and Mr. Fihelly, although not now in the service of his country, should be asked to supply the data on which he founded his charge.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): There is one matter that has not been touched on, and that has not been dealt with by the Premier either—that is in regard to the situation of the Agent-General's office in the Strand. Recently one of the Southern papers published a statement submitted to the Federal Parliament in regard to the activities of the High Commissioner in London, and, when giving the expenditure for Australia House, it said—

“The offices of Queensland and Western Australia would remain outside Australia House. During the year accommodation was offered to the respective Agents-General of those States on generous terms, but without acceptance.”

A public statement has been made by the ex-Agent-General that the best place for the Queensland representation is in Australia House. I think we should give that matter a good deal of consideration. Perhaps the Premier on his recent visit to the old country went into the matter.

So far as the expenditure is concerned, we can very well look at the matter from an Australian point of view. It seems a parochial view to take that Queensland should remain so sadly isolated as she is in the Strand. I had the opportunity of going personally into this matter when I was in London some years ago. It always struck me that the Agent-General's office was in a most deserted spot from the point of view of doing good work. The Strand is never deserted, as far as passers-by are concerned, but it struck me that the office looked very deserted inside, and that Australia House was everlastingly full. I know that quite a number of people who wished to call at the Agent-General's office, first of all went to Australia House, from which they were directed to the Agent-General's office. The Premier might give us some information in regard to that matter.

I want to say a word or two now in regard to the statement made by the ex-Agent-General. This morning we had a good deal of covering up of tracks in regard to the action of that gentleman. In one breath it was said he was doing an injustice, and in another breath that he was possibly the best Agent-General that Queensland has ever had. The statement in regard to the Agent-General's office can only have one interpretation. I disagree with the Premier in saying that the statements could be attributed to the other States as well as to Queensland. I do not think the ex-Agent-General had that in his mind at all. He had in his mind that the position was nothing more or less than “overrun with graft.” The statement explains itself. It has been thought outside that when a man went as Agent-General for any State to England, it did not take him very many years to become wealthy.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you apply that to Sir Horace Tozer, Sir Thomas Robinson, and others?

Mr. KERR: I am applying it to no one. It is generally suggested by those who are perhaps not in authority that once a man is Agent-General he has an opportunity of becoming a fairly wealthy citizen. I venture to say that when the ex-Agent-General said the place was "overrun with graft," he must have had something like that in his mind. Whether he had any offered to him I do not know, but he will be in a position to say.

Mr. COLLINS: He might have been offered work.

Mr. KERR: When the ex-Agent-General—who is a man who stood out on the front Government bench—goes to the old country and returns with a definite statement that the position is "overrun with graft," there is only one conclusion to come to—that that gentleman, who is now a private citizen, has been offered "graft," and if the Premier in his position as Administrator of the State is quite satisfied calmly to let the matter be passed over, we are not doing our duty in Parliament. The time is opportune for the Premier to appoint a Commission, and if necessary call the ex-Agent-General to prove his statement, and let us know where we stand in this matter. That is the only way to face the position.

Queensland has been very unfortunate in the filling of this position. For eighteen months, more or less, we have been practically the laughing stock of Australia. One prominent Australian paper said—

"A favourite recreation of the Queensland Labour Government is appointing Agents-General. Within eighteen months or so it had three—Robinson, Hunter, and Fihelly. Now Fihelly is supposed to be coming back to nurse a House of Representatives constituency, and Huxham may take his place. And if the Fihelly plans go awry, Jones, who sits for Paddington, Jack's old Assembly seat, will be in the way, wherefore it is already suggested that Jones may succeed Huxham. It costs about £1,500 to carry a dissatisfied or superfluous Minister and his belongings to London, for these things are done on the grand scale. Something might be saved by making a contract job of it."

It appears to me that something in the nature of a contract job has been made of it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You need not worry about "Jones" taking the job. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: No; the hon. gentleman had his experience. I am not going to mince words in this Chamber when it comes to the appointment of a gentleman to fill such an important position as Agent-General. We know that the gentleman who has been appointed is possibly one of the finest gentlemen we could meet socially, and possibly he has the missionary spirit; but, under the party system of government in Australia generally, and in Queensland in particular, we have been doing nothing else but appointing party hacks to fill these positions.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is just what we have not been doing. That is what we ought to do.

Mr. KERR: It was very well known that Mr. Fihelly, at the time of his appointment, was a thorn in the side of his Government for various reasons. He was given this job in London. Now another vacancy has occurred. What do we find? An aged gentleman going to a position which requires reorganisation, which calls for the ability and energy of a young man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Like yourself.

Mr. KERR: Possibly. It is time we faced the position instead of transferring party hacks who have given the best years of their life to the Labour movement to very important duties on the other side of the world.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you think "Bob" Joyce should have been appointed?

Mr. KERR: I do not know "Bob" Joyce at all; the hon. member may know him. The same old procedure is followed in Queensland. Let us take the case of another politician, Sir George Reid. He was a very capable politician—the best politician offering for the position of High Commissioner of Australia when it became vacant. He served his term, and had it extended for twelve months by the Commonwealth Parliament, and then said he would do the job for nothing if they retained him. But another party was in power and they wanted another party hack, and Mr. Fisher was appointed.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the hon. member that the question before the Committee is the vote "Agent-General for the State."

Mr. KERR: I am drawing a comparison between the methods of appointing Agents-General in this State and in Australia generally. Mr. Fisher was a good High Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. KERR: I am drawing a comparison, and saying that politicians have been appointed to similar positions without any other consideration whatsoever all over Australia, but particularly so in Queensland. In South Africa they have had three High Commissioners, and two of them died in harness—men who were not appointed from the political ranks, but were men of business capacity who reorganised the office—the very thing that Queensland required in her Agent-General's office.

Every speaker on this vote has made reference to the finding of markets for Queensland produce overseas. That is a very important function of the office, and we should have a representative to do that so as to assist the people in Queensland. The Premier complained that the exporters were not fully utilising the office. Why? Simply because the Agent-General has for years and years served his political life with a certain party. We should have a business man in the position—one who will be able to help to work out the destinies of the State, as is intended by the Agent-General's office. I am not quibbling at all with the salary now proposed to be paid. It is a point for discussion when we recollect that our public servants in Queensland are being reduced in salary whilst this official is to receive an

Mr. Kerr.]

increase of £250 per annum. That will undoubtedly be a bone of contention at a later stage. The New South Wales Agent-General receives a salary of £1,850; the Victorian Agent-General a salary of £1,750 per annum; and the Western Australian Agent-General a salary of £1,500 per annum. I have previously pointed out that we were underpaying our Agent-General, and I am glad that we are at last going a little way towards fixing an adequate salary for the Agent-General, so as to maintain the dignity of the office in the same way as the other States of Australia. According to the upkeep of the various offices, we are not doing the same amount of business as New South Wales and Victoria. The cost of upkeep of the Queensland Agent-General's office is £10,997; the cost of the New South Wales Agent-General's office is £7,223; of the Victorian Agent-General's office, £8,250; of the South Australian Agent-General's office, £5,244; and of the Western Australian Agent-General's office, £4,788.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Our exports exceed our imports.

Mr. KERR: If the hon. gentleman believes that, he is making a very big mistake. A schoolboy could tell the hon. gentleman why our exports exceed our imports.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Can the hon. gentlemen tell us?

Mr. KERR: We are indenting from the other States. Here we have the Queensland Agent-General's office costing about £10,000, and the other States do not reach that figure.

The PREMIER: I believe that New South Wales and Victoria pay in addition a considerable sum to engineering firms for the inspection of material.

Mr. KERR: Possibly so. Does the Premier mean to infer that we are not doing that?

The PREMIER: We pay our own inspectors.

Mr. KERR: Our indents amount to about £250,000, and if the other States are not paying their own inspectors, then our office must be overstaffed.

The PREMIER: The New South Wales and Victorian Governments pay an extra amount to engineering firms to do that work.

Mr. KERR: That may be a more economic method, because their services are not continually required. For rates, rent, and insurance in connection with the Queensland Agent-General's office, we pay something in the vicinity of the whole cost of the upkeep of the Western Australian Agent-General's office. Surely there is something wrong there. I hope that the Premier will not only give us an explanation, but his opinion, whether, as recommended by Mr. Sheppard, the official secretary in Australia House to the Commonwealth Government, the offices of the Agent-General should not be transferred to Australia House and the present offices let. The Agent-General said that was an easy thing to do and would be a profitable transaction, and that the offices should not be in an isolated position. The taxpayer will have to pay the extra expense, but we have to remember that Queensland is but a cog in the wheel of Australia. Australia House is a magnificent building, and a credit to Australia, and the office of our Agent-General should be situated there.

[Mr. Kerr.

Mr. TAYLOR (Windsor): I have listened to the discussion on the Agent-General's office and have read the statements made by the late Agent-General with regard to the necessity and use of that office. If we are to take into consideration the work performed by the late Agent-General and consider it as the whole of the work required to be carried out by an Agent-General, then we should shut up the office. Personally, I think that is not so. There is any amount of room for an Agent-General in London to represent this State and carry out effective work. When a person accepts the position of Agent-General for a State such as Queensland he is not only representing the Government there for the reception of tenders for certain articles required by the State but the interests of the State as a whole. It is recognised, when he accepts the position, that he has to fulfil those duties. The late Agent-General said that the position is a sinecure. It is not a sinecure. There is any amount of work to be done to occupy the whole of the time of every man who accepts the position and adequately represent the State. None of the other States has thought it worth its while to withdraw its Agent-General from London. The Government should, if possible, clear up the statements made by the late Agent-General. He made a reference to graft. He professes to know something about that matter, and he should give the fullest possible information to the Premier or Government with regard to matters of that kind. Hon. members are very much in the dark as to what happened when the Premier and the late Agent-General met in New York. I do not know whether the Premier gave Mr. Fihelly a bit of his mind when they met there; but, if he did not, he should have done so. I only hope he did, and that he told him during the conversation to go somewhere. The proceedings in connection with the vacation of the Agent-General's office by Mr. Fihelly, so far as we are able to judge in Queensland, were most irregular. He appears to have flouted the Government in every possible way. He took the bit in his teeth, as it were, and resigned in an irregular manner from an appointment that he had received in good faith. When a man receives an appointment like that from the Government he should carry out the specifications of the contract in their entirety unless he and the Government come to an agreement under which he can vacate the position.

I do not know anything about what has been said in connection with the location of the Agent-General's office, but the Government should know their own mind, and the opinion of other Governments as to whether the present offices are suitable or not. It is a matter which the Government might very well consider.

It has been said that political appointments have been made to the position of Agent-General. That has been the case for a number of years, not only in Queensland, but all over Australia.

I do think that it is many a long year since the State had as Agent-General an official to compare with Sir Thomas Robinson when he occupied that position. [2.30 p.m.] Apart altogether from party matters, I think that, if any man ever carried out the duties of Agent-General efficiently and thoroughly—I am not saying anything about the gentleman who is

about to fill the position—it was Sir Thomas Robinson. I think there are certain positions, especially that of Agent-General, that should not be filled by politicians.

Mr. COLLINS: Tell us what is wrong with politicians.

Mr. TAYLOR: A good many things are wrong with politicians. If the hon. member will only travel outside a little and hear what people have to say about politicians, he will soon get his eyes opened. Politicians are not held in high esteem by the people outside. Whether they are right or wrong, I am not going to say.

Mr. COLLINS: They are wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why squib on your "cobbers"?

Mr. TAYLOR: I think myself that in the majority of cases politicians are utterly incapable of carrying out such duties. I have said this not only in connection with the office of Agent-General but in connection with other matters. With regard to Mr. Huxham, I certainly think that we have in him a gentleman who will worthily represent the State. He is a man who commands respect not only in this Chamber but throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, and probably throughout those parts of Australia where he is known. That does not alter the fact that politicians should not be appointed to a position like this. This position involves not only governmental matters but other matters of importance, and I think the best man obtainable should get the position. At present we only get from the Agent-General an annual report dealing with this market and that market. It can be of no use, as the information is many months old when it reaches us. Why should we not receive a monthly report from the Agent-General keeping our people in touch with the existing markets—not only the markets operating in London but other Continental markets operating to the advantage or disadvantage of and in competition with Queensland? We should receive a monthly report as to what is happening or is likely to happen, so far as the Agent-General can determine. This would give us accurate information to place before our people. Not only the Government but the people of Australia generally are interested in the export of our primary products. We are absolutely dependent on that at present. If it were not for our export of wool, I do not know where we would be. There are other matters associated with the export trade of Queensland on which we want particular advice from time to time, and not in a report at the end of each year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you not get your cable reports from London every day?

Mr. TAYLOR: We do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then why do you want the Agent-General to send them?

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman and other hon. members opposite are always saying that those cable reports are from interested parties, who have an advantage to gain. I take it that, if the Agent-General sent those reports, he would be a disinterested person.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You seem to be backing up the idea.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not backing it up at all. If the Agent-General sent those daily

reports, he would not be representing any industry or calling. That ought to be of value. If the reports are to be of any value, it depends absolutely on the man sending them and on his capacity. If he has not the capacity, then, of course, the reports are of no value at all. We must have someone with a keen knowledge of what is happening with regard to exports and imports, if he is to be of any use.

I hope that the Premier, for the sake of the office and of Queensland generally, will take the public into his confidence with regard to the Agent-General and the charges that have been made by the late occupant of the office. If there is anything in these charges, let us know it. If he finds it impossible to hold an inquiry which will be of any use, I am quite prepared to accept that. It then will not be the fault of the Premier, but the hon. gentleman should endeavour to clear up these matters so that the people of Queensland can be satisfied that everything in connection with the Agent-General's office is what it should be.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): A good deal of this debate has centred round the necessity for an Agent-General's office in London, and I hope it will not be too long before the debate is ended. It is ridiculous to have an Agent-General in London to represent each State, as the High Commissioner for the Commonwealth could do all that is necessary.

As regards the odour in which politicians are held by the friends of hon. members opposite, this would continue while the hon. member gives publicity to rumours of this kind.

Mr. VOWLES: It is a direct statement by a responsible person.

Mr. RIORDAN: If it is a direct statement by a responsible person, then it is his own fault for getting into bad odour with the people outside. I think the hon. member for Windsor was speaking for himself in regard to that matter. The position of Agent-General is practically a commercial traveller's job. The office serves very little purpose, and the State does not get a proper return for the money expended, and the sooner the office is abolished the better it will be for the State.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I do not agree with the remarks of the last speaker, as I think an Agent-General is absolutely essential, but the office should be remodelled on business lines. I think we at this end are just as much to blame as those at the other end. At the present time, if anybody in Queensland desires to send samples to the Agent-General, he has to go in a roundabout manner to do it, and we should have in Brisbane an officer to represent the Agent-General so that we could send our samples to Great Britain without trouble. The hon. member for Oxley referred to some articles sent to the Agent-General in London that arrived in bad condition. That was the fault of the people at this end, and not the fault of those individuals who prepared the articles, because they did not send them to the Agent-General. If we had some officer on this side who would be responsible for sending samples home and for the obtaining of reports as to their suitability for the home market, it would be of immense advantage to the producers here. At the present time the co-operative companies cannot make use of the Agent-General's office because it

Mr. Warren.]

is not managed on business lines. If the Government made the office efficient, then we could use it for the purpose of exhibiting our goods, and it could also obtain information as to where the best markets are. The hon. member for Fitzroy talked about State socialism. If the Agent-General's office is to be anything of that sort, then wipe it out altogether. But, if you make it what it was intended to be instead of providing a rosy position or a social position for some politician, then I am convinced that the people of Queensland, and the producers in particular, will be very grateful. I have nothing to say against the gentleman who is now occupying the position. I think that the remuneration which is being paid is altogether too little. I do not think we shall get the man we want, who will feel the pulse of the British markets and give us that useful information which is so essential to the producers here, for the amount we are paying at the present time. The cost of living in England is very high, and I do not think it is possible to get a man who is absolutely suitable to fill the bill to make his home for such a length of time in the old country for the emolument which is offered. It was reported when the Premier was in England, that he said that he would suggest a business man for the position, and I thought that the party opposite had accepted his opinion and that a business man would be appointed, which would have been a very wise move. Whether "graft" or anything else of an undesirable nature is taking place in the Agent-General's office or not, it is about time that the office was overhauled and a better system adopted.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I take it that it is the function of the Opposition to defend the Government in connection with the happenings or the true reasons which actuated the return of the two late Agents-General, whom they themselves appointed out of their own ranks and who prior to such appointment held ministerial office. One matter which has struck me in connection with the discussion which has ranged round the late Agent-General is this: Where are Mr. Fihelly's friends to-day? (Opposition laughter.) Insinuations have been made in regard to Mr. Fihelly—certainly not by the Premier, who stated that Mr. Fihelly was efficient in the performance of his duty; and I dare say that most of us remember the trouble taken and the inquiries made by Mr. Fihelly in connection with the marketing of Queensland meat, butter, and other products—but there is a kind of atmosphere that the late Agent-General has done something which he should not have done. Mr. Fihelly and I have always been politically opposed and we have fought many a hard battle, but he is a man with whom I have a personal friendship, and whom I have always recognised as being a man of ability. He must have had ability or he would not have occupied the responsible position which he held in his party, nor would he have been looked upon by his party as one of its leaders whenever ability was required, more particularly in connection with election campaigns. Yet to-day apparently he is deserted by the men who should have stood by him through thick and thin, and his name is received in silence. Although Mr. Fihelly was my political opponent, I have always had a regard for him as a personal friend. We all know that the late Agent-General was a very

[*Mr. Warren.*

active man—always wanting to do something—and I can quite realise that, when he became Agent-General and entered on the duties of his office in London, he found that he was circumscribed and hemmed in. When the maturing loans had to be renewed and the financial institutions in London negotiated with, the negotiations might well have been left to him, but he found that he was sidetracked. With the knowledge I have of Mr. Fihelly, I can quite realise that he felt accordingly, and there is no doubt he is not a man who would be content to be sidetracked when a responsibility arose in which he might take an active part and show that he had the energy and ability within him to carry out the negotiations.

There is one other matter which I wish to mention. I have been struck by the fact that no mention has been made by the Chief Secretary of the system of nominated immigrants. I would like to know whether any provision is made this year for that system of immigration, because I consider that by that means we have obtained some of the most valuable immigrants that have ever been introduced into Queensland.

THE PREMIER: The matter is always provided for in the Trust Estimates.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am particularly concerned about this matter, because I am of opinion that they are the most valuable immigrants we have ever had. They were always of a good class, and they always go straight to the care of the friends who have nominated them and who make arrangements for their future.

There is another matter in regard to the Estimates generally which I may as well mention whilst I am on my feet, although I did not intend to do so when I rose to speak. I refer to the fact that hon. members are somewhat handicapped on the present Estimates owing to the fact that the departmental reports have not been circulated, as is the usual custom. Had they been available, it would have been possible for hon. members to offer more criticism or otherwise with such information in connection with the departments. In my opinion and from my experience it is wise to have the reports when we are discussing the Estimates, and I am sorry that it has not been possible in this case, because hon. members are able to discuss them only in a general way instead of specifically as heretofore.

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*): With reference to the statement of Mr. Fihelly, I would like to point out that the charges were not levelled against him. Charges have been levelled against the Government. Definite charges were laid, and the definite statement was made by him that the office of Agent-General was a sinecure and not required, and that it was "overrun with graft."

THE PREMIER: It might have been a definite charge, but it was not very specific.

MR. MOORE: It is the duty of the Government to obtain a specific charge. When an Agent-General comes back and makes a definite statement, it is the duty of the Government to sift that statement and ascertain what is in it. Instead of that, we find that, as soon as the Premier comes back, an appointment is made. Before he came back there were rumours all round the country that a certain person was to be appointed. The usual thing happened—the person who it

was rumoured would be appointed denied that there was anything in the statement. On the Premier's return he was asked to receive a deputation from the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, so that they might put forward their views in connection with the suggested appointment of a business man to the position.

Mr. HARTLEY: That was "Bob" Joyce.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that any particular individual was mentioned. The Chamber of Commerce requested that they should be allowed to put their views before the Premier. The Premier put them off, and before they could interview him Mr. Huxham was appointed. I have nothing to say against Mr. Huxham, but when an Agent-General comes back and makes the definite statement that the office is of no value and should be abolished, then the matter should be inquired into before taking any hasty action in appointing someone else—another politician—to the position. It looked as though the Government were desirous of getting some person out of the way to make room for someone lower down. There is no charge against the ex-Agent-General, but there is a charge against the Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: The trouble is that we did not appoint your nominee, "Bob" Joyce.

Mr. MOORE: My nominee, as the hon. gentleman says?

Mr. HARTLEY: The nominee of your crowd.

Mr. MOORE: The only suggestion about Mr. Joyce was contained in a cable published in the Press to the effect that the Premier was going to appoint Mr. Joyce.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That cable never came.

Mr. MOORE: Whether it came or not, it appeared in the Press.

The PREMIER: There was no cable from me to the Government suggesting the appointment of Mr. Joyce.

Mr. MOORE: I do not say there was a cable from the hon. gentleman to the Government, but the statement was made that he was going to appoint Mr. Joyce. The Government should have taken the public into its confidence before making another appointment. If any Government sends an individual home, and after two years' experience that official makes a definite statement that the office should be abolished, then before another appointment is made information should be given to the public as to the correctness or otherwise of the statement.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. gentleman think that on that statement we are warranted in having an inquiry?

Mr. MOORE: I most certainly do think so.

The PREMIER: He did not make the statement as Agent-General.

Mr. MOORE: He made it the next day. It is only splitting straws to say that when he had reached Queensland he was no longer Agent-General.

The PREMIER: A statement from the Agent-General generally carries much more authority than would otherwise be the case.

Mr. MOORE: I suppose that as an official of the Government he could not make the

same statement as a paid official, but as soon as he was free to make it he did make it.

The PREMIER: If he found that there was anything irregular in the Agent-General's office he should have made a report.

Mr. MOORE: He should have made a report to come before this Chamber, and no appointment should have been made until the matter had been investigated.

The PREMIER: I agree that he should have made a report on the subject.

Mr. MOORE: The statement was made public, and it appeared in the Press, and the matter should have been cleared up before another appointment was made. It would have only been an act of courtesy on the part of the Premier to have received the deputation from the Chamber of Commerce in Brisbane before making a hasty appointment. It did not look well, and the whole position wanted investigating before the appointment was made.

Question put and passed.

AUDIT OFFICE.

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

"That £15,981 be granted for 'Audit Office.'"

Question put and passed.

INTELLIGENCE AND TOURIST BUREAU.

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

"That £3,120 be granted for 'Intelligence and Tourist Bureau.'"

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I have noticed quite a lot of comment in Brisbane in the last day or two in reference to Mr. P. J. Nally, an officer of this department. I understand that he has been visiting America. I would like to know if Mr. Nally visited that part of the world with the authority of the Government, if so, what he was paid, what duty he performed, and any other information that is available? I understand that Mr. Nally has been engaged by the Government during the last few years in compiling in book form records of the various beauty spots of Queensland. I would like to know if he visited America with any official status and what he was paid.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): Mr. Nally is an officer of the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau. He was entitled to certain leave and took that leave in America at his own expense. He was not paid any expenses by the Government.

Hon. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I would like to say a word in praise of the services to Queensland of Mr. Eaborn, the director of the Sydney branch of the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau.

The PREMIER: A very good officer.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: He is a most courteous officer, and takes the greatest pains to see that all the wants and requirements of inquirers are attended to and provided for. I am very glad to see that the slight increase of £40 has been made in his salary. It is really very well deserved, but his remuneration is even now very small for such an efficient officer when compared with

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

the salary of a similar officer in New South Wales. I have very much pleasure indeed in expressing my thanks to that gentleman for what he has done for me individually.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear! He is a very good officer.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Some hon. members have just returned from a visit of inspection to the irrigation scheme at Castle Creek. Hon. members are anxious to see that scheme made a very great success. I observe that provision is made in these Estimates for an assistant photographer at £205. I take it that the Government wish to get settlers up in that area as soon as possible, and I suggest to the Government the advisability of the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau, through the Irrigation Commissioner, securing a set of motion picture slides to be displayed throughout Queensland and Australia in order to advertise that area.

The PREMIER: I am prepared to consider that suggestion.

Mr. TAYLOR: Thank you. It will be well worth the money it will cost.

Question put and passed.

MUSEUM, BRISBANE.

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

“That £5,391 be granted for ‘Museum, Brisbane.’”

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND.

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

“That £2,013 be granted for ‘Public Library of Queensland.’”

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): When I was in the Public Library some months ago, I heard a remark which gave rise to my present speech. A gentleman in the library said, “Don’t wake it up.” I think that remark applies pretty aptly to the library. From what I could see of it, after studying it for some time, I think it is more of a sheltering institution for those who frequent Queen’s Gardens. We are spending £2,000 a year on this institution, and I would like to see it reorganised. Perhaps an investigation could be made in the Southern States to see how their public libraries are operating. I want to [3 p.m.] draw a comparison between our dead Public Library and the live institutions of the South. Year after year we have been passing this vote, and nothing has been said or done to galvanise the institution into life. I shall quote the number of volumes in the various libraries—

	Volumes.
Sydney	314,000
Melbourne	282,000
Adelaide	114,000
Perth	114,000

While in Queensland we have a miserable 43,000 volumes. That alone does not signify a great deal, but in Melbourne and Adelaide the libraries are great assets to the State. They are lending libraries, and send their books out to every country district. Our library is doing nothing of a similar nature. The library connected with the Railway

[*Hon. J. G. Appel.*

Department, of which the Assistant Home Secretary has a knowledge, is an excellent institution so far as the railway employees are concerned. That institution sends books over the whole of Queensland.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Of course, it has the advantage of the railways behind it.

Mr. FARRELL: The library of the Workers’ Educational Association operates in the same way.

Mr. KERR: Our Public Library is a tax on Queensland, and we should consider the necessity of bringing it to a similar level with those of the Southern States. One realises that there are many private libraries. It is very expensive to join a private library. I know some private libraries where you pay 6d. to take out one book. Hon. members can imagine that with books changing hands about twenty-six times a year, each book brings in a good amount of money.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is the best speculation I have heard of yet. Do they lend the “*Courier*” and “*Daily Mail*”?

Mr. KERR: It is a good speculation. The hon. gentleman has brought up another point which is a very pertinent one while we are dealing with the subject of libraries. Why are we asked to pay 2d. for our daily papers in Brisbane, when they pay only 1d. in Sydney?

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I will see the Commissioner of Prices about that. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: We are backward so far as our Public Library is concerned. In Western Australia—a State with a smaller population than Queensland—there are 263 public libraries, as against 206 in Queensland. I want to impress upon the Committee the necessity for improvement in this matter. Our Public Library could very well be extended to meet the requirements of the school libraries. It could assist the school children if we utilised our present resources as a means of exchanging and furnishing books for the school libraries.

The Public Library of Queensland, on which we spend over £2,000, could very well be galvanised into life. I would like to see this library created a separate entity so that it would be in a position to do something of value in the community, more especially in regard to circulating libraries and in regard to State schools. The hon. member for Herbert recently stated that there was going to be introduced into this House a Bill to provide a maximum of £2,000 for buildings for schools of arts and libraries. That is another instance of members going outside Parliament to make announcements as to what is going to happen in Parliament at some subsequent date. I do not know whether the Premier is in the position to say that it is proposed to expend on libraries in Queensland and schools of arts a maximum of £2,000, as stated by the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: I recommend that consideration be given to the question of public libraries, and that the Public Library of Queensland be galvanised into an institution that will render good service to the people and provide the free circulation and exchange of books throughout the whole of Queensland, which will be of great benefit to this State.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER.

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

“That £7,730 be granted for ‘Public Service Commissioner.’”

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): This is a very important vote, and I do not think it should go through without some remark. It will be noted from the Estimates that the sum asked for this year is £7,730, and, if you turn to the year 1920, you will find that in that year less than half that sum was required. We find that the staff has been built up by the appointment of additional inspectors, that it is functioning in avenues where it should never have functioned, and there has been a good deal of trouble and discontent—whether Ministers know it or not I do not know—in the public service by reason of the inspectors usurping the functions of the Under Secretaries. If you read the duties of inspectors under the Public Service Act, you will find that they and not the Under Secretaries are responsible for the control of the departments. In the olden days an Under Secretary had complete control of his staff and the efficient working of his department, but too much pin-pricking is coming in to-day. It will be recollected that the Victorian police fight was caused by what were known as “pin pricks in the service.”

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You do not suggest that the public service inspectors are on the same plane, do you?

Mr. KERR: I am pointing out that the Government are appointing inspectors to do the work of the Under Secretaries, and I can prove my words by quoting what their duties are. The duties of inspectors are—

“(i.) The efficiency, economy, and general working of the department.

“(ii.) Overlapping as between department and department, branch and branch, officer and officer. Concrete recommendations as to meeting same, with graph in illustration.

“(iii.) Understaffing and overstaffing. Recommendations as to necessary adjustments.

“(iv.) Ratio of juniors to seniors which might be maintained and size of section which it should be possible for a responsible officer to control.

“(v.) Particulars of work performed by each officer.

“(vi.) Aptitude of an officer for the work and general suitability for the position.

“(vii.) If salary is within the automatic scale, whether the work has reached sufficient importance to warrant classification.

“(viii.) Whether any classified officer is in receipt of a greater salary than is reasonably sufficient for the work performed by him. Recommendations for adjustment.

“(ix.) Arrangements which are made for giving officers a general training for the filling of the various positions in the department.

“(x.) Standardisation of methods and the adoption of uniform methods of procedure in cases where these things are desirable and necessary.”

The cost of the office has advanced from £3,000 in 1920 to £7,000 at the present time. One of the main items of expense is the appointment of four inspectors, whose duties are to go through the departments and see that economy is practised by the officials. You can very well allow our Under Secretaries and senior officers of departments to run their own shows. There has been too much pin-pricking in the public service altogether, and it is not conducive to the best interests of the service.

Mr. FARRELL: Do you want to abolish the office altogether?

Mr. KERR: I venture to say that before inspectors were appointed to pry into the affairs of public officers we had an equally efficient service in Queensland. The hon. member knows that, although approximately the same amount of work is done now as before, it takes nearly double the staff to do it to-day. We have not been game to tackle this question, but it should be tackled, and this is the place to tackle it. I do not agree with inspectors going round and usurping the functions of others. There should be some co-ordinating authority in the service. We had originally a board composed of Under Secretaries which did very excellent work.

Mr. FARRELL: I agree with you that we have appointed a Czar as Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. KERR: That is what I have previously pointed out. What does Mr. Story say when an increase comes along? He says—

“The correct time at which variations should take effect was obviously from the beginning of the financial year, as variations of classification were closely interwoven with the financial policy of the Government.”

We know what a disastrous financial position the State is in, and that on account of that the State public service suffered a reduction of 5 per cent. In my opinion, there is no need for him to usurp the functions of the Under Secretaries and senior officers, who should be given an opportunity of doing their work without this unnecessary interference. There would be a better result obtained in the public service than by the appointment of the officers who are now being appointed.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The service was previously controlled by Commissioners.

Mr. KERR: The Under Secretary is responsible to the Minister. If 100 inspectors go into his department, he is still the responsible officer. If some outsider can go in on the ground of seeing to economy and efficiency, the Under Secretary not only loses control of things but loses interest in his work. That is the position in the public service to-day.

Another point I want to deal with is in regard to the affiliation of the Public Service Association with the Australian Labour party. To my thinking, unionism to-day has reached a point which is very desirable. But, when you find that the public servants of the State are taken beyond the realms of unionism and placed in a political wing of an organisation to cultivate a political ideal—that is, the Labour ideal—then I say that you will find the public servants deteriorating in the eyes of the people. I say that many boys who would

Mr. Kerr.]

give the very best service in the public service will not venture into it because they find that they have to carry out Labour ideals.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the vote?

Mr. KERR: Certainly. I say that the public servants involved under the vote we are discussing are forced to join a political union.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: They are not forced at all. It is a matter of choice.

Mr. KERR: They took a vote of the public servants and the result was unfavourable.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. KERR: If I am not to be permitted to discuss the public service under the vote for the Public Service Commissioner, I do not know where I am going to discuss it. The public servants to-day are affiliated with the political wing of the Government, although they should know no politics.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: There is no vote here for the Trades Hall.

Mr. KERR: I am not talking about the Trades Hall. I am talking about the hon. member's party. This is the only vote where we can discuss this question. It is a question whether a public servant should be forced into joining a political party.

Mr. HARTLEY: They carried preference to unionists, did they not?

Mr. KERR: I am not talking about that.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is the governing factor.

Mr. KERR: Hon. members opposite know that thousands of unionists do not vote for their party and never will. I am not talking about political unionism, but about the public servants being compelled to join the political wing of the Government.

The PREMIER: The executive of the association decided that for themselves, and were not forced by anybody outside.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman must know what is going on. The executive had no right to affiliate the public service with Australian Labour Party, as they did.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member suggest that we should have prevented the executive from making that decision?

Mr. KERR: I say that the Government ought to have taken action, and not have protected the executive, which they did. I say that the executive were given specific instructions by a majority of the public servants who said that they were not going to be attached to any political party. The hon. gentleman should deal with it. He deals with everything else when it suits him; but, when it comes to something in favour of this Government, he does not take that action which is absolutely necessary to protect the public servants. I know that hundreds of public servants voted against becoming a part of the political wing of the organisation, but they are not protected by their employers, the Government. It is time some action was taken. We expect to get the very best from the servants of the Government—I venture to say that the majority are giving us of their very best—and we ought not to injure our chances by bringing politics into their lives and work. Politics ought not to enter into the work of outside workers, but the public servants are being

[*Mr. Kerr.*

forced into an organisation. The executive is nothing more or less than a political organisation.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You ought to address a mass meeting.

Mr. KERR: Yes, and I would tell them what I am saying here to-day. I do not hide my opinions either here or outside. I am man enough to stand up to what I say both inside and outside this Chamber. It is not in the best interests of the State to have the public servants forced under a certain political wing. I hope that they will use their vote wisely at the plebiscite before the next election of officers. During a recent debate it was stated that the public servants were a privileged class. The Ministers who made that statement had no right to make it. Public servants go to work in the morning, work all day, and go home at night. How are they more privileged than any other class? It is suggested that they have a permanent position. The positions in the public service to-day are no more permanent than positions in banks, insurance companies, or outside firms. As a matter of fact, the public servants' positions in the clerical division are less secure than those of the others I have mentioned. The reason for that is because the finances of the State are in such a bad way that you never know when your turn is coming to be deflated—you can call it deflated or retrenched as you like. A Labour Government have no right to say that the public servants are a privileged class.

Mr. HARTLEY: A Labour Government did not say that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: I must obey your call to order, Mr. Pollock. You have given me a very good "go." It is extraordinary that you have permitted me to go so far. I appreciate it very much indeed, because it has been said that you are a strong man in the right place. You have given me a great deal of latitude, and I hope that my remarks will be fully considered.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION BOARD.

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

"That £1,565 be granted for 'Public Service Superannuation Board.'"

Question put and passed.

STATE STORES BOARD.

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

"That £11,959 be granted for 'State Stores Board.'"

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I notice in this vote that there is an increase of about £1,000. I also notice that in 1923-24 there was one senior buyer on a salary of £450 per annum, and that the salary has now been increased to £525 per annum. This year two assistant buyers are provided for at a salary of £305 per annum each, and I would like some information from the Premier with regard to those increases. The number of typists has been increased from three to six. I do not know whether the business has grown to such an extent as to require the extra assistance indicated. I have said before that the State

Stores Board should have been established a number of years ago. I do not know to what extent it is operating, or whether it is buying for the whole of the Government departments, including the Railway Department, the Government Printing Office, etc. If it is doing that, then it has quite a lot of work to-day. I think the Premier should give us a little information in regard to this branch, because it is an activity in connection with the administration of affairs that will save the State tens of thousands of pounds by keen, careful buying, not only here and in other States, but also abroad. It is certainly one of those positions where the salaries paid should be of such a nature as would preclude anyone coming along and offering the officers anything in the nature of a bribe. I do not say that is being done in this case, but that it is done and has been done in the past in other matters is well known. We know that a £5 or £10 note might possibly cost the State £100.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): As the hon. member for Windsor has stated, there has been a change in the method of purchasing Government stores. The Chief Secretary's Department administers and controls the State Stores Board. Under the old system of purchasing Government stores, purchases were made by the Government Storekeeper. Latterly, and because the operations of the Government were extending, the departments have been growing, and a multiplicity of buying organisations were springing up until it was thought advisable to concentrate the buying organisation into one department under responsible officers of the department who were interested, and who would watch the administration and control of the board. This policy necessitated some increases in the staff, but where such increases have taken place there has been a corresponding saving in the various departments whose purchases are now made by the State Stores Board. Provision is made for two new assistant buyers and three new typists. Though the staff shows a numerical increase, they are really officers who have been transferred from other departments. Many of the officers now engaged on the board were previously performing duties in other departments. The purchase of supplies has now been simplified. The necessity for the increase in the staff is shown by the volume of business now transacted. The purchases made by the board for the year 1922-23 amounted to £195,000, whereas last year they totalled £300,000, or an increase of £102,000. Departmental store purchases have increased from £211,000 in 1922-23 to £312,000 in 1923-24. The cash receipts for 1922-3 were £195,000 as against £289,000 in 1923-24, and whereas the cash payments in the early part of 1922-23 totalled £204,000 they now total £284,000. It will be recognised that there has been a considerable increase in the volume of business done by the board. These figures do not indicate that the departments are requiring that increased volume of goods and commodities in stock. It only means that the operations through the central organisation have increased because the operations have been co-ordinated and placed under the control of one authority. The volume previously might have been as great, but so many different departments were engaged in making purchases that the Government Storekeeper had

only comparatively a small volume of business under his control. I am sure that the creation of the board has been justified by the economy that has been effected and the satisfaction that has been given to the various departments, while there has been less chance of corruption than under the old system.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Can the Premier inform the Committee whether there is any proposal that the board should function for the Hospital Boards?

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I cannot say whether any such suggestion is under consideration. The State Stores Board would be quite willing to do so if the Hospital Board desired. At present the board only operates for the Government departments, but there will be no objection if it is desired to requisition its services for the Hospital Board.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I would like to emphasise the remarks of the hon. member for Enoggera. In New South Wales a saving of 12½ per cent. was made by the State Stores Board purchasing for the hospitals. Generally speaking, by calling for tenders in London or America, a saving of at least 12½ per cent. was effected, and the successful tenderers were mostly London firms.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

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

“That £41,675 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services.’”

There are one or two items which I should mention. The first item “Subsidy for a steamer service between Brisbane and the Gulf ports, £4,000” refers to a service that has been existing for two or [3.30 p.m.] three years. The firm of John Burke, Limited, has been running a steamer to the Gulf ports. The agreement with that firm is nearly completed, and I have no doubt we shall have to make further arrangements.

The vote for “Advertising the State” has been increased by £500 because of the demand for official publications and pamphlets issued by the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau has been great. We have a wide distribution of these pamphlets in the Southern States, and probably it would be good business to increase it.

There is a new item—“Expenses of Tropical Diseases Bureau, £200.” That is an Imperial institution. The Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote to the various States last year, pointing out the financial difficulties of this institution. He said that it was usual for tropical countries to make a contribution towards the upkeep of the bureau, and we agreed to grant £200.

With regard to the vote, “Life Passes over Australian Railways to ex-Ministers, £2,400,” it will be noticed from the footnote that—

“Approximately £1,900 will be received by the Railway Department as its share of the cost of Life Passes issued to Commonwealth and State ex-Ministers.”

State ex-Ministers have been accustomed to receiving from the various Governments

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

travelling facilities over the railways of the States, and the passes have been paid for individually by the various States. For some years the matter has been under the consideration of various conferences—I think it was first recognised in 1913 that there was an obligation to grant the facility to certain ex-Ministers. For one reason or another that was never really operative until a year or two ago. Now the Secretaries for Railways suggest that the passes should be paid for on a certain basis—£2,400 from each State, 50 per cent. going direct to the Railway Department, and the balance to a pool from which each State draws a certain quota. It will thus be seen that the net cost to the State is not very high. I have particulars of the decision arrived at should hon. members want further information. The present holders of passes are—Hon. P. Airey, Hon. W. D. Armstrong, Hon. J. W. Blair, Sir A. S. Cowley, Hon. J. H. Coyne, Hon. D. F. Denham, Hon. G. W. Gray, Hon. H. F. Hardacre, Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, Hon. J. M. Hunter, Hon. W. Lennon, Hon. T. O'Sullivan, Hon. W. T. Paget, Hon. A. J. Thynne, Hon. J. Tolmie, and Hon. J. A. Fihelly; ex-Ministers and Premiers are entitled to such passes.

A new item "Balance of Expenses of Visit of Premier and party to New York and London, £500"—has been added. I gave particulars of the total cost this morning. The balance of that is being charged to last year's expenditure, and will show on the Supplementary Estimates. This will make good the amount required.

Then there is an item, "Grant to Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, £347." This Committee called for some assistance to defray the initial expenses with regard to the amount required for publicity purposes.

With regard to the item "Subsidy to Great Barrier Reef Committee, £500," the subsidy is on a pound for pound basis, the money being raised by public subscription.

MR. TAYLOR: Is that a Commonwealth Committee?

THE PREMIER: No, it is purely a Queensland Committee, and was largely brought into being as a consequence of the efforts of His Excellency the Governor. Subscriptions have come in regularly, and there is a large amount in hand. We agreed to subsidise subscriptions to the extent of pound for pound, but not exceeding £500 a year, so that our obligation is limited in that way.

There is an item "Grant to Japanese Relief Fund, £10,000." The fund was started last year at the instance of the Commonwealth Government, who sought the aid of all the States, and asked them to make substantial gifts for the relief of the sufferers in the Japanese earthquake. We agreed to supplement the grant by other States by £10,000, and the appropriation is made for that purpose.

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I notice that the Premier referred to the grant of £10,000 to the Japanese relief fund. Surely that amount was expended last year.

THE PREMIER: It should have been in last year, but the Estimates were framed before the grant was decided upon.

MR. MOORE: It was paid last year, and this is to rectify it?

THE PREMIER: No, it has not been paid.

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*]

MR. MOORE: The Opposition regard the subsidy of £4,000 for a steamer service between Brisbane and the Gulf ports as quite necessary, and we also think it necessary to spend £4,500 in advertising the State, but in advertising the State we want to see that it is advertised properly and not have the money expended uselessly. I want to take one or two items to show how advertising the State was done last year. One item is "Randolph Bedford, Expenses in advertising the State in America, £50." That is following on £400 paid last year, making a total of £450. Then "Captain Harris, Advertising the State in San Francisco, £300." "J. S. Collings, £100, Advertising Queensland on his tour in New Zealand."

THE PREMIER: You are not suggesting that the only way to advertise the State properly is through political opponents, are you?

MR. MOORE: We want efficient advertising that will bring people to this State, and not the sort of advertising that will be done by an organiser on a trip to New Zealand. That is a pure waste of money, and I strongly object to public money being expended on this sort of trip. No one can say that the advertising done by Mr. Bedford in America has been useful to the State.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Bedford did excellent service for the State. Some of his reports and a great many of the inquiries which came as a result of Mr. Bedford's visit to America have been very useful to this State.

MR. MOORE: I certainly have not heard of anything useful coming out of Mr. Bedford's visit, and certainly nothing useful from Mr. Collings's visit to New Zealand. Things of this sort are subsidies to political supporters.

THE PREMIER: There were a considerable number of erroneous impressions in New Zealand as to Queensland.

MR. MOORE: We can quite understand that those erroneous impressions have been considerably added to by the gentleman who went there. I strongly object to subsidies to political supporters when they go away on trips. That is not advertising the State at all. It is spending Government money for political purposes. We have also had instances of where public money has been spent in subsidising various newspapers. It is not a question of advertising the State in those papers at all. It is a question of subsidising the papers. If the Government are going to subsidise these papers, why not put the amount down as subsidies, because it is not advertising the State in any way beneficial to the State.

I also take exception to the item "Allowance to Lieutenant-Governor, £950." With the financial position we are getting into to-day—when we find applications for increases and for shorter hours for public servants turned down, when we find the Treasurer faced with difficulties and financial stringency and an increased rate of interest—it is absurd to pay £950 a year to a Lieutenant-Governor, and I intend to move that the item be omitted. I beg to move—

"That the vote be reduced by the sum of £950."

I feel strongly that we have no right to pay £950 to the Lieutenant-Governor when the services rendered are not adequate.

THE PREMIER: Is not the labourer worthy of his hire?

Mr. MOORE: Does the Premier for one instant pretend that the amount of work done by the Lieutenant-Governor is worth £950?

The PREMIER: I certainly think you could not pay less than that to a Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MOORE: What did we do before when we had the Chief Justice in the position?

The PREMIER: £2,500 was paid when we had the Chief Justice.

Mr. MOORE: When he was actually doing the work of Lieutenant-Governor?

The PREMIER: He was getting more when he was acting as Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MOORE: If he did no work during the year, he was not paid at all. It is all very well for the Premier to try to defend this position, but to my mind it is absolutely wrong. We have had Bills brought into this House for the compulsory retirement of individuals at sixty and sixty-five years of age, but this gentleman is over seventy.

The PREMIER: The Imperial Government sanctioned the appointment.

Mr. MOORE: The Imperial Government had nothing to do with the appointment of Mr. Lennon. The Queensland Government recommended it, and the Imperial Government were not likely to turn it down. It is done by no other State in the Commonwealth. It is an extravagant expenditure; I do not think it can be defended, and the position should be abolished.

The PREMIER: This is really an appointment by the King, and you are reflecting on the King. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: There is no attack on the King at all. It is a question of the unwarrantable extravagance of the Government in appointing an individual to an office which is not required. We know that, until it was found necessary a few years ago to find an appointment for a political supporter, we never had a Lieutenant-Governor appointed in this way.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is wrong. There were Lieutenant-Governors appointed in Queensland before Mr. Lennon.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, but they only officiated when the Governor was out of the State. When it is so necessary to exercise economy in the State, we should do away with appointments like this, which are of no value to the State, and I emphasise my opinion by moving an amendment to reduce the vote by £950, and do away with this superfluous office. I voiced my protest last year, but no notice was taken of it. It is the general wish of the people outside that these useless officers should be done away with. If provision must be made by the Government for a political adherent, let it be done in a straightforward way by taking it out of their own party funds, and not at the Government expense. How can we get over our difficulties when extravagances are going on in this way, merely to mollify political supporters and assist political adherents? I do not think it is a fair thing that the State should be burdened with a sum of £950 a year in this way when there are individuals outside who are being reduced in salary, and when we are up against such a financial stringency as we are to-day. I beg to move the omission of the following item:—

“ Allowance to the Lieutenant-Governor, £950.”

1924—2 M

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I take it from the remarks of the hon. member who has moved this amendment that his objection to the item is that the appointment was a party political appointment.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: So far as that question is concerned, the appointment of Mr. Lennon was one exactly on the same footing as that of Sir Arthur Morgan or Sir Hugh Nelson.

Mr. MOORE: Two wrongs do not make a right.

The PREMIER: His appointment was made on the same basis as that of Sir Arthur Morgan and everybody else who has held the position.

Mr. MORGAN: It did not carry the same salary.

The PREMIER: Then the difference in salary is the point? Sir Hugh Nelson was appointed to the position when he was President of the Legislative Council. Sir Arthur Morgan was appointed to the position when he was President of the Legislative Council. Mr. Lennon was appointed whilst he was President of the Legislative Council.

Mr. MOORE: His office was abolished.

The PREMIER: For twelve months during the vacancy which existed between the departure of one Governor and the appointment of another Governor he was acting as Governor of this State in his capacity as Lieutenant-Governor, and since that time on a great many occasions he has filled the position in the absence of the Governor in other parts of the State or from Queensland. Why should this attack be made on Mr. Lennon? Why should he be singled out for assault? I think it is verging upon the indecent thus to attack a man who has given long and useful service to the State, who has been long enough and able enough in Parliament to fill various high positions, and who has been honoured by his State and honoured by the King on the recommendation of his advisers by his appointment to a high and honourable position. Why should hon. members opposite single him out for attack?

Mr. MOORE: That is ridiculous.

The PREMIER: It is not ridiculous. I give the hon. member credit for not realising that he was making an unfair and unwarranted attack on Mr. Lennon on grounds that cannot be sustained. Simply because Mr. Lennon had political adherence to this party, is that a reason why he should be made the subject of an attack upon his allowance—an assault upon his fitness and various other things? There is no justification whatever for the amendment, and nothing of the kind was ever done with respect to Lieutenant-Governors when the Labour party were in opposition.

Mr. MORGAN: The position is different altogether.

The PREMIER: Wherein do they differ? They differ only in this—that Sir Arthur Morgan was not a Labour man and Mr. Lennon is.

Mr. MORGAN: Sir Arthur Morgan was President of the Legislative Council.

The PREMIER: And so was Mr. Lennon.
Mr. MORGAN: That office was abolished.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

The PREMIER: Of course it was, but we must have a Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the Chief Justice?

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. member does not suggest that we should have two Lieutenant-Governors? We can have only one Lieutenant-Governor, and the man appointed by the King remains as Lieutenant-Governor until removed by the King or until he dies. The hon. member is suggesting what certainly would be an affront to the King by cutting off the allowance of the King's appointee and representative. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members laugh. It shows the rather warped conditions of mind of hon. members opposite when they move such an amendment. If any suggestion were made by members of the Ministerial party that we should terminate the salary of the Governor of the State, what would be said? Would we not be held up as the greatest disloyalists in the land? Yet these gentlemen who pretend to uphold the dignity of these institutions make an attack upon the Lieutenant-Governor, who is just as much the King's representative as the Governor. I should like to take this opportunity to say—not that I desire to enlarge the question in debate—that my opinion with regard to the person holding the position is that it would be far better if the administration were carried out by the Lieutenant-Governor and not by the Governor.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is not intended as any reflection on the present holder of the office of Governor. We have had no more excellent occupant of that position.

Mr. VOWLES: Is not that an affront to the King?

The PREMIER: No. That would be advice tendered to the King, and would only be carried out if accepted by the King. I think such advice ought to be tendered at the proper time, and I want to reiterate and emphasise—because I would be the last to do any hurt or injury—that the present occupant of the position is an admirable and excellent occupant, and an excellent gentleman in every sense. He is very popular, practical, sound, and a thoroughly well-informed man, and one who will be of very considerable service to Queensland when he relinquishes his position because of his great knowledge of Queensland and his great standing in the old country. Really, the position is such that we ought to be able to get along—when the King sees fit and that time arrives—without appointees selected from the United Kingdom.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: We ought to be able to get along with Governors who are selected from within the State and who are Australian citizens. I believe the time is fast approaching when the Government's recommendation will have to be made, and I believe when it is made—in fact I have the assurance from the present British Government, as I had the assurance of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the last Government—Lord Milner—that as soon as the majority of the States desire such a change the British Government will not stand in the way—it will be adopted. I can see no ground beyond the spirit—I would not like to call it vindictiveness—of per-

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

verseness on the part of the Opposition in moving a reduction of this vote.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): The office of Governor is not under review at present. We all agree with regard to the present occupant of the position. The position of Lieutenant-Governor is more unnecessary now than before. When the late Mr. Hamilton was appointed President of the Legislative Council, he was not appointed Deputy Governor. Mr. Lennon was not appointed permanently to that position when he occupied the position of President of the Legislative Council. It was after the abolition of the Upper House that the position of Lieutenant-Governor became permanent.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is quite wrong. Mr. Lennon became Lieutenant-Governor while the Upper House was still in existence.

Mr. VOWLES: It was not a permanent position.

The PREMIER: The person is always permanently appointed. When once he is appointed his position cannot be terminated except by the King.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman says that, if we deprive Mr. Lennon of his salary, we would be offering an affront to the King.

The PREMIER: It would be an affront to the King.

Mr. VOWLES: Let us do it in a constitutional way. Mr. Lennon, when he was on this side of the House, said that the position was a sinecure and was unnecessary. Let us take his own judgment on the position as incurring an unnecessary liability of £950. Let us consider that position, more particularly now that an excuse is being made for a 5 per cent. reduction in the salaries of those whose occupations are necessary. The salary of £950 per annum would go a long way to restoring the 5 per cent. reduction to some of the underpaid officials whose positions are necessary. That is one reason why I am opposed to expending this money unnecessarily. I cannot for the life of me see why we cannot adopt the old practice of appointing the Chief Justice to fill the position of Lieutenant-Governor when the occasion arises. If that were done it would be a much more economic position than we are adopting now. For those reasons I am going to support the motion for a reduction of the vote, in spite of the suggestion by the Premier that we shall thereby be offering an affront to the King.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): We have never previously had a paid Lieutenant-Governor.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is wrong. We have had paid Lieutenant-Governors many times.

Mr. MORGAN: The President of the Legislative Council drew a salary.

The PREMIER: He also drew a salary as Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MORGAN: Only when he was acting as Lieutenant-Governor.

The PREMIER: No, as Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MORGAN: He only drew the salary when he fulfilled the duties of Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MAXWELL: He accepted the salary of the higher of the two positions he was occupying.

Mr. MORGAN: The Premier knows very well that what I say is correct.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He was paid half the salary of each position while he acted as Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MORGAN: When he was not occupying the position of Lieutenant-Governor he only drew the salary attached to the position of President of the Legislative Council. When the late Mr. Hamilton was President of the Legislative Council, the then Chief Justice, the late Sir Pope Cooper, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, and received no emoluments other than the salary attached to the position of Chief Justice.

The PREMIER: He also drew the salary of Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MORGAN: That was when he acted as Lieutenant-Governor, which is quite a different thing to the present position. At the present time a permanent salary is appropriated for the Lieutenant-Governor. It would be a different matter if he only drew a salary while he occupied the position.

The PREMIER: Do you suggest that the late Sir Arthur Morgan did not draw as much as £1,950 a year as Lieutenant-Governor?

Mr. MORGAN: Does the hon. gentleman say that he got a permanent salary?

The PREMIER: I did not say a permanent salary.

Mr. MORGAN: The late Sir Arthur Morgan did not draw a permanent salary when acting as Lieutenant-Governor.

The PREMIER: He received as much as £1,950 a year for acting as Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. MORGAN: The late Sir Arthur Morgan might have been acting as Lieutenant-Governor for three or four months of the year. I admit that the late Sir Arthur Morgan and other gentlemen who occupied the position of President of the Legislative Council drew an extra salary while they also acted as Lieutenant-Governor, but they did not draw the salary when they were not filling that position. The present case is different. Mr. Lennon draws the salary whether he is acting as Lieutenant-Governor or not. I am to a certain extent with the Premier in the view that the appointment of a Governor is unnecessary. I was one of the supporters of federation who were told that when federation was brought about the position of State Governor was to be abolished, and that the Governor-General would act in that capacity for the whole of the States. The present Governor of Queensland is a very fine man—one of the finest men who have occupied that office in Queensland. He has fulfilled his duties to the credit of himself and everyone concerned. Hon. members on this side are not criticising the Governor or the Lieutenant-Governor, but we are criticising the provision that is being made for a permanent salary for the Lieutenant-Governor that has not hitherto been provided for. I suppose that during the time that gentleman acts as Governor he receives the higher remuneration as other Lieutenant-Governors did. The Premier might tell us whether that is so or not.

The PREMIER: That is not so.

Mr. MORGAN: The Lieutenant-Governor only draws the salary appropriated for him?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: That is different to previous appointments. I am going to vote for the amendment, as this position should not be provided for on the Estimates, and because the Chief Justice should, by virtue of his position, perform the duties of Lieutenant-Governor in the absence of the Governor. When he is filling the position of Governor he should draw the extra salary, but the extra salary should not be attached to the office and be paid year in and year out.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): One is rather surprised at the remarks of the Premier with regard to the amendment which has been moved, and especially that he should talk such piffle. The hon. gentleman knows that

his remarks were only piffle—only [4 p.m.] humbug and nonsense. No hon. member on this side has made an attack on the Lieutenant-Governor. The attack has been made on the position, which, we contend, should not have been created, and which is unquestionably a political appointment. That fact cannot be denied. Had the Legislative Council continued in existence, there would have been no such appointment as this. On account of the fact that the present Government and Labour supporters were responsible for the abolition of that Council, they found it necessary to find a position for the President of the Council.

The PREMIER: Was it not a good thing to abolish the Council?

Mr. TAYLOR: I think it was a most unfortunate thing that the Council was abolished. Had the Legislative Council continued in existence, this appointment would not have been made. I certainly intend to support the amendment, because I think there is no justification whatever for the appointment. The Chief Justice of Queensland should be the man to take the position when the Governor of Queensland is absent. With regard to what the Premier said about local men being fitted for the position, there are no doubt most estimable men who are able to fill the position admirably. At the same time, I claim that, in view of the state of politics in Queensland and the Commonwealth generally, the appointment of a Governor from Great Britain is justifiable.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I rise to support the amendment. I regret very much the attitude of the Premier in this matter. His whole argument is to try and make hon. members and the public generally believe that the Opposition are taking this up as a personal matter—as an attack against the holder of the position. That is absolutely a wrong attitude for the hon. gentleman to take up. It is also a poor and weak argument to insinuate that the Opposition are treating the matter purely as a personal one. The hon. gentleman is trying to cover up what is purely a party political appointment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not at liberty to reflect upon the character of the appointment of the Lieutenant-Governor or of the Governor. This is not a motion upon which that can be done. It is a question on which the financial aspect of the appointment can be discussed.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am not for a moment discussing the person holding the position. I make the definite statement that the Opposition are not doing that. We say that the appointment is unwarranted. The Premier's

Mr. Edwards.]

attitude in putting a bluff over the Opposition this afternoon is a poor one. His explanation regarding the Agent-Generalship was similar. It is astounding to find the Premier taking up such an attitude. With other hon. members of the Opposition, I say that this money could be better spent in the interests of the State than is the case at present. Possibly, as mentioned by the hon. member for Dalby, it could be used to increase the salaries and allowances of some of the underpaid members of the different departments. If the Premier was honest with himself, he would admit that this office should be abolished in the interests of the State. I do not think for one moment that if a vote of the people of Queensland were taken on this question there would be a Lieutenant-Governor with a permanent salary in Queensland. When the Governor is temporarily absent the duties of Lieutenant-Governor could be carried out by a person holding some other office in the State.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): The amendment is not a new one, as the Premier would have us believe. I find, according to "Hansard" for last year, page 1063, that the hon. member for Murilla, Mr. Morgan, moved the omission of the following item:—

"Allowance to Lieutenant-Governor, £950."

I have listened to the reasons given by the Premier as to why this office should be continued, and the reasons advanced by him are absolute piffle. It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to tell us that former Presidents of the Legislative Council—the late Sir Hugh Nelson and the late Sir Arthur Morgan—also occupied the position of Lieutenant-Governor. That was quite right while the Legislative Council was in existence, but with the abolition of the Council one would naturally expect that that position would go right out of existence. Notwithstanding the protests that were made by hon. members on this side as to a continuation of that position, we find that a recommendation was made to His Majesty the King that the Hon. William Lennon be appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Queensland, and then the Premier has the temerity to say that members on this side of the House would be disloyal if they attempted to discuss a matter such as this. I am one member of the Opposition prepared to take the risk of that and discuss the question. In Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, the Chief Justice occupies the position of Lieutenant-Governor during the absence of the Governor from the State. It was the same in Queensland at one time. The late Sir Samuel Walker Griffith and the late Sir Pope Cooper occupied similar positions, and no one will say that they did not carry out their duties in a dignified and honourable way. I am not dealing with, and would be sorry to deal with, the individual. We are asked to pass this vote of £950 when it is well known that the Premier has told us that the greatest economy is going to be practised in the various departments. Here is an opportunity for the Premier to prove his sincerity. Here is an opportunity where he can save £950. It seems to me that the question of economy is nothing more or less than a hollow sham. They turn round and tell the men on the lower rungs of the ladder that, owing to financial stringency, they are unable to give them the basic wage, yet they are quite prepared to perpetuate an office such as this when the work can be

[Mr. Edwards.

very well carried out by the Chief Justice during the temporary absence of the Governor. I am certainly going to vote for the amendment which has been moved by the leader of the Opposition, and I will leave those who vote against it to their deserts.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I certainly am not going to vote for the amendment. (Opposition laughter.) I think that the time has arrived when the whole position should be reviewed not only in connection with the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor, but also with regard to the appointment of a Governor. Considering that we have five Labour Governments in power in the Commonwealth, a conference of those Governments should be held in connection with the appointment of Governors. I am of opinion that the time has arrived when we should appoint our own Governors from the people. The expenditure in this regard is mounting up. There is £6,500 required for the Governor and his establishment, and £950 for the Lieutenant-Governor, and I am satisfied that, considering the Lieutenant-Governor on one occasion performed all the duties pertaining to the position, we could save £5,000 or £6,000 by doing away with the imperially appointed Governor.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I intend to support the amendment. The Lieutenant-Governor is appointed under a Royal Commission, and can only be retired by the direction of the King. The hon. member for Bowen says he does not intend to vote for the amendment, but wants the position reviewed.

Mr. COLLINS: The whole thing should be reviewed.

Mr. KERR: What he wants is the very thing we want, and if he desires to carry out his wishes, he will vote for the amendment, which will indicate to the Government that they have to take action to deal with the matter of this Commission. We know that this Commission cannot be revoked unless it is referred to the King for that purpose. Who refers these things to the King? It is done by Parliament, through His Excellency the Governor and the Imperial Government. If the hon. member for Bowen is honest, let him vote for the amendment and carry out what he wants to have done. There is no other option. No doubt this office is a gift from the Government of £950 to a certain gentleman, and we are moving an amendment as a protest against it. We know that the work which the Lieutenant-Governor is doing to-day can be easily done, and has always previously more or less been done, by the Chief Justice. I find that "Todd" in his work on Parliamentary Government has this to say—

"During the temporary absence of the Governor the general practice is to empower the Chief Justice or a judge to act as temporary Governor."

Instead of doing that, the Government are paying an individual £950 a year, while other public servants have been reduced in pay. "Keith"—another eminent constitutional authority—says—

"In the absence of the Governor through incapacity the administration is generally entrusted to the Lieutenant-Governor, if there is one, and, if not, to the Chief Justice."

Here is an employee of the Government who is drawing £950 a year. I say that it is a dole or gift. In the existing condition of

the finances, if we tackle these doles—in this instance a large one—which are continually creeping in, we shall not be placed in the position of having to reduce the lower-paid men in the public service.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): There is no doubt that this attack is directed against the present occupant of the position of Lieutenant-Governor. I think it is quite evident that, if Sir Hugh Nelson or Sir Arthur Morgan were back again in the position, we would not hear anything of the amendment. I take it that the position is this—that when any Government are in office they make their appointments from men who are conversant with and in agreement with the policy they are carrying out. For that reason the present holder of this position is there. There is no need for hon. members to hide their real intention, and I think it is rather small minded. I heard one hon. member interject that two wrongs do not make a right. Evidently hon. members are prepared to do wrong again and again; but, when the same policy is adopted against them, they want this Government to do what they call right. That is a poor attitude to adopt. I think it has come to this—that in a democratically ruled country we are coming to the conclusion that an office such as this or the office for which it is an understudy is not necessary, and that it will very soon be made apparent that the duties can be carried out by a Commissioner or other officer. That is where the argument is leading.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I do not think there is anything in the charge that this is in the nature of a personal attack at all. At any rate I do not admit it, but it is up to the Opposition to point out to the Government exactly where they are throwing money away. We have had to admit our inability to pay our State employees a fair wage; yet, when it is pointed out to the Government clearly where nearly £1,000 is being recklessly or stupidly or weakly spent, they draw all sorts of red herrings across the trail. The idea of the Premier talking about an affront to the King! So long as this Opposition fail to point out to the Government where there is a leakage of Queensland's good money, they fail in their duty to the people. I hope they will never fail in that duty. I say that the leader of the Opposition would have failed in his duty if he had not made some move to point this out to hon. members opposite. They are very quiet on this item. None of them can excuse it. They know it is a political appointment. They know that if it had been somebody else this expenditure of the people's money on a State pensioner would not have been permitted. When the Government realise the necessity of curtailing their expenditure in useless directions we shall have money to pay our employees a fair wage.

Question—That £40,725 only (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) be granted—put: and the Committee divided:—

AYES. 18.	
Mr. Appel	Mr. Fry
.. Barnes, G. P.	.. Kerr
.. Bell	.. Logan
.. Clayton	.. Maxwell
.. Corser	.. Moore
.. Costello	.. Morgan
.. Deacon	.. Roberts
.. Edwards	.. Taylor
.. Elphinstone	.. Warren

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Maxwell.

NOES. 26.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones
.. Bertram	.. Kirwan
.. Brennan	.. Land
.. Carter	.. Lloyd
.. Collins	.. Mullan
.. Conroy	.. Payne
.. Dunstan	.. Pease
.. Farrell	.. Riordan
.. Ferricks	.. Ryan
.. Foley	.. Smith
.. Hanson	.. Theodore
.. Hartley	.. Wellington
.. Hynes	.. Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Foley and Mr. Tease.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Petrie	Mr. McCochlan
.. Kimz	.. Wilson
.. Peterson	.. Gillies
.. Barnes, W. H.	.. Wright
.. Swales	.. Bedford
.. Szzy	.. Cooper, F. A.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I would like a little information on the item. "Life passes over Australian railways to ex-Ministers. £2,400." I know that the Premier has explained this, but I want a little further information. When a member of Parliament has served a term of seven years, or been a member of three Parliaments, he receives a pass over the State railways and it costs the State nothing in cash. I know that pass only applies within the boundaries of the State. The pass for Ministers, however, is different. By this vote it is already costing £2,400, and I want to know if there are any conditions attaching to the giving of a life pass to a Minister? It seems to me unreasonable that a Minister should be granted a life pass over all the railways of all the States. It will be an increasing charge on each State, especially if within the next few years new groups of Ministers are elected in the States.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The conditions of the issue of these passes were agreed upon at the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne in 1923, and are as follows:—

"That life passes, issued to Prime Ministers or Premiers who have held office for one year, Presidents of the Senate and Speakers of the House of Representatives, Presidents of the Legislative Councils and Speakers of the Legislative Assemblies who have served for three years in the aggregate, shall be recognised over Federal and State railways by the issue of gold passes available over all lines to such persons; and the New South Wales Government, as the senior State, on behalf of the several Governments concerned, be authorised forthwith to issue such passes to the persons qualified under this resolution.

"A charge of £150 is made for each pass issued. The amount contributed to be apportioned on a basis which would allow 50 per cent. of each amount to be paid to the Railway Department of the State in which the recipient of the pass resides, and the remainder of each £150 be allocated amongst the various States and the Commonwealth in certain ratios according to the proximity of the various States to that in which the ex-Ministers, etc., are domiciled.

"The rate of apportionment is as follows:—"

[It is not necessary for me to give the whole

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

of the percentages to be received by the different railway systems. I will just quote the percentages so far as Queensland is concerned. Queensland will receive a percentage of 50 per cent. of the cost of all life passes issued in this State, 14 per cent. on passes issued in New South Wales, 11½ per cent. on passes issued in Victoria, 9 per cent. on passes issued in South Australia, 6½ per cent. on passes issued in Western Australia, 5 per cent. on passes issued by the Commonwealth, and 4 per cent. on passes issued in Tasmania. Out of the £2,400 which is asked for under the vote 50 per cent. is paid directly to the Railway Department in Queensland, and the balance to the other States in their varying apportionments. The cost, therefore, to the State is small. The hon. member for Fitzroy suggested that there might be large groups of Ministers in the States in the next few years, but an examination of the Ministers qualified to receive these passes does not bear out that suggestion.

Mr. KERR: Are the passes made retrospective?

The PREMIER: Yes. I have already given the names of ex-Ministers to whom these passes have been issued, but I may repeat them for the information of hon. members—Hon. P. Airey, Hon. W. D. Armstrong, Hon. J. W. Blair, Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley, Hon. J. H. Coyne, Hon. D. F. Denham, Hon. G. W. Gray, Hon. H. F. Hardeacre, Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, Hon. J. M. Hunter, Hon. W. Lennox, Hon. T. O'Sullivan, K.C., Hon. W. T. Paget, Hon. A. J. Thynne, Hon. J. Tolmie, and Hon. J. A. Fihely.

Some of these gentlemen are entitled to the pass by virtue of their present office, Lieutenant-Governors and Judges are entitled to passes over the Australian railways. The number is not likely to fluctuate very much in the near future, especially if the people of this State in their good sense continue to allow the present Government to remain in office. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): I notice that £4,500 is appropriated for the purposes of advertising the State. I have no objection to money being wisely or judiciously spent for that purpose; but when it comes to advertising the State Government instead of the State, I certainly object. It has been previously pointed out that an expenditure has been incurred in sending a Labour organiser to New Zealand. We find that he says nothing about whether the claims of the State are kept well to the forefront in the Dominion, but that he is quite satisfied that at the next election New Zealand will swing to Labour. That being the case, I strongly object to the people's

[4.30 p.m.] money being spent in such a manner. Again, we have the example of the gentleman who attempted to secure a certain amount of money with a view to boosting Queensland in the United States. His work was so good that the Premier turned down his request for an extra £50! The hon. gentleman evidently thought he was not a valuable adjunct to the State.

There is another method by which we could well advertise our State—I mean through our National Art Gallery. Notwithstanding the fact that we have stressed the desirability of educating the people of

the State to the advantages to be derived from art, nothing has been done. It may be said that we are advocating something that will benefit only the metropolitan area; but there are a great many people visiting Brisbane who come from the Northern and Western districts, and also from the Southern portion of Australia. £500 only pays the wages of the curator of the Art Gallery. We know that £500 will go no distance at all—it would not even buy a decent picture. We should not wait, as has been suggested, for the completion of a town hall, and make the art gallery merely a municipal activity. It is the function of what is termed the "People's Government" to do something to encourage the education of the people so far as the fine arts are concerned.

Let us look at the position in the South. I know I shall be told that they have had many public benefactors in the Southern States; that people in the South have made considerable bequests for the advancement of the fine arts. Unfortunately, Queensland has not reached the stage when we have the capitalists doing similar things here. We find that on many occasions when men—not only those with political ideas similar to hon. members on this side of the Chamber, but those with ideas similar to those of hon. members opposite—get a certain amount of money on which they may live in comfort, they leave Queensland to live in the South, and spend their money there.

I have previously stressed the unsuitability of our Art Gallery for housing pictures. I certainly hope that the Premier will see his way clear to do something to lead the way in this matter. Take the South Australian Art Gallery. It is looked upon as one of the smallest art galleries in Australia, but in my opinion there is no finer in the Commonwealth. It possesses some beautiful works of art. I do not think they have had as many bequests there as they have had in Melbourne. Money could not be better spent than in educating the people, young and old, through works of art.

If you go into a number of homes to-day you will see framed almanacs or just ordinary prints. Some of the work that the art printers are doing is very fine, but there is nothing that has a greater tendency to elevate the mind than a first-class Art Gallery, and I trust the Premier will put a further amount for this purpose on the Supplementary Estimates. Year in and year out we have on the Estimates the paltry sum of £500 for a Queensland Art Gallery. It is not for a Queensland Art Gallery at all. That is practically a misnomer. It is only meant to pay certain individuals who take care of the gallery. I do hope that some of our friends who have the wherewithal will use some of their money for the purpose of adding to the collection we have. I do not say that there are not some good works of art in our gallery, but the gallery is in the wrong place. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Matthew Nathan, on every occasion that he has opened local art exhibitions has stressed the desirability of creating a healthy environment by the encouragement of this class of work. Who could lead the way better than the Government? It is not a fair thing to throw the responsibility upon the municipal authorities. The Government should lead the way, and I am raising my voice with a view to seeing whether it is not possible to get them to let the people

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

of Queensland see that they are prepared to lead the way in this connection. The pictures need not be concentrated in the metropolitan area all the time. There have been instances where some beautiful works of art have been carried from one end of Australia to the other, and why should not the people reap the benefit of these works of art? What can we say to the people in the South when they come here and ask about our Art Gallery? The comment that is made in that connection is not very flattering to the Government.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The second item in this vote is £4,500 for advertising the State. You can spend money wisely in advertising the State and you can throw away money in advertising the State—that is, by advertising in quarters where it brings no return. I do not know what method is adopted with regard to advertising the State, but when advertisements are going to be inserted in newspapers, those responsible should know the circulation of the paper, where it circulates, and whether the advertisement is likely to be of any benefit to the State. If that principle is followed, we shall probably get good results from our advertising; but if it is done in a haphazard fashion, we are simply wasting our money. In advertising the State in newspapers throughout the Commonwealth these things should be given every attention so that we shall get the best possible return for the money expended. I also notice that there is an item, "Grant to Commonwealth Prickly-pear Board, £2,000." I would like to know from the Premier how long we are to continue paying that grant. We have established a Prickly-pear Commission, and an amount of £100,000 has been placed on the Estimates in that connection.

At 4.40 p.m.,

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: Considering the State is spending such an enormous amount of money for its own Prickly-pear Commission in order to deal with this pest, which affects New South Wales as well as Queensland, I would like to know from the Premier how much longer this payment of £2,000 to the Commonwealth is to be continued.

Then I notice there is £1,250 set down for the expenses of an Australian trade representative in the East. I hope that the day is not far distant when neither this Government nor any other Government will contribute anything for trade representation in the East. My opinion in connection with trade representation in the East or in any other part of the world is that those interested can get better service by having their own appointees. A trade representative was sent to the East by the Commonwealth and the States. He was appointed in good faith, but he had not been there any length of time before he was recalled.

The PREMIER: Are you speaking of Mr. Little?

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes.

The PREMIER: The States had nothing to do with it.

Mr. TAYLOR: We have expended a considerable amount of money in order to get trade representation in the East and in other

parts of the world, but the men we have sent as representatives of the State have signally failed to carry out the duties for which they have been appointed, and I think the time has arrived when they should be cut out.

The Premier dealt with life passes to ex-Ministers over Australian railways. I am one of those who think that we are getting into a pernicious practice, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia, in regard to free passes on our railway lines, and I think that the time has come when we should call a halt in that direction. I am not speaking in a personal sense, but, considering the way the practice is being extended, and in view of the hard battle we have in all the States to make both ends meet, it is time we stopped the continuance of this practice—at all events, that we do not extend it. If I had my way I would cut it out to-morrow.

The PREMIER: This decision was first arrived at in 1909, when Messrs. Denham, Barnes, and O'Sullivan agreed to it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know that the Denham-Barnes Administration were responsible for free passes for life being given to members who had served in three Parliaments, but they were on the wrong track. We want to get back again as soon as we can to the right track.

There are quite a number of items on the Estimates which will have the support of everyone. The remarks which the hon. member for Toowong made with regard to the Art Gallery are all right, but we cannot afford the money at the present time. There are quite a number of public men in Queensland who could give assistance and enable us to establish an Art Gallery. It has been done by public men in the other States, but nothing has been done in that direction in Queensland.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillogoe*): I wish to refer to one or two things which the hon. member for Windsor has mentioned. The grant of £2,000 to the Commonwealth Prickly-pear Board is made under an agreement come to by New South Wales and Queensland with the Commonwealth Government. This is the last year of the agreement. The question is almost certain to be again gone into, and if it is, I think we are bound to continue the grant, so long as we are satisfied that the Board is doing useful work. The work of the Commonwealth Board is very different from the work required to be done by the Prickly-pear Commission of Queensland—not entirely different, because our Prickly-pear Commission will take advantage of the work of the Commonwealth Board, which issues scientific reports in connection with biological experiments made in regard to the destruction of prickly-pear.

With regard to the vote for the expenses of the Australian trade representative in the East, for which £1,250 is set down this year as against £1,500 last year, this item is paid under agreement with the other States and the Commonwealth. As to whether it is wise to have a representative in the nature of a Government Trade Commissioner in the East, there may be a difference of opinion, but after the increased experience of the last year or two—the arrangement has been in existence only a short time—I think that it is not likely that the present system will

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

be continued, as the expenditure appears to be somewhat futile. That is not intended in any sense as a reflection upon the ability or the usefulness of the present occupant of the position. He is a very capable business man with a very considerable commercial knowledge of Eastern conditions; but the position does not appear to be productive of any very lasting good or in the promotion of much trade with the East. We had the advantage of listening to an address a week or two ago from Mr. Cohen, who has first-hand knowledge of life in the East, and hon. members had an opportunity of judging of his ability; but I have gained the impression that a Government trade representative in the East on these lines is not productive of much good to the producers themselves and that they should have their own organisation. They should be prepared to spend money and have their representatives in the East who can actually handle their goods and put them in the hands of the distributors. Only in that way can effective trade result.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Windsor concerning the Art Gallery, it is evident that it is impossible for us to establish a gallery on creditable lines owing to the paucity of the funds at our disposal. Nobody recognises more than I do the value of an Art Gallery in the development of the people educationally and the cultivation of aesthetic taste. That can be done by means of an Art Gallery, but such a gallery cannot be provided by Government funds when there are much more urgent demands for them in other directions. In South Australia they have an Art Gallery which would be a credit to any country in the world.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: They have Australian pictures and pictures by modern masters purchased overseas and pictures by masters of centuries ago. But they have had benefactions of one kind or another which must have aggregated hundreds of thousands of pounds. They have also benefited in respect of other public institutions by the bounty of private citizens. Their University has been largely endowed. Their School of Industry and Mines and other institutions have all benefited. We have been unfortunate in Queensland in not having had the benefit of generous donations of that kind.

Mr. MORGAN: We have had no wealthy men here.

The PREMIER: That is where the hon. member is entirely wrong. In Queensland there have been accumulated large fortunes, but unfortunately the men who have accumulated wealth have either had no leaning in this direction or have left the State to reside elsewhere.

Mr. KELSO: There is only one big city in South Australia.

The PREMIER: There is more than one in Queensland, and so we should have had more assistance. But I do not think that that factor can be taken into consideration. The people who have had the means have not been animated by the right spirit.

His Excellency the Governor has pointed out on one or two occasions the necessity—I think he put it that way—for supporting these institutions. The support must come from voluntary aid. We cannot look to the

Government to provide funds, because those funds are required for other purposes, and there is such a stringent demand upon the Government in other directions. An Art Gallery that would be creditable to a community of our size, and a community of the standard of development and education that we have in Queensland, would cost £250,000 for a collection of pictures and a suitable building to house them in, and you cannot expect the Government to appropriate £250,000 for that purpose. That can only be done by those who have the means.

Mr. EDWARDS: You will have to alter your policy or you will never have the means.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is taking a very limited view. Let him turn over in his mind what institutions we have in Queensland after fifty or sixty years of self-government. Let him take that period—not merely the last ten years, during which the Government have been in office—and see what institutions we have in Queensland as a result of efforts by private donors. What institutions have been set up by way of public benefaction and are worthy of being called attention to? I can only call to mind two institutions—one the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust which makes grants in aid of hospitals and other institutions, and the Sir Samuel McCaughey bequest to the University.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: And the Dogs' Home at Yeronga.

The PREMIER: Looking at it in that light, it is a very serious reflection upon the people of Queensland, when you can only recall at the most two institutions that are worth talking about. There are a few minor cases in connection with which the donors are entitled to every credit. There are scholarships and that sort of thing, but they are small.

Mr. WARREN: There is the Randall Art Gallery in South Brisbane.

The PREMIER: Yes. There are some endowed scholarships at the University and elsewhere, but they are minor things compared with what has been done in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): It is very gratifying to hear the reply from the Premier that we have had this afternoon. He is very sympathetic towards art in this State, but I would rather see a little practical sympathy instead of cold-blooded sympathy. I would like to see the Government take the lead even if they only provide £2,000. I realise that we have not got a moneyed class in Queensland, and I have no doubt that the Premier saw the report of the paper read by Mr. Wickens, the Commonwealth Statistician, at the Conference in Adelaide the other day.

Mr. COLLINS: There are people here worth £500,000.

The PREMIER: There are many valuable pictures in the possession of private persons, and they ought to be made available to the public. I think it is incumbent upon the owners to donate some of those pictures to the Art Gallery.

Mr. MAXWELL: There are some very good pictures in the State, but the Government should take the lead in this matter.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

They should not place only a paltry £500 on the Estimates. That sum is not for art, but to pay the curator who looks after the place.

I am very glad to see the Secretary for Mines back in his position, and I am very glad that he was so fortunate as to escape serious injury in the motor accident in America. I do not know whether I would be in order at this stage in asking the hon. gentleman for information in connection with the British Empire Exhibition and the position that Queensland occupied there. I would ask the Premier if an opportunity will be given us to obtain that information.

The PREMIER: That will probably be given on the report of the resolutions.

Mr. MAXWELL: So long as I understand that, I am quite prepared to wait. There is an item here in connection with expenses of the British Empire Exhibition, and I thought this would be a good opportunity to seek some information. I shall adopt the suggestion of the Premier.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Last year the sum of £4,000 was appropriated for advertising the State. I would like to know from the Premier how much of that money was expended, and in what way it was expended? I would also like to know whether the amount of £389 9s. 3d. that was paid to "Smith's Weekly" for 10,000 copies of the special issue on the cotton industry came out of the Special Contingency Fund, which is under the control of the Premier, or out of the fund for "Miscellaneous Services," which is also under the control of the hon. gentleman? It should have come out of the amount authorised by Parliament. The report of the Auditor-General mentions the expenditure of this money. I desire to point out that 10,000 copies of "Smith's Weekly" at 4d. per copy amount to £155 13s. 4d., yet £389 9s. 3d. was paid. The deficiency has not been explained. To me it is extraordinary. If a newspaper whose publishing price is 2d. was asked to sell 10,000 copies of an issue, they would probably quote 1½d. per copy; but even if the full price per single issue of 4d. was paid only £155 13s. 4d. is accounted for. If we take the postage to London on each copy at 2d., another £77 would be absorbed, but there is still a large amount to be accounted for by the Premier. The Premier told us definitely that nothing was paid by the Government for writing up the article. He told the Committee that the article was going to be written whether the Government took any copies or not. "Smith's Weekly" sent a man to Queensland to write up the cotton industry, and on the article appearing the Government decided to purchase 10,000 copies. A very large amount of that expenditure has not yet been explained.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): The hon. member for Toowong raised the question of the expenses of the British Empire Exhibition. I take it that the £6,000 asked for on the Estimates is portion of Queensland's quota to the General Australia Fund. We know when starting on this work that the total cost of organising the Australian section was set down at £300,000. I explained that fully to hon. members during last session of Parliament. When the opportunity occurs, I can

give hon. members further information regarding the expenditure.

Mr. MORGAN: Do you issue a report?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This State is committed to its apportionment of that £300,000, and the amount to be contributed by Queensland will probably be £32,000.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Was not an increased vote passed by Parliament?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, quite early in the movement.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Has an increased vote not been passed latterly?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. It is hoped that the expenditure on the Australian section will be kept within the original estimate of £300,000. An estimate has been prepared of the probable cost, and, speaking from memory, it shows that the expenditure will probably be £311,000, which is slightly over the original estimate. The question will arise whether the excess expenditure is an obligation to be assumed by the Commonwealth, or whether it will be a matter for arrangement between the Commonwealth and the various States. However, some revenue has been coming in from the Exhibition which it is hoped will reduce this amount to within the original estimate.

The revenue from sales has been increasing since the commencement of the warmer months of the year, and Queensland's portion, I take it, will amount to [5 p.m.] about £22,000. Without going into details, as has been pointed out by the Premier and the hon. member for Oxley, the benefits accruing from an Exhibition of the character of the Wembley Exhibition cannot be measured from the point of view of pounds, shillings, and pence taken at the gate. They must be viewed rather in the light of national benefits. Australia's part was well maintained, and, if we were doing it again—I speak on behalf of the whole of the Commissioners—we could profit by a few mistakes.

Mr. KELSO: Were not the apples well advertised?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am in a serious strain this afternoon.

Mr. KELSO: So am I.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think Australia was well advertised as a whole, and that the benefits accruing cannot be measured by pounds, shillings, and pence. Australia will never regret, and Queensland should never regret, the part she took in this great World's Empire Exhibition.

Hon. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): With those who represent country districts, and especially fruitgrowing areas, it is a question why time after time we are advised that products put up in the shape of preserves are not put up in a sufficiently attractive form to cause that attention being given to them which would render them commercially valuable to the extent that they should be. I desire to ask the Premier who is responsible for the get-up of these articles? Would it not be possible to get them up in the attractive form necessary to appeal to consumers in those countries where we propose

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

to push them? Time after time the information comes back that such and such a product or preserve has been put up in an unattractive form and its value has thereby been minimised. Undoubtedly this question affects a large area in Queensland where different products are grown for which we must look for a market overseas. Would it not be possible to get expert evidence as to the best methods of putting up these articles to make them attractive and saleable?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I sincerely hope that the opportunity will arise before the Estimates go through to go right into the question of the Australian exhibit at Wembley. A great deal of success has been achieved, but a tremendous lot is to be criticised.

The PREMIER: The question may be raised on almost any estimate where a department contributed to a display.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I presume it is rather late in the day to enter into a discussion of that sort now. Where the Commonwealth expended £300,000—and Queensland has contributed a large proportion of that—I think the people of Queensland are entitled to a statement as to whether the project was a success or a failure. Necessarily there is much room for criticism. I do not wish to be unjust, but, necessarily, mistakes must have been made. I should like to know from the Premier whether there is any intention to continue the Exhibition for a second year.

The PREMIER: We have not yet been consulted as to whether we will agree to a continuation or not.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Secretary for Mines, who is chairman of the Queensland Committee, did me the honour of inviting me to become a member of the Committee, and I did what I could to assist, and in that position one becomes possessed of information which I think this Committee should have, as the people responsible for the expenditure of the money.

Mr. MORGAN: Should we not have a report?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Probably that will be available later on, but the Exhibition will close on 11th November, and our Commissioner there was busy getting certain alterations made which will probably improve the Exhibition before it is finally closed, and I take it that no report will be available during this session of Parliament.

I am going to transgress a little by inviting the Premier to make some statement in this Chamber in regard to his experience of the Empire Parliamentary Association whilst in London. I cannot make reference to it on the vote because that is passed, but I believe the Premier wishes to make some statement, and I think the Committee should hear something from him in regard to that Association. Visiting members of Parliament from all parts of the Empire received wonderful hospitality and assistance whilst in London. We were made most comfortable and welcome in all parts of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and as an educational medium I do not think it has an equal. The remarks I made to the secretary of that movement when leaving were that I had not come across a man who was doing more to accomplish the work of Empire

building than that particular gentleman, and I think the Premier will express a similar view. I am glad to see that Queensland is going to do something towards contributing to the cost of that Association, and we undoubtedly received full benefit from it. Members of this Assembly, quite independent of their political views, were made welcome and received all the assistance they needed.

At 5.8 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): If I am not out of order in referring to it here, I should like to say that the Government are providing a sum of £100 as a contribution towards the publication issued by the Empire Parliamentary Association. At the same time—I have already mentioned it to Mr. Speaker—I desire to see some action taken to have a branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association formed in Queensland. (Hear, hear!) The Empire Parliamentary Association heretofore has been comprised of members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords and the members of the Dominion Parliaments, but not of the State Parliaments. Latterly they have enlarged their constitution, and have now invited the members of the State Parliaments in Australia to become members of the Association. It will be a very useful thing to members to belong to that Association whenever they contemplate a visit not only to England, but to the other Dominions, because members of Parliament in all the other Dominions are members or are affiliated with the Empire Parliamentary Association, and considerable facilities are given to travelling members to meet and exchange opinions with other members, no matter what their party politics are. The headquarters of the Association are Westminster Hall and the Houses of Parliament, England. The secretary is a most courteous gentleman, and he endeavours to give every facility to visiting members of Parliament, including travelling facilities. The Association provides reading-rooms to which members can resort, and there is a full range of current newspapers from practically the whole of the Empire and publications of all kinds of interest to parliamentary members. Facilities to meet members of other Parliaments are afforded, and they invariably invite visiting members to meet other members in meetings and deliver lectures. They also send delegations from England to the various Dominions, and invite delegations from the various Dominions to visit England.

A parliamentary delegation has left Australia to visit South Africa, and a similar delegation has left England to visit that country. The association performs a very useful work, and the cost is very small. We are merely asked to contribute towards the cost of their publications. They publish a number of periodicals, as well as a lot of other matter such as addresses and lectures delivered in their rooms, but they also publish regularly a booklet known as the "Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire." It is a compendium of very useful information relating to parliamentary action, and contains a summary of legislation and debates. They also issue another publication on foreign affairs, which gives a succinct account of developments in foreign countries. I have

[*Hon. J. G. Apple.*]

been getting the publication myself for some time, and I find it most useful. I have asked Mr. Speaker to convene, at a suitable time, the members of this Parliament who desire to become members of the association. If that is done, we can become definitely a branch of the Parliamentary Association. I think it is a matter to which hon. members should give their assistance; it will not cost anything, and at the same time those who are travelling get the benefits of the association. I can thoroughly endorse the statement made by the hon. member for Oxley about the courtesy of the reception given by the association in England. On the two occasions I have been there I have been met in a most handsome manner, and have been given an opportunity of addressing the members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the Parliamentary Association's rooms, and have had a great many courtesies extended to me. I am sure that any hon. member visiting England would have the same facilities.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I just wish to say that I was quite serious in the interjection I made when the Secretary for Mines was speaking. I want to say that Australia has been very well advertised, especially in regard to apples.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I misunderstood the hon. member. I am sorry.

Mr. KELSO: I was just as serious in regard to my statement as the hon. gentleman was in his statement that the Wembley Park Exhibition was a good advertisement for Australia. I agree with the hon. gentleman that you cannot measure its value in £ s. d. I saw in the papers a day or two ago a statement that there is likely to be a deficit of £1,500,000 in connection with the Exhibition. I hope that will not be borne out by facts; but if it is so, I do not think we should be worried about it, because the great benefit of the Exhibition to us is that the people in Great Britain have seen what the possibilities of Australia are. My only reason for interjecting was this: In the reports of the doings at the Exhibition, what struck me was the importance attached to Australian apples. The probability is that the people of Great Britain were not seized with the fact that, independent of Tasmania, other parts of Australia can also grow splendid apples. We were told in one account that the demand for Australian apples by the public who went to the Exhibition was so great that the supply ran short. It seems to me that if we reiterated the position with regard to Australian apples, it would be a splendid advertisement.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): There is an item of £1,000 for "Expenses of Royal Commission on Public Works." It seems to me that the Commission are not able to get evidence to complete their reports. Take the case of the proposed Redcliffe railway. It is many months since the Commission took evidence on that proposal, and at that time they did not seem to be able to get evidence with reference to a certain bridge, and I do not know whether they have got the necessary evidence yet. It seems very strange that a Commission appointed by this House is not able to get that information from the Railway Department. I would like some information from the Premier in this matter, because probably the people at Redcliffe will

not be able to get their much desired railway while we are in our present financial condition. At the same time, it seems only reasonable that the Commission should table a report as soon as possible.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I should like to ask the Premier for some information as to the £10,000 appropriated last year for the benefit of returned soldiers, and showing the way in which the money was spent.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I understand that the Royal Commission on Public Works are ready to prepare a report on the Redcliffe railway mentioned by the hon. member for Murrumba, but they are waiting for a report from the engineers as to costs. If he wants any further information, I suggest that he get it from the Commission themselves. The figures asked for by the hon. member for Enoggera, with respect to the expenditure from the vote for returned soldiers, are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Fares, etc., Railway Department, etc., limless soldiers	422	2	8
Sundries (Anzac Day), T.B. soldiers	117	6	1
Men in hospitals and freights on goods	180	8	5
Pineapple subsidy	1,610	5	5
Advances Corporation, Refund of expenses of managing soldiers' advances	4,390	16	6
Overdraft, Producers' District Agency	382	1	11
Anzac Day, printing, etc.	70	0	0
Cartage on Stone of Remembrance, Toowong Cemetery	27	15	0
Motor hire	2	15	0
	£7,203	11	0

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): With reference to the inquiry by the hon. member for Murrumba in connection with the report on the Redcliffe railway, the Public Works Commission are waiting for an estimate as to the cost of a certain section of the work, and are not prepared to recommend the expenditure of a large sum of money on a railway until it is available. They have asked for an estimate, but they have been told that the money is not available.

The PREMIER: They may have been told that the money is not available, but that does not prevent them from making a report.

Mr. ROBERTS: They do not feel inclined to recommend the expenditure of a very large sum of money without knowing what it is likely to cost. They have been unfortunate in not being able to get it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have had an approximate estimate.

Mr. ROBERTS: We have an approximate estimate of what it would cost some years ago, but we want to know what it is going to cost in the future. I can quite understand the feelings of the hon. member for Murrumba, but that is the position. With reference to the money voted for the benefit of returned soldiers, the Premier has told us that it was not all spent last year. I attended a meeting of unemployed returned soldiers who were asking for assistance. Why could not some of it be spent for that purpose?

Mr. Roberts.]

The Premier might say that the money is not intended for that purpose. I think hon. members will agree that the money should be spent in the interests of returned soldiers.

When the Estimates were going through last year I took exception to the way in which the money appropriated for advertising the State was being spent, so far as it affected Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. I am pleased to see that within the last few weeks this matter has received some attention, and at the present time there is a Government official at work in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs district compiling a booklet on that portion of the State. It has also had the effect of causing the people in those districts to go in for advertising their district. In Toowoomba a committee has been formed, of which the Mayor of the city is chairman, and they propose to spend a certain sum of money in advertising the city of Toowoomba. I am pleased that Toowoomba and the Darling Downs are getting their proportion of the vote, because it is a locality that is well worth being advertised.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I notice here a subsidy of £500 for the Great Barrier Reef Committee. I commend the Premier for this subsidy, because unquestionably the Great Barrier Reef will probably in future prove a great national asset, not alone to Queensland, but Australia. At the same time, I would like to know from the hon. gentleman whether the investigations of this committee are purely scientific, or whether we shall get a report on the economic value of the reef.

THE PREMIER: It is both a scientific and an economic committee.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am glad to hear that.

MR. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): The Government are to be commended for their action in enabling the State to receive such a wonderful advertisement overseas. The Premier made some reply to my interjection this afternoon about moneyed people in Queensland. From the experience I have had in the other States, I am of the opinion that there would have been a great deal more money in Queensland to-day if there had been proper advertising of the State and if

full knowledge of the possibilities of Queensland were known in the southern States. While I am not one of those who want to rob the southern States of their population, I say without hesitation that if we were to advertise Queensland in the other States, more particularly in the thickly populated areas where the people with capital are being pushed out on account of the high land values, greater wealth would come to Queensland. In many districts I know—I am sure it is known to many hon. members in the Chamber—it is impossible, even at the present high price, to obtain land for settlement. It would be a good idea if the Government were to appoint a person to advertise our State in the South in that respect.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN left the chair, 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.

[*Mr. Roberts.*