

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 1924

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TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER, 1924.

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

QUESTIONS.

INKERMAN IRRIGATION SCHEME—CO-OPERATIVE CONTROL BY CANEGROWERS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. At the commencement of the Inkerman irrigation scheme, did the terms of the arrangement between the Government and the canegrowers included in its area permit of the 'power house, plant, cables for distributing current, wells, etc.,' eventually becoming the property or being co-operatively controlled by the canegrowers upon the State being repaid its expenditure in this connection?

"2. Under the present arrangement has the position in this respect been altered; if so, in what manner?

"3. When was work on the scheme first commenced?

"4. Are all the farms within the area now supplied with irrigation water?

"5. What is the present estimated cost of completing the scheme?"

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

"1. Yes, upon the conditions set out in Order in Council of 8th February, 1917.

"2. (a) Yes. (b) The control of the Inkerman irrigation area was vested in the Commissioner of Irrigation as from 1st July, 1923.

"3. July, 1918.

"4. It is not practicable to supply all the farms within the area.

"5. As applications are being received constantly for extensions to additional farms, no estimate can be given of the ultimate total cost. The book capital cost at 30th June, 1924, was £256 472, but it is not proposed to authorise extensions beyond a total capital expenditure of £300,000."

ROSEDALE SELECTIONS—SYSTEM OF BALLOTING FOR LANDS.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"In view of the recent happenings in connection with the Rosedale Selections—

1. Is it his intention to alter the present system of ballot?

2. If so, what system does he intend to follow?

3. Will he also give favourable consideration to granting priority to those Queenslanders who are at present engaged in pastoral or grazing pursuits?"

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

"The whole question is under review."

REPORT OF REVALUATION BOARD ON SOLDIER SETTLERS' IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*), for Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has the report of the Revaluation Board on Soldier Settlers' Improvements yet been furnished to him?"

"2. When will a definite announcement be made on the Revaluation of Soldiers' Blocks?"

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

"1 and 2. The investigation has not yet been completed."

RENTAL CONCESSIONS ON GRAZING SELECTIONS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murrilla*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. How many grazing selections are there still existing which, prior to the passing of 'The Land Act Amendment Act of 1920,' came within the 50 per cent. limitation on rental increases?"

"2. What is the total area of such selections?"

"3. Will the same concession be granted in these cases as in the case of the pastoralists covered by the recent London agreement—namely, no further rental increases after May, 1924?"

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

"1. 1,735.

"2. 14,013,525 acres.

"3. No."

APPLICATIONS AND PERMITS FOR ART UNIONS, "LIBERTY FAIR," ETC.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. How many applications were granted and refused, respectively, during last financial year for (a) raffles; (b) art unions; (c) raffles and art unions combined?"

"2. (a) How many permits were granted to conduct gambling carnivals of the type known as 'Liberty Fair,' 'White City,' etc., and what are the names and addresses of the persons to whom such permits were granted? (b) Is it the practice to inquire as to the proposed allocation of the funds derived from such carnivals and, if so, what was the proposed allocation in each case? (c) Is there any supervision exercised to ensure that such allocation is adhered to?"

"3. Is it the practice to consult the local authority within whose area it is proposed to carry on operations before the granting of these permits?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Friders*) replied—

"1. (a) Raffles granted, 920; raffles refused, 121. (b) Art unions granted, 291; art unions refused, 62. (c) Raffles and art unions combined granted, 51; raffles and art unions combined refused, 9.

"2. (a) No permits were granted for 'Liberty Fairs' or 'White Cities.' (b) See answer to (a). (c) See answer to (a).

"3. See answer to (a)."

NUMBER AND SALARIES OF STATE SERVANTS FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 1914-1915 AND 1923-1924.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) asked the Premier—

"What is the total number of State servants (all grades) and their aggregate salaries or wages for the financial years ended 30th June, 1915, and 30th June, 1924, respectively?"

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

	No. of Officers.	Amount of Salaries and Wages per annum.
		£
<i>Financial Year ended 30th June, 1915.</i>		
Officers employed in Public Departments	9,109	1,381,750
Railway Employees—		
Open Lines ..	14,936	2,099,544
Construction ..	4,076	653,395
Total	28,121	£4,134,689
<i>Financial Year ended 30th June, 1924.</i>		
Officers employed in Public Departments (see Fourth Annual Report of Public Service Commissioner)	11,503	2,701,672
Department of Public Works Construction and Maintenance	619	45,096
Prickly-pear Land Commission	16	5,710
Mining Operations	1,306	391,644
Irrigation Commissioner ..	411	114,728
Main Roads Board ..	1,226	261,263
Central Sugar Mills ..	11	4,617
State Enterprises ..	1,093	219,833
Railway Employees—		
Open Lines ..	16,940	4,463,811
Construction ..	3,097	876,660
Total	36,422	£9,085,034

MISREPRESENTATIONS IN SOUTHERN PRESS *in re* AUSTRALIAN SUGAR INDUSTRY.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Premier—

"In view of the unscrupulous efforts constantly being made by some newspapers to prejudice the Australian Sugar Industry by the publication of grossly incorrect statements concerning it, of which one appearing in the 'Age' of 20th August is a sample, it being full of malicious misrepresentations on the subject, will he appoint a committee of four, consisting of members representing sugar electorates, two from each side of the House, for the purpose of meeting and discussing the best methods to adopt for exposing the falsity of such statements and educating public opinion in the South thereon; such committee to have power to confer, and, if it deems necessary, work in co-operation with those organisations who represent the sugar industry in Queensland?"

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"I do not think the appointment of a committee, as suggested by the hon. member, would accomplish any good purpose."

MINISTER OF CROWN APPEARING AS COUNSEL FOR DEFENCE IN CRIMINAL CASES.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Is it customary for a Minister of the Crown to appear in criminal cases in this State as counsel for a prisoner?"

"2. Has a Minister of the Crown recently acted in a criminal case as counsel for a person charged with a criminal offence?"

"3. If such is the case, will such Cabinet Minister take part in the consideration of the application of the prerogative of mercy when prisoners defended by him may be interested?"

"4. Is it not a fact that even King's Counsellors must obtain special leave before engaging in the defence of prisoners charged with criminal offences?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

"1. There is no law to prevent a Minister of the Crown from appearing in a criminal case on behalf of a prisoner.

"2. Yes.

"3. No.

"4. Yes; leave is always granted as a matter of course."

FEES AND ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS OF INDUSTRIAL BOARDS (AGRICULTURE AND COTTON INDUSTRIES).

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

"1. What fees are the members of the two Industrial Boards (Agriculture and Cotton Industries) drawing per day?"

"2. What allowance is made to each member per day for expenses, travelling and other?"

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

"1 and 2. This information is given in regulation 32 under the Industrial Arbitration Acts, 1916-1923, which was made on the 6th June, 1924, and laid upon the table of the House on the 29th July, 1924."

INQUIRY INTO ALLEGED SEPTIC OUTBREAK, LADY CHELMSFORD HOSPITAL, BUNDABERG.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*) asked the Home Secretary—

"Whether, in view of the statement made by me in this House respecting

the administration of the Lady Chelmsford Hospital, Bundaberg, the admission by the hon. member for Bundaberg, when referring to my reference to septic cases, that there had been a serious outbreak during which one patient died, and the recent statement by Dr. Thompson, Government medical officer, Bundaberg, that no case of septic poisoning in that hospital had been reported to him, will he take steps to have a magisterial inquiry into the matter?"

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

"The matter is receiving consideration."

PURCHASE OF REFRIGERATING MACHINERY FOR HAMILTON COLD STORES.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Why did his department purchase refrigerating machinery for the Hamilton Cold Stores at a cost of £22,810 without giving an opportunity to suppliers of this class of machinery submitting estimates?"

"2. Is it the policy of his department to carry out all such transactions on similar lines?"

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

"1. An offer such as this could not be overlooked, as we were advised by the department's experts, after inspection and valuation, that its acceptance meant an approximate saving of £7,000 on prices then prevailing.

"2. Tenders are usually called, unless the department is satisfied that it is profitable to take advantage of such offers as the one in question."

FREIGHT RATES FROM BRISBANE TO COUNTRY DISTRICTS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Marilla*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What are the present freight rates per ton on the following commodities railed from Brisbane for distances of 50 miles, 100 miles, 200 miles, and 300 miles, respectively:—Agricultural produce (truck loads); dairy produce; fresh fruit; fencing wire and wire netting (truck load, per ton); agricultural machinery and implements; manures and fertilisers (truck loads)?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) replied—

	50 Miles, per ton.	100 miles, per ton.	200 Miles, per ton.	300 Miles, per ton.	Remarks.
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	
Agricultural produce (except potatoes)	9 11	17 2	27 4	33 9	Truck loads or smaller quantities
Potatoes	8 6	15 7	24 11	32 1	ditto
Dairy produce (butter, eggs, honey, cheese)	28 10	48 11	79 11	106 4	ditto
Fresh fruit	9 11	17 2	27 4	33 9	ditto
Fencing wire and wire netting	17 5	29 11	51 3	64 1	Truck loads
Ditto	28 10	48 11	51 3	64 1	Smaller quantities
Agricultural implements and machinery	17 5	29 11	51 3	64 1	Truck loads of large machines for harvesting
Ditto	28 10	48 11	79 11	106 4	Smaller quantities and smaller implements
Manures and fertilisers	4 1	4 5	8 9	10 3	Truck loads

AMOUNTS DUE BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 1921-1925.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*) asked the Treasurer—

“What amounts, for the years ended 30th June, 1922, 1923, 1924, were due for services rendered, payable from revenue, and for which no claims were made until the following financial year?”

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

“The information is not available. I would refer the hon. member to the Auditor-General's report for the year 1920-1921, wherein it is stated—

The practice of charging the expenditure during the months of July, August, and September on account of the preceding year to the votes for that year, as provided for by section 18 of the Audit Act of 1874 and section 7 of the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1890, was, by Executive Minute dated 8th April, 1921, discontinued as from 1st July last, and such expenditure will now be charged to the current year's votes.

“The practice referred to did not in any way affect the financial position as at 30th June each year, but it caused a very considerable amount of clerical labour to the Treasury, the various departments, and also this office, without any compensating advantage.

“The Audit Office has for years past favoured this change.”

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Marine Department for the year ended 30th June, 1924.

Regulations under the Agricultural Bank Act of 1923.

CITY OF BRISBANE BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced for the good government of the city of Brisbane.”

I am moving this motion at this stage by arrangement between the Premier and the leader of the Opposition. The desire is that the Bill should be circulated to enable hon. members to peruse it before we reach the second-reading stage, and I shall therefore defer my remarks until then.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—EIGHTH ALLOTTED-DAY.

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

TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

HARBOURS AND RIVERS.

Question stated—“That £7,144 be granted for ‘Harbours and Rivers.’”

Question put and passed.

LAND AND INCOME TAX.

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

“That £54,486 be granted for ‘Land and Income tax.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): We have not yet received the report of the department dealing with land and income tax, so we are not able to judge the incidence of such tax, but the figures that we have up to the present are a pretty sure indication of the degree of prosperity in this country, especially when one considers the amount of taxable income and the amount collected by way of taxation. In 1914-15 the population in Queensland was 676,707, and the taxpayers, including companies, numbered 22,396. The taxable income for that year amounted to £17,571,888, and the tax payable to £482,580. For the year 1922-23—the latest figures available—the population was 790,239—an increase of 113,532, or 16.8 per cent. as compared with 1914-15. For 1922-23 the taxpayers, including companies, numbered 41,080—an increase of 18,684, or 83.4 per cent. as compared with 1914-15. In 1922-23 the taxable income amounted to £16,963,789—a decrease of £608,099, or 3.5 per cent., as compared with 1914-15. In 1922-23 the tax payable was £1,724,408—an increase of £1,241,828, or 257.3 per cent., as compared with 1914-15. It is a rather remarkable fact that in the period under review the population increased by 16.8 per cent., and the taxpayers by 83.4 per cent., and the total taxable incomes decreased by 3.5 per cent.; the tax payable increased by 257 per cent.

The only way we can arrive at the prosperity of the various States is by comparison. It is rather difficult to find the figures in regard to the other States, but I was able to discover the Victorian figures on the same basis. For the year 1912-13 the population of Victoria was 1,412,119, the total number of taxpayers was 43,514, the taxable income £22,932,964, and the tax payable £493,101. Ten years afterwards the population of Victoria was 1,521,424, the number of taxpayers, including companies, 75,391, the taxable income £43,164,017, and the tax payable £1,358,896. The population in the ten-year period had increased by 119,305, or 8.4 per

Mr. Moore.]

cent.; the number of taxpayers had increased by 21,807, or 73.2 per cent.; the taxable incomes had increased by £20,231,048, or 88 per cent.; and the tax payable had increased by £865,795, or an increase of 175 per cent.

The extraordinary feature of the comparison is that, whereas the total taxable income in Queensland in the ten-year period had decreased by 3.5 per cent., the total taxable income in Victoria had increased by 88 per cent. It shows that the prosperity of that State is on a totally different plane to that of Queensland, and that our revenue has increased by pushing up the taxation on a decreased income, whereas in Victoria investments and private enterprise have been encouraged and the people have carried on profitable industry to such an extent that the tax payable increased by 175 per cent, and the total taxable incomes of the people by 88 per cent. The comparison shows the difference between two classes of administration—one that brings prosperity to a State and higher revenue from taxation, and another which is doing nothing but jeopardising private enterprise and dragging more and more taxation out of the people until development is stopped. In Victoria, development is going ahead by leaps and bounds, the number of employees in factories is increasing, and the expenditure on public works is of a reproductive nature, whilst in Queensland the burden of taxation is so heavy that it is retarding and becoming a burden on the people carrying on industries. When we find figures such as these, proving conclusively what a difference legislation means to the prosperity of a country—a difference which involves encouraging private enterprise and increasing the number of taxable incomes—it surely shows that some different method of administration and legislation is necessary in Queensland so that the prosperity which is enjoyed by Victoria—a State not nearly so favourably situated climatically or having the area of land or natural advantages that Queensland has—should also be experienced here. In Victoria the taxable income of the people has increased to such an enormous extent that the people scarcely feel the increased burden of taxation, whereas in Queensland we know that increased taxation is crushing development out of the State and making it almost impossible for people to carry on and compete with people living under the better conditions obtaining in the Southern States.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think some information is wanted from the Treasurer in connection with himself, quite apart from any general policy. I notice by the hon. gentleman's Financial Statement that the hon. gentleman anticipates getting £3,769,000 this year from taxation. In view of the fact that last year there was an excess of £277,201 over his estimate, I want to ascertain from the hon. gentleman whether this £3,769,000 is a minimum amount, or does the hon. gentleman expect it to be exceeded?

I take it from some things that I do know, that there were some items of taxation that were not collected last year, probably due to the fact of the reorganisation of the Taxation Department in connection with the Federal and State scheme of unification. When I ask for this information I refer to the year 1924-1925.

[*Mr. Moore.*

Another matter which may be brought up, and which may be more a matter of detail, is that in looking through the Estimates one comes to the conclusion that a very much larger number of hands is being employed in the Taxation Department as a result of the extra amount to be collected by the Department. The point I want to raise in this connection is what basis of charge is being made by the State Government on the Federal Government in connection with the collection of Federal Taxation. Undoubtedly the Federal work is going to increase the work of the State Department, and I wish to know whether any arrangement has been made by which a certain amount is to be debited against the Federal Treasurer for the services rendered by Queensland. When one looks at the position one realises that the staff has increased very materially. For instance, in the Land Tax Branch from 24 to 31; in the Accounts Branch clerks have increased from 23 to 32, and typists from 6 to 14.

Another item I would like particulars of is "Travelling Expenses and Incidentals." The amount appropriated last year was £10,500, and this year the anticipated amount is £18,761. There are two points involved: (1) How was the estimate for the previous year made up? (2) How much of the £18,761 does the Treasurer expect to be used this year?

The question of taxation is one of great moment to the State generally and to the prosperity of the State in particular. I am afraid that the community generally does not realise how important it is that an estimate of this kind should be looked into as it is being looked into this morning. There is no question that increased taxation means an increase of unemployment and, generally speaking, it has a tremendous bearing on the State. Any information that the Treasurer may give this morning will certainly be in the interests of the community generally, and particularly in the interests of those who are employing labour to-day.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The estimate is founded upon what the Commissioner of Taxes expects to receive this year from income taxation. I cannot say that it is either a conservative or a liberal estimate; the figures are supplied by the Taxation Office. The officer responsible for supplying these figures is expected to get as accurate an estimate as possible. Of course, ultimately the figures may be exceeded or they may not be reached—one cannot say. The probability is that the figures will not be exceeded.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Has the amount been cut down?

The TREASURER: No. As a matter of fact the Commissioner increased the amount after submission of the first estimate. After the lapse of several weeks there was a reconsideration of the position, and he revised his estimate and increased the amount, based on the amount received the previous year and after a general survey of the prosperity of the State. In [10.30 a.m.] regard to the increased number of the staff, the hon. member is perfectly right that the increase has been brought about because of the extra work

involved in collecting the Commonwealth taxation under the joint scheme. A Bill is before Parliament—and will be discussed probably in the course of a few days—to ratify the agreement. In that agreement the hon. member will find the whole of the details as to how the cost is to be borne. The Commonwealth will pay to the State the entire cost of collecting the Commonwealth tax so that there will be an offset against the increased vote.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Opp.*): The point that rather disappoints me in regard to this vote is the striking fact that, although the Commonwealth and State taxation are now collected by the one authority, the only economy to the State during the current year will be about £5,500. I was hoping that, when the two activities were brought under the one head with one chief officer, at least many economies could and would be effected, and I was hoping that the saving to the State would be very much more than appears to be the case. I hope the Treasurer will give us a little information on that point. In discussing this vote, one is severely handicapped by not having the Commissioner's report. I would have liked to see in what direction the £200,000 additional revenue from income tax was derived last year. By certain concessions made during the last session of Parliament, the revenue from income tax was to be somewhat reduced, and we therefore naturally anticipated that there would be some falling off in the receipts from income tax, but the actual result would appear to be that we are £200,000 better off. It would be interesting to see from what source this very large increase was obtained—an increase which practically saved the Treasurer. If it had not been for that abnormal increase in the income tax returns, the Budget which the Treasurer recently presented would have had a very different appearance. If the Treasurer can give us any information on these two points, I shall appreciate it.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I am sorry I cannot give information at this stage as to the increased amount received from income tax last year. I have not bothered to get the statistics to furnish hon. members, because they will be fully covered in the Income Tax Commissioner's report.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We shall have no opportunity of discussing it.

The TREASURER: I take it that the hon. member wants the particulars, not for the purposes of criticism, but for information. I have asked the Commissioner to supply hon. members in his report this year with rather fuller information than it has been customary to supply in the Commissioner's report, and he is doing that. The report takes some time to compile because it is largely statistical. Hon. members are apt to find fault with the situation when the Estimates are under discussion before the departmental reports are before them. That is inevitable because of the early date we take the Estimates. If instead of meeting Parliament in July or early in August, hon. members think it wiser to postpone the commencement of the session so that the Estimates would come on later—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: No.

The TREASURER: That would be the only way of ensuring the tabling of the

reports in Parliament by the time the Estimates came up for discussion.

Mr. KELSO: There have been very few Bills this session.

The TREASURER: The hon. member will find on the business-sheet quite a list of Bills. It is a good practice to have the Financial Statement delivered at an early period of the session. The business-sheet can be so arranged that Estimates may be taken on days that suit hon. members best, and to enable that practice to be adopted, the Financial Statement will have to be taken at an earlier date. If it is taken at an earlier date in the session, it will practically mean that all the parliamentary reports will not be tabled by that time. In a few cases the reports have come in early. The departments have been asked in some cases to get their reports in at the earliest possible moment, and some reports which do not deal with statistics have been sent in; but reports which depend for their compilation on statistics must necessarily be delayed. If hon. members wish to have a change in the practice, I am quite willing to make the change later on.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Is the income tax report likely to be available before or when the Income Tax Acts Amendment Bill is debated?

The TREASURER: I am afraid not. I trust I shall not be out of order, Mr. Pollock, in referring to this subject. We shall have to get on at a very early date with Bills which the Government desire to put through this session. I think there is a general desire not to prolong the session, and there is a hope of concluding the business of the session about the middle of October or a little after that date. However, I will ask the Commissioner of Taxes to endeavour to have his report placed earlier before Parliament.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I understand that there is in the Income Tax Department today a feeling of insecurity on the part of the staff. I understand that, on account of the exemptions being increased, there is a likelihood of twenty or thirty clerks being dispensed with. I would like the Treasurer to indicate whether that is so, and whether it is the intention to absorb those clerks in other departments of the State.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The arrangements under which the State and Federal staffs were merged necessitated the State taking over arrears of Commonwealth taxation work in connection with the preceding assessing year. On that work quite a large staff of assessors, inspectors, and clerks were engaged—I think there were about seventy engaged at the time we took over the work. Necessarily, when that work is overtaken, the necessity for a continuance of the full staff will have ceased, and provision has to be made either for their absorption in the State service, for which arrangement is made where the opportunity occurs, or for their retransfer to the Commonwealth. At any rate, we have no desire to treat harshly the members of either the State or the Commonwealth staff who have been taken over, but there were a great many members of the Commonwealth staff who were not officers of the Commonwealth public service.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I would like to ask the Treasurer if he can see his way to have acknowledgments sent out from the Income Tax Office of returns sent in by taxpayers. Many persons have asked me if this could not be brought about.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): There are 36,000 income tax payers in connection with the State returns, and then there are also the Commonwealth returns. To send out acknowledgments would involve a great deal of clerical work and expense, and, at the same time, there would be no good purpose served. I do not know what benefit the hon. member thinks will accrue to the taxpayer by getting a formal acknowledgment of the receipt of his return, as the acknowledgment is made in due course when the taxpayer gets his notice of assessment.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I would like to give the Treasurer an instance which occurred in my own case. A couple of years ago I sent in my return, and later on received an inquiry as to why I had not forwarded one. I think that where a person has sent in a return and asks for a receipt he should get it, and not be called upon to swear an affidavit as I was—swearing on the Bible—that he has sent in a return. It is pretty rough where a person has obeyed the law, through some mistake made by an officer of the department, that he should be liable to a penalty unless he is prepared to take the whole onus on himself of proving that he sent in his return. There should be some way whereby a person who has done that can be protected and a recurrence of that kind of thing prevented in the future. If the receipt of his return has been delayed through no fault of his own, I cannot see why a penalty should be attached to him. I hope that the Treasurer will see the wisdom of issuing a receipt to any person who asks for it.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I am prepared to give instructions that, where a taxpayer makes a return and asks for an acknowledgment, an acknowledgment should be supplied accordingly. I do not think the trouble is the fault of the department. A large volume of correspondence is received and dealt with systematically, and I do not think many mistakes occur in the office. Possibly the greater number of them occur between the time when the taxpayer makes out his return and places it in an envelope and the time when he mails it. Of course, there cannot be infallibility in any line of business, but the Taxation Department has to be so meticulously careful in dealing with these matters that I am sure they are not at fault. Certain officers are charged with the responsibility of opening the mail and recording it; but if hon. members desire that an acknowledgment should be sent in cases where it is requested, I will give instructions accordingly.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): One must recognise that there is a tremendous amount of correspondence for the Taxation Office to handle, and however careful the officers may be it is possible for mistakes to occur. I had a case where a taxpayer put in a return and was then called upon to put in another return, on the ground that he had not sent in one at all, and he had to pay 10 per cent. penalty, and then his first return came in

[*Mr. Clayton.*

afterwards. I do not mean to say that a receipt should be given in every case, but I think the Treasurer will admit that, if the taxpayer demands a receipt, he should get it. I do not think that is the case at the present time.

In addition to the higher officers I would like to pay a tribute to the three inquiry officers of the department, the one dealing with land tax and the others with income tax. Anybody who has had anything to do with them must admit that they deal with the public generally in a most excellent manner, and I would like to see those gentlemen get credit for it. From my own personal experience, I am glad to be able to say that I appreciate what they have done in carrying out their work.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think we all recognise that some of the departmental reports cannot be tabled very soon after the close of the financial year, and if they are tabled after the Estimate concerned has been dealt with, I would have no objection to having them discussed at a later period. But we are in your hands, Mr. Pollock.

The TREASURER: I think the hon. member misunderstood me. I said I would not be averse, if it was desired, to calling Parliament together at a later date so that all the departmental reports would be available when the Estimates of those departments were being discussed.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have no desire to misinterpret the hon. gentleman. On this Estimate I want to have something to say with regard to the financial position of the State generally.

We are dealing with something that is absolutely vital to the progress of this great State—more vital perhaps than many of us recognise—yet we have not the very important report that ought to be here to enable us to intelligently discuss this vote. I want to protest most emphatically against being asked to pass a vote of this description practically in the dark, and without being able to discuss it in the way we ought to be able to discuss it. If in any business matter a proposal was brought forward in which certain things were asked, and we were told that we would get more information after those things were passed, we would be held up to ridicule: yet that is practically what we are being asked to do in Parliament, when Parliament should set an example to the community, more especially when dealing with an important vote like this, which has such an important bearing on the industries of the State. We should not be asked to deal with the vote without the requisite information from the department. The vote is of such importance that the Treasurer ought to be prepared to postpone its consideration until the arrival of the necessary report from the department. That would certainly be very helpful to the community. Personally I want to voice my protest in the strongest possible manner at the loose way in which we are putting through this estimate.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I have not had any difficulty with my own income tax returns, or with those in which I have been interested. I always take the precaution of making my income tax return out in duplicate.

Mr. PETERSON: That is no proof of the return being lodged.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If there is any question about the lodging of the return, then you have the duplicate.

Mr. PETERSON: That is no proof.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It should be sufficient to prevent anybody being required to make out an affidavit stating that his return was lodged. It is not so much the question of whether the return has been lodged as other things. This year I received my assessment notice asking for payment of the money on a date nearly a week previous to my receiving the assessment. That did not strike me as being quite fair. The department had sent the notice to Parliament House, and, when it reached me at Charters Towers, the date on which payment was demanded had passed. Under ordinary circumstances the amount could not have been paid on the date named, as it would not have been in my possession by that date, but immediately I received the notice I paid the amount. To my mind the receipt for the payment of the money is of infinitely more importance than a receipt for the lodgment of the return.

Mr. PETERSON: You can pay the money over the counter.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: How can you pay the money over the counter when you are a thousand miles away from the office? If you pay the money into the bank you get an interim receipt from the bank, which you send to the Taxation Department; but, if you do not get a receipt from the Taxation Department, you begin to wonder what has happened, and whether the interim receipt reached its destination. There are various ways of sending money, and, as all the people do not live in Brisbane, all the money cannot be paid over the counter. Some people send their money by post.

Mr. KELSO: They can send it by registered letter.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Registered letters are just the ones that go astray. My experience has been that an ordinary letter oft-times reaches its destination more promptly and safely than a registered letter. Hon. members know that many of the charges against officials in our courts are founded on the fact that registered letters have gone astray, and the people concerned have got restive as to whether their money has reached its destination or not. The department could allay their feelings by sending out prompt acknowledgments of the money. If I can do so, I pay my money over the counter, but, if that cannot be done, the people have to do the next best thing.

I would like to say in reply to the criticism in connection with the tabling of the various reports that in times gone by hon. members never got the reports as early as they do now. We used to discuss Estimates introduced by previous Governments in November and December—sometimes right at Christmas Eve—and the reports were not then available.

Mr. CLAYTON: Were you satisfied under those circumstances?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I had good grounds to be dissatisfied then, when the reports were not tabled until December, whereas

they are now available in September. I certainly think that reports have been tabled much earlier in recent years than previously. The most important report is the one submitted by the Auditor-General, and prior to this Government assuming office it was never available during the discussion of the Estimates. Hon. members opposite have less room to complain now than of the performances of the late Government.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): There is one matter that I would like to deal with before this vote goes through, to try to secure from the Treasurer a promise that something will be done in the matter of double taxation and payment by the Commonwealth to the States. We know that a Bill is shortly to be introduced in regard to one collecting authority. I would like to raise the question of one taxing authority, which would be of great benefit to the people of the State. The question of one taxing authority will arise at an early date. At the Premiers' Conference of 1923 the following proposals were definitely agreed to:—

“For a period of five years from 1st July, 1923—

1. The Commonwealth shall not levy any income tax on any incomes except those of companies.

2. The income tax levied by the Commonwealth on the income of companies shall not exceed 2s. 6d. in the £1.

3. No interest shall be paid by the Commonwealth to the States on properties transferred to the Commonwealth under section 84 of the Constitution.

4. No payment shall be made by the Commonwealth to the States under the Surplus Revenue Act 1910.”

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! That raises a question of policy, and has nothing to do with this vote.

Mr. KERR: It is a question of one taxing authority. I would like to know from the Treasurer whether he is prepared to give hon. members an opportunity to become acquainted with all the information on this question when the question of policy in regard to the income tax of the State arises. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. gentleman to the report of a Royal Commission held in Western Australia, in regard to Federation and Western Australia, and I will lend it to him if necessary. The papers have been prepared by Mr. Edgar T. Owen, Under Treasurer of Western Australia. It deals concisely with the very questions we require to know something about before we commit ourselves as a State to one taxing authority for the Commonwealth. Queensland may suffer a gross injustice unless this question is looked into very closely.

This book is full of information regarding excise and other duties. It contains a list of papers dealing with income taxation, covering—

The Federal movement in Australia;
The Commonwealth Constitution;
Legislation declared invalid;
Past proposals to alter the Commonwealth Constitution;
Commonwealth and State financial relations;

Mr. Kerr.

Customs and excise revenue and portion repaid to States;
 Commonwealth and State taxation and cost of federation;
 Power of Commonwealth to take over public debts of the States;
 Factories under federation;
 West Australian imports and exports;
 Power to form new States.

Before we can handle this important question of taxation and determine whether we are going to sacrifice part of our income tax or whether the Commonwealth is going to receive any benefit, we must first receive proper and correct statistics, as was the case with Western Australia. Until those statistics are placed before us we cannot get very far. Western Australia was not taking any risks, and they prepared a very good case for their State. If our proposed agreement is going to be for about five years, I think the Treasurer should take action and collate similar information to what was collated in Western Australia. I suggest to the Treasurer that a committee of, say, two members from each side, assisted by the Under Secretary for the Treasury, should investigate the matter and make us au fait with the position. This would place us in a position to be able to deal with the Bill when it came before the House, and we would know where we stood as individuals, and where we stood so far as the State was concerned.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The Commissioner of Taxes has informed me that his report will be available for the Government Printer this week, and no doubt it will be in the hands of hon. members next week.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I was hoping to hear from the Treasurer some reference to the questions of land taxation and super taxation. Super taxation was brought in as an emergency measure, and it cannot be urged that it is an emergency measure now. In conjunction with land taxation, it is very hard on the rural landowner. It means double taxation, and there appears to be no effort to relieve the rural landowner in this respect. Even small landowners are not exempt, because this sort of thing depreciates the value of all land. In the first place, it was anticipated that this taxation would cause large estates to be broken up, but those estates are still intact. The general effect is that the small landholder suffers by the increased taxation through the general depreciation of land values, and if he sells, it is at a reduced price. It is not fair to hit only one section of the community. If taxation affects one, it should affect all. Some inducement should be offered to owners of large areas to cultivate their estates; if they had an opportunity of getting relief for larger amounts where they did cultivate their estates, it would help the situation. But these large estates are still existing, and no more cultivation is being proceeded with than in the past. Something should be done so far as the super tax is concerned; also as regards the general bearing of the land tax in connection with the rural owner.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I come in contact with the officers of this department fairly frequently, and I wish to say that I have always received every

[*Mr. Kerr.*

courtesy and attention from both Federal and State officers when the offices were separated.

There is one difficulty I find in regard to a lot of people in the country. In many instances the income received by people who own small areas of land has been less than £100 a year for the last ten years, and every year they have to get somebody in the city to make out returns for them. There is no tax to pay, and from the position of these people we know that they never will have any tax to pay. Some [11 a.m.] of them are very aged, and it appears to me that, after three or four returns have been sent in, there might be an intimation from the Commissioner that no further return need be sent in by these people until such time as he asks for it. There are numbers of these people all over the State, and, although they will never be taxable, they are put to considerable worry each year. In some instances the only income received is £60 or £70 a year from rents. That is free of income tax, still these people have to make out returns, and I think some consideration should be given to them.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The incidence of taxation and its effect generally on the community is of such importance that I would like the Treasurer to postpone this vote until we get the report of the Commissioner of Taxes. The Treasurer says that the report will probably be available in a week's time.

The TREASURER: I would remind the hon. member that there has already been a considerable amount of discussion this morning.

Mr. MOORE: The discussion has been very limited, and this question of income tax and land tax is one of the most vital questions that we have to discuss. The incidence of taxation affects the industries of the State to the greatest possible extent, and we want to see what effect the taxation is having. The postponement of this vote could not make very much difference to the Treasurer, but it would make a very big difference to members of Parliament if they knew the exact incidence of the tax and how it affects a certain section of the community. The Treasurer has told us that he has asked the Commissioner to give fuller information in his report so that hon. members will have an opportunity of seeing the incidence of the tax and how it affects the various people in the State. It would be preferable if this vote were postponed until we got that information so that we would know exactly where we stand.

The TREASURER: I would have no objection to meet the wishes of the leader of the Opposition, but there will be two further opportunities of discussing the incidence of the income tax. One will be on the second reading and Committee stages of the Bill and also when the resolutions from the Committee of Supply are under consideration. Surely that should be sufficient?

Mr. MOORE: That might be all right if we were assured of having the report before the Bill is discussed.

The TREASURER: I can assure you of that.

Mr. MOORE: It is not an altogether satisfactory method of discussing the question. The most satisfactory way would be to move a reduction of the vote to ascertain whether

the incidence of the tax is having a detrimental effect on the community.

The TREASURER: You can move a reduction of the vote.

Mr. MOORE: That is the only way in which we can enter a protest against the action of the Government in imposing taxation that may be considered detrimental to the industries of the State. We want the report to see the exact incidence of the taxation and whether it is not possible to prevail on the Government to alter the incidence.

The TREASURER: There will be no change in the incidence of taxation.

Mr. MOORE: I know it would be perfectly futile to move a reduction of the vote under the present constitution of the House, but it would be an effective protest. Owing to the conditions prevailing on the other side, one can never tell whether a few members opposite would not be inclined to come over and vote with this side in order to enter an emphatic protest against the way in which the Government are carrying on the business of the country. To my mind, this is the most important vote we have to discuss on the whole of the Estimates.

The TREASURER: Some member or other says that about almost every vote.

Mr. MOORE: The Treasurer must recognise that the incidence of taxation in this State is the most important question with which we have to deal. It is the incidence of taxation that spells prosperity or otherwise to the State. That being the case, it is only a fair thing that we should have all the information available when this vote is under discussion so that we have an opportunity of seeing the exact position. If we consider it advisable to draw public attention to the incidence of taxation, we can do so by moving a reduction of the vote. People then would take a little more notice than they do at the present time because of the way in which this vote goes through. Nor very much information is given about it. The very fullest information should be given by the only man who can give it, and that is the Commissioner of Taxes.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to endorse the request of the leader of the Opposition that the Treasurer should postpone this vote till a later date.

The TREASURER: The Income Tax Bill will be introduced in the course of a week or two, and you will then have an opportunity of discussing the whole question of income taxation.

Mr. TAYLOR: There are certain things that can be done on this vote that cannot be done when we are discussing that Bill. We are not finding fault with the Treasurer because the report has not been tabled in time, but the deferring of this vote for a day or two would not affect the hon. gentleman.

The TREASURER: I would be quite willing to do it if there would be no further opportunity of discussing the incidence of the tax, but there will be a full opportunity on the Bill, which is of a consolidating nature.

Mr. TAYLOR: I admit that, but at the same time we are discussing a vote in connection with the Land and Income Tax Department, which is one of the most important votes we can possibly discuss. We cannot discuss the question as we would like to

discuss it unless we have full information. We should like to see where the taxation is coming from and the method of collecting that tax. We could better discuss the question if we had the Commissioner's report, and, as the report is going to be available in a week's time, there will be no harm done by delaying the vote. The Treasurer might well accede to the request made by the leader of the Opposition and delay the vote till a later date.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bolimby*): I was hoping that, as a result of the request made by the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Nationalist party, the Treasurer would have seen his way clear to immediately respond to that request, seeing that it only means the postponement of this Estimate. The hon. gentleman should recognise that, if the discussion was postponed till a little later, it would not cause any grievous personal inconvenience to himself, and I would point out that it is currently reported this morning that we are not going to take the Estimates in the order in which they are printed. The public outside, as well as hon. members on this side, require that this question should be discussed. It is all very well for the Treasurer to say that it can be discussed in a certain way when the resolutions from Committee of Supply are being considered. I grant that it can, but we all know that, when we get on our feet with Mr. Speaker in the chair to discuss matters at that stage, we are very limited in the extent to which we can go. We all know the number of items which have to be discussed at that particular time, and, with a view to dealing with the most important items, many are allowed to pass altogether without debate. I am sure the Treasurer himself is seized with the position outside—that on account of taxation there is a shrinkage to-day, for instance, in connection with employment. It is a painful thing to realise the burden which many people are bearing as the result of the heavy taxation. The information given this morning by the leader of the Opposition, to my mind, was appalling. The Treasurer is going to be helped rather than otherwise by having a frank discussion upon an Estimate which has a bearing on that particular subject.

The TREASURER: This is not the proper time to discuss the Government's financial policy.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Opposition are fair in their criticism, and recognise that the hon. gentleman has very often tried to meet them fairly, but this is a matter of the gravest importance to the State. If the reasonable request which has been made by the leader of the Opposition is turned down, the inference outside will be that it is the desire of the Government to curtail discussion in connection with this important matter. I would again very respectfully and earnestly ask the Treasurer to grant the request of the leader of the Opposition, not because it has been made by that hon. gentleman, but by reason of its great importance and its bearing in connection with the financial needs of the State at this juncture. The Treasurer knows that, because he himself has had very largely to curtail expenditure along certain lines, and the fuller and franker the discussion the better it will be for the Government and the State generally.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I endorse the remarks of the leader of the Opposition and

Mr. Maxwell.]

other hon. members on this side. The hon. member for Wynnum has raised a very important point—that is, in regard to the confidence which is so essential for the advancement of this State. The hon. member also referred to the unemployment which exists to-day. I would like to draw the Treasurer's attention to a statement which appeared in one of our newspapers yesterday dealing with unemployment in the building trade. I had occasion, when speaking previously in this Committee, to refer to the lack of business on the sheet.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: I claim that the fullest opportunity should be given to members of the Opposition to go into this question thoroughly. The hon. member for Queensland referred to what had taken place during the occupancy of the Treasury benches by a previous Government, and pointed out the lateness of the session at that time and the delay which occurred in tabling reports. I have been led to believe since I came into this Chamber that the present Government, at any rate, were going to do things in such a manner that the greatest publicity would be given, and opportunity would be offered to allow a full discussion by hon. members; but what do we find? We find the Government drifting into the very same practices of which they accused previous Governments. I do not say that the predecessors of this Government did those things; I am taking the statements which hon. members opposite have made. On various occasions when we wanted to discuss seriously certain State enterprises and Government departments we on this side found we could not do so owing to the reports not having been presented. A request has been made by the leader of the Opposition that the Treasurer should postpone the consideration of this Estimate till a subsequent stage. I was under the impression that the hon. gentleman was going to do so, but he seems to think there will be sufficient opportunity now.

Mr. DUNSTAN: What about adjourning the House in order to prepare your case?

Mr. MAXWELL: Our case is already prepared, but it is very evident from the lack of business on the paper that the Government will have to adjourn the House before very long.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: I know I have digressed a little, but that is only in reply to the hon. member's interjection. We should have not only the report of the Commissioner of Taxes, but every other report so that we would be in a position to discuss things in an intelligent manner.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I support the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. It must not be overlooked that, as compared with 1922-1923, the income tax for last year shows an increase of £150,000 and land tax of £28,000. We must remember that the income tax exemption has been increased to £250, and we are entitled and it is our duty to find out where the extra income tax is coming from. We are also entitled to know how much super tax is paid. We have none of this information before us. The whole of our secondary industries hinge on the taxation of business in Queensland as compared with the other States. We know that an enormous sum has come out of industry. It is time we took definite action

in regard to one of the most important things in the State to-day; that is, the extraction of income tax from the very vitals of industry.

Mr. DUNSTAN: What rot!

Mr. KERR: The hon. member says "What rot!" That is the attitude of his party to-day, and because of that attitude Queensland is in her present position. It is no good haulking at the position.

Mr. COLLINS: You want to put more taxation on the workers.

Mr. KERR: The worker pays every time. He pays so much that he is not able to make our industries pay in Queensland. The only way to do that is by increased population. Because of taxation the wages to-day have not the same economic value that they had before. We are discussing a department which brings in a revenue of something over £2,700,000, and we are not able to get any information as to where that money is coming from. We can see that the taxation is injuring industries, but we have not got the figures this morning in connection with the taxation. It is disgraceful that Parliament should meet at all under these conditions. What is the good of asking us to give an intelligent vote when we are not given any figures from the head of the department to show where we stand? It is disgraceful that any Government should ask us to pass such a large amount unless we know the incidence of the taxation. We are entitled to know how much is extracted by ordinary taxation, and how much by super tax. The Treasurer has gone halfway to meet us, and he should go the rest of the way and delay the vote so as to give us an opportunity of dealing with the incidence of taxation in the State.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I desire to back up the remarks of the hon. member for East Toowoomba as to the inconvenience of the farmers having to make unnecessary returns. In connection with owners of land in rural districts under £300 in value, who never come under taxation because the value of their land never varies, they have to keep on sending in returns year after year. It means an absolute waste of time in the office and therefore of funds, and we ought to have some economy in that direction. I hope that some attempt will be made to deal with the matter.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Mr. Pollock,—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed to him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. MOORE: I thought I had another five minutes.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The leader of the Opposition has pointed out how desirable it is that certain information should be obtained before this vote is passed. His protest has been supported by other hon. members, and I want to endorse it also. My principal reason for doing so is that we ought to have some information as to the sources from which the extra £200,000 was obtained by income tax last year. On several occasions during this session hon. members have shown just how our industrial position is being affected by taxation; and in view of the increased taxation of the Government and the various methods of getting money for which they are responsible in the various

[*Mr. Maxwell.*

forms of stamp duty and income tax and other ways, there is real reason why this Committee should be fully informed of the position before discussing this vote. I do not think that upon examination the statement of the hon. member for Queenon will prove to be sound. Although it is true that under the Government which I supported the report of the Auditor-General was sometimes late, yet the departmental reports were tabled every year before the various Estimates went through. We are justified in asking that this information should be available. The Treasurer has stated that we shall have it next week, but I say that the report is so important that we should have it before the vote passes. It has everything to do with the rates of taxation and whether there should be a reduction, and as a protest I move—

“That the vote be reduced by £1.”

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The hon. member for East Toowoomba has moved a reduction of the vote, I am perfectly certain, not because he really wishes to reduce it, but because he wishes to get information.

The TREASURER: He will certainly not get information in that way.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer must admit that, as reasonable beings, we are entitled to get the information.

The TREASURER: A very reasonable attitude has been adopted by me in that regard.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman should certainly pray for the gift which would enable us “to see ourselves as others see us.” The hon. gentleman certainly cannot claim that every reasonable information has been given. On this very vote the Treasurer has had to admit that, because he has not his staff here this morning, he is not able to afford to the Committee the courtesy of information on quite a minor matter.

The TREASURER: It should be the virtue of a Christian gentleman to be generous enough to admit that I courteously rose and replied to every point the hon. member raised.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have heard those words “Christian gentleman” before. Let me say that I do not regard them as anything but a compliment from the hon. gentleman.

The TREASURER: It should be the virtue of a Christian gentleman to acknowledge courtesy.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have acknowledged it. I have again and again stated that I have received it, and that I have always regarded the Treasurer as willing to give information. But this morning he is different. The hon. gentleman forgets that the Opposition have a duty to the country. It is no use the hon. gentleman sitting down and saying, “I am the great I am.” We asked questions with regard to travelling expenses and incidentals, and the hon. gentleman told us that his staff was not here—that is a sample of the courtesy which he extends to the Committee when we surely are only doing our duty. As to the bigger question which the hon. gentleman has sidetracked, again I ask whether he does not realise the bearing which the increase in taxation and the amount which is being received has on Queensland? I want to say emphatically that if the hon. gentleman did his duty to the country he would immediately give all the information he could.

Mr. KELSO (*Vundah*): Here we are faced with the duty of discussing these Estimates when we have not got the report of the Commissioner for Taxes, and hon. members will remember the discussion we had on the Estimates of the Department of Public Works, because the report of that department was tabled only the very morning when the Estimates were to come up. A protest was lodged then that it was impossible for us to discuss Estimates intelligently unless we had the departmental reports, and we repeat that protest now. In the case of this vote, it is absolutely essential that we should have the report of the Commissioner. It is quite evident, although the Treasurer has denied it, that the Government are running short of Bills and that it will be a short session. Supply has been introduced early, and it is unfortunate that our main report—the report of the Auditor-General—is not ready for us, but we should have the departmental reports. The Treasurer stated years ago that finance was “the basis of good government,” and at this juncture it is important that we should know just how the land tax and income tax are collected. It is very regrettable that the Treasurer did not agree to the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition.

[11.30 a.m.]

Question—That £54,485 only (*Mr. Roberts's amendment*) be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 23.

Mr. Appel	Mr Maxwell
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Moore
„ Brand	„ Morgan
„ Clayton	„ Nott
„ Corser	„ Peterson
„ Deacon	„ Petrie
„ Edwards	„ Roberts
„ Elphinstone	„ Sizer
„ Kelso	„ Swayne
„ Kerr	„ Taylor
„ King	„ Warren
„ Logan	

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Roberts.

NOES, 33.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Hartley
„ Bedford	„ Jones
„ Bertram	„ Kirwan
„ Bruce	„ Land
„ Bulcock	„ Lacombe
„ Collins	„ Lloyd
„ Conroy	„ McCormack
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ McLachlan
„ Dash	„ Mullan
„ Dunstan	„ Payne
„ Farrell	„ Ryan
„ Ferricks	„ Stopford
„ Foley	„ Theodore
„ Gilday	„ Weir
„ Gillies	„ Wilson
„ Gledson	„ Winstanley
„ Hanson	

Tellers: Mr. Farrell and Mr. Hanson.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question—“That £54,486 be granted”—put and passed.

MARINE.

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

“That £76,145 be granted for ‘Marine.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The report from the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers for the year ended 30th June, 1924, says—

“On behalf of the Rockhampton Harbour Board a specification was prepared and tenders invited for a trailing suction

Mr. Moore.‡

hopper dredger for use in the Fitzroy River. Tenders are returnable on 29th August next.

I have examined certain papers in an endeavour to ascertain whether any tender was accepted and who was the successful tenderer, but I can see no reference to the matter. I would like the Treasurer to tell us whether any tender has been accepted, and whether the successful tenderer is a Queensland or an Australian manufacturer.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I am not quite sure, but I believe that twelve or thirteen tenders have been received, but they have not yet been considered. Tenders were received from one Queensland firm, several Australian firms, and quite a number of oversea firms. There is a wide disparity between the lowest and highest tender, and they are now under consideration.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I would like to ask the Treasurer if the new dredger, which it is proposed to bring into Queensland or to have manufactured in Queensland, is to be a suction dredger, or one of some other type? It is of very great importance to know exactly what is going to be done in that direction. It will be remembered that on one occasion before the war a new dredger was bought, and, when a function was held on the river in connection with that matter the most enthusiastic supporters were the hon. gentleman who then sat in opposition, and who thought that the purchase was a most excellent one. I want to ask the Treasurer if it is likely that the dredger will be built in Queensland, whether he is going to Germany for it, or whether he has sent anyone home to ascertain what is likely to be the most suitable dredger for our requirements. It is very important that we should be perfectly certain that the tool we are getting is the very best tool for the work to be done. The Treasurer should be able to give us that information. I would also like to ask him if the "Matthew Flinders" is now performing her work in a satisfactory way? Some little while ago there was trouble aboard the "Matthew Flinders." The Treasurer will perhaps remember that, when approaching another vessel entering the Bay—there being a strong tide running at the time—some one was thrown into the water by some means or other, and there was some feeling amongst the crew that the vessel had not been properly handled, and there was some disturbance amongst those employed on that occasion. I want to ask the Treasurer if that dissatisfaction has disappeared. I remember that the "Matthew Flinders" was designed by an officer of the department, and was considered entirely suitable for the work. I believe a good deal of trouble was taken in designing that boat, and I want to ascertain, therefore, if she has lived up to what was believed by the department would be the case. I also want to know if the employees engaged on her are entirely satisfied. The Treasurer will be able to tell us whether any men left on the occasion I referred to as the result of what happened. I notice that there is an increase in the number of pilots, but I take it that is due to the growth of the port.

The TREASURER: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is pleasing to note that this port has grown, but we may have to consider seriously whether the present accommodation for vessels coming into

[Mr. Moore.

the port is sufficient. I would remind the Treasurer that during my time as Treasurer it was thought that in the not very distant future it would be necessary to make some extra provision down towards the Hamilton in that regard. It is a matter of moment, and I trust the Treasurer will be able to tell the Committee what the department has done in that direction.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The dredge is now under construction. Messrs. Walkers Ltd., Maryborough, being the successful contractors. It is a bucket dredge. The Rockhampton Harbour Board have asked the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, Mr. E. A. Cullen, to design and draw up specifications for a new dredger. I suppose that there is no greater authority in that connection in Australia than Mr. Cullen. (Hear, hear!). The tenders will be decided after consultation with the Rockhampton Harbour Board, who have to carry the obligation.

With regard to the episode which occurred in Moreton Bay among the crew of the "Matthew Flinders," I understand that the accident happened while I was away. The pilot steamer's whaleboat capsized. The accident had nothing to do with the steamer. The incident exercised the minds of the crew at the time, and they felt aggrieved. That has now been overcome, and the trouble has disappeared. Everyone—mercantile men in particular—recognise the rapid expansion which is taking place in the trade of the port, and the necessity for increased accommodation for shipping. The Government have land in reserve near the Hamilton hotel extending down the river. They have designed a comprehensive docking scheme which includes about one mile of quays. Mr. Cullen has designed a docking scheme in the inlet where the dredging plant now lies. The site enables fine facilities for shipping to be carried out. These increased facilities will certainly be required.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That was the reason for the resumption of that land.

The TREASURER: Yes. The hon. member for Wynnum had in his time a very comprehensive scheme recommended to him for the development of the river. It is a very fine scheme which everyone would agree with, and which any Government will carry out as the necessity arises from time to time. We shall shortly have to make a start in the construction of the wharves near the cold stores, and gradually extend them down the river. The first part of the scheme is one mile of quays near where the dredging plant is usually anchored. It affords an admirable location for wharves, is handy to shipping and has a fine swinging basin with plenty of water.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): The Treasurer in his reply has opened up a new avenue of thought. I realise that we have a good port, but I also realise that it is absolutely essential to construct a new dock if we are to cater for and encourage the largest steamers to visit this port. I was pleased with the remarks of the hon. member for Mirani when speaking on the Government Loan Bill, when he dealt with the subject from the point of view of the whole of the State and not of Brisbane alone.

The TREASURER: A graving dock is part of Mr. Cullen's scheme. It will entail the

expenditure of a vast sum of money and a lot of preliminary expenses; but it is recognised that a new dock is required to improve the trade of the port.

Mr. MAXWELL: The amount of employment it would give to the various trades would be something wonderful. Work has been sent away from this port owing to the inability, through lack of facilities, to execute it locally. I do not want to anticipate a deputation which proposes to wait on the Treasurer in connection with the matter, but I trust that, when the deputation interviews the hon. gentleman, he will give it every consideration. Like the hon. member for Mirani, I hope hon. members on both sides will view this question from the point of view that it is not going to benefit Brisbane alone but the whole of the State.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to say a few words in connection with the new dock which is so necessary at the present time. A lot of money has been expended lately which, had it been expended in a work of this kind, would not have aroused such criticism as has taken place.

The TREASURER: The criticism would have been just the same.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman would then have had something to show for his expenditure.

The TREASURER: We have something to show for our expenditure.

Mr. TAYLOR: The money has absolutely disappeared, and the Treasurer is anxious to find out where it has gone.

Mr. HARTLEY: You want to put it at the bottom of the river.

Mr. TAYLOR: I suppose it is at the bottom of the river and under the mud at the present time. The report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers says—

“The volume of sea-borne trade for the past year is the largest yet experienced during the State's existence.”

The TREASURER: A very fine tribute to the Government.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is not a tribute to the Government; it has occurred in spite of the Government. The Government could not prevent it. They have done everything they could to prevent it.

The TREASURER: That is very unjust.

Mr. TAYLOR: Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Government, the State has progressed, and will continue to progress. In order to deal with this sea-borne traffic which is coming to our shores, it is absolutely necessary to have adequate docking facilities.

The TREASURER: I agree with you that it is very necessary, but at the same time not one ship to my knowledge has been held up for a berth.

Mr. TAYLOR: Probably that is so, but at the same time quite a lot of repairs would have been done in Brisbane if we had had the docking accommodation. We find, according to the report, that sixty vessels, excluding launches, were docked during the year as compared with sixty-four in the previous year. The total tonnage of those vessels was only 37,677. Why, one vessel of that tonnage trades with Australia at the present time. Of that total, 1,658 tons re-

presented Government vessels other than dredge plant, and 10,375 tons represented dredge plant, while the tonnage of other vessels attended to in the graving dock totalled 25,644. We find again that during last month the value of our exports, especially primary products, is again in the vicinity of £1,000,000 over the value of the imports which arrived in Queensland the same month. I am sure we are all very pleased to see that. Hon. members know that the exports were mainly made up of wool, and, according to all we can see at the present time, our exports in that direction will increase, and we want to see accommodation provided here in order that repairs may be carried out to the largest vessel trading with this port.

The TREASURER: Yes, at the Hamilton.

Mr. TAYLOR: I should say that is the best spot in the river for work of that kind.

The TREASURER: Does the hon. member know that the dock he mentions would cost in the vicinity of £1,000,000 or £2,000,000?

Mr. TAYLOR: I suppose it would, but that would not be any more than the hon. gentleman has lost on cattle ventures, and in this case there would be something to show for the expenditure. We have a river that is equal to anything in the Commonwealth and one of which we have every reason to be proud. Every effort should be made to provide ample wharf accommodation right round the banks of the river in the vicinity of the refrigerating works, where quite a lot of land was resumed years ago by a previous Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why not form a Harbour Board and do it yourself?

Mr. TAYLOR: There is a harbour board in the hon. member's city and that is quite sufficient. (Laughter.) The Government of the day resumed quite a large area of the land down the river in order to provide for expansion of sea-borne traffic, and they did a very wise thing, with which no one can find fault. That land could not be resumed to-day at anything like the price paid by the previous Government. That Government were looking ahead, and realised that port development had to take place down towards Pinkenba. I hope that it will not be long before, instead of talking about a dock, we shall see the work actually in hand, which will result in a dock worthy of Queensland and capable of accommodating the largest vessel that may come to Australia.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): In view of the accident that happened recently in connection with the whaler of the “Matthew Finders,” I would like the Treasurer to explain whether the davits, both port and starboard, are in their proper positions. My attention has been directed to the positions which they occupied. When they are lowered, on both the port and the starboard side, I understand they are under the discharge.

Mr. BARBER: Under what?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The discharge. On making further inquiries, I was advised that the engine has to be stopped when a boat is lowered on the one side, and that the electric plant has to be stopped when a boat is used on the other side. Of course, it frequently happens that only one boat is lowered, and it is quite possible that a serious accident may take place if the engine

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

has to be stopped for that boat to be lowered. I would like the Treasurer to cause inquiries to be made as to whether this is so, and, if it is, I ask that the necessary alterations may be made to avoid an accident. It is desirable that no risks should be taken.

I wish to draw the attention of the Treasurer to another matter in connection with this vote. There has been a very large increase of traffic in Moreton Bay. The islands are now being occupied and small vessels are trading carrying commodities to those islands. It frequently happens that those boats require to travel at night to take advantage of the tides. The condition of the buoys and beacons in the bay is very bad. In fact, buoys to mark reefs which were in existence for forty or fifty years have gone and have not been replaced. Many of the beacons also have fallen down and have not been replaced. The danger connected with these fallen beacons is that railway iron was used as a foundation and a wooden beacon was bolted on the top. The wooden portions of many of these beacons have disappeared, and it is almost impossible in these narrow channels to follow the exact channel at night time, with the result that on one or two occasions these small boats have suffered rather serious injury through coming in contact with these old iron standards. If it is not proposed to replace the wooden portions of the beacons, I suggest that these old iron standards should be removed so that the worst that may happen to a boat will be stranding.

Regarding the dry dock, as the Treasurer stated, during the term of the Hon. W. H. Barnes as Treasurer a design was prepared for docking accommodation and for a dock in the portion of the channel situated between the training wall at the Hamilton and the main shore. That is a most suitable place, because it gives direct entrance to the river, but, owing to the lack of foundations, the work would involve, as the Treasurer interjected, a very large amount of capital. I ask the Treasurer if his attention has been directed to a scheme, which, I believe, emanated at one time from the Harbours and Rivers Department, for the construction of a dock on the south side of the river, a little higher than the site suggested on the Hamilton shore and above Colmslie? The foundation there would be nothing like so costly as at the other site. There is a foundation of freestone, and the construction of a dock there would avoid a large amount of the expenditure which would be necessary on the Hamilton side.

There is another matter I desire to impress upon the Treasurer. I understand that in connection with any new line of steamers from overseas to which the Commonwealth—and naturally the State—would have to contribute by way of subsidy, the hon. gentleman has expressed his determination that Queensland shall not contribute to such subsidy unless Brisbane is made the terminal port. I think hon. members of the Opposition will commend that determination. However, if the hon. gentleman proposes that Brisbane shall be the terminal port, it follows naturally that dock accommodation must be provided to accommodate suitably such vessels. The Treasurer interjected that he knew of no case where there was a loss of time owing to the lack of dock accommodation in Brisbane—

[Hon. J. G. Appel.

The TREASURER: No. I said that I did not know of any case where a vessel coming to Brisbane was held up for a berth.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That makes my argument still stronger, because I know of many instances where vessels requiring urgent docking had to pass Brisbane and go on to Sydney. If the principal port of the great State of Queensland is to maintain its position, it is absolutely necessary that, even at some sacrifice, the necessary docking accommodation should be provided. Of course, the present dry dock was sufficient for all purposes when it was constructed, but it is absolutely inadequate at the present time. Vessels over a certain length are unable even to approach it. I understand the depth of water on the sill scarcely exceeds 16 feet at high water. Its length also is insufficient; and it is quite

[12 noon] inadequate to accommodate the liners, both passenger and cargo, which now connect us with the Motherland and the continent of Europe. If we are to get the fullest advantage and benefit of cheap freights, we must have large vessels to carry the freight, larger vessels being operated at a much less cost than the smaller ones; and to enable us to do that it is absolutely essential that adequate accommodation should be provided in the principal port in the State. I am not pressing the claims of Brisbane because it is Brisbane; it is simply because Brisbane is the principal port of the State. So long as the place was suitable, it would not matter to me whether it was at Rockhampton or Townsville; but it is admitted that Brisbane is the principal port and on this port all the large oversea traffic is concentrated.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I wish to express appreciation on behalf of the Rockhampton Harbour Board of the celerity with which their request for a dredge has been acceded to. I am pleased to note that the matter is being kept well forward, and I hope it will not be long before an order is placed for the dredge. The Treasurer has acted wisely in having a dredge designed by his own engineer and tenders received, not only from Queensland and the other States of Australia, but also from other countries. That is rather in marked contrast to the action of the late Government in purchasing the two very fine, but German, dredges that they did.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The German builders had the patent, and you know that.

Mr. HARTLEY: We are getting the Queensland engineers to improve on the German patents.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Members of your party went over those dredges and boosted them up.

Mr. HARTLEY: If everybody followed the policy of the hon. gentleman, we would have all German patents in Australia and everywhere else. I think the Treasurer has acted in the interests of the manufacturing trade of Australia and Great Britain in getting the Government engineers to draw up designs.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They are going to copy that patent.

Mr. HARTLEY: They are going to improve on it, and that is a policy that will encourage the manufacture of Australian dredges, implements, and everything else.

There is no need to go to Germany because they happen to hold a patent that is the best for the time being. I am very pleased that the purchase of a dredge for the Rockhampton Harbour Board is so far advanced. There is not the slightest doubt that a dredge is urgently needed in the Fitzroy River, and it will be well used when it comes to hand. The hon. member for Windsor remarked that he was not inclined to have a harbour board in Brisbane after the experience of the Rockhampton Harbour Board. I think the Rockhampton Harbour Board, all things considered, has done remarkably well to look after 42 miles of river with one dredge.

Mr. KING: Forty-two miles of what?

Mr. HARTLEY: Forty-two miles of river.

Mr. MORGAN: He said he thought it was a creek. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: That is some joke. The wharves in Rockhampton are 42 miles from the sea, and the influence of the tide is felt in the Fitzroy River 18 miles above Rockhampton. The other day, through the courtesy of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, I went round the upper reaches of the Brisbane River, and some little way up—near Mount Crosby—we crossed the river, and by-and-by we crossed it again. Coming back I fell into a very bad error. My friend, the hon. member for Bowen, asked whether we were coming back on the south side or the north side of the river.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Was that coming back? (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: I said, "Brother, we went up on the south side, and we crossed the river at such-and-such a place, and then we crossed it again, so now we are coming back on the south side." I was wrong, for the simple reason that we crossed a little creek a few miles up that a representative of the Water Supply and Sewerage Board told me was the Brisbane River. It was such a little creek that I thought it was merely part of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board's scheme for running water down an open channel. So much for the Brisbane River!

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Nevertheless, the Brisbane River is a very fine river.

Mr. HARTLEY: If Rockhampton had had paternal Governments with sufficient foresight and generosity to reserve somewhere in the vicinity of 250 acres for wharfage sites and a dry dock, as has been done in the Hamilton Reach, then the Rockhampton Harbour Board would be in a very good position, too. Seeing that past Governments so retarded the port of Rockhampton—it has grown in spite of them—I ask members of the Opposition how it is, if they believe in private enterprise, that they have not formed a harbour board for the port of Brisbane and taken charge themselves? Why always go cap in hand to a socialistic Government for the money to deepen the Brisbane River to accommodate over-sea shipping?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The finances of the port of Brisbane are in a very good position.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why do not the hon. member and his rich friends finance the matter themselves, the same as other harbour boards have to do?

I would like to ask the Treasurer how this scheme for the development of the port of

Brisbane and the construction of a dry dock at the Hamilton will be financed? Will the Government finance it as a national undertaking, or will the cost be a charge against the port of Brisbane?

The TREASURER: The cost will be charged to the port of Brisbane.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is very satisfactory. There is very little reference in the report to the work that has been done in the Brisbane River. There is some reference to the fact that the cuttings have been kept clear, but there is very little information as to Harbour Dues, revenue, and expenditure. I am not complaining about the treatment we have received in the Central district. It is freely admitted by the Rockhampton Harbour Board and by everybody in the Central district that we have been very generously met by this Government as far as the financial position would admit; but it would be better if the transactions of the Brisbane Harbour Trust, as to their extent and as to their sources of revenue, were more clearly set out in the report. I must admit that my mind is not altogether free from the impression, and I know the Treasurer has corrected me on this point before, but the first impression is that they are pretty well financed by the Government, and that the Government practically find as much money as is wanted.

If the annual transactions of the Harbour Trust were put either into the report of the Harbours and Rivers Department, or into a separate report of the Harbour Trust, it would be much more satisfactory, as we could then look up the figures for ourselves.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): Hon. members have been comparing the ports of Rockhampton and Brisbane in regard to navigation facilities. I would like to remind the Committee, and particularly the Treasurer, that Ipswich claims to be "the head of navigation" and the oldest port in Queensland.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: The old "Settler" used to run up there.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Yes, boats like the old "Settler" used to run up there, and it was due to those vessels and the good work they did in those days that the district of West Moreton was settled. The railway line originally started from Ipswich, because the river was navigable up to that point, and since then it has been thought fit to have a railway running from Ipswich to Brisbane and also a main road; but that is no reason why the waterway should be allowed to be closed. Ipswich is an important city on the banks of the Bremer—(Laughter)—and the constant effect of the rain washes down the gravel from the hills, which is filling up the river in places. That means that a dredge is much more needed in Ipswich now than it has been in the past. Not only do we need to have the river constantly dredged, but the ever-increasing size of ships with bigger draught which are being used in the river makes it impossible for them to negotiate the rocks which were once so easily avoided by the boats which formerly used the river. I would ask the Premier to consider the request which has been made to him by the Ipswich Chamber of Commerce to remove the rocks that are unquestionably hampering navigation in the town reach of the Bremer.

Mr. MORGAN: You want it to compete with the railways.

Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

Mr. F. A. COOPER: We do not mind that. We have the main road and the railway, but we still have the waterway. Ipswich is the only centre in Queensland which promises, because of its coal formations, to be the big manufacturing city of Queensland, and we cannot allow any highway to be closed. I would recommend the Treasurer to give serious consideration to the request of the Ipswich Chamber of Commerce to have these rocks removed. It is not a big job, and it will be of immense value to the port of Ipswich and to the State of Queensland.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The hon. member for Bremer might address his request to the Irrigation Commissioner. He probably would get more value from that. (Laughter.)

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Instead of spending all the money dredging the Brisbane River and the Fitzroy River up to Rockhampton, it would be cheaper for the Government to dig new rivers. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member does not suggest a new river up to Ipswich. This is a vote we should consider very seriously, as upon it depends to a great extent the possibility of developing trade. We have now something of interest in the Wide Bay district.

Mr. WEIR: The Urangan Pier.

Mr. CORSER: We know that provision is not being made under this vote to give it the attention it deserves. The Urangan Pier has been established at a cost of about £60,000.

Mr. WEIR: A public scandal.

At 12.15 p.m.,

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

Mr. CORSER: That pier would probably cost three times as much to-day. It was established after full investigation by experts. It has been tested by the Commonwealth liners, the "Austral Glen" having carried away a full cargo of sugar. Other vessels also have been there. The naval experts have proved that there is a splendid port at Urangan, and some facilities should be offered to develop it. We should not be too prone to criticise the conditions which Nature has given us along our coasts. We know what is being done in other countries in the world, more particularly in Central Africa, where huge developmental railways are being extended in the interests of cotton, maize, and timber growing. Those railways all terminate at ports; for instance, at Mombasa, where the authorities at the present time are spending £1,000,000 in providing port improvements. We have behind the Wide Bay and Burnett districts a tremendous area of land which is being developed under the Government scheme—the Upper Burnett and Callide lands—to say nothing of the huge territories which could be developed with great benefit to the State. All those areas of country could be made accessible through the port of Urangan, which has been established at a cost, not of £1,000,000, but of £60,000, but we find that no action is taken. Masters of vessels have said that no port is easier of approach than Urangan. Hon. members on both sides of the Chamber have agreed that an excellent port exists there, but there has not been

anything like the money spent on that port that has been spent on our rivers to keep them open. I am not going to say anything about the hundreds of thousands of pounds which have been spent on our rivers; but, when we have such a good natural port as Urangan, because we live in some other part of the State, we should not refuse to develop that port. The assets are there in the shape of the jetty, and it will be a great advantage to the State if we make provision for keeping the port open and arrange for vessels to call there. In the interests of primary and secondary industries in those districts, I sincerely hope that something will be done to preserve and develop the assets which have been placed there at such a low cost. The Treasurer must remember that a considerable amount of the money which was expended on the Urangan jetty was taken from the funds lying to the credit of the Maryborough Harbour Board. When it was built it was expected that the jetty would be a national work. However, it has been paid for partly by the people of the Wide Bay district, and the balance owing is treated as a debt against the port, instead of being looked upon as a national undertaking. I certainly hope that the Government will consider the national advantages which can be obtained from a port of that nature, which will be available for the development of the primary and secondary industries in that portion of the State.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): I have sat in this Chamber seven years and listened to this sort of stuff, and I have never yet raised my voice on this white elephant at Urangan, but I propose to touch upon it this morning. If ever there was a work of national corruption, I think the Urangan Pier stands out on its own. I am told on the very best authority that the then hon. member for Maryborough, who is now the Federal member for Wide Bay, was offered either Urangan Pier or the Tinana Railway deviation, and he chose the Urangan Pier. If that is so, then I say that the Urangan Pier is a national disaster.

Mr. CORSER: I deny that political stuff of yours. You put that up at every election.

Mr. WEIR: You cannot deny it. I have got this on the best authority—on the statements of a member of this House who does not sit on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. CORSER: There are Ministers of the Crown here who passed it.

Mr. WEIR: When this agreement was signed one of the Ministers of the Crown went up on the Maryborough platform with a cabbage wrapped in a Maryborough "Chronicle" to catch the mail at night, and the cabbage wrapped in the Maryborough "Chronicle" fell on the platform and was left there after that Minister had left in the mail.

Mr. CORSER: What has that got to do with it?

Mr. WEIR: Not much, but I will show what it has to do with it. It is well known that certain coal ventures in Takura district were associated with this public scandal. It is also known that certain land values have been inflated to suit this scheme. As late as three weeks ago a block of land was sold to the Federal Government for a custom house at Urangan. Did you ever hear of such a thing? A custom house for Urangan! The whole thing is jobbery. Let

[Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

me go a little further. I have been asked to approach the Premier with a request for an extension of this fishing pier. What the deputation should do is to ask the Premier to give them a jazz hall on the end of the pier, so that the young folk could enjoy the full advantages of dancing and the glories of the deep as well. It will never be fit for anything else. Why do I say this? I say it because it was opened in April, 1917, but during the whole of the period of the war, when the shipping was controlled by the Government of which the Federal member for Wide Bay is a supporter, and since then this white elephant has been visited by only some six boats! This is the thing that they tell us is a national assistance. It is a national disaster. It savours of national corruption, and I say that any political candidate in this country who associates himself with a thing like it should not be allowed to contest a seat in future. I have very strong views on this question, because I think that what was done was totally wrong. What is the use of it? We have been told by these people that it is a good port. I have been approached—

Mr. CORSER: By whom?

Mr. WEIR: I have been approached to get the Premier to do certain things. The Premier remembers distinctly the agitation in Maryborough to get him to put in an extra crane to enable produce to be handled at the wharf. In spite of the fact that they have had six boats in seven years, these people had the audacity to want a further crane; and subsequently a request was made for an extension of the pier. Why not confess the thing definitely and tell the people what the trouble was? I remember that a former member for Wide Bay, Mr. Booker, publicly disowned the thing, and said it was a public scandal. He did not make any bones about it. I intend to give the facts of the case, because it is fast ruining the shipping of Maryborough. It is doing so in this way—that every time we ask for an improvement of the river or anything associated with the improvement of the port we are told that we have already incurred a debt of £40,000 or £50,000 on this Urangan scheme. I remember another little incident about it. Some people tried to get me to approach the Premier over and over again and put before the Government a request for reduced railway freights on maize from the Burnett. They approached the shipping people themselves, or their agents did, and asked them what tonnage they would require before they would bring in a boat. The shipping companies tied them down definitely and said, "Give us such and such a tonnage, and we will bring in a boat." They have not got the boat, because they cannot guarantee the tonnage. There is not sufficient inducement to bring boats there, so they will not come, but all the while the hon. member for Burnett exalts himself and calls the "Corser" white elephant—the jetty at Urangan Creek—a national assistance.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): We have had a sample of the opponents of the Urangan pier, who refers to a public scandal. It is not so very long ago that the Government themselves were associated with the opening of this pier, and Mr. Lennon, now Lieutenant-Governor, who performed the ceremony on behalf of the Government, said they expected that it was going to be a big thing, and the

one man to whom they would not give any of the credit was the man whom they now try to blame.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: At that time, when they thought that this jetty was going to open up a huge territory, there was one man who they said was not responsible, and that was the late State member for Maryborough—the man whom they blame now.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: As regards the question of political scandal, I think hon. members know the hon. member for Maryborough, and his statements of scandal and boodles are made under the protection of this House. I invite open speaking. Such invitation is only necessary when there is nothing to say. The Urangan jetty was built after evidence had been collected from the most eminent authorities the Government were able to get in Australia. Mr. Lindon Bates and others were brought here and paid for reports, and they reported in favour of the jetty, and Mr. A. J. Jones, now a Minister of the Crown, advocated the opening of the port. Is he associated with a political scandal? If it was a political scandal, surely the then hon. member for Maryborough would not hide behind words! It was built in the interests of the State; the whole State was agreed upon it at that time. Now the hon. member says somebody wanted to ship maize there, but the shipping companies would not bring their boats in. They would not come in because the Waterside Workers' Union of Maryborough, working through the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, would not allow the registration of a branch at Urangan jetty, so any company which wished to bring boats there had to pay the fares of the members of the union all the way from Maryborough and back, and overtime. It is only very recently that the opposition of the Waterside Workers' Federation had been broken down. There should be provision for waterside workers to register at the jetty so that the labour would be on the spot. Sixty men were prepared to join the union there, and signed a petition, but the more conservative members of the union in Maryborough opposed it. Another reason why no boats called there, let me remind the hon. member for Maryborough, is that there is no provision for fresh water for ships, and the present Government have not agreed to provide it although they have been asked. There has been no request for an extra jetty or an extension, but for a new crane to take the place of the out-of-date one there at present. These requests have been made and have been refused, although they are a small consideration in comparison with the large expenditure which has been incurred. With reference to the question of maize, the request was that the cheap rate which obtains between our district and Brisbane for products for shipment overseas should be extended to goods going to Urangan, and I do not think anybody will say that was an unreasonable concession to ask for, though sneeringly commented on by Maryborough's member. If it had been granted, the maize boats would have gone there as well as the coal vessels.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): There are one or two statements of the hon. member for Burnett that I want to refute, because

Mr. Weir.]

I know the history of this business well. The present Federal member for Wide Bay did just what his brilliant son has done just now. He tried to do his best to put the responsibility on to anybody who would carry it.

Mr. CORSER: I did not try to do that.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member for Burnett tried to blame the waterside workers because men were not willing to shift, lock, stock, and barrel, and live there, although they have only had six boats in seven years. Obviously those men could not live on the job. They cannot live on air. These people were prepared to work on the waterfront under the conditions applying on all water fronts, that is, that the employers pay their fares to the jetty and back to their homes. Why burke this question? These people are prepared to shift to Urangan tomorrow, as they are not being employed full time at Maryborough. But why ask them to shift if there is no work there?

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. CORSER: We ask that work be provided.

Mr. WEIR: Then why not approach the Federal Government, who had control of the port for a number of years? When an attempt was being made to get labour for Urangan jetty, a petition was sent round to be signed by those men who were prepared to work at Urangan. It was signed by one man on crutches and two others drawing the old-age pension. I saw those names, and I can give those names to the Committee. The document came from the Federal Parliament, and Mr. McLaren, who is Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Union in Maryborough, went through the document with me, because he saw the huge joke attached to it. These were the men who were going to work the boats—one on crutches and two drawing the old-age pension. Later, when the petition was taken to these poor old beggars, they were told, "Your pension will be stopped, as your name is on this sheet," and they replied, "My God, we did not know what we were signing."

Mr. CORSER: That tale might go down with your supporters, but it will not go down with intelligent members of the community.

Mr. WEIR: I do not expect the hon. gentleman, or anyone associated with him, to be intelligent enough to understand any statement.

Mr. CORSER: You said that you were not one of the intelligent members of the community.

Mr. WEIR: No.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, you did.

Mr. WEIR: No. For the benefit of the hon. member I will repeat what I stated. I said that I was not one of the intelligensia for the reason that the hon. gentleman claims to be one. Getting back to the Urangan jetty, those responsible for the petition tried their very best to attach the failure for this white elephant to somebody else. The waterside workers are prepared to form a branch there to-morrow if work is there. The point is that the employers want them to go there for nothing, and they will not go there for nothing. Why should they? They went round and got a few old cripples—

Mr. CORSER: That is not correct.

[Mr. Weir.

Mr. WEIR: I read the list and you did not. I will produce the list. As usual the hon. member for Burnett—

Mr. CORSER: I saw the men.

Mr. WEIR: And so did I. One poor old beggar on crutches, carrying round papers. The hon. gentleman always had his case half-baked. After all, this is a family complaint.

Mr. CORSER: Your name will never do as much good for the country.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): It is with some degree of regret that I realise that the Urangan jetty, after being consigned to its proper place, is being resurrected again. I think it is absolute cruelty to attempt to resurrect it, because pangs of bitterness must possess the minds of the supporters of this scheme.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is why we do not mention the fish trawler. (Laughter.)

Mr. BARBER: I know something about fish trawling, and, if the business had been carried out on the lines I suggested, it would have been an immense success. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Burnett has endeavoured to make the Committee believe that there was practically no opposition to the erection of the Urangan jetty, and that it was looked upon as a work of national importance. The hon. gentleman must think that we suffer from very bad memories, and that the people outside have pretty "crook" memories. The father of the hon. member for Burnett and myself spent the whole of one afternoon and evening discussing the question. I had a chart, and, having some knowledge of charts, depths, etc., I considered that I was on a very good wicket. When I submitted to the House the soundings within a fair radius of Urangan, I believed the House was impressed with what I stated; but the pressure was too great on the Government of the day, and, as a result, this monstrous thing was built. It is all very well for the hon. member to say that Mr. Lennon opened the jetty. After this enormous amount of money had been spent on what it was more or less known would be a failure, someone had to open the jetty, and, as this Government happened to be in power, someone from this Government had to open it. Mr. Lennon certainly had my sympathy.

Mr. CORSER: It was what he said that I refer to.

Mr. BARBER: Hon. members will find on perusing "Hansard" that I pointed out that the whole thing was wrong. I pointed out that one of the factors that would operate against the use of Urangan jetty was that steamers travelling south to Brisbane would have to come inside Sandy Cape and follow a very circuitous channel to get into Urangan. That distance was measured, and, if my memory serves me aright, it was found to be 65 miles, which would mean that, after taking on a bag or two of oysters and one or two other little items, the boat would have to steam back and sweep round the Cape after having covered a distance of at least 130 miles, and at the speed which vessels of that day were capable of, it would mean practically a whole day's loss of time. The amount of cargo that would be available would not warrant a steamer of any decent size going in there. I remember the then Speaker, Mr. Armstrong, taking a week-end trip at Urangan in Mr. Booker's motor

launch, and, when they came back, they reported that they had had a most strenuous time. (Laughter.) It was strenuous in this respect, that, having negotiated the channel into Urangan, the boat—I believe it had a draught of about 2½ feet—struck a bank, and they had to camp out all night and wait for the flood tide. If hon. members opposite try to impress this Chamber with the importance of making a port at Urangan, then I am sorry for the people of Queensland. Urangan can never be a port. I have had personal experience at the place. I have been down there on different occasions during my years of training in the Naval Brigade. We used to cruise around there, and my experience is that immediately a northerly or north-easterly breeze of any force got up steamers of any draught at all would have to get away at once and steam out into the deep water. What would be the position under such circumstances with a boat like those belonging to the British-India Steam Navigation line which ran in those days? No captain would risk his ship under such circumstances. The hon. member for Burnett resurrects this question again after it has been seven years buried, and it should be absolutely ossified and petrified by now. Let Urangan die and be buried and become as extinct as the dodo. That is what nature intended. I have had an opportunity of viewing the Queensland ports and ports in other parts of the world.

I would ask the Treasurer of Queensland, whether Labour or otherwise, in view of the tendencies of shipbuilding and the establishment of huge motor services, seriously to consider whether Governments are warranted in granting loans for the purpose of deepening some of these so-called ports. Maryborough people call the Burnett River a creek, and the people of Bundaberg retaliate. Years ago these smaller ports afforded trade to a considerable number of light draft steamers, which carried on a fairly lucrative business. The tendency of the shipping world during the last few years has been to build larger vessels, and, instead of running four or six small craft competing one against the other at the different ports, they now place steamers with a tonnage of from 2,500 to 5,000 tons on the service. I am satisfied, from the economic aspect, that it would be far better to wipe out this small mesquite fleet and have three or four large centres possessing a decent depth of water for these large steamers to call and pick up the freight. Nature has been very kind to Queensland. I have only to mention the ports of Brisbane, Gladstone, and Bowen. The point I want to make is whether, in view of the larger ships now travelling up and down the coast, the huge possibilities of motor transport, the construction of roads by the Main Roads Board, and our railway service, it would not be more economical for the primary industries, and trade of all sorts, to concentrate on three or four centres to get their produce to market instead of spending the huge sums of money that are being spent to deepen a number of so-called ports. The Treasurer should seriously consider that matter.

The docking facilities of Brisbane have been discussed for a good number of years. I remember some years ago when that large area of land at Hamilton was resumed for docking purposes. A party of hon. members from both sides of the Chamber, myself included, were delegated to go and inspect

the land. With Mr. Hardacre, who was then a member of the Labour party and had a fair knowledge of land values, we spent a whole day in the district. There is no doubt that the project is a fairly big one, but it is one which is warranted so far as the port of Brisbane is concerned. There has been a tremendous development in the port during the last four or five years, and there is no doubt that greater docking facilities should be provided. Too much money is spent in the vicinity of the city, and more money should be spent further down stream in providing wharfage and docking facilities. The Government would be justified in concentrating on measures of that sort, which would provide a more efficient accommodation for the vessels using the port.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I would commend the remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg to the serious consideration of this Committee. He has called attention to a danger which, in my opinion, is certainly creeping in of trying to maintain at considerable expense ports which were never meant to be ports. The scarcity and cost of money will cause future Treasurers seriously to consider whether some of these so-called harbour schemes would not have to be abandoned, and whether efforts should not be concentrated on those centres which nature has provided with shipping facilities.

At 12.47 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: At this stage I would like to ask the Treasurer if he would give some information as to whether it is intended to instal electrical coal-handling appliances at the various ports of Queensland. That is a most important question. Those hon. members who have any idea at all of the abundance of coal which exists in this State must appreciate the fact that the entire future of the industry depends on our ability to establish markets overseas. One of the principal factors in placing this coal on the market and competing with other countries is the installation of such appliances at our ports to permit of the coal being handled and placed in the ships' bunkers with as little cost as possible. It may be rather surprising news to the Committee to know that some thousands of tons of coal are shipped from South Africa every year to South America, which, from its position, must be looked upon as a natural outlet for our coal. If it pays South Africa to ship such large quantities of coal to that destination, we should use every effort in the direction of handling our coal economically so that we might capture the trade of these South American ports. If my memory serves me correctly, there was in the past a movement to equip some of our ports with such electrical appliances. The Treasurer in replying might give us information on this matter and with respect to the efforts that are being made in that direction.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The hon. member for Bundaberg would wish this Committee to believe that his party has been opposed to the Urangan scheme from its inception. I wish to show that the opposite has been the case. I am quoting from page 2640 of "Hansard" for 1911—

"Mr. LENNON: . . . It is not possible to deal with the question of building a railway to Urangan without considering the question of a port. We

[Mr. Corser.]

have had a report from Mr. Cullen and Mr. Elliot, and they have been freely quoted during the day. If I was not satisfied there was a port there, I would not support the building of the railway. I hope the railway will go through."

Next, the late hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Booker, has been quoted as against the scheme. Mr. Booker said—

"The hon. member for Burrum has made a very valuable statement as to the desirability of this railway, and the hon. member for Maryborough has referred to the details of it, so there is no necessity to reiterate what they say."

And Mr. Booker continued a speech in support of the scheme. Mr. Adamson said—

"Having lived in Maryborough for a very considerable time, and represented it for two or three years, and having advocated the extension of this railway to Urangan, I feel that I would not be doing right if I did not express my agreement with the proposal of the Minister for Railways. I wish to read the recommendation at the end of the Commissioner's Report. He says—

For the reasons given above, I recommend the extension of the Pialba Branch railway to Urangan, on the understanding that adequate facilities are to be provided for handling large steamers and cargoes at the terminus.

"It seems that the Commissioner has had the idea that the reason for building this railway is that it is to go to a port where large cargoes are handled.

"The Secretary for Railways: There is no other reason."

Hon. members will see that support was given to the scheme by Mr. Adamson, who was later Labour Secretary for Railways. That shows that the scheme was not parochial, and was not supported by only one individual. In addition, we have the statements of the Secretary for Railways and of the present hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Ferricks). The latter said—

"I have always been an advocate of opening up ports. . . . I was interested in the able speech of the hon. member for Maryborough [not Mr. Weir], and I am in accord with all that he has said."

Now, in the few moments at my disposal, I have been able to show that hon. members on the Labour side who had fair minds supported the proposal when it was before the House.

Mr. FERRICKS: I had been a long time away from Maryborough when I made those statements. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: You have been a long time away from the Herbert and you are contesting their plebiscite. When the measure was going through and there was a possibility of using the port the Labour party supported it, but, as they do not want the port opened, they tried to settle the blame on an individual, and to say that the idea had not any support from the Labour party. They would not give the credit to the Federal member for Wide Bay when he introduced the measure, yet now they try to put all the blame on to him when they refuse to have the port used. I think the hon. member did a remarkable thing when

he succeeded in getting the support of Labour members in favour of what they now allege is a rotten scheme. What a wonderful man he would be if he could get their approval to anything that was really bad. The hon. member for Maryborough said that the Federal member for Wide Bay opposed the Tinana railway deviation in preference to the Urangan scheme. I give that statement a denial now.

Mr. WEIR: You do not know anything about it.

Mr. CORSER: I repeat that I give that statement the denial now. I think I have dealt fully with the little parochialism that has cropped up. I have pointed out that the scheme was supported by Labour members, and practically nothing was said against it. Mr. White and Mr. Barber opposed the scheme from a Bundaberg view point and the interest of their own district, but there is no excuse for the present member for Maryborough injuring the Wide Bay and Burnett producers in support of Maryborough vested interests, as he sees them through his narrow vision.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): In connection with the jetty to Urangan Point and those who opposed the scheme, in my recollection every inquiry was made before approval was given to the project. Reports were received from Mr. Cullen, Mr. Elliot, and others, and they were carefully considered. The matter was not decided in any hurry. The hon. member for Bundaberg has given one of the very reasons why the project was approved—that is, owing to the fact that to make shipping payable, it was necessary that vessels of larger tonnage should be used, and owing to the fact that these larger vessels could not be handled without a very large expenditure on the Mary River, it was essential that a deep-water port should be provided for the purpose. I recollect that for years the Bowen jetty was regarded as a white elephant, and it was necessary to dredge constantly to make it available for the accommodation of the shipping tonnage which is visiting Bowen to-day.

Mr. BARBER: The hon. gentleman refers to thirty years ago.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I refer to quite recent times. It is absolutely necessary to dredge the Bowen Harbour from time to time to-day because of the silt that accumulates. For years the Bowen jetty was regarded as a white elephant, yet to-day it is one of the greatest assets for snipping accommodation that we have in the North. In the early days only a small number of small coastal boats called there, yet to-day the Bowen Harbour is in constant use. That development is comparatively recent, since railway facilities extended to the North. To attain that position it was necessary to have the harbour continually dredged. The same thing applies to the Urangan jetty. We must take the opinions which were offered by the experts in this matter. It is only a question of railway communication and certain improvements to the channel to render that jetty available for the purpose for which it was built. It is well within my recollection that the scheme was supported on both sides of the House; yet to-day we hear hon. members opposite turn around and make a personal attack upon a relative of an hon. member of the Opposition. That indicates that we are degenerating. I say,

[*Mr. Corser.*

that the father of the present hon. member for Burnett did gain something as the representative of the electorate which he represented, and I have no hesitation in saying that the present Federal member for Wide Bay is the best representative for Queensland we have in the Federal House to-day.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like the Treasurer to explain the reason for the enormous increase in the cost of dredging. It appears to me that it does not arise from the number of men employed on the dredge; it cannot be the increased cost of wages that makes this enormous difference in the cost of dredging. I shall give a table illustrating the great increase in cost of dredging since 1915—

AVERAGE COST OF DREDGING IMPROVEMENTS PER TON.

Class of Dredge.	1915.	1924.
	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Ladder	7-73	13-75
Pump	3-23	5-89
Grab	14-65	24-36

I would like some information from the Treasurer in regard to the dredging of the harbour basin at Bowen. It seems pretty expensive to shift a dredge from Brisbane to Bowen and then back again to Brisbane.

In October and November, 1921, [2 p.m.] it took the dredge "Maryborough" four days preparing for the voyage; six days on the voyage, and then seven days preparing to dredge at Bowen. This cost £2,575. Then, when the job was completed, it took twenty-five days preparing for the voyage and returning from Bowen, which cost £2,865. That is a good deal of money—£5,440 for a dredge to go up to Bowen and back again—and, if this cost is likely to recur, it would be more economical to have a dredge there. The report does not say whether the dredging at Bowen will have to be done again, or whether the work was only in the nature of enlarging the basin and will be for all time. The information is a little bit indefinite. I was rather surprised to read in the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers about the difficulty they had in constructing the new pier at Bowen because of the strong winds and rough water. I thought the Bowen Harbour was one of the finest harbours in the world. However, I am not worrying about that part of it. I want information about the cost of the dredging.

Mr. COLLINS: It is technical work, and you know nothing about it.

Mr. MOORE: The fact that the hon. member has been looking on at the work does not give him any technical knowledge of dredging. I want to know whether dredging will be a continuous necessity at Bowen or whether the dredging done now will be sufficient for a number of years.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The dredging at Bowen was necessary to enlarge the basin to a depth of 20 feet and to provide berthing accommodation alongside the new pier to a depth of 26 feet at low-water springs. That work is now completed. It was more economical to send the dredge from here to Bowen than

to purchase a new plant. It would have been cheaper if the Bowen Harbour Board could have hired the plant at Townsville, but it was not available at the time.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): Reference has been made to the erection of the Urangan jetty, and the suggestion has been made that the hon. member who then represented Maryborough had the choice of getting the Tinana Railway deviation or the Urangan jetty. I think it only fair to say, as a member of the Administration which approved of the construction of the Urangan jetty, that no such offer was ever made, nor was it possible to make such an offer to the hon. member for Maryborough at the time. The two works are in quite a different position.

The Tinana deviation is a work which has been considered for many years as very necessary by the Railway Department to obviate the cost of carrying on the railway service and render unnecessary the running in and out of Maryborough as at present. As I pointed out, the construction of the Urangan jetty was justified by the favourable reports which were received, and, if larger freight accommodation was to be provided, it was necessary that a deep water haven should be provided with facilities for the accommodation and loading of vessels of larger burthen, just as in the case of the Bowen jetty. To my own personal knowledge, for many years the Bowen jetty was a white elephant because it had not railway communication with the hinterland. For a time it was only used by the small passenger and cargo boats, and Bowen was absolutely dead. If hon. members take the trouble to read the reports at the time, they will find that the cost was defrayed from the finances of the State, but as soon as it had connection by railway then it paid. Port Denison, we all know, is a very fine natural harbour. Being of large extent, when a heavy wind blows the water is very rough at the head of the jetty, and it frequently happens that boats have great difficulty in berthing there, and dredging is required from time to time in such a case. From my knowledge of Urangan, I have no hesitation in saying that with railway connection with the hinterland, and when dredging and certain other work is carried out which is absolutely essential and was foreseen when the work was approved of, Urangan will take its proper place as a port.

Mr. CARTER: They have got a big hinterland connected with Urangan now.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is pity that personal squabbles should be allowed to intervene in discussions of this kind. I want to emphasise that the hon. member for Burnett is one of the most assiduous and painstaking representatives of the people that I have ever met—he never takes "No" for an answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must speak to the vote.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am referring to the way the hon. member worked to secure this jetty, which members on both sides established for the benefit of the man on the land. The hon. member was assiduous in his endeavours to obtain it. We know that his motives were of the purest, and his object was to do something to assist those who were settled on the land. I have no hesitation in saying that, when the time arrives and certain im-

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improvements are affected such as have to be made in connection with all such works, Urangan will take its proper place and be a very great asset to those who are on the land by enabling them to ship their produce more conveniently than by sending it to the Maryborough wharves.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I would like some information from the Treasurer as to the tenure under which certain persons hold stretches of the foreshore at Caloundra from which they get shell grit. I know of a case of a returned soldier who thought he would get a few bags and send them to Toowoomba, but who found that he was on somebody else's territory, although there was nothing to indicate it. I understand that about 20 miles of the foreshore have been taken up in this way.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): Five blocks of land have been leased at a rental of £5 a year each.

Question put and passed.

MARINE BOARD.

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

“That £1,643 be granted for ‘Marine Board.’”

Question put and passed.

PRINTING OFFICE.

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

“That £154,634 be granted for ‘Printing Office.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am not going to cavil at the efficiency of the Government Printing Office, but I do object to what appears to be a ring in the printing trade in Brisbane which tends to keep prices abnormally high. It is necessary for local authorities to get their books from the Government Printer, and the result is that, as he has prices on the same basis as the printing offices outside, the local authorities have to pay a higher rate than they could sometimes get the work done for elsewhere. I do not see why they should be compelled to go to the Government Printing Office.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities would not be any better off if they were allowed to go elsewhere.

Mr. MOORE: So far as I can gather, they would. At any rate, we have got quotations from outside which showed that we would have been able to get our printing done outside more cheaply than we have to pay in Brisbane. There is certainly some reason for it, and I am told that there is a certain agreement between the employers and the employees in the printing trade to keep prices up, under which they mutually give each other an advantage. There is nothing wrong with the efficiency of the Government Printing Office, but, if local authorities could get their work done efficiently and more cheaply elsewhere, then it is only right that they should be allowed to do so, and not be compelled to pay more merely because of a regulation which was introduced to keep some check over the forms of the books used by them.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I consider the cost of printing is too high in connection with some of the

[*Hon. J. G. Appel.*]

departments—I cannot speak for the local authorities—but in making a comparison with pre-war prices we must bear in mind that the cost of paper, type, and labour has increased. However, I will undertake to inquire into the matter that has been raised.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): There is another matter which affects certain local authorities. We know that the local authorities, particularly those in the country, have a good deal of printing to do, but some delay is caused through the Government Printing Office refusing to execute orders before the payment of cash. I believe that the Government Printing Office does not do any work on credit for outside local authorities. We know perfectly well that the money can always be recovered, and I would ask the Treasurer to see his way clear to allow the local authorities, especially those in the country, to have their work executed on credit at the Government Printing Office and allow the accounts to be rendered at the end of the month.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): On more than one occasion I have drawn attention to the fact that printing is costing a great deal more than it should, and I have suggested that tenders should be called from outside firms in connection with Government work, and that prices should be submitted from the Government Printing Office, and then a comparison be made. Since making that statement I have been told that one of the greatest rings or combines that exists to-day in Brisbane is in connection with job printing, and that it is almost impossible to get any difference in quotations between one firm and another. The prices quoted are generally the same, and I believe that in some instances the work is sent to the Government Printing Office, and, after it has been performed, there is a margin of profit. This is a matter for very serious consideration. Why should there be a combination between employers and employees for the purpose of placing excessive charges on business people? We all know that during the war, stationery, paper, etc., reached exorbitant prices, but we also know that there has been a considerable drop since then. I have had about twenty-five years' experience as a printer.

The TREASURER: You have?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, and I could set up a job, and, with very little practice, I could do that work again if necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. gentleman cannot work a linotype.

Mr. MORGAN: No. The linotype was just coming into general use when I left that calling. There are a great number of jobs that a linotype cannot do even to-day. It is a machine that is used more particularly in connection with close book and newspaper work. Independent of that, the linotype is a labour-saving machine, and can do the work of six or seven men. There is something wrong, therefore, when printing prices go up. The introduction of labour-saving machinery should not be a reason for an increase in prices. I am not in favour of any set of people, whether employers or employees, banding together to fleece the public.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the vote under discussion.

Mr. MORGAN: I was going to connect my remarks, Mr. Pollock, to show that the Government should discover if that is so, provided the Government Printing Office is not in the combine. I understand that the cost of paper, labour, and machinery is set against every job.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: According to the job costing system used.

Mr. MORGAN: Certain charges are then added to those costs for profit. Several hon. members opposite may have been connected with the trade more recently than I have been, and if they have information at their disposal, it is only right that they should give it to the Committee.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Do you believe in the stabilisation of industry?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not believe in combinations fleecing the public for more than is necessary. I believe in the employee receiving what is due to him under the award of the Arbitration Court; but when it is discovered that a number of printers have combined to extort excessive profits from the public, the Government, who were placed in their position because of their opposition to trusts, monopolies, and combines, should take steps to dissolve that combine if it is found to be acting detrimentally to the interests of the people. The Government have means in the Government Printing Office of seeing whether the people are getting fair treatment or not. If a business man has to pay 25 per cent. more for his printing and stationery than he should, it is passed on to the consumer. The consumer eventually pays for excessive charges. A large number of documents have to be obtained by the local authorities from the Government Printing Office, and those bodies are complaining that the charges are excessive as compared with a few years ago. The Treasurer is in a position to discover the cost of paper to-day as compared with the cost during the war, and the cost of all other matters pertaining to the trade. I do not wish the employer to do the work for less than it costs, nor do I wish those engaged in the industry to work for a lower wage than they are entitled to receive, but the general opinion outside is that the cost of stationery is excessive, and in the interests of the people generally the Treasurer should institute inquiries as to the truth or otherwise of that opinion. It may be necessary to appoint a Royal Commission or a commission of some sort. That has been done before, and if it will enable the people to get stationery at a reasonable cost after the printers have received a fair margin of profit, then the remarks made in this Chamber will certainly do a fair amount of good.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): So far as the Government Printing Office is concerned, I consider its duties are carried out very effectively. The figures are not given for the amount of work done every year, but the fact that the Printing Office shows a profit indicates that it is doing good work. In large works such as the Printing Office it is necessary that prices should not be cut down too low, because provision has to be made for deterioration of machinery and replacements, in order to bring the plant up to date and in keeping with the progress that is taking place in the printing world to-day. It is necessary to show a profit so that, when those replacements have to be made,

they have something to show to justify the further expenditure.

Regarding the statements with regard to printing and stationery in Brisbane and Queensland generally, I wish to remind hon. members that there is a big competition throughout Queensland in these lines by Southern firms. Southern firms have their representatives coming up to Queensland and canvassing for orders, and our men have to compete with them. It is quite impossible for our printers to charge extortionate rates, and personally I do not believe that they do. The idea of a Royal Commission is absurd. The Government have at their disposal a means of finding out exactly what profits printers are making. This can be done through the Income Tax Office. Printers have to furnish their income tax returns, and the information could be got from that source.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with that matter on this vote.

Mr. TAYLOR: I did not mean to transgress, but I thought that something could be done in that direction if necessary.

The TREASURER: Surely the hon. member knows that we could not have access to the income tax returns?

Mr. TAYLOR: I mean that the total amount of profit made by the trade could be ascertained. I do not mean that reference should be made to individual profits. We are able to get the profits made by certain classes of business, and it would be easily seen whether an excess profit was being made in the printing trade. I do not believe for one moment that that is the case. I and many other hon. members get printing done, and we realise the strong competition with which our local printers have to contend.

Question put and passed.

STAMP DUTIES OFFICE.

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

“That £14,220 be granted for ‘Stamp Duties Office.’”

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I do not know if the Treasurer has had his attention drawn to the statements made by Mr. Hertzberg which appeared in the daily Press yesterday respecting the injury which will be done to business houses by the proposed cheque and stamp duties increase. I would like to know if the hon. gentleman is going to receive a deputation.

The TREASURER: I said that I could not receive a deputation until the Bill was presented to the House.

Mr. KING: Now that it has been presented, is the Treasurer going to receive that deputation?

The TREASURER: It has not yet been put before the House—only the resolution has been presented.

Mr. KING: I understand. I suppose the Treasurer will in due course receive a deputation?

The TREASURER: Yes, if after a discussion in Parliament those concerned still think it necessary to have a deputation.

Mr. KING: I would like to say a word or two in connection with appeals against stamp duty. We have a Commissioner of

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Stamp Duties who is a very able officer. There is no doubt about that; but he is a tax collector pure and simple. He does not miss much, and possibly he may get a little more than he ought to get. The present procedure of appeal against the assessment of the Commissioner is cumbersome [2.30 p.m.] some and costly, and I want to know whether it would not be possible to set up a sort of intermediate appeal board for the purpose of dealing with many of those matters that would possibly go to appeal but for the expense involved. Section 24 of the Stamp Act provides for the method of appeal. It reads—

“ Any person who is dissatisfied with the assessment of the Commissioner may, within thirty days after the date of the assessment, and on payment of duty in conformity therewith, and of the sum of £20 as security for costs, appeal against the assessment to the Supreme Court, and may, for that purpose, require the Commissioner to state and sign a case setting forth the question or questions upon which their opinion was required, and the assessment made by them.

“ The Commissioner shall thereupon state and sign a case and deliver the same to the person by whom it is required, and such person shall within seven days thereafter cause the said case to be set down for hearing before the next sittings of the Full Court, at which the same shall be heard.”

This cannot be done for nothing. It is going to cost a considerable amount, and, if an appellant is successful in conducting an appeal and the assessment of the Commissioner of Stamp Duties is overruled and the questions are answered in favour of the appellant, all he can get for his trouble in appealing is £20 costs.

The TREASURER: That provision was passed by a previous Government.

Mr. KING: I do not uphold every piece of legislation passed by previous Governments, and I do not condemn every piece of legislation passed by the present Government. I want to be fair, and I appeal to the Government to remedy any mistake which may have been made in the past. I ask the Government to amend this Act of Parliament, which I do not think is a fair Act. There are too many pin-pricks and matters which cause irritation as between the Commissioner of Stamp Duties and the business community. It does not pay any man to go to the Full Court on appeal over a small matter involving £1 or 30s., but it pays the Commissioner to get the money. Rather than go to the expense of appealing, the taxpayer will pay the additional stamp duty. If he wins his case, he can only get £20 costs, and, of course, if he loses his case, he only loses £20. I am not complaining of the Commissioner of Stamp Duties, who has to do his duty according to his lights. He probably thinks certain documents attract stamp duty, whilst the business man thinks they do not attract stamp duty. Instead of going to the expense of stating a special case before the Full Court it would be far better to have an independent board set up to deal with these small matters. It would create a better feeling between the business community and the Commissioner of Stamp Duties, and I ask the Treasurer to take the matter into

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serious consideration with a view to smoother working between the Commissioner of Stamp Duties and the business community.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I have listened to the hon. member's representations on this matter. Speaking off-hand, it seems to me that it would lead to difficulty between parties, and possibly result in more or less frivolous appeals if there was such a board. It would also lead to delay in cases where the duty obviously ought to be paid. It is recognised that a great many people will evade payment of duty if they can possibly do so. There are a great many people whose business it is to advise how the payment of duty can be evaded—I do not say illegally—but how it can be evaded by way of transfer, or whatever it may be; and the setting-up of such a tribunal would lead to a great deal of expense, without securing the adjustment of any real grievances in connection with the administration of the Stamp Office. The Commissioner, being a painstaking, capable, and knowledgeable officer, naturally is regarded by the business community, as the hon. member stated, as a good tax collector.

Mr. KING: That is his duty.

The TREASURER: A tax collector is never popular; so that discounts criticism against him on that score. So long as the Commissioner deals justly with the people who come before him, no one can expect any more.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I regret that I was not in the Chamber when the hon. member for Logan spoke, but I knew he was going to speak, and I think I know the lines on which he has been arguing. I support the contention that there should be an appeal board in connection with the Stamp Office. Notwithstanding what the Treasurer has said, he will remember that there is an appeal board for land and income tax payers, which I understand is working satisfactorily.

The TREASURER: After all, in those cases the amounts payable are very considerable. In the case of stamps it might be a matter of 2d. or a matter of £5.

Mr. KELSO: Every man has a right to appeal.

The TREASURER: Every man has a right to get a decision; but he must have consideration in a trivial matter.

Mr. KELSO: That applies to income taxpayers. Even in a trivial matter they can appeal to the Board. Without reflecting on any officers at all, there is always a feeling on their part—and rightly so—that they should get as much revenue for the State as they can, but, when it is a question of giving a decision in a certain direction, naturally their decision goes in favour of the Crown. No one wants to figure in a leading case in connection with stamp duty or income tax. We know that the amount which one is appealing against may be only moderate, but to appeal successfully would be a very costly process. We have heard the Attorney-General say that it is the policy of the Government to try and cheapen law for the people. Here is an opportunity for the Treasurer to help to cheapen law on behalf of a number of people who have been for some considerable time dissatisfied with decisions given by the Stamp Commissioner. Although the amounts in many cases may

be small, yet some of them may be large. In the smaller cases, if they thought they had a good case, and had some speedy means of referring the matter to a Board of Appeal, the probability is that their contention would be borne out. The matter is worthy of the attention of the Treasurer, and an appeal board would meet with the approval of a large section of the community. In small matters the assessment is made in an off-hand way, and it would not be a great expense to have the matter decided by an appeal board.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.
CHIEF OFFICE.

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

“That £64,607 be granted for ‘Department of Agriculture and Stock—Chief Office.’”

The amount required this year is less than last year's appropriation by £26,705. Salaries show a reduction of £555, but this is apparent only, as £1,250 was provided here last year for the salary of the cotton specialist, which now appears under the “Cotton Industry” section. Hon. members will notice that the estimates of the department are set out in a different way this year from the form in which they have been presented hitherto, and that accounts for the apparent difference. The item of “Contingencies” shows a decrease of £26,220. Provision is made for the salaries of 119 officers as against 118 for 1923-24. Nine new appointments have been made and eight positions have been omitted. The new appointments are:—One cadet clerk, two typists, one messenger, one poultry instructor with headquarters at Townsville, two cadets at the State Nursery at Bribie Island, one cinematographer and one cadet photographer. The positions omitted include those of three clerks (owing to the transfer of operations under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act to the State Advances Corporation), one assistant instructor in agriculture, one field assistant, one chief instructor in fruit culture, two assistant instructors in fruit culture, and the cotton specialist (transferred). Salary classification increases are provided for officers in receipt of salaries not exceeding £600 per annum, the total amounting to £1,720. Hon. members will notice that a sum of £3,000 has been deducted from the salary total as being charged to Trust Funds. That is in return for work performed on behalf of those funds by officers in the head office, whose salaries are entered fully to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Of that sum, £2,400 is debited to the Diseases in Stock Fund and £600 to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Fund. The vote for wages, travelling expenses, etc., shows a reduction of £1,470, but in reality this item is increased by £800 to meet the estimated amount required for additional travelling expenses, hires, etc., of officers, and for the purchase of new apparatus for the Pure Seeds Branch. A sum of £2,270 has been transferred to votes under the heading of “State Farms and Gardens” to cover the estimated cost of the Museum and Queen's Garden, Brisbane. The provision asked for in respect of the

“Departmental Library” and the “Queensland Agricultural Journal” is the same as last year. The item for bursaries at the Agricultural High School and College is £100 less, although, as has been already stated, students are coming in as fast as they are going out. Railway fares and freights, etc., show an increase of £400, the additional amount of travelling required and the increase in fares and freights accounting for the extra amount required. The vote for “Agricultural Instruction, Demonstration, Field, and Experimental Plot Work” has been reduced by £500. The vote for “Instruction in Cotton Cultivation” is here omitted, provision now being made in that respect under the vote for “Cotton Industry.” “Fruit Instruction, Demonstration, Field, and Experimental Plot Work” is £500 less than last year. The demonstration plot at Mulgeldie has been closed, and those established at Monal Creek in the Upper Burnett district and at Melton in the Callide Valley, under the Upper Burnett-Callide settlement scheme, have now been transferred to the Cotton Industry section as cotton research stations. The grant to the Council of Agriculture is reduced this year by £11,000, making it £15,000. The Council, as hon. members are aware, has now decided to make levies, which, in accordance with the Primary Producers Organisation Act, will be subsidised by the Crown at the rate of £1 for £1.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to hon. members that many other items are involved in this vote, and I think the only way out of the difficulty is to allow a discussion on cotton as well on this vote. Under this vote the Government's policy on the cotton question can be discussed, but the cotton industry itself can only be referred to in passing. I do not see how hon. members can discuss that matter on this vote and then again on another vote. I am merely throwing this out as a suggestion to hon. members.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): We are very pleased to hear the remarks by the Minister, and we are all seized with the fact that economy should be practised throughout every department, but restricted expenditure is sometimes false economy, and sometimes it is more economical to incur more expenditure to obtain greater efficiency. No doubt this department has been the cinderella of the various departments for a long time, but I am sure almost every hon. member is very much concerned about agriculture, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia. It is interesting to know that agriculture in Queensland is in very much the same predicament as agriculture in other parts of the world. The Secretary for Agriculture in the United States of America points out in his report that, if the financial reward was measured according to the honest work of the farmers of the United States, they would have little reason to complain about their returns for the year. Unfortunately the financial rewards are not always commensurate with the work performed, and more especially is that the case in connection with the farms. In Queensland we are in very much the same position as they are in America. Just recently we constituted a Council of Agriculture, modelled on the lines of bodies with the same ideas that exist in the United States of America, and California in particular. The Secretary for Agriculture in the

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United States gives four of five reasons why there have been some failures in connection with farming, and I would like hon. members to pay particular attention to those reasons--

- (1) Over-production on many farms;
- (2) Continued high freights;
- (3) Maintenance of industrial wages near war-time level;
- (4) Economic depression;
- (5) Depreciated currency in European countries;
- (6) Interference with efficient functioning of necessary industries; and
- (7) Unreasonably high cost of distribution of some of the farm products.

In America a large number of the farms are in a very much worse plight than are some of the farms in Queensland to-day. In 1913, in Ohio and one or two of the adjacent States, from 155 farms the receipts, less expenses other than taxes, amounted to 1,147 dollars per farm, and the average tax was 112 dollars per farm. When investigation was made again in 1921, it was found that the estimated income available for labour, profit, interest, and taxes averaged only 771 dollars per farm, and the average tax amounted to 253 dollars per farm.

The taxes have very greatly increased, and the prices of the various commodities that have to be purchased by the farmer have also very much increased; but the amount of money received by the farmer for his produce is only 10 per cent. more, or on an average less than the pre-war level. The farmer, nevertheless, has to pay 150 per cent. more than he did in pre-war times for the various implements and necessities he uses. A great many people in Queensland are talking about the very unsatisfactory state of farming generally. Those conditions are chiefly brought about by the difficulty of financing and marketing. It seems to me that the department has been active in attempting to discover some method of improving the marketing of produce by stabilising the prices of commodities. During the past two years the department has adopted a policy of pools. There are exceptions to that rule, and one exception that might be cited is cotton. Instead of forming a cotton pool, the department endeavoured to create a monopoly. The Government passed an Agricultural Bank Act in the last session of Parliament for the purpose of making advances to settlers. I understand that this Act is likely to come into operation at any time, and I hope it will assist in getting over a great deal of the trouble experienced by the man on the land in relation to finance. I find that in New Zealand applications were made to the Government under a similar Act for advances totalling £12,000,000. Of that amount the Massey Government approved of advances amounting to £2,736,255, but notwithstanding these large advances that Government came in for a great deal of criticism for not advancing a larger amount of money to the farmers. If the critics there considered that the action of the Government in advancing to the farmers £2,736,255 was reprehensible, how much more are the Government of Queensland reprehensible when their advances to the farmers approximately amount only to £100,000? We have a number of commodities in Queensland which at the present time

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are claimed to be over-produced. There is no doubt that, if we could cheapen production in any way, it would tend to induce increased consumption. The best method of getting rid of gluts is in every way to cheapen the cost of production and bring the price of the commodity down to a level which would increase consumption.

I would like to call attention to a matter that has come directly under my notice in regard to condensed milk. During the last few years a great deal of discussion has centred around the closing or non-closing of certain condensed milk factories. Several are closed down at the present time.

In this case, basing the figures on the production per case of condensed milk, the Nestles Company operating in the vicinity of Toogoolawah at one time were paying 15s. for the quantity of milk necessary to make a case of milk containing 48 tins, and they were selling the condensed milk at approximately 1s. a tin. Since then they have reduced the price which they pay for the milk to between 7s. and 8s., but the cost per tin of milk has not moved much from the vicinity of 1s. a tin—I think it is something like 11d. or 1s. at the present time. They are now curtailing their operations very considerably, but at the same time they are still endeavouring to get the consumer to pay the high price for the milk. If the price were reduced, I think a good deal of the trouble in connection with the glut would disappear. Another thing which may affect the position is the good seasons and the fact that fresh milk is becoming more plentiful. That must affect the sale of this company's products.

There is another matter that needs attention and which requires to be cleared up as soon as possible. We have the Department of Agriculture and the Council of Agriculture. Some means should be used whereby one of those bodies should be absorbed or co-ordinated with the other. They appear to be two distinct bodies and are evidently not working on harmonious lines. In my opinion there is room for any amount of research work to be done, but, if that research work is going to be successful, it must be conducted on well-established lines, with all the officers of both the Department of Agriculture and the Council of Agriculture working in a co-ordinated manner.

Some time ago, when the Council of Agriculture was being discussed in this Chamber, the Secretary for Agriculture appealed to us to wait a little while. It had then been in existence some twelve months, and the hon. gentleman said it would be only a fair thing to give it another year. We have waited another year, and I can see no material advantage that has been received from the Council of Agriculture. Certainly there has been no material advantage that we could not have received from the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. HARTLEY: Does the hon. member think the Council of Agriculture ought to be abolished?

Mr. NOTT: The outstanding need, so far as I can see, is that this Council should be altered very much after the fashion that we on this side of the Chamber advocated when it was formed, that is, that it should work on sectional industrial lines.

Mr. HARTLEY: What do you mean by industrial lines?

Mr. NOTT: During the last two years the chief work of the Council of Agriculture has been to advocate pools and then to stampede the various butter factories into taking a vote with a view to coming under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act.

The Council did a good deal in steadying up the agitation that was started some time ago by the ratoon cotton advocates. Instead of the Council assisting these men to have every inquiry made, they [3 p.m.] did all they possibly could to steady up the agitation, even going so far as to say to some of the cotton growers who said they were going to war to the end, "Very well, war away." There is any amount of room for research work in connection with agriculture, and I know the department has quite a number of officers who are capable of carrying out very valuable research work for Queensland, if they were given the opportunity. Unfortunately there is no continuity of effort. A man may work for some months on one thing and get a certain distance, and then his work is pigeonholed and he is put on some other work. Consequently he does not get very far. The Government have always claimed that they were out to do their very utmost to establish secondary industries. We have a great secondary industry in the Ipswich woollen mills which is well worth assisting, but on account of the very high freights that the Government have seen fit to inflict on the wool growers at the present time we find that industry is suffering very much.

We have quite a number of experts in the Department of Agriculture who have been there for some time, and we have quite a number of newly-imported cotton experts; and I would like to call attention to the difference in the salaries paid to these cotton experts and those paid to the other experts. It will be noticed that the cotton experts are getting up to £1,250 a year, whereas responsible officers of the department, many of whom have professional attainments superior to those of the cotton experts, are getting very much less. We have two important officers who are always in Queensland and who render very valuable service to the State. One is the Director of Agriculture, and the other is the Agricultural Chemist. Another important officer is the wool expert. Australia — Queensland particularly — gets more from the wool industry than from any other industry. I suppose there are between 700 and 800 types of wool, whereas there are probably only between 20 and 24 different types of cotton to be considered; yet our wool expert only gets £425 a year. These officers should be able to command a very much greater salary, and, if they were put in a position to show results for their work, the Department of Agriculture would be able to assist agriculture generally to a very much greater extent than it has done up to the present. In speaking of these imported experts I would like to mention that recently in South Australia a Research Institute was established, and Professor Richardson, who is an Australian, was appointed head of the institute. Financial considerations offered no great attraction, but one of the reasons why Professor Richardson accepted this position and left the one he held in Victoria was the fact that he considered that Australian agriculture would gain four years' start by

having a professor appointed who thoroughly understood Australian conditions. He considered that, if an American or some other professor had been appointed to that position, it would have taken three or four years before he could become familiar with the various Australian conditions.

Some of the State pools have been successful in their operation, while others have failed. To my mind, the method of creating pools to stabilise prices in Australia will not get us very far. At the best they can only go a certain distance, and deal with products which are consumed within our own borders. If the Council of Agriculture and the various officers of the department would do what they could to endeavour to get the Federal Government to grant an export bounty we would arrive in a few months at a far better system of stabilisation than we can ever hope to get by the system of State pools.

In 1871 a number of practically bankrupt States federated and formed the German Empire. By a system of bounties on exports they developed into what was in 1914 the most powerful nation in the world. They paid many millions of pounds in bounties to the sugargrowers in that country, and the money came out of the consolidated revenue. I remember making some inquiries in Germany as to how ironworkers looked upon the payment of these bounties to the sugargrowers, and the ironworkers told me that they considered it was good business, because, if the bounties were not paid, millions of acres would go out of cultivation. Besides sugar they also grew wheat and potatoes, which helped to keep down the internal price of foodstuffs. They could also export their surplus products to other parts of the world, but they recognised that their home market in Germany was the best market they had, and that it was to their advantage to keep their people on the land. Most of the farms in Germany are held in small areas, and pass from father to son. The ironworker considered that he was well paid by being able to draw his labour from the agricultural districts, because they supplied him with men who made better artisans than the men who could be obtained from Potsdam, Berlin, and some of the other large cities in Germany. They considered it quite justifiable that they should be taxed as ironworkers to keep the agricultural sugar industry alive in Germany. The particular firm I speak of did not make agricultural implements, but they made the steel from which a great number of agricultural implements were manufactured, and a number of them were sold directly to the men on the land.

Recently the Queensland Government have given a good deal of attention to the irrigation of large and small areas with the idea of settling people on the land. For instance, we have the Upper Burnett-Callide, and other schemes. There is, however, one industry in Queensland which for some years past has been of outstanding prosperity. I refer to the wool industry, to which it is regrettable that far greater attention has not been given. Here I would like to quote figures showing the increases in the flock totals of the State during the two periods of eight years each:—

	Sheep.
Eight years to 1914 ...	8,243,481
Eight years to 1922 ...	5,488,848
Showing a decrease of ...	2,754,533

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

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): In my estimation this is one of the most important departments with which we have to deal. There is no doubt that, with the Department of Public Lands, it has more to do with the prosperity of the State than any other. First of all, we require a wise land settlement policy, and then in its turn follows the necessity for the energetic encouragement of agriculture, so that in dealing with this vote the importance of agricultural development cannot be too earnestly stressed. We know that for some time past the Council of Agriculture has undertaken the work of organising the primary industries with the object of putting the producers on a better footing. So far the efforts of this body—which should be the Farmers' Government—have not been successful in bringing about the desired result, but, as time goes on, we hope that something of a tangible nature will be achieved. Whilst the Government in a sense have been endeavouring to advance the interests of the producers and to settle big agricultural questions, it has at the same time been found necessary to impose further taxation on them. We have just been through a series of dry seasons, and the primary producers of to-day are in most cases not in a very sound financial position. It is therefore regrettable that the Government have seen fit to impose increased railway freights upon them. Certainly, individually these are not very big, but in the aggregate these small taxes which have to be paid by the producer are making his burden heavier than he can bear.

Recently there was an increase of 20 per cent. on the freight for wool and sheep, but, as the cattle industry has had a pretty big set-back on account of the fall in prices since 1920, there was no increase in that direction; it certainly would have been very unwise to have attempted to saddle the cattle industry with any heavier burden. There was a 5 per cent. increase on general produce, and passenger fares were increased by about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I am quoting these figures to show how the primary producer—who is the hardest hit—is going to suffer. This is an attempt to impose further taxation on primary producers, and is just a blow at the agriculturists generally, and it is not altogether appreciated by them, because they are not yet in a position to stand it.

The following is a comparative statement of land occupied in Queensland:—

Year.	Area.	Increase during 8 years of Liberal Administration.	Decrease during 8 Years of Labour Administration.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1906 ..	265,381,856	..	..
1914 ..	358,331,163	92,949,307	..
1922 ..	328,044,542	..	30,286,621

Those figures go to show that the policy of the Government has not tended to encourage settlement on the land, and, without settlement, there must certainly be a falling off in the number of those engaged in agricultural pursuits.

[*Mr. Logan.*]

The following is a comparative statement of area of land under crop:—

Year.	Area.	Increase during 8 Years of Liberal Administration.	Increase during 8 Years of Labour Administration.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1906 ..	559,733	..	..
1914 ..	792,568	232,815	..
1922 ..	863,755	..	71,187

During the latter period prices have been higher, and, possibly because of the introduction of land taxation and other taxes, the agricultural population has not grown to the extent that was expected.

Let me now give some figures dealing with the live stock of the State.

This is a comparative statement of number of live stock—

—	1906.	1914.	1922.
Horses ..	452,916	743,059	714,055
Cattle ..	3,413,919	5,455,943	6,955,463
Sheep ..	14,886,438	23,129,919	17,641,071
Swine ..	138,282	166,638	160,617

Summarising these figures—

—	Increase during 8 Years of Liberal Administration.	Decrease during 8 Years of Labour Administration.
Horses	290,143	29,004
Cattle	2,042,024	1,499,520*
Sheep	8,243,481	5,488,848
Swine	28,356	6,021

* Increase.

These figures show the seriousness of the position. They show the great need for the exercise of care in the handling of this department. Big schemes are at present in hand for the settlement of further people on the land. We hope that these schemes will be successful, but at the same time the falling off in the number of live stock in Queensland and in the acreage of land under cultivation is owing to the fact that the Government have not developed the lands adjacent to existing railway lines for the purposes of closer settlement. Even in those areas which are fairly closely settled the Government have been guilty of oversight in not providing those settlers with facilities to get their commodities to market.

It is incontrovertible that a big drift has taken place in the country population to our cities and towns. I have a statement here showing exactly what this drift has been. In the eight year period from 1906 to 1914 the increase in the population of cities and towns was 52,688, or an increase of 23.2 per cent., while the increase in the population of shires was 104,881, or an increase of 34.2 per cent. During the eight year period up to 1922 the increase in the population of cities and towns was 64,005, or 22.9 per cent., while the increase in the population of shires was

only 16,646, or 4.4 per cent. These figures prove conclusively that there has been a greater tendency to settle in the cities and towns than in the country—a fact that is not good for the development of the country. The cause of this is due to the artificially inflated wages in the cities and excessive taxation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. LOGAN: This, Mr. Pollock, is concerning agriculture, and I am trying to show that those who were formerly engaged in agricultural pursuits have been induced to leave the country and settle in the cities, where wages and conditions are more attractive.

I want to deal shortly with the methods that have been adopted in appointing boards for the purposes of handling fruit. I understand that we are also to have a Board to control our cereals and fodder. The Government, no doubt on the advice of the Council of Agriculture, have appointed certain agents through whom the producers of fruit have to dispose of their crops. I think something like eight agents have been appointed in Sydney and about five in Melbourne and Adelaide. The fruitgrowers who are consigning their fruit South have to dispose of their fruit through these agents. The same thing applies in other centres. I had the privilege recently of seeing a letter from a gentleman who had a certain number of cases of bananas to consign to the market. When he brought those bananas in he was told that he could not send the full consignment—that he could send only about one-third of the quantity which he had brought in. If the same conditions are going to apply to agriculture in my district, I know perfectly well that it is not going to be manageable. Assume that a farmer has eight or ten tons of lucerne chaff cut and ready for sale. He generally carts the stuff into the market on the days most suitable to him. If he is going to be told that he can only bring in one ton on a certain day and, perhaps, two tons on another day, those days may not be suitable to him, because they may be the very days when he has to cut his lucerne or plant something.

I admit that it is necessary to have a better distribution of our commodities, because we have often seen that, when prices are good, the farmers invariably rush in to take advantage of those good prices. Consequently they flood the market, and by flooding the market they reduce the price of their commodities. At the same time I think we shall have to find some better way of dealing with the commodities. It will not do if farmers are only allowed to bring in certain quantities and they are to be instructed by the Director of the Council of Agriculture when to bring in those quantities. That sort of thing will certainly not be helpful to the man who has, perhaps, a dozen jobs in hand on his farm. If the State is going to handle these commodities, it might be better to allow the farmers to bring them in when suitable, and for the authorities to hold and distribute those commodities when they are required for consumption. The State Produce Agency is not able to compete with private firms simply because it does not hold commodities, but sells as soon as they arrive. Private firms do not sell produce if the price

offered is not acceptable. They hold it a day or two, and possibly get a better price by doing so. I have myself seen cases where farmers have sent produce to the State Produce Agency, and the agency has put that produce up and sold it for the price offered. A merchant in the market has bought that produce, and next day has got £3 10s. on his bargain. Of course that kind of thing does not encourage the farmers to support that enterprise. While I believe it is the policy of the Council of Agriculture and the State Produce Agency to distribute the supplies of the producer most evenly so that the market will not be glutted, I do not think that they are going to get any big results under the present system.

I want to show just how the lucerne grower is situated at the present time. To-day there was a slight increase in the market price of chaff. To the grower at Forest Hill it was worth about £4 15s. a ton on trucks. That amount is by no means all profit to the grower. First of all, there is the cost of production, wear and tear of implements, and labour. Then he will use at least 2s. worth of benzine to chaff a ton of lucerne, and it will cost from £1 to £1 5s. for bags. Then it has to be carted to the station, and after paying freight and commission there is only a bare living left. I should have connected that with my remarks on the freight question.

One could speak at considerable length of the dairying industry. The hon. member for Stanley touched on that matter, and that is one of the industries which certainly does require something in the way of stabilisation.

It is unfortunate that we are not [3.30 p.m.] able to ally ourselves with New Zealand or some other Dominion which is working along purely co-operative lines, whereby we could place prices on our commodities. If we were to enter into some co-operative arrangement with New Zealand, we could do something to stabilise prices. This is a question for the Federal Parliament, and I hope the time is not far distant when something of that nature will eventuate, so that the butter producer will get an adequate return for his labour.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): Like previous speakers I also am of the opinion that the vote for the Agricultural Department is one of the most important that we have to deal with. Queensland is essentially a primary producing country at present, and our primary industries are the mainstay of the State. We have very few secondary industries in Queensland, yet I am in hopes that the day is not far distant when we shall be able to claim that this is a great manufacturing State. The progress of Queensland depends a great deal upon the administration of the Department of Agriculture. In moving the vote the Minister explained the reasons for the various increases and decreases, and it is particularly gratifying to know that, whereas last year it was necessary to have an appropriation of £30,000 for the relief of farmers, on this occasion it is not necessary to ask for any vote in that connection. I am hopeful that the present year will prove to be a prosperous one, and that the farmer will not need to apply to the Government for relief rations to enable him to carry on. We have often been told by the Minister that the department is doing everything possible to encourage development in agriculture. It is true that in connection with some of our

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primary industries the department is doing all that it possibly can; but it is regrettable that very few new primary industries have been established.

The cotton-growing industry is probably the only new primary industry established recently, and we know from the experience of the last twelve months that the Government have practically strangled that industry through their interference in banning ratoon cotton. Possibly we might hear from the Minister when he proposes to bring in a Bill to lift the ban on ratoon cotton and thereby avoid the loss of many thousands of pounds to the producers of the State, such as has occurred this year through that interference.

The cotton industry offers to primary producers in areas which do not participate in a very heavy rainfall a crop that at least will give them a return, if the Minister will carry out the promises he made at the commencement of this season. Last year the cotton yield did not come up to the anticipations of the Government. I am hoping that the coming year will show the world that, with the removal of the ban on ratoons, Queensland will be able to grow a great deal of ratoon cotton of remarkably fine staple. We were told when the Minister brought in the Act imposing the ban on ratoon cotton that he was acting on the advice of experts in the employ of the Government. Hon. members on this side warned him that in interfering with the industry in the manner he intended he was going to injure a great industry. He told us that he was doing it because his experts had advised him that ratoon cotton was not a legal tender on the world's markets. I do not know whether these experts can really claim to be cotton experts. We know that in the past we had one man who thoroughly understood cotton—Mr. Daniel Jones—a man to whom the Government practically "gave the boot" and told him, after all his labours, that he knew nothing about cotton. It has been proved during the last few months that Mr. Jones does know something about cotton. The Government have intimated that they intend to remove the ban on ratoon grown cotton, because Mr. Jones has proved that ratoon cotton is legal tender in the London market.

Mr. HARTLEY: We have not proved it.

Mr. BRAND: The Government in departing from their policy in regard to ratoon cotton must be acting on advice received from London after Mr. Jones went there. I have here a report from Mr. Jones in London to the Cotton Growers' Union of Central Queensland. Those cotton growers have put up a magnificent fight for ratoon cotton in this State. It was through their endeavour that Mr. Jones was sent to the old country. In reporting to that body Mr. Jones said that he found that the British cotton spinners were only human, and they said they would not be swayed by the hurricane of abuse to which ratoon cotton had been subjected, just as they would by accepting it at the valuation of the Government. They realised that a golden opportunity had been offered. It was noticeable, he said, that, whereas our experts damned ratoon cotton because of its harshness, the principal objection offered against it by Lancashire spinners was its softness. (Opposition laughter.) In view of that report from a man who thoroughly understands cotton and who is a man of integrity, it is hard to say

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whether the experts here whom the Government obtained from overseas are really experts at all.

Mr. PETERSON: They may be American experts, with "expert" at the end of their name.

Mr. BRAND: I am hopeful that, as a result of what has happened in the past, the Government in future will take notice of what they are told from this side of the Chamber, and that they will accept the advice we offer in these matters in good faith, and endeavour to conduct the affairs of the various departments in such a way as to bring prosperity to the State as a whole.

We are spending large amounts of money upon directors and experts of all descriptions, yet I think we might be well advised to spend a little money in an endeavour to establish new primary industries. We have no coffee industry in Queensland, yet our climate is suitable; we have no tobacco industry, yet our climate is suitable; we have no rice industry or sisal hemp industry, yet our conditions are suitable. These and a number of other industries might be successfully started in Queensland if the Administration gave them practical assistance.

Mr. HARTLEY: You want to go to Rockhampton and see the sisal hemp failure there.

Mr. BRAND: Sisal hemp has not been a success because the Government have not assisted the producers to grow it, and they have had to worry along in their own way.

Mr. HARTLEY: Kidston's folly!

Mr. BRAND: I think coffee could be grown successfully, and, if the Government gave some little assistance to the farmers by sending out an instructor, it could be made a lucrative side-line with a good number of farmers. Some few years ago the Government had the advice of the late Mr. T. A. Bromiley, who was an enthusiast in coffee culture and knew thoroughly not only the growing of the crop but also the marketing and manufacturing of the product. On one occasion I asked the Government to retain his services and secure eminent and practical advice for the producers, but without success. I understand the preference he showed for this crop has been passed on to his son, and I recommend the department to secure the services of Mr. Alfred Bromiley with a view to giving instruction in coffee culture.

Mr. DUNSTAN: I thought you did not believe in experts?

Mr. BRAND: I do not believe in self-made experts. There has been no endeavour to establish the industries of tobacco and rice growing, but I understand that the Irrigation Commissioner is going to give both a trial at Castle Creek. I hope he will show the Department of Agriculture that those industries can be established in Queensland, and thus save the State the large sum of money which has to be sent elsewhere for these products.

Possibly the greatest agricultural industry we have—the sugar industry—has been satisfactorily administered by the Department of Agriculture during the past year. I want to be fair in that respect—it has administered the sugar industry very, very well, but it is principally due to the fact that the industry practically controls itself, and the department merely gives effect to the dictates of its representatives. Industry

control has proved in this connection to be highly successful. We need to realise that the Federal Government are the responsible body in the sugar industry, and I understand from a report from Melbourne that the present Government intend permanently to stabilise the sugar industry by the adoption of the Adelaide resolutions of the Country party, and thereby remove it from political control. During the present year the department will be called upon to make representations to the Federal Government for the further protection of this great industry, and I hope that, when the time comes, they will see that the most responsible officer in the department is appointed to look after the interests of the industry.

One of our great industries—the fruit industry—has been receiving a good deal of attention from the department. What we want in this industry more than in any other is some practical sympathy from the Minister and the Government. If the Government are not prepared to give effect to the reports of their proved experts, and if they are not prepared to extend practical sympathy to the fruitgrowers, then we are not going to establish thoroughly the fruit-growing industry, or at all events we are not going to establish it in the way that we would like. I understand that Professor Goddard is attempting to eliminate the pests from the fruit industry in south-east Queensland, and his efforts deserve the congratulations of fruitgrowers. He is at the present time concentrating on the Tweed and Stanthorpe districts. I understand that he has discovered the cause of bunchy top in bananas, and has also guaranteed to eradicate the fruit fly from the Stanthorpe district if given an opportunity. In this respect I understand that fifteen inspectors are to be appointed for a period in Stanthorpe during the cropping season.

Mr. HARTLEY: The expenses will be pretty heavy by the time the pests are eradicated.

Mr. BRAND: I hope that the Minister is going to carry out his promise to see that those inspectors are appointed for the purpose of endeavouring to destroy the cursed pests which are attacking the fruit industry in the Stanthorpe district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No such promise has been made.

Mr. BRAND: I understand the hon. gentleman has promised that fifteen inspectors will be appointed for the Stanthorpe district. I hope the Minister will pay serious attention to the eradication of the fruit pests. In my own district there is an area—the Burrum River flats—which is recognised as one of the finest citrus areas in the State. A few years ago the fruit from the Burrum River flats was recognised as the best citrus fruit in Queensland, but that was before this Government came into power. That area produced heavy crops of magnificent fruit, and before the advent of this Government the Government of the day supplied cyaniding outfits, and so the farmers were placed in the position of being able to rid their fruit trees of red scale, and other insect pests, with the result that those orchards produced magnificent fruit. To-day, because of neglect on the part of the department, and in spite of the recommendations by the instructors in fruit culture, these orchards have deteriorated from the point of view of both quality and quantity of

fruit produced. A few months ago the Minister was asked to provide £400 so that the farmers could buy a cyaniding outfit—this was beyond the means of the ordinary farmer—so that they could carry out the work which had previously been carried out by the department under a previous Government. The Minister was not sympathetic. He was not prepared to spend £400 on an outfit which would have enabled the fruit growers in that district to produce a greater yield of fruit and a better product.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Some of them use sprays.

Mr. BRAND: Sprays are satisfactory when dealing with some insects, but the experience of the Burrum River orchardists indicates that you must go in for cyaniding to get the best results. I hope that during the coming year the Minister will adopt a more sympathetic attitude and will extend some practical sympathy to the fruitgrowers in the way of assisting them to eradicate the pests that harass them.

The hon. member for Lockyer has supplied certain figures dealing with the number of stock in Queensland. This question of the decrease in the number of stock in Queensland should arrest the attention of all hon. members. Stock is one of our greatest assets. We find that during the past year there has been a decrease in all forms of stock—horses, cattle, sheep, and swine. The decreases have been—

Horses	...	...	52,462
Cattle	...	...	558,549
Sheep	...	...	884,970
Swine	...	...	28,374

Taking the value per head of horses at £4, cattle at £3, sheep at £1, and swine at £2, it will be found that the State has lost in stock alone last year no less a sum than £2,828,413. This decline in the numbers of our stock should be arrested. I can quite understand there being a slight decrease in the numbers of cattle, but I cannot understand why any decrease in sheep or swine should have taken place. The department are endeavouring to bring about the better breeding of draught horses in this State. They recently purchased six draught stallions, and I hope that their experience will result in a benefit to the State. The Government should seriously consider the purchase of additional stallions so that the whole State can be adequately served. I understand that continued applications are being received for the services of their stallions, with the result that the Government have found that, instead of six, it would need twenty-six to cope with the demand for their services. I hope for the sake of the improvement of our draught horses that the department will continue to exhibit greater sympathy.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): The farmer and the man on the land have certainly not to be thankful for the lighthanded way they are treated in this Chamber by their friends on the Opposition benches. I always understood that the man on the land was a hard-headed, hard-muscle, and hard-handed customer, who was ready to go on to our undeveloped lands and carve out his own fortune. From the speeches of the hon. members opposite, though, I am rather inclined to think that I have formed a very mistaken idea of him altogether.

Mr. BRAND: You ought to try and do it on your own farm.

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Mr. HARTLEY: If the development of our lands is dependent upon the appointment of, say, fifteen additional inspectors to catch the fruit-fly, and other inspectors to teach our settlers how to grow coffee, I do not know whether we shall not have to appoint nurses to feed and look after them altogether, if what hon. members opposite say about them is correct.

Mr. KELSO: What about your own experience in farming?

Mr. HARTLEY: I never asked anyone to do anything for me unless I paid him for what I wanted done. Fancy fifteen inspectors to catch the fruit-flies in Southern Queensland! I suppose we would want thirty in Central Queensland, and sixty in the North. Anyone who has to deal with pests knows that he has to find out the specific and apply it himself.

I want to say a few words in regard to the Council of Agriculture. The Government brought in legislation some time ago, and hoped by the establishment of the Council of Agriculture that they would be placing at the disposal of the men on the land means by which they would be able to control their own industry for their own benefit. I was very much astonished to hear the hon. member for Stanley say that he does not appreciate what the Government have done in that connection, and that in his opinion the Council of Agriculture has failed. If that is so, and he is speaking for his party, I am quite sure the Government are not going to force a failure on the farmers in the electorate of the hon. member or in the electorates of the hon. members opposite. This scheme has cost the Government a fair amount of money. The Government placed an amount of money on the Estimates originally to inaugurate the scheme, and are now subsidising it at the rate of £1 for £1.

I think last year the Council of Agriculture cost the Government £33,000 and the year before £25,000. That is close on £60,000, and is a fair amount of money. It was expended in order to put at the disposal of the farmers an organisation whereby they could control their own industry to the best advantage of themselves. If hon. members opposite are genuine in their support of the hon. member for Stanley, they should ask that the Council of Agriculture should be abolished.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member for Stanley did not ask for that.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, but it was practically what he meant, only he was not man enough to say straight out what he wanted. I boil down the hon. member's criticism to this: That so long as the Council of Agriculture can be used against the Government, the hon. member is satisfied; but the minute the advice of the Council of Agriculture conflicts with the political attitude of a number of the farmers, it is to be condemned.

Mr. WARREN: Does it conflict?

Mr. HARTLEY: No, it does not. I merely say that the hon. member for Stanley takes up that attitude. Because the Council of Agriculture did not see eye to eye with a small section of the farmers who, because they had their own private interests to serve, raised an agitation in favour of raton cotton, hon. members opposite object to that Council. I say that in that matter the Council of Agriculture was acting in the best

interests of the greatest number of the farmers and of the farming industry generally. A small section wanted to stir up the rest of the Primary Producers' Associations against the Government's policy of annual cotton. Up to the present nothing of any tangible value has been brought forward to show that the Government's policy in that matter is not sound. I know that the Government have receded from their attitude; personally, I say they are wrong. The Council of Agriculture cannot be condemned because of their attitude on that question. I did not hear hon. members opposite censure the Council of Agriculture for organising associations to go to the Arbitration Court to fight against the giving of an award in the cotton industry and the agricultural industry generally. Surely hon. members do not think the Council of Agriculture was formed for that purpose? If there is any reason to blame the Council, I think it may be laying itself open to censure in that respect, because that is the duty of the political organisations of the farmers. The Council of Agriculture is supposed to be non-political, and nobody can tell me that the question of the fixation of wages for the cotton or any other agricultural industry can be called non-political.

Hon. members opposite should be outspoken, and say whether they are prepared to support the Council of Agriculture when it acts disinterestedly in the interests of the farming community, or whether they want it abolished. Personally, I think that the Council of Agriculture is failing to achieve the object for which it was created, simply because it is a non-political Council and more particularly because it is controlled—and the Primary Producers' Associations are controlled—by men of a political creed opposite to that of this Government. The farmers have been given what is practically a socialistic machine with which to organise their industry.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: With a socialistic leader.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not care whether that is so or not. Personally I do not think Mr. Macgregor is by any means a socialist, or he would certainly have brought into operation a more effective and competent scheme than he has. I do not see that the Council of Agriculture has accomplished anything beyond a little temporary advantage by the creation of pools, which, after all, will fail in the last instance. The pools are financed by the big man in the end, and, while they may offer a temporary advantage, they do not work out to the advantage of the producer or the consumer ultimately. The hon. member's interjection is absolutely unwarranted so far as Mr. Macgregor is concerned, if we are to judge him by his administration of the Council of Agriculture to date. I had hoped that one of the first results of the establishment of the Council of Agriculture would have been that it would be possible to obtain the requirements of the farmers cheaper and of better quality than is the case to-day. The hon. member for Stanley supports me in a quotation he made as to the cost of agricultural implements to-day—that they are anything from 100 per cent. to 150 per cent. higher in price than they were before the war. What is the cause of it? You cannot tell me that it is because wages are so much higher.

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Mr. MOORE: It is because of the high tariff.

Mr. HARTLEY: It does not matter whether it is an Australian implement or an imported implement, you pay the same price, or within a few shillings of the same price. Why? Hon. members opposite are silent. I will tell them why. Because the whole of the agricultural implement manufacturing industry is controlled by a ring or trust to-day, and no manufacturer dare sell at less than the fixed price.

Mr. MOORE: They do not want to sell for less.

Mr. HARTLEY: That may be right from their point of view. Does the hon. member support that policy? Does he say it is a good policy for a young country like Queensland?

Mr. MOORE: No.

Mr. HARTLEY: Where the farmers used to pay £2 10s. or £3 10s. for a single-furrow plough, to-day they have to pay £5 10s. or £6 10s. Where is the justice of that? When we have a high protective tariff we should be able to manufacture a plough for very little more than it cost in 1913 and 1914. It does not matter whether you buy an English implement, an American implement, or one of the Sunshine Harvester implements, they are all bound by an unwritten but very sound agreement that these implements must be sold at a certain price. I know from personal experience and on inquiry that, if I want to buy, say, a plough of American make, and I get quotations from the agents for two different American makes, and one of these agents quotes me £1 under what the other agent quotes, then the agent who quoted me the lower price will be in trouble with his wholesale manufacturing firm in America for a breach of agreement. The second man has only to hear of that transaction—as I know from actual experience with two of them—and he will be charged with a breach of the agreement. What the Council of Agriculture has to do is to break through that ring, and hon. members opposite who have anything to do with the land in any shape or form know that that is right. They know that the man who is doing the farmer the most harm is the agricultural implement manufacturer and his agents. He is bleeding the farmers to the extent of 200 per cent. or 300 per cent.

Mr. KEISO: Do you suggest as a remedy that the State should manufacture agricultural implements?

Mr. HARTLEY: I am just going to suggest exactly that thing. What the Local Producers' Associations have to do to overcome the difficulty is to get Mr. Macgregor to import first-class agricultural implements at the lowest cost price and get the Government to put a sufficient amount of money at their disposal to finance the proposal. Having done that, the next thing for Mr. Macgregor—or any other man who is prepared to do a fair thing in the interests of the farming community—to do is to establish works in Queensland for the manufacture of all classes of agricultural implements. The improvements made in nearly all the best Australian agricultural implements have been due in a great measure to Queensland mechanics. It does not matter where you go to, in America, England, or anywhere else, Aus-

tralian have proved both before and during the war that they are the equal of any other manufacturing mechanics.

Mr. KERR: The Secretary for Agriculture says we do not want more State enterprises.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not think the hon. member interpreted the remarks of the Minister correctly. I think that, as usual because of his small mental calibre, he fails to grasp what I am trying to tell him, so I will tell him again that I want Mr. Macgregor and the Council of Agriculture to induce the farmers to see—and then they will do what I have suggested—and then they are being robbed by the price they have to pay for agricultural implements, and I want them to import all the machines the farmers want for the next two or three years and then start a manufacturing establishment.

Mr. BRAND: Who will find the money for it?

Mr. HARTLEY: I have suggested that the Government should finance the matter. The next thing they should do is to start a distributing agency of their own, first in Queensland, secondly, in the other States, and subsequently in Great Britain, and possibly appoint distributing agents in America. I know that does not suit hon. members opposite, because the first thing that would happen would be that the businesses of our dear friends, the late leader of the Nationalist party and the hon. member for Wynnum, would be interfered with. Immediately that happened, about 90 per cent. of the profits of the middlemen derived from the farmers would be cut out.

At 4.9 p.m.,

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

Mr. MOORE: The State Produce Agency was going to bring that about.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Council of Agriculture ought to advise the farmers to take over the two cheese factories of the hon. member and get the profits that he makes. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I will sell them at half-price.

Mr. HARTLEY: What I want the farmers outside and the Local Producers' Associations to realise is that, if they cannot use the funds which have been placed at the disposal of the organisation which has been created to further their interests and advancement, then I for one am not going to support much longer the granting of £1 to £1 subsidy for the continuance of that organisation. Anyone who is genuine knows that what is happening to the man on the land to-day is that he is being hit from all sides. He pays anything from 100 to 150 per cent. more for everything that he requires on his farm, whether it is an axe, an auger, a plough, or any other machine. It is the same when he comes to sell anything. He has to send his produce on to the open market, and, as the hon. member for Lockyer showed, he is caught again by the produce merchant. The State Produce Agency sells his produce one day at a certain price, and two days after a private produce merchant sells the same produce back to the consumer at an increase of £3 per ton on what he gave for it.

Mr. LOGAN: Could they not hold it till the price went up?

Mr. Hartley.

Mr. HARTLEY: I admit the soundness of the hon. member's contention, although it would be a difficult thing for the State Produce Agency to hold big stocks like that, and, instead of the price going up, it might fall and the producer would be hit again.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat made a very shrewd observation when he said that the farmer was being hit from all sides. I do not know that he ever made a truer observation in this Chamber, but I want to point out that the biggest hit is coming from the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Back up that statement.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I shall do so. Let me draw attention first of all to the salaries paid under the vote we are dealing with, and, if I mention names or positions, I want it to be understood that I am not referring to the individuals but to the money associated with them. What is the salary of the head of the Committee of Direction, Mr. Macgregor? What are the salaries of those next in command? I venture to say that no privately-run business concerned with the same commodities is paying anything like the same amounts to-day. Whose pockets does it come out of? What is the amount of money paid to the man who is running the banana show? Very much more than is being paid in any other business. When you come to work the whole thing out and discover what the expenses are, you find that the whole thing is a sham and a myth, and the unfortunate person who sends in his produce has to pay.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers outside will not accept that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that, because I received in my mail at Roma street this morning a letter which I shall read for the benefit of the hon. gentleman. I am quite in order in touching upon the Egg Pool, because it is referred to in the report of the Director. The letter came from Helidon and said—

"I am sending down to-day by rail one case of eggs, 25 dozen. Am I bound to send my eggs to the Government pool? If so, I think it is a rotten show. Theodore wants to make some more pools for his pals to get a big salary, and then you can call Queensland bankrupt. Please let me know if I am obliged to send eggs to the Pool. If I have to, I will sell the fowls before I will help any pool under the present Government.

"Thanking you for past favours.

"Yours faithfully,

"P.S.—Last year owing to the drought I had to sell all my fowls, but I am making another start now."

I wrote back to the writer and told him that, if he had more than 100 fowls, he was bound to do so.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you tell him that it was a farmers' and not a Government pool?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that the very money which they are using to finance it came from the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you object to that?

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HON. W. H. BARNES: I am just stating facts. The hon. gentleman in charge of these Estimates will be able to tell them all he has to say. That letter is from a farmer at Helidon. If the Secretary for Agriculture would take the trouble to find out, he would find that the very legislation which he says is in the direction of helping the producer is the legislation which is helping again and again to cripple the farmer. It is going in the direction of making many men try to dodge what is being done. During the luncheon hour to-day I went down to my office and a person came in to see me. He said, "During this week I bought in public some pineapples for shipment to Sydney. I paid for them, but after I bought them I discovered that I had gone outside of the Committee of Direction, and that I had no right to send my pineapples to Sydney. I went to the Committee of Direction, and they said, in effect, 'You are a good boy for being so obedient in coming to us, and we will allow you to send this lot to Sydney, but please do not offend again.'"

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Was that not a very charitable view?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I thought our motto was, "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves."

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. gentleman does not believe in co-operation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is not co-operation.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, it is.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, that is not co-operation. There is no co-operation when a man is told that he can only do certain things. He is tied hand and foot. Co-operation! It is going in the direction of absolutely strangling the industries of this State.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You say you are against co-operation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is putting words into my mouth that I have not used. I am a strong advocate for co-operation, and my answer in that direction is that the Babinda Sugar Works Bill, which is now before this House, was made possible because of the measure which I introduced into this Chamber years ago in connection with the sugar industry. I am not against co-operation, but I am against the man on the land being made a kind of convenience of to find billets for other men who are politically bound in a certain direction, and whose votes are cast in a certain direction.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are afraid that they will chop into your profits.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very sorry to say that I have no profits.

Mr. HARTLEY: I will swap with you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have here an account sales. This is what we have to do according to dictates of the Committee of Direction. We have to put on these plasters for the man who sends in his stuff. Does the Minister deny that these plasters have to be put on under a regulation which he has issued? It takes one of my clerks pretty well all day putting plasters on account sales in order to run this show for

the Government. I have here a letter from a gentleman whom I think the Secretary for Public Works has had the pleasure of meeting when the Minister did me the favour of going down into my electorate. The letter is dated 31st August. It says—

“On Monday I took seventeen cases of pines to the boat for Sydney. The Controller told me that I could only send six. That is all I was allowed by the Government Director of Fruit. I asked why?”

The Minister cannot charge me with going behind his back, because this letter requests me to write to the Minister for an explanation on the matter, and the reply was that, whilst only six could be sent, he could send them somewhere else if he liked, but it did not matter about all his trouble and labour.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You would like to cause a glut to bring prices down.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is silly.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Did hon. members ever hear of a case in which eleven cases of fruit being kept in Brisbane instead of being sent to Sydney caused a glut? (Opposition laughter.) That action is in absolute keeping with the administration of the hon. gentleman.

MR. HARTLEY: It is making you pretty warm.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is one thing that I have learned in public life—when on your feet to always keep cool, and that is one of the things that I have always been able to do. At the same time I have very often been able to stir up hon. members opposite. The other day there was a glut of pineapples in Brisbane and the assistance of the State Produce Agency was invoked to help the Government in the matter. There was a paragraph in the Press stating what this great State Produce Agency had done in that matter. I want to say deliberately that the manager is a perfect gentleman. What did he do? He is a wise man. He said, “I cannot manage all these myself,” and proceeded forthwith to distribute them through other agents. We then saw this paragraph in the Press, probably inspired by someone, that the State Produce Agency had come in and done all the business.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who did it, then?

MR. HARTLEY: He was the controlling man.

MR. MAXWELL: He did it with the help of the man you call the middleman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have often heard it remarked that hon. members opposite want to eliminate the middleman. What is happening to-day? Instead of allowing the free distribution of fruit in the South—and that does not get at anyone in Brisbane—the Committee of Direction have cut out a great number of people who usually sold and distributed the fruit there. Hon. members opposite have talked incessantly about having no knowledge of one of the biggest monopolies created, and they are now creating a certain position in order to bring one about. There is no question that they are boon companions in connection with this matter, and the Secretary for Agriculture, who is in charge of this Committee of Direction, is out to wreck a number of

businesses in Brisbane. The hon. gentleman will find from the report of the Director of the Council of Agriculture that the Bolshevik idea is going to be realised bit by bit. They are to handle everything. The first idea is to lay hands on as much as you can for yourself and get as much as you possibly can for yourself.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that Webster's definition?

MR. KELSO: You don't stick to Webster's definition.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has practised that idea in several directions. The position is clearly defined in this report, which states that they are out to lay hold of every business. What happened the other day? The Committee of Direction sent out notices in Brisbane inviting tenders for all the carting of agricultural produce in Brisbane, much to the disgust and annoyance of the carters, who are going to get up a deputation to the Government in connection with the matter. In addition to that the Committee of Direction propose laying hands on all grain and everything else coming into Brisbane. They will have a tough job. Can the Government not see that, when the financial stress to which I have made reference to-day is so great, they are helping to pull down people and wreck them? If that is a good policy, then the Government should go ahead, as they are going to do it most effectively.

The position in connection with the administration of this department is one that we have never seen before in the State of Queensland. It is all due to the Secretary for Agriculture, who has a goal that he is seeking to realise. The position is perfectly clear. I have a letter here from the same person at Redland Bay to whom I have already referred, and he said that he was told that the next time he wanted to send a consignment of pineapples he could send as much as he liked to Sydney, but he was not to send anything to Brisbane. A free agent? No! I thought that when the Government came into power they said they were going to put an end to victimisation and were to do nothing in the way of curtailing liberty. This is the Government that were out for the liberty of the individual! They are tying up people and preventing them doing their business in a reasonable way. The Government talk about liberty! We know what that means so far as the individual is concerned. I have also this account sales from the same person, who writes—

“Will you interview them and see if they have not made a big mistake. I am short of about 58 dozen. Here I am paid for one lot—

8 doz. for 1s.

456 dozen at 2½d. dozen.

79 dozen at ½d. a dozen.”

MR. KELSO: What for?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Bananas. Seventy-nine dozen at ½d. a dozen!

“145 dozen at 4¾d. a dozen.

12¾ dozen at 7¾d. a dozen.”

And so on. Then we come down again to the 8 dozen for 1s.

MR. KELSO: How much did he have to pay?

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HON. W. H. BARNES: Nothing, because those that brought 7½d. a dozen saved the situation a bit. It would not be fair to say he had to pay something if he did not. I followed the hon. member who spoke previously, and in his references he sneered at the work done in connection with the fruit fly and at the number of men who had to be employed to try and find a remedy. The hon. member evidently has not realised the ravages of the fruit fly in Queensland and the destruction it has effected. I am not an advocate of putting on a large number of men if they can be done without, but, if we can attack the fruit fly successfully and do away with it, we are doing a great thing for Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Hon. members on this side of the Chamber realise that, unless more money and assistance is given, and also keen practical sympathy on the part of those concerned, Queensland is not going to be served as it should be. It is imperative that something should be done in this direction.

MR. DUNSTAN: In a compulsory way?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member is a splendid speaker, and will be able to tell us whether it will be compulsory or otherwise. We do not hear his charming voice as often as we should in this Chamber. I am sure the hon. member will tell us something in this regard.

When you come to think of the possibilities of the North more particularly, I ask would it not be a good thing if we could do something which is going to help in the direction of encouraging new industries such as coffee growing? If you are going to do that, you are going to have more than one lot of eggs in your basket in the development of this State.

[4.30 p.m.] Take it from the larger point of view. We are part of Australia, a fact we are apt to forget. We are very near certain countries, and it is essential that we should link up as far as possible by getting a population in the North of Queensland and industries which will keep people there. If we do that, we shall be doing something which is going to help Queensland from a defence point of view. We should cultivate all that we can of those things which will enlarge the possibilities of the State.

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

MR. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I do not think that any good organisation or good scheme can be killed by criticism. Up to the present criticism of the present organisation in the agricultural industry has been lacking. I do not think we need to be unfriendly in criticising that organisation, but I do think we would have been in a very much better position had we, as farmers, criticised the actions of those who are running our agricultural organisation. I do not for a moment think that we could have brought into operation a perfect organisation. I want to be quite clear on this, because I do not wish to convey the idea that, had we personally had control of this organisation, we would have introduced a perfect scheme. But I do think that this organisation started with a dead weight on it.

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When the Primary Producers Organisation Bill was going through the House I instanced the case of the organisation in America, and said it was a very qualified success there. I maintain to-day that in no place in the world, with the exception probably of Denmark, is the farmer organised to anything like the extent he should be. Our organisation here has made many glaring mistakes. Some years ago we attempted to organise the fruit growers on somewhat similar lines, but we were going to organise the banana growers separately, the citrus growers separately, and the pineapple growers separately, because their interests are so different. If the fruitgrowers at that time thought it was essential to organise separately, how much more necessary was it to organise the different farming industries separately? The sugar growers are organised very perfectly, but only because it is compulsory. They did not organise voluntarily. To-day they are the only primary producers who are properly organised in Queensland. Had it not been for the conditions in that industry, the sugar growers would have been no better organised than any other primary producers. The fact is that it is a very big problem to organise the farmers. The farmer is different from any other class of people. I heard some apparently slighting remarks by the hon. member for Fitzroy—I do not say that the hon. gentleman meant them to be slighting—to the effect that, if we go on much further talking about the farmer, we shall have to send up a nurse to him. The hon. gentleman must remember that his conception of a farmer is so inaccurate, and his contact with the organisations of farmers has been so small and circumscribed, that he does not know actually what he is talking about. We cannot get away from the fact that the farmer is the most difficult class of man it is possible to organise. That is because farmers are not able to come together, but are working separately and producing crops under different conditions. There are hardly two farms in Queensland which produce alike; the land and the circumstances are different in each case. Therefore it is very hard either to organise or to adopt a scheme which will fit all conditions of farmers. For instance, if there was a price fixed for a given commodity, would we fix it as grown on first-class, second-class, or third-class land? You would have to give considerably more in one case than in the other. If this is so, we must recognise the difficulties we have to face. That is the whole difficulty in connection with the scheme. Some of my friends may object to what I am about to say, but I am not going to be afraid to criticise, and I say that up to the present the money that has been put into the Primary Producers' Organisation has been practically wasted. What we want is a frank examination of the situation. We must be candid and admit that the farmer is in a very bad way to-day. He would prefer to live in the city, where the pleasures and conveniences of life are superior under present conditions to what they are in the country. The organisation is not holding out a brighter prospect for the man on the land. No doubt the Government party, as the consumers' party, would be willing to give improved conditions to the farmer if they could also give them to the consumer, but unfortunately the enmity between

the dingo and the sheep is due to the fact that the one wants to eat the other.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The sheep does not want to eat the dingo.

Mr. WARREN: The dingo wants to eat the sheep, though. Between the consumer and the producer there can be no sweet reasonableness, and it is no use saying there can be. There can be no happy meeting ground. If there is a meeting and a giving away, it is done from pure generosity. Take the Commissioner of Prices. Whom does he consider? Not the producer—he is not there to consider him. When he put the price of milk up to 8d., who got the advantage? Why, the middleman—the parasite. In saying that I do not wish to reflect on the Commissioner of Prices, although I do not believe in price-fixing. When the milk producers went to the Government to ask for a pool, one of the conditions was that the price of the milk—although it was a starvation price—was to remain as it was unless the consumer was consulted. What is the use of talking of what we have done for the farmers? We have done a lot for the farmer, haven't we? If that scheme was swallowed by the producers, it would put a yoke round their necks which it would take fifty years to get rid of. The idea was to make them the bond slaves of the consumers. The organisation has not been in any way for the benefit of the farmer.

Have this consumers' Government at any time attempted to raise the price of commodities to the producer? When the butter scheme was put before the Premier, did he not say that the consumers would have to be considered? I do not claim that the consumers should not be considered or that they should be exploited, but until the producers get the actual result of their labour we are never going to help production in Queensland. This is why production is being strangled. In talking to the farmers we often tell them—I have done so—that the produce agent must be the servant of the farmer and not his master. Once we make the middleman the servant of the producer, that is all we need. The more agents you have within reasonable limits the better distribution you will have, and it is wise for us to use all the means of distribution we can. We must never forget that so long as the agents are honest they are the friends of the producer. When they are dishonest they are a nuisance. I want to be very clearly understood that our grand scheme must give us control of these agents—not destroy them—because, after all, the percentage they charge is so small a matter, if they work properly, that it is not worth considering. I have said before and I want to emphasise again that pools are not everything. Like the hon. member for Fitzroy, I am afraid they will have only a limited life.

At 4.45 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. WARREN: The pools will not last, but I hope they will form a foundation for greater co-operation. I do not expect that we are going to make better conditions for the producer by the wave of some magic wand. The farmers can only be benefited by organisation and hard work. I am a farmer, and I am proud to be a farmer, but I have to confess that the farmers are to blame to a great extent for the position in

which they find themselves. In my own district I attended a Local Producers' Association meeting, but there were not sufficient there to form a quorum. That was in a thriving dairying centre. When we find that the farmers are not taking a sufficient interest in their organisation we must recognise the heavy work devolving upon those who take an active interest in the matter.

Reference has been made to the fruit industry. I do not consider that the scheme in connection with the fruit industry has been in operation long enough to judge as to its success or otherwise. I do not wish to condemn anything moving in the right direction. Those concerned may make great mistakes or do things with which I do not entirely agree, but I consider that people who make no mistakes do not make anything at all. We should give the fruit industry and those controlling its organisation an opportunity to make good. I was in Melbourne a few years ago attending to certain matters on behalf of the fruitgrowers. After studying the market there very carefully, I came to the conclusion that it was very dangerous to interfere with the agency business there. I believe the Committee of Direction has made a blunder in that direction for the reason that those in the industry in Melbourne have sufficient capital behind them to bring in bananas from Fiji in spite of the duty. I believe it would be wise even at this eleventh hour for the Committee of Direction to decide to move slower in that respect. I have warned the people outside on this matter, and I want to utter a warning in this Chamber. If any ground is lost by this action, it will never be regained.

Some mention has been made of the Council of Agriculture and the Director of that Council. The Council of Agriculture is responsible for any mistakes that it makes and it should carry the responsibility of those mistakes. If it is considered necessary to amend the legislation dealing with that Council, then it must be altered. It is unfortunate that the Government do not pay sufficient attention to hon. members on this side when legislation affecting the agricultural industry is going through this Chamber. It is a pity they do not pay more attention to those who have worked in the industry and are desirous of bringing about better conditions in every possible way. What would be my position if I entered a trade union and endeavoured to tell the members how to manage their business? They would know more about the work than I did. But put those same men—they might be ever so clever at their own work—into an organisation of farmers where they would be up against men who were born and reared in that industry, and the chances are 100 to 1 that the men who are used to farming would be able to lose the other men. The Government have made that mistake, and it is good for the country that they intend to remedy it. There is no use blaming ourselves only, because the farmers are to blame as well. Neither is it any use denying that the circumstances were responsible for the very poor response made under this scheme. I hope that the Government and the people will rise to the occasion so that in the future something better will be done for the farmer, who is in a very low way at present.

Mention has been made of evaniding orchards. I am game to say that, if an hon.

Mr. Warren.]

member went to the Department of Agriculture, he could not get a definite assurance from any of its officers as to the best method for the treatment of citrus pests. It has always been that way, and there is no improvement in that respect now. I have had experience in the citrus industry, and in consequence of that experience I do not believe in cyaniding. The great orange centres which used cyanide and which over-cyanided have gone out of existence. There are sprays which are absolutely safe to use. If those sprays were used carefully and periodically, we would have better production. There are millions of acres of land along our coastline and in our western areas suitable for the growing of oranges, for which we have markets. If we grew sufficient citrus oranges, we could export to the old country and strike the market at a time which would be absolutely safe, as no other country would be able to land supplies there at the same time. The unfortunate part of it is that one can travel over the country and find that many orchards have gone back almost to their original state and have become centres for breeding pests which are a menace to the fruitgrower.

I have heard statements made in the Committee concerning those highly scientific men in the department who are engaged in combating the fruit-fly pest. They were termed by one hon. member as "fly-catchers." I am sorry that any hon. member should make use of his position in this Chamber to cast reflections on these men. I give the Minister every credit for what he has done in this matter. There is no denying the fact that he has made a forward movement. We, as farmers, recognise the necessity for these experts going out and doing the work for us, because we have never learned how to attack these wretched pests from a scientific point of view. Take the bunchy-top disease in bananas. Certain professors have been giving particular attention to this disease, and there is every reason to hope that in the near future certain results will be obtained from their investigations which will be invaluable to the fruitgrowers of Queensland.

I want to emphasise that throughout all the branches of industry we must have experts—not a great army of them—but highly qualified experts who can instruct us. We should be able to go to the Department of Agriculture and Stock—which is the Cinderella of all departments—and the messenger should be able to direct us to some office where we could make inquiries and get enlightenment on these matters. I congratulate the Minister as far as this matter is concerned. I think we are in for bright things in this direction. To make the country attractive is the great problem that the Secretary for Agriculture has to face. I am sorry to have to say that that problem is not touched at all, but I hope the hon. gentleman will tackle it.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I generally take the opportunity of saying a few words in connection with this vote, because I look upon it as one of the most important that we have to deal with in the Estimates. I notice that there has been a decrease in the vote this year. Last year the amount allotted to the Department of Agriculture and Stock was £201,448 and for the year 1924-1925 the amount is £115,096, being a reduction of £86,352. I regret that that reduction has

been brought about, because up to this year since the Country party got into this Chamber these Estimates had been increased each year, thereby showing that the Country party had proved that agriculture had been neglected. I think that is borne out by the treatment afforded to primary producers generally prior to the Country party coming into existence. Should we ever be in a position to give effect to our policy—and I think the time is not far distant—we shall increase this vote considerably and allow agriculturists and primary producers an opportunity to co-operate and to engage in secondary industries.

Before a move is made for the reduction of this vote I think it would be well for the Secretary of Agriculture to ask himself the question, "Are the primary producers satisfied at the present time?" I venture to say that, if he got an expression of opinion from the primary producers throughout the State of Queensland, he would find that a state of dissatisfaction exists. The primary producers are not satisfied with the condition of affairs at present, and, unless the Government do something very different from what they are doing at present, I do not think there will be any satisfaction.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What are you suggesting?

Mr. CLAYTON: I suggest that we can act on sound lines and do everything possible to give the men on the land an opportunity to put themselves in a very prosperous condition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you mean by that?

Mr. CLAYTON: I know the Secretary for Agriculture has been doing what he can to put them in a prosperous condition, but the hon. gentleman generally fails in connection with anything he tackles. We know that before he came into this Chamber he failed, and I am inclined to think the hon. gentleman is not getting on in a satisfactory manner at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you mean by saying that I failed before I come into this Chamber?

Mr. CLAYTON: I have it on good authority that the hon. gentleman could not make a success of any property he occupied when he was an agriculturist—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Because I would not sweat men as you do.

Mr. CLAYTON: And he had to go out and work for shire councils in conjunction with the working of his property. I understand it is absolutely correct that the hon. gentleman worked for different shire councils in the North. I say all the more credit to him for being able to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true. There is nothing to be ashamed of in doing work for a shire council, but I never worked for a shire council.

Mr. CLAYTON: As to making a living off his farm, the hon. gentleman was unable to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must be confusing me with someone else.

Mr. CLAYTON: I am not confusing the Minister with someone else. I am basing my remarks on a statement that was made to me.

[Mr. Warren.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You should speak the truth.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Minister interjected, and he brought this on himself. I was going on to say that the Government generally, since the creation of the Council of Agriculture, have tried to do something to benefit the primary producers, and I

[5 p.m.] trust their efforts will be successful. We on this side know that the Council of Agriculture could not achieve everything in the short time that has elapsed since its formation, but I notice that lately, in conjunction with the Federal Government, it has been trying to do something to stabilise the dairying industry, and I look to the Federal Government in the near future to introduce legislation that will place the dairymen in a better position than they are in at the present time. At present there is no industry in a more languishing condition than the dairying industry. Some time ago we had Mr. Ferry fixing the price of butter at 1s. 7d. per lb., and to-day some of the factories in Queensland are getting no more than 1s. 4d. If we are going to do anything to enable dairymen to make a successful living and to comply with the industrial awards which the Australian Workers' Union threatens to impose on them, it is essential that something should be done to enable the dairyman to get a price for his butter at least equal to the cost of production. If the Federal Government pass legislation creating dairy boards, and the dairy boards, under agreement with the different States, fix the price of butter on the basis of the cost of production, then we shall have a certain section on the Government side agitating for the Commissioner of Prices to step in and fix the price of butter. They will use the argument that the Government will not increase the basic wage, and therefore they will oppose any increase in the cost of living, and the Commissioner of Prices will have to fix the price of dairy products. That will be detrimental to the dairyman, although it may pacify a section of those sitting behind the Government. We know that some time ago, when the Commissioner of Prices interfered with the price of butter, the dairymen of Queensland lost no less than £242,000.

Mr. W. COOPER: What must they be losing now?

Mr. CLAYTON: They are losing a very considerable amount at the present time under a Labour Government, and, if the dairymen in the hon. member's electorate had the opportunity of deciding whether they would vote Labour or otherwise, they would elect a candidate in whom they could place reliance. If these dairy boards are constituted and they fix the price of butter on the basis of the cost of production—that is what we advocate—and production decreases in Queensland owing to an adverse season and there is a bounteous season in the other States, an agitation will be started by a certain section on the other side for the introduction of Southern butter if it can be imported at a lower price than the cost of the local butter. You will find that that will be the experience, as has been the case recently with regard to sugar. In the other States the wives of unionists threw all the principles of unionism on one side because we were compelling them to pay a decent price for their sugar—a price which will enable a white man to exist. They clamoured for

cheaper black-grown sugar and the same will occur so far as the butter industry is concerned. They do not care whether the farmer is making a success of the industry or otherwise.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you making that charge against the women in the South because of what Mrs. Glencross said?

Mr. CLAYTON: Mrs. Glencross, when she addressed the meeting, was backed up by Mr. Brennan and Mr. Scullin, Labour members of the Federal Parliament, and Mr. Brennan went there with a letter from Mr. Charlton, the leader of the Federal Labour party, and said he would support them in their movement. I will only say that the hon. gentleman would do the same thing if he was in the Federal Parliament to-day.

I look to the Council of Agriculture to do something for the primary producer. We have advanced a large sum of money in connection with the Council. Members of the Country party were very wise when they met the Premier, in the absence of the Secretary for Agriculture, the other day, and brought before him the necessity of constituting the Council on different lines.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You were about three months behind the times, though.

Mr. CLAYTON: The hon. gentleman does not like it because we are alive to the situation. He says that we were three months behind the times when, as a matter of fact, the hon. member for Burnett last session brought up the question, and on subsequent occasions dealt with the matter. When the Minister says that we are three months behind the times, I can tell him that he is about nine months behind the times, as he generally is on these occasions. (Opposition laughter.) I think the Council of Agriculture could do an enormous amount of good if it was established on the commodity system; that is, we should have Local Producers' Associations dealing with the branches of industry in which they are engaged. For instance, you could allow the dairymen to form their Local Producers' Associations and District Councils, the same with the fruit men, the egg men, and the maize producers, all in affiliation with the Council of Agriculture. I trust that the Council of Agriculture will move in that direction, because I believe it will mean the success of the organisation. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was introduced we were successful in getting amendments beneficial to the primary producers embodied in the measure, and I trust that the Minister will see the wisdom of again accepting recommendations made by hon. members on this side, seeing that they come from men who have had practical experience of farming. I am not going to say that the Council of Agriculture has not done some good for the primary producers. The Council has done some good where the different industries have been dealt with sectionally.

The fruit industry is controlled by a Committee of Direction, and many of the growers in the electorate of the hon. member for Cooroola have told me that they are satisfied to work under the Committee of Direction, with certain exemptions. They are

Mr. Clayton.]

satisfied that they have been getting a fair price in some respects for their bananas, but they express dissatisfaction with the action of the Committee of Direction in the Southern States with regard to the limitation of agents. We look forward to the time when the fruitgrowers will be able to control their own industry, but at the present time they are only controlling it through agents. If we bring about a limitation of agents, as the Committee of Direction desire, we are going to cause a state of antagonism in the Southern States which I fear Queensland banana-growers will have to fight in the near future. The same antagonism is likely to be displayed towards the banana industry that we have had in connection with the sugar industry. I know that negotiations are going on for the introduction of Fiji bananas in the South, and that a deputation to the Minister for Trade and Customs, Mr. Pratten, in Melbourne the other day asked for the lifting of the tariff against them; but I am pleased to say that Mr. Pratten looked upon the banana industry as of so much importance to Queensland, in that so many white folk are engaged in it, that he gave it as his personal opinion that nothing should be done in that direction. I hope that, when the matter comes before the Federal Parliament, its members will listen to the advice of the Minister. It would be a most serious thing if anything were done to retard the progress of the industry, because I look upon it as likely to become in the near future one of the most important we have in Queensland. Owing to the fact that we have railway communication right from the North to the Markets of Melbourne and Adelaide, many persons will go into the industry more thoroughly than they have done hitherto under the handicap of having to send their bananas by water, and I trust the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing will give this matter most careful consideration and will listen to the views of the growers. As I told them, when I opened the show at Pomona the other day, if they have a grievance, it is their duty not to attack the Minister but to take it to him and allow him to deal with the question. The possibility is, therefore, that they will call upon the hon. gentleman in the near future.

So far as the administration of the Diseases in Plants Act is concerned, the hon. member for Gympie and myself have been appointed to a local committee to deal with a disease which has broken out amongst the bananas in our district, and I understand that, if an opportunity offers, we are to introduce a deputation to the Minister on the matter to-day. I know the hon. gentleman is most attentive in matters of this description, and I trust that on this occasion, as on other occasions, he will give serious consideration to the problem. I gather that the disease has broken out not only in the Gympie district but also in other districts.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not allowed to discuss that question on this vote.

Mr. CLAYTON: Why am I not allowed to discuss it, Mr. Pollock?

The CHAIRMAN: Because the Diseases in Plants Act is provided for under a separate vote entirely.

[Mr. Clayton.]

Mr. CLAYTON: I understood that we were allowed a general discussion on this first vote.

The CHAIRMAN: No, the hon. member is entitled to discuss the Chief Office and the cotton industry.

Mr. CLAYTON: Another matter to which I wish to refer is the show subsidy. I am not quite sure whether that comes under this vote or not, but I think the subsidising of agricultural societies does a great deal of good in country districts.

Show societies are spending money on advertising the State, and the Government should do all they possibly can to subsidise them. There are other matters that I will refer to on another vote. When we are discussing the motion, notice of which has been given by the hon. member for Mirani, I think we shall be able to show the Minister the wisdom of allowing the Council of Agriculture to be conducted on lines more in the interests of the farming community.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am very sorry to see a reduction in this vote as compared with last year, because it is absolutely unwarranted. This is the most important department of the lot, inasmuch as the workers of the State depend to a great extent on the success of agriculture in this country. I am sorry that the industry is not as prosperous as it ought to be and that the prospects are not as good as they ought to be. The general increase in the cost of everything has seriously affected the agricultural industry. The costs are being continually piled on to the primary producers, and they are not in a position to pass those costs on. If we do not get control of the markets to a larger extent than we have at the present time, the industry is not going to do much better than it is doing now. The difficulty in connection with the organisation of farming in connection with the control of marketing, pools, etc., is that immediately you start to organise you start to incur considerable expenses. When a general scheme of organisation is formulated, there is the tendency—which exists in many Government departments—to increase the cost of administration. We know also that the farmers are a very small minority of the people, and, if they attempt to dictate to the rest of the people what prices they shall pay for certain commodities, even though those prices are fair in comparison with the cost of production, and at the same time the surplus produce is dumped overseas at a low price, there is certainly going to be a pretty big row. You can hardly expect the working people of Brisbane to submit to that in times of distress, or at a time when they can see Australian butter being sold in London at half the price for which it is being sold in Brisbane, or when any produce is being sold here at a higher price than it is being sold overseas. There is certain to be a good deal of kick about that. The only way in which we can make the industry payable is by receiving an increased price for the products. I am of the opinion that in the future the costs that are piling on the farmer are not going to decrease but are going to increase. It is practically certain that we shall have an industrial award granting higher rates of pay. It is not so much the rate of wages or the reduction in hours that we object to as the unfairness of having to pay the same rate of pay and work the same hours of

labour in all avenues of farming employment. There is a good deal of approval of that policy on the other side, but those hon. members must remember that, when this extra charge is imposed on the industry, they will have to ask their constituents to put their hands in their pockets and pay for it as the cost of their policy. I hope they distinctly understand that.

Mr. WEIR: You ask them to pay now and give them nothing but abuse for it.

Mr. DEACON: All the hon. member does is to promise them things and keep on promising them. We are building very largely on some industries. There is a large vote on the Estimates to aid the cotton industry. I do not want to condemn that industry, because I have not had any personal experience with it, but I do know that it has been a failure on the Darling Downs owing to the difficulty of getting labour and the extreme cost of picking the crop. The farmer is asked to take all risks, the troubles of pests and dry weather, and to accept a return which does not encourage him to persevere with the industry. There is a lesser acreage under cotton on the Darling Downs this season than last, and I understand that next year it will be practically extinct on the Downs. That is because the crop does not pay the farmer there.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How much per lb. do they pay for picking on the Darling Downs?

Mr. DEACON: It is paid for at a weekly rate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Can you tell me how much per lb. it works out at?

Mr. DEACON: I could not tell the hon. gentleman accurately. In many instances no attempt was made last season to pick it at all. It was abandoned because the wages demanded would not have paid the farmer to harvest it. The position of the farmers on the Darling Downs is sounder in regard to crops than anywhere else in Queensland, because they have three or four staple crops to grow—maize, fodder, and wheat, in addition to the dairying industry. We have those main industries still to rely upon.

I do not think the salaries paid to some of the officers of the department are quite fair. For instance, the Director of Agriculture, which is a very important position, only receives a salary of £550. I am not referring to the Director of the Council of Agriculture, but to the Director of the Agricultural Branch of the Chief Office. The Inspector in Pig Raising receives £450 a year, and the Director of Agriculture, who has a much more responsible position, has a salary which is not much more. I do not want to say that the Instructor in Pig Raising is not worth his money, but certainly, if he is worth £450, the Director of Agriculture is worth much more than he is paid.

Then there are "Instructors in Agriculture." I do not know what they do, and I would like the Secretary for Agriculture to explain when he replies. So far as I can ascertain, the farmers whom I know have not heard of them, and have not seen them.

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.