

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 3 OCTOBER 1924**

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FRIDAY, 3 OCTOBER, 1924.

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

PAPERS.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the public accounts for the financial year 1923-24.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

AMOUNTS PAID TO MINISTERS, 1905 TO 1924.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) asked the Chief Secretary—

“1. What were the amounts paid to all the Ministers of the Crown during the financial years 1905-06 to 1914-15?”

“2. What were the amounts paid by the Treasury Department to individual Ministers during the same period, furnishing the House with details of same?”

“3. What amounts were paid to the Ministers of the Crown during the years 1915-16 to 1923-24?”

“4. What were the amounts paid by the Treasury Department to individual Ministers during the same period?”

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

“1 to 4. Most of the information sought by the hon. member has at one time or

another been furnished to Parliament. A fresh compilation from department records would entail much clerical work and considerable expense."

DISTRIBUTION OF "GOLDEN CASKET" PROFITS.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*), without notice, asked the Home Secretary—

"On or about what date is it proposed to make a further distribution of the profits standing to credit in the 'Golden Casket' fund?"

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

"The matter has been prepared, and I expect to be able to make an announcement next week."

DATA IN RE RAILWAYS APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Is the hon. gentleman in a position to supply the information promised by him in reply to the following question, asked by the hon. member for Burnett on 19th September:—

What is the designation, mileage, estimated cost, and amount spent to date of each railway approved by Parliament, classified under the following headings:—(a) Construction not yet started; (b) started and construction progressing; (c) started and work discontinued?"

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

(a) RAILWAYS OF WHICH CONSTRUCTION NOT YET STARTED—

Section.	Length.	Year passed by Parliament.	Estimated Cost when Submitted to Parliament (not including Land Resumptions or Telegraph Lines).
	M. Ch.		£
Lanefield to Rosevale .. .. .	16-45	1914	61,494
Gatton to Mt. Sylvia .. .. .	11-30	1914	40,876
Mt. Edwards to Maryvale .. .. .	27-78	1914	358,616
Inglewood to Texas and Silverspur .. .. .	43-61	1914	143,181
Extension from Dirranbandi .. .. .	51-60	1914	179,718
Juandah to Taroom .. .. .	41-76	1914	197,722
Yarraman to Nanango .. .. .	15-76	1918	121,984
Brooloo to Kenilworth .. .. .	10-27	1920	164,037
Dobbyn to Myally Creek .. .. .	50-9	1920	359,346
Pearamon towards Boonjee .. .. .	10-76	1920	130,239
Eromanga to Windorah .. .. .	95-0	1910	*
Windorah to Springvale .. .. .	230-0	1910	*
Springvale to Camooweal .. .. .	290-0	1910	*
Quilpie to Eromanga .. .. .	62-0	1910	*

\* No estimate submitted to Parliament. Authority under "The Great Western Railway Act of 1910."

(b) RAILWAYS STARTED AND CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS—

Section.	Length.	Year passed by Parliament.	Estimated Cost when Submitted to Parliament (not including Land Resumptions or Telegraph Lines).	Amount Spent to Date (not including land Resumptions or Telegraph Lines).
	M. Ch.		£	£
(a) Many Peaks to North end of approved line from Mundubbera, and (b) Mundubbera to Northern Burnett .. .. .	110-50	(a) 1920 (b) 1914	1,156,946	629,175
Rannes to Monto .. .. .	109-43	1920	704,943	228,428
Baralaba to Castle Creek .. .. .	53-53	1922	332,585	155,766
Mackay to Proserpine .. .. .	75-51	1910	..	1,074,601*
Babinda to Cardwell .. .. .	74-23	1910	..	1,079,362*
Townsville to Cardwell .. .. .	100-0	1910	..	770,481*
Tara to Surat (Section 1) .. .. .	35-68	1914	162,819	78,454
Winderah Branch .. .. .	12-17½	1914	44,660	65,827
Longreach to Winton .. .. .	109-42	1915	479,807	205,187

\* No estimate submitted to Parliament. Authority under "The North Coast Railway Act of 1910."

(c) Started and work discontinued—

Mount Molloy Branch Extension .. .. .	7-20	1917	39,624	32,049
Yaraka to Windorah .. .. .	27-35	1910	..	43,337*
Dajarra to Junction (North and South lines) .. .. .	39-69	1910	..	96,966*
Winton to Springvale .. .. .	188-0	1910	..	82,672*
Goondoon to Kallia .. .. .	30-60	1914	231,194	117,209†

\* No estimate submitted to Parliament. Authority under "The Great Western Railway Act of 1910."

† Open for public traffic, Goondoon to Wallaville 12 miles 19 chains.

## PAPERS.

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

Twenty-second annual report of the Commissioner of Taxes on the operation of the Income Tax Act during the year 1923-1924.

Report of the Commissioner for Railways for the year ended 30th June, 1924.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES,  
1923-1924.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message transmitting the Supplementary Estimates—Revenue, Trust and Special, and Loan Fund—for the year 1923-1924.

The Estimates were ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

## VOTE OF CREDIT.

ON ACCOUNT 1925-1926.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message recommending that provision be made, on account, for the services of the several departments of the public service for the year ending 30th June, 1926, of the following sums:—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £1,200,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of £700,000;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £600,000.

The message was ordered to be referred to the Committee of Supply.

TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL.

## INITIATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Trustees and Executors Act of 1897 in a certain particular.

Question put and passed.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS.

PRECEDENCE OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ON THURSDAY.

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

“That for the remainder of this session Government business do take precedence of all other business on Thursdays.”

Question put and passed.

## SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

RAILWAYS.

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

Question stated—

“That £96,309 be granted for ‘Railways—General Establishment’”

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): The hon. member for Townsville, when speaking, stated that the railway development and administration under this Government was the reason for the successful development of the sugar industry in the North. I think that is totally wrong, because, as everybody who has been engaged for any time in the sugar industry knows, during past years, and until quite recently, the sugar industry progressed in spite of the various Governments which were in power. The development of the sugar industry in Cairns and Innisfail localities took place before there was any development in regard to railways there. Both of those localities were dependent on the opening up of the sugar lands by the railway lines built by the shire councils, which the Government at a later date took over.

When the hon. member for Oxley was speaking, he voiced the opinion that at the present time political influence in connection with the railways was not nearly so great as it used to be. I cannot subscribe to that in any way, because at the present time political influence, not only in connection with the railways but in every department of the State, is being exercised to a greater extent than it has ever been before in the history of Queensland. In regard to this matter I would like to quote a paragraph which was published in a Maryborough paper not long ago, showing that a great many union workers there are expecting political interference in connection with the railways. The Maryborough “Chronicle” of 6th August last has a report headed “Railwaymen’s claims. Mass meeting yesterday,” and containing a paragraph headed “Class-conscious workers,” after which the following paragraph appears:—

“UNDER THE WHIP.

“The workers at the present time were suffering from the whip, the lash of which was wielded by their representatives. ‘Your member is prepared to come out and say where he stands,’ declared Mr. Morrow. ‘He is one of the few who is honest and prepared to tell his comrades what he does in Parliament. We find that our men shun us. They say it is a caucus secret. We send our delegates to Parliament, and they say the business is secret! Here is Dave Weir, who says what he does. Dave Weir has no secrets, and his popularity is increasing every day.’”

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

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I rise in response to the suggestion of the hon. member for Warwick that I should give some explanation and justification of the railway administration. The hon. member complained that, in moving this vote, I gave

scanty information, and I said by way of interjection that I usually spoke fully in reply. I have no objection to discussing the railway policy, and I take this opportunity of doing so by way of reply to some of the main points submitted by members of the Committee during the debate on Wednesday.

I fully realise the importance of the Railway Estimates both to Parliament and to the country, but the speeches of hon. members opposite remind me of the title of that beautiful poem by Robert Bracken, "Not Understood." Hon. members on the other side do not understand Government policy or the true relationship between the railways and State development—they do not, to my mind, appreciate the true relationship of railway economics and State economics. There they differ from hon. members on this side, and there is therefore a conflict of ideas and opinions. I do not believe in capital punishment, but there should be some penalty for the constant and tedious repetition of arguments by hon. members opposite, which have been answered effectively time and again by the Commissioner and by the Minister. I admit that some speeches delivered on the other side of the Chamber were very interesting, but others might have come from the tomb of Tutankhamen. They remind me of what the present Assistant Home Secretary said when he was speaking here some years ago in reply to an hon. member opposite—

"Mr. Speaker, the speech of the hon. member opposite is like a boomerang—it will come back and blow him up."

(Laughter.) The speeches of hon. members opposite on this occasion may not come back and blow them up—(renewed laughter)—but they will certainly rebound and destroy them in some other way. There was a mass of mutual contradiction in the speeches of hon. members opposite, and I wish to refer to some of the instances of it. Before doing so, however, let me say that, whilst I do not believe in undue optimism, I do not, on the other hand, hold with intense pessimism, and there seems to be more than a tinge of pessimism running through the contributions of hon. members opposite to this debate.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Who is responsible for it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think that hon. members opposite ought to try to cultivate a hopeful outlook, in spite of the fact that they have been in the cold shades of opposition for so long. I think that the railway administration of the State should not be condemned unduly because of the pessimistic outlook of hon. members, when condemnation is not justified by facts and figures and by official reports.

The hon. member for Murilla said that we should give more concessions to the cattle industry and reduce railway freights generally. The hon. member for Oxley rose almost immediately afterwards and said, "Away with these concessions! Cut out the reduced rates which have been given by the Government! Change the policy entirely." The hon. member for Enoggera said it was undesirable to commence additional railway construction. The hon. member for Nanango rose and demanded new railway construction. Those are two instances of mutual contradiction.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Nanango advocated the linking up of existing lines.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Railway construction is all right when based on a sound policy, and I am going to point out that the policy of this Government is sound, and at the same time that the arguments of hon. members opposite were mutually contradictory and destructive. I would like hon. members opposite to agree amongst themselves as to what they think is a sound policy to commend to the Government. It is no use asking me nor any other member of the Government to consider seriously the mutually contradictory arguments of hon. members opposite.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They would soon recommend most drastic things that could be well carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Warwick stated that political influence was on the increase in the Railway Department, but the hon. member for Oxley rose immediately afterwards and said that political influence was waning in the Railway Department. I could go further showing the contradictory nature of the arguments of hon. members opposite, and showing how difficult it is to follow their contortions in logic.

I wish to say a few words with regard to the nature of the criticism and the value of the criticism that has been advanced, and I want to remind some hon. members opposite how very reckless their criticism has been. The hon. member for Murilla some time ago denounced the administration of the Irrigation Commissioner in scathing terms, and some time afterwards when a party visited the Dawson irrigation area the "Daily Mail" came out with an article headed, "Mr. Morgan Retracts." Instead of the hon. member finding his criticism justified he had to retract what he had said in Parliament. It shows how very careful hon. members have to be in accepting the criticism of the hon. member for Murilla on railway administration or any other administration.

Mr. KERR: The Minister holds different views now from those that he held in 1914.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am pointing out that the value of the criticism of the Railway Department by the hon. member for Murilla is just as weak as his criticism of the Irrigation Commissioner. The hon. gentleman criticised the Government and the Irrigation Department because of something he had heard; but, when he got the facts, he found he had made a mistake.

Then, some time ago the hon. member for Enoggera made a great discovery in connection with health administration. He read out a list of 253 articles which he stated had been found in Brisbane's milk supply.

Mr. KERR: I read out a list from the report of the Commissioner of Public Health.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He pointed out that the Government had been in power for nine years, and it was a scandal for the Government to allow such conditions to continue, but the hon. gentleman made a mistake. He discovered a mare's nest. Those things were not found in Brisbane's milk supply, the 253 articles were articles that had been examined by the Government Analyst, Christopher Columbus

*Hon. J. Lacombe.]*

discovered America, Dr. Harvey discovered the circulation of blood; but it remained for the hon. member for Enoggera to discover cyanide in our milk supply. (Laughter.) That instance, too, indicates how careful we have to be about the acceptance of the arguments of hon. members opposite in relation to the Railway Department. I have facts and figures to prove conclusively that the arguments urged by hon. members opposite are not supported by documentary evidence at all.

I want now to deal with the question of expenditure. Hon. members opposite—particularly the hon. member for Warwick—had a good deal to say about what they termed the unnecessary and unwarranted increase in expenditure. The expanding service of the Railway Department requires an increasing expenditure, but the Railway Department and the Government are quite in accord with hon. members opposite that anything in the nature of extravagance should be prevented. We all subscribe to that argument; but I would point out to hon. members that for the first time in twenty years there was a decrease in railway expenditure in 1921-22. In that year there was a decrease in expenditure of £238,000 as compared with the previous year, and during the following year there was a further decrease of £96,000 as compared with 1921-22. Hon. members must realise that there must have been very careful attention devoted to the question of expenditure to produce that result. When hon. members opposite speak of extravagance and increasing expenditure they are really skating on very thin ice.

I will read an extract from the Auditor-General's report for 1913. I am making comparisons because comparison is the life blood and the oxygen of argument. It is only by comparison that we can test the arguments of hon. members opposite. I find this from the report of the Auditor-General for 1913—

“From the above table it will be seen that during the past seven years, whilst earnings have increased by 116 per cent., the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue has increased 149 per cent.”

That is the record of anti-Labour Government in regard to the consolidated revenue expenditure of the State, and that includes railway expenditure. We find, according to the Auditor-General's report, that the general expenditure of the State in the seven years prior to 1913 increased by 149 per cent. Hon. members opposite helped to increase that expenditure. What is the use of them coming here to-day and accusing the Government of increasing the expenditure when they increased it in a degree that the present Government has never attempted?

I quote, too, the increase in expenditure under an anti-Labour Government for a few years prior to the present Government assuming office. The figures are—

Year.	Increase.
1907-08 ... ..	15.46
1908-09 ... ..	16.45
1909-10 ... ..	15.25
1910-11 ... ..	10.52
1911-12 ... ..	22.16
1912-13 ... ..	12.19
1913-14 ... ..	10.24

All those increases are over the railway expenditure of the previous year. The increase

[Hon. J. Larcombe.

of 22.16 per cent in 1911-12 over the previous year's expenditure is a percentage increase which the present Government has never been responsible for in railway administration. Where is the force and cogency of the argument of hon. members opposite in the light of those figures?

Mr. MOORE: The expenditure was bringing in an adequate return at that time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can show by statistics that the adequate return which the Committee desires is being obtained under the present railway administration.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can show that by statistics and facts, and by comparisons.

Mr. MOORE: Can you show it by balances and credit balances?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can show it by the working expenses per train mile, and that is a good test.

Mr. KERR: Give us the deficits—that is the whole thing in a nutshell.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will tell the hon. member about the deficits later. I want to deal with one thing at a time. I have shown the absurdity of some of the arguments of hon. members opposite.

Mr. MOORE: No, you have not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let me proceed a step further and take the comparison over a period of eighteen years—nine years' administration under Labour Government, and nine years' administration under anti-Labour Government in regard to the railway expenditure of the State. I find that the results are—

	Per cent.
Increase in 1923-24 over 1915-16 ...	81.32
Increase in 1914-15 over 1906-07 ...	163.16

That shows an increase of more than 100 per cent. under a Tory Administration as compared with a similar period under Labour Administration.

Mr. VOWLES: How was it expended—in rolling-stock?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will not be side-tracked in my speech.

Mr. KERR: We had no old engines running then.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I have asked hon. members to refrain from interrupting. I now caution them definitely against such a course.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I want to emphasise the fact that during the last nine years of administration of the anti-Labour Government the expenditure increased by 163 per cent., while in the nine years' administration of the present Labour Government there was an increase of only 81 per cent., yet hon. members opposite speak of increasing expenditure! It would not be proper for me to quote these figures unless they could be thoroughly verified. They are absolutely correct. They are not taken from fairy tales or Arabian Nights stories, but they are taken from evidence which cannot be disproved. It is pure effrontery and audacity for hon. members opposite to speak of extravagance in railway administration when we have that evidence before us showing an increase in the

expenditure under an anti-Labour Government of 163 per cent. as against 81 per cent. by a Labour Government. These are the advocates of economy and reduced expenditure!

Mr. KERR: If we had had an increase of 500 per cent. we would have got a better return than is being obtained now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In view of these figures, what have hon. members opposite to say in reply? Will they apologise?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members opposite remind me of a character in Shakespeare—they would rather teach twenty than be of the twenty and take each other's advice.

[10.30 a.m.]

Mr. CORSER: Why did you not give us the Commissioner's report? Then we could have answered you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The report was received from the Government Printer last night and was placed on the table of the House to-day.

Proceeding further in relation to the question of expenditure, I want to show what type of economists hon. members opposite were when they were in power. In 1914 there were 500 miles of railways under construction, the approximate cost of which was £2,500,000. Notwithstanding that, on the eve of an election the party opposite passed another 500 miles of railway at an approximate cost of another £2,500,000.

Mr. VOWLES: We did not start it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was one of the most scandalous pieces of political jobbery ever known in the history of the Queensland Parliament. They did not start those railways! No; hon. members opposite left it to this Government to face the responsibility. They misled the settlers and the people of Queensland, and passed this enormous mileage of railway that I have mentioned, thus compelling the capitalisation of the railways to be increased as a result of their policy. The Tory Government had no intention of carrying out that construction. Five hundred miles under construction at a cost of £2,500,000, yet the Tory Government, in their last session in 1914 committed the State to the expenditure of another £2,500,000 for another 500 miles of railway! These are the members who boast of economy!

Mr. VOWLES: You supported it, and so did the Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This information shows how absurd these lily-white advocates of economy are. They talk economy, and practise extravagance! They talk efficiency, and are responsible for the most wasteful methods that the State has ever known! It is only by the consideration of hon. members on this side of the Chamber that the policy of the Tory Government is not kept more before the public. Instead of prolonging the debate, we on this side of the Chamber have frequently allowed the arguments of hon. members opposite to go unchallenged. I think it is an unwise policy to continue to allow to go unchallenged the

superficial statements of hon. members opposite.

The present Labour Government are greatly handicapped as a result of the fifty years' legacy of the Tory policy of passing through railways as lightly as they would smoke a cigar, and with the intention of going no further with them. (Opposition laughter.) That is the policy we want to expose. In the last few years hon. members opposite have come to me asking for railways that would cost £10,000,000 to build. That is the party opposed to over-capitalisation and in favour of economy! (Opposition interjections.) Hon. members opposite are self-condemned and self-refuted on the question of expenditure, and it is not necessary to pursue that subject much further.

The present Government are not going in for over-construction. Our policy is concentration upon the existing lines and upon existing needs—upon the Longreach-Winton, Tara-Surat, and the North Coast line and the Burnett scheme. This year we have no additional new railway proposal other than the South Brisbane-Kyogle-Grafton proposition, which is a national necessity, and which is supported, with exceptions, by hon. members opposite.

Mr. CLAYTON: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I shall give the loan expenditure in the various States for the year 1922-23, the figures being taken from the "Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia." During that year most of the States, with the exception of Queensland, were under anti-Labour administration—

EXPENDITURE FROM LOAN FUND PER HEAD OF POPULATION, 1922-23.

	£	s.	d.
New South Wales	...	4	10 2
Victoria	...	5	10 3
Queensland	...	4	13 11
South Australia	...	6	15 7
Western Australia	...	9	17 4
Tasmania	...	5	5 5

That shows the expenditure per head of population to be lower in Queensland than in any other State with one exception. Where Tory Governments were in power we find the loan expenditure to be higher than that in the State of Queensland, where we have a Labour Government.

There is no hope for economy or efficiency from hon. members opposite. The only way we can ascertain whether the present Government are extravagant is by a comparison of their expenditure with that of anti-Labour Governments in Queensland in the past, and with anti-Labour Governments in other parts of the Commonwealth. I regard these figures as a kind of intellectual shorthand, as, no matter what argument I used, I could not improve upon the powerful and convincing nature of that comparison which I have given to the Committee.

Mr. KERR: It is a good thing to spend money if you are getting a return from it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is quite true. I am pointing out that, by comparison with anti-Labour Governments in Queensland in the past, and by comparison with anti-Labour Administrations in the other States, the present Government are not extravagant in their railway administration.

*Hon. J. Larcombe.]*

That is the reply I am giving to the hon. member for Warwick.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Tell us about your Ministerial expenses.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The interjection of the hon. member reminds me of a couplet from Shakespeare—

“Oh what can man within him hide  
Tho' angel on the outward side?”

The hon. member is always talking about ministerial expenses. We know quite well that an hon. member opposite spent several thousands of pounds on a trip to North Queensland when he was a Minister. When the purchasing power of money was much greater than it is to-day, we had this enormous expenditure by one hon. member opposite who was a Minister of the Crown before the present Government came into power. I do not wish, however, to pursue that subject any further.

I desire now to deal with the question of management. Hon. members opposite have spoken a good deal about mismanagement. We can only get a true appreciation of the position by comparison, as in the case of expenditure. I want to introduce my subject by referring to the records of hon. members opposite when they were in power.

It is interesting to go through the Auditor-General's reports of previous years and find the mismanagement and extravagance that hon. members opposite were responsible for. I intend to give a few quotations from the history of Tory Governments, but before doing so I want to say that hon. members opposite are evidently trying to perform the cuttle-fish trick. We know that when the cuttle-fish is attacked it exudes a blackish fluid and escapes, and if hon. members opposite think that by attacking the present railway administration, and talking extravagance and mismanagement, they are going to cover up their own sins of commission and omission, they are making a mistake. I am going to place them on record in “Hansard,” so that the electors may see just what was the record of hon. members opposite who are supposed to stand for efficiency, sound management, and economy.

Will members of the Opposition tell the Committee a little of the criticisms that were contained in the Auditor-General's report in 1913 in regard to railway administration? There was a scathing indictment of railway administration in that report. Hon. members opposite might tell a little about the history of the McKeen car experiment, which was so costly to the State. They might give the Committee the Renard road train history and the loss to the State thereon. They might tell the Committee a little about the tank engine incident that cost the State a sum of £50,000 to adjust in strengthening lines, bridges, etc. They might tell the Committee a little about the Urangan job which cost the State £50,000.

On several Opposition members interjecting—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! No hon. member can say that interruptions are conducive to good debate. Every hon. member knows that, when an hon. member is endeavouring to make a point, an interruption entirely puts him off. As every hon. member has heard me say that I will not

permit any further interruptions, it is only fair for me to say that I will give no further notice. I will name the next hon. member who is responsible for interrupting.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I contend that that record of anti-Labour administration in Queensland showed that hon. members opposite are not competent or fitted to criticise the present railway administration in regard to management and extravagance. I want to say further that I do not see any sparks of genius flashing from the eyes of hon. members opposite. They make just as many mistakes as hon. members on this side of the Chamber. There are no supermen on the other side who can teach the present Commissioner or the present Ministers how to run the railway service of the State better. Wherever hon. members opposite have had the opportunity, they have mismanaged and muddled; yet they talk about efficiency and sound management. Let me say in all seriousness that the Railway Department is soundly managed.

Mr. EDWARDS: You know that is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The facts and figures which I am going to quote bear out my statement. The mere assertion of the position by myself proves nothing, but I am going to support my remarks by the evidence which I have at my disposal.

It is hardly necessary to mention the enormous area of Queensland, the record mileage we have as compared with other States, and our comparatively small population. Any fairminded member of the Committee must admit that those factors are very important in considering railway administration. Our problems are more difficult than those of any other State in Australia. Notwithstanding that the area of Western Australia is greater, I shall be able to show that the difficulties of our problems are greater than they are in that State. Let me give a quotation from the Commissioner's report—

“A further demonstration of Queensland's disadvantageous position by virtue of long-distance traffic is a comparison showing the percentage of line miles beyond a radius of 500 miles from the metropolis in the various States to the total line mile connection with the capitals. The figures are—

	Miles.	Percentage of Total Connected Line Miles.
Queensland . . . . .	2,215	41.8
New South Wales . . . . .	140	2.6
Victoria . . . . .	Nil	Nil
South Australia . . . . .	Nil	Nil
Western Australia . . . . .	275	7.5

We find there ample evidence of the difficulty of the Queensland railway administration problem; 41.8 per cent. of our line miles is beyond a radius of 500 miles from the metropolis, and in no other State does that position exist. That is a fact which could be kept in mind when we are considering railway problems, to get a sound and correct appreciation of railway administration—the enormous handicap that is thrust upon the Government in administering the railway system, in which 41.8 per cent. of line

[Hon. J. Lacombe.



miles are beyond a radius of 500 miles from the metropolis.

Again, I want to point out that the increase in fares and freights in Queensland since 1914-15 has not been as great as in other States. I want to emphasise that—I have mentioned it previously. The money which would have been taken out of the pockets of the people by increased fares and freights has remained in their pockets to the extent of millions of pounds. That is an aspect of railway administration which must be borne in mind.

I quote now from an article in the "Daily Telegraph" of October, 1923—

"The position disclosed by the present report offers signs of amendment. The expenditure per train mile was 16d. less than in the previous year, and the percentage of expenses to earnings was the lowest for some years. The position would have been better still but for concessions granted in the way of rebates. There is evidence that, so far as internal management goes, reasonable efforts are being made to run the railways more economically. But it is obvious that something more drastic is needed to bring the revenue and expenditure more nearly into line. The readiest way, of course, is to increase the fares and freights, which is the step private ownership would have taken."

That criticism is in marked contrast to some of the irresponsible criticisms which have fallen from hon. members opposite, which is falsified by the statement of the "Daily Telegraph" that there is evidence, so far as the internal management of the railways goes, that—

"Reasonable efforts are being made to run them more economically."

Quite a different appreciation of the difficulties with which railway administration is confronted in this State. Those difficulties are shown by the fact that 70 per cent. of our deficiency is on country lines. That fact confirms what the Premier and other hon. members on this side have frequently suggested—that the railway deficiency is a result of assisting country development.

Now I come to an important test—

#### WORKING EXPENSES PER TRAIN MILE.

	s.	d.
Queensland ... ..	8	3½
New South Wales ... ..	9	2½
Victoria ... ..	10	5.85
South Australia ... ..	9	5
Western Australia ... ..	9	6

That is a remarkable table. It contains no element of romance—nothing to charm the senses—but it is powerful proof of good management; it is invaluable to seekers after truth and those who want to ascertain how the railways of Queensland stand in comparison with other railways.

The "Melbourne Age" some time ago said that the working expenses per train mile were the true test, and I think it is generally recognised that it is so. So we find that, according to the best and soundest test which we can apply, the Queensland railways are the most efficient in Australia, because the working expenses per train mile are lower than in any other State. I cannot

resist emphasising that point, because in it there seems to be an absolute reply to the criticism of hon. members opposite.

Hon. members opposite have spoken of the increase in the number of Government railway employees, and the hon. member for Oxley talked about over-staffing, and said that two men were doing one man's work. Let us make a comparison—

#### EMPLOYEES PER MILE OF LINE.

1914-15 ... ..	3.09
1923-24 ... ..	2.80

Fewer employees to-day per mile of railway than in 1914-15! There is no indication there of bad management or administration. That is a splendid little table, and it reflects credit on the Government and on the Commissioner and his employees. Let us see how the total number of employees has increased. Between 1911-12 and 1914-15 the increase in the number of employees in the Railway Department was 2,036. In 1914-15 the total number of employees was 14,936, and in 1922-23 the number had increased to 16,940, or an increase during the whole period of this Government's administration of 2,004, as against 2,036 in the last three years under a Tory Government. Where are the two men doing one man's work? The suggestion is absolutely falsified by the facts and figures and other information available.

Let us apply another test—

#### REVENUE PER EMPLOYEE.

	£
1914-15 ... ..	257
1922-23 ... ..	321
1923-24 ... ..	336

There is another splendid table showing that the employees are giving good returns, and that the revenue per employee is greater now than in 1914-15.

Let us see how the net revenue has increased in the last three years—

#### NET REVENUE INCREASE.

	£
1921-22 ... ..	344,000
1922-23 ... ..	706,000
1923-24 ... ..	722,000

This table, too, indicates improvement in the railway position, notwithstanding the deficit. I submit a further table—

#### WORKING EXPENSES PER TRAIN MILE.

	s.	d.
1921-22 ... ..	9	11½
1922-23 ... ..	8	7½
1923-24 ... ..	8	6½

That is additional evidence of careful and economical management. Then take

#### PERCENTAGE OF WORKING EXPENSES TO EARNINGS.

1921-22 ... ..	93.32
1922-23 ... ..	86.97
1923-24 ... ..	87.34

There is a slight increase in 1923-24 over 1922-23, but a substantial reduction as compared with 1921-22. The following figures show the

#### NET EARNINGS PER TRAIN MILE.

	s.	d.
1921-22 ... ..	0	8½
1922-23 ... ..	1	3½
1923-24 ... ..	1	3

Hon. J. Larcombe.]

I now submit engine mileage statistics—

AVERAGE DAILY ENGINE MILEAGE IN THE VARIOUS STATES OF AUSTRALIA AND IN AMERICA.	
New South Wales ... ..	63.53
Victoria ... ..	56.24
South Australia ... ..	50.73
Western Australia ... ..	43.88
Queensland ... ..	64.02
America ... ..	60.8

In the matter of engine mileage Queensland stands in a better position than any State in the Commonwealth, and even better than the United States of America. I submit that that is evidence of sound management, and an improvement of conditions which again refutes the arguments of hon. members opposite. Those figures show that the Government policy and the railway administration in particular is sound. I think hon. members opposite appreciate the facts that I have set out, but party politics are such that they cannot admit them. Hon. members opposite, like many other members of political parties, are blinded by political prejudice, and they do an injustice to the Railway Department and its officers when they unfairly attack railway administration. They rely upon a policy of misrepresentation, concealment, and exaggeration.

Mr. MOORE: It is not unfair to the officials of the Railway Department to attack the Government policy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not to attack, but to attack falsely. That is the point. Hon. members opposite have a right to attack. I am not complaining about that so long as they allow me the right to reply.

Mr. MOORE: We are not stopping you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not stopping hon. members opposite from criticising. I am replying to their criticism. The general tone of the debate has been commendable so far as courtesy and consideration are concerned, but what I object to are the unsound arguments by hon. members opposite. They are at liberty to put those arguments forward, but I am at liberty to reply to them, and say that they are not sound or correct. Railway administration is at least as good as it was before the Labour party came into power. If the railway administration were unsatisfactory, how could we show the lowest working cost per train mile in Australia, and a lesser number of employees per train mile as compared with 1914, and show the splendid return per employee that I have quoted? The case for the Government and the Railway Department is incontestible and unassailable, and, if hon. members opposite were not in the vortex of a party political system, they would readily admit that.

I desire to refer to the economies that have been effected in the Railway Department during the past few years as a result of careful management. If hon. members will permit me, I shall have the information placed in "Hansard." Information has been compiled by the Commissioner dealing with coal consumption, oil consumption, train loads, average daily mileage of locomotives, wagon loads, and average daily mileage of goods wagons. I ask leave of the Committee to have the information placed in "Hansard."

Mr. CORSER: A little propaganda you should call it.

[Hon. J. Larcombe.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already ruled in Committee that it is not advisable to allow any hon. member to have placed in "Hansard" material that is not read, for the reason that hon. members would be able to place in "Hansard" material that they would not otherwise have an opportunity of placing in "Hansard" because of the time limit of speeches provided under the Standing Orders. I think it would be wise if the hon. gentleman would read what he wishes to have inserted in "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then I will pursue the usual course. I thought I might have economised time by getting the information into "Hansard" by consent.

#### COAL CONSUMPTION.

		Per 100 miles.	
		Cwt.	
1922 ... ..	...	...	57.2
1923 ... ..	...	...	54.2
1924 ... ..	...	...	53.27

#### OIL CONSUMPTION.

		Per 100 miles.	
		Pints.	
1922 ... ..	...	...	10.95
1923 ... ..	...	...	10.59
1924 ... ..	...	...	7.93

Mr. MAXWELL: But you are consuming more money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The following is an extract from the Commissioner's letter to me dated 8th July, 1924:—

"On the other hand, particular attention has been paid to economy in working, particularly in regard to the following matters:—

*Train Loads.*—Taking the flow of traffic towards the coast on the three principal trunk lines, the percentage of actual loads to the capacity of the engines has been increased very considerably during the past three years. On the Cunnamulla-Charleville section the increase is 28 per cent; Charleville-Roma, 24 per cent; Emerald-Rockhampton, 46 per cent; Cloncurry-Richmond, 37 per cent.; while other sections show marked improvement also.

*Average Daily Mileage of Locomotives.*—The figures for Queensland show that the average daily mileage for each engine in stock is greater than is secured by any other State in Australia, and is better than the figure obtained in the United States. Queensland averages 64 miles per engine per day; New South Wales, 63½; Victoria, 57; South Australia, 51; West Australia, 44; the United States, 61.

*Wagon Loads.*—The average wagon load at the principal stations throughout the State has been increased very materially. Taking a four months period, ended April, 1924, with the corresponding term in 1922, the percentage of load to tare of all wagons loaded at Roma Street has risen from 80 per cent. to 90 per cent.; Brunswick Street, from 77 per cent. to 93 per cent.; Warwick, from 51 per cent. to 77 per cent.; Townsville, from 80 per cent. to 96 per cent.; and Cairns, from

69 per cent. to 76 per cent.; while other stations have shown lesser increases.

*Average Daily Mileage of Goods Wagons.*—Taking the first five months of 1924 in the Southern and Central Divisions, compared with the corresponding periods in 1922 (when statistics were first kept), the average mileage per day has improved from 22.5 miles to 25.1 miles. If the department had been only getting 22.5 miles per day out of the wagons this year, approximately 1,000 more wagons, costing roughly £300,000, would have been required to deal with the business."

Those remarks show the economy that has been effected. They are very valuable and forcible, and have a vital bearing on the administration of the Railway Department.

I come now to the deficits that have been so frequently mentioned, and wish to refer to the remarks of hon. members opposite. They have repeated again and again that there has been a deficiency in the administration of the railways under a Labour Government. Well, Mr. Pollock, that is true. Hon. members might just as well have told us that two and two make four, because there was a deficit on the railways long before a Labour Administration came into power. The railway administration did not wait until a Labour Government assumed power to show deficits. As I mentioned by interjection on Wednesday, railway deficits have been the order of the day in Queensland for at least forty years, and they aggregated approximately £10,000,000 under anti-Labour Government. There were only three small surpluses amounting to £160,000 in that period. That shows that hon. members opposite are not regarding the railways in their true aspect and true perspective, and that they do not realise that the railways stand in a similar position to education in relation to the State.

We have yearly an expenditure of £1,500,000 on State education. No one speaks of an educational deficit. Hon. members opposite, and hon. members of the Committee generally applaud the expenditure on education, and ask for further expenditure. I contend that our railway policy is comparable with the Government's policy in relation to State education.

MR. TAYLOR: Would you make the railways free?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have practically free education, but we have not yet got free railways. The policy in regard to both is comparable,

[11 a.m.] inasmuch as the indirect advantage to the community justifies the expenditure and deficiencies. We get no profit from State education, but we get an indirect return by having an educated community and by equipping the young for the battle of life.

With railway expenditure we are promoting land settlement and the development of the country, we are helping the mining industry, and doing many things of that nature which, in an indirect manner, justify the railway deficit.

If the railway policy were based upon the suggestion of the hon. member for Warwick—that is, that railways should pay in the financial and monetary sense—we would cripple industry in this State. The Government

shape the policy in connection with our railways in a similar manner as we do our policy in regard to education. The benefits from both are indirect. If hon. members opposite would realise that point, the deficit would be robbed of a good many of its terrors.

I have pointed out that deficiencies occurred under the policies of the Tory Governments, but hon. members opposite have carefully concealed those deficiencies under anti-Labour control, and have allowed the people to believe that railway deficiencies are peculiar to Labour Administrations. I shall make an interesting comparison—

PERCENTAGE OF DEFICIT TO REVENUE.

1901	...	...	50.55
1911-1902	...	...	38.97
1902-1903	...	...	38.32
1923-1924	...	...	28.54

We therefore find that under Labour Governments the percentage of deficit to revenue is not as great as has been the case under anti-Labour Governments. Therefore, the argument of the railway deficits being an indication of unsound management is not borne out by facts. There were railway deficits in the years 1910, 1911, 1912, and 1913, and other years. In thirty years of anti-Labour Government they realised deficiencies in railway administration to the aggregate amount of £10,000,000. So the comparison and the appreciation of those facts show that the present deficiency has not the terrifying and unsatisfactory aspect that hon. members opposite would endeavour to lead the Committee to believe. The hon. member for Inoggera, when speaking, challenged the figures that I quoted. I shall not quote them again, but I have them here to prove that what I said by way of interjection was correct—that in a period of thirty years of anti-Labour administration there were only three surpluses, and small ones at that.

In other branches of State activity we have striking indications of indirect advantages not reflected in balance-sheets. £180,000 is invested in the State coalmines, and we saved last year in the Railway Department, as a result of those State coalmines, a sum equivalent to 24 per cent. of the capital invested in the State coalmines. Those mines nominally show a loss, but we have the fact that the saving effected by another State department is equivalent to 24 per cent. profit. That is strong evidence of the indirect advantage of the State policy in relation to State coalmines and the Railway Department.

In the Brisbane "Courier" of 3rd October, 1923, that paper, when reviewing the Auditor-General's report, states, inter alia—

"One might offer a passable excuse for the accumulated deficits of nearly £10,000,000 on the railways. At least the railways are helping to maintain civilisation in the remote districts."

That is quite true.

I want to emphasise the fact that the railways are helping to maintain civilisation in the remote districts of Queensland. The "Daily Telegraph" of 1922 said—

"There is a sense in which the present Minister for Railways is right: the railway is a public benefit, and not all its prime cost should be recouped directly by revenue."

Hon. J. Lacombe.]

In both these articles there was a criticism of the railway administration and of the Government's policy, but the writers of both the articles admitted that there was something to be said in favour of the contention that the railways should not be expected to pay, and that the indirect advantages very frequently justified the deficit, or at least a portion of the deficit.

The "Producers' Review" of May, 1923, had this to say—

"Examine for a moment the futility of the contention that Government is a business from the point of view of showing profit in a balance-sheet."

The "Producers' Review" did not take up the attitude that we should regard railways in the same light that we would regard a private business; but acknowledged that the advantages of the State services do not appear in balance-sheets.

There was a further recognition of this principle, and it was recognized by the Opposition, through the hon. member for Windsor. I noticed in the "Daily Mail," which reported the visit of the Secretary for Public Lands and other parliamentarians to the Dawson Valley, that the hon. member for Windsor stated that he agreed with the suggestion of the Secretary for Public Lands that the cost of the head scheme of irrigation in the Dawson Valley should be spread over the whole of the State, and that the settlers in that area should not be asked to bear the whole of the cost.

Mr. MOORE: He only expressed his own view.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think it is an important view, too, coming from the hon. member for Windsor, who is one of the fairest members of this Committee. We know that when he speaks he says what is in his own heart, and does not speak for the purpose of political strategy. I place a good deal of value on that opinion.

I refer now to the remarks of the hon. member for Warwick. He said that the Secretary for Railways and Government followers generally claim that the railways are assisting land settlement, wealth production, and the activities of the State. The hon. member for Warwick said that is absolutely absurd—that there is no such result reflected in the statistics. I want to say that there is evidence that the railway policy has led to increased wealth production and to increased activity. I want to mention, too, that, although the tonnage carried over the railways has not increased in the way that the Government and railway administration would have liked, the fact must be borne in mind that the mining industry has been practically paralysed as a result of post-war influences. That is a factor over which the Queensland Government have no control.

The partial paralysis of the mining industry has led to an enormous reduction in the tonnage the railways had to carry in regard to minerals and as compared with what the department would have carried if there had been ordinary prosperity in the industry. Then, again, the sudden drop in the price of cattle has led to a great deal less activity in the cattle industry. So have the dry conditions affected the cattle industry. These two factors have also materially affected the tonnage which is being carried over our railways.

[Hon. J. Lacombe.

Let me give hon. members of the Committee the wealth production of the State—

"During nine years of anti-Labour Administration the wealth production of Queensland amounted to £264,000,000.

"During nine years of Labour Administration the wealth production of Queensland amounted to £470,000,000,"

an increase of £206,000,000 under a Labour Government. That is an effective reply to the hon. member for Warwick, and shows how our railway policy has stimulated production.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is value—not production.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is value. The inflation in prices has been partly counterbalanced by the depression in the mining industry, by the depression in the cattle industry, and in other industries as a result of war and drought. Even allowing for the inflation of prices, there is an enormous increase in wealth production under a Labour Government. An increase of £206,000,000 for nine years under Labour Government as compared with a similar period under the Liberal Government. I say that the Government have been helping in the Railway Department and other departments to bring about that increase of wealth production. Those figures are given in reply to the hon. member for Warwick, who contended that there had not been any appreciable improvement in the production of the State as the result of the present railway policy.

Again, the hon. member for Warwick spoke of the increase in the fares and freights and the increase of working expenses. It should be apparent to every hon. member that to compare the figures for 1914-1915 for the purpose of building up a case against the Government is manifestly unfair and unsound. All over the world there has been an appreciable increase in cost of material and working expenses, and Queensland could not escape that increase. Let me mention a few of the increases in cost of material as compared with 1914-1915—

Cement	...	...	...	...	53.84
Rails	...	...	...	...	73.33
Steel plates	...	...	...	...	79.26
Flat spring steel	...	...	...	...	161.53
Coal	...	...	...	...	87.15
Mild steel bar	...	...	...	...	59.09

Those increases are as compared with 1914-1915, but the increases in the interval between 1914-1915 have been greater. There has been a reduction lately, but we have had to bear greater increases in the prices of material during the last nine years. The increase in wages was absolutely justified in order to secure a contented service and to get the best results out of the employees. The previous Government starved the railway service, and that led to an enormous burden being placed on the Labour Government's shoulders for the first few years of their control.

Mr. KELSO: You talk about increases in wages. That was the result of the war.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am not talking about causes; I am talking about the effects on railway administration. With that increase in working expenses it cannot be said that there has been the same increase in fares and freights. If a private firm had had to meet increased charges in material and wages as the Railway Department had to do, he would have

increased fares and freights in order to cover the increased cost. The hon. member for Warwick and other hon. members who are in business have done that, but the Railway Department did not do it, and the result is represented in the deficiency of the Railway Department. Hon. members opposite would, by a simple rule of arithmetic, have added two and two together to make four, and we could have done the same, but our present policy is better.

Mr. MAXWELL: You add two and two together and make five—not four.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let us consider the concessions which have been given to industry by the Railway Department. Do hon. members opposite realise the substantial concessions which have been given to industry in this State in the past few years by the Railway Department? If they do, do they challenge the Government, or do they admit that the Railway Department has been pursuing a sound policy? If they admit that that policy is sound, they must admit the force of my contention that these concessions have materially affected the railway position. Last year the Railway Department granted concessions to the sheep, cattle, and other industries amounting to £243,000; in 1922-1923 to £223,000; and there were substantial concessions given in 1921-1922. The total amount is approximately £500,000. Concessions amounting approximately to £500,000 in three years have been given by the Railway Department to the various industries in the State, notwithstanding that our increases in fares and freights have not been as great as the increases in working expenses.

Then, again, the repeal of the guarantee provision of the Railway Act has amounted to a loss in revenue which we would have otherwise received to the extent of £3,000,000. That was a class tax imposed by hon. members opposite. The present Government repealed that tax, and there is a loss of £3,000,000 to the Railway Department, but the money is saved to the producers and to the State. I want to remind the Committee and the people of the State of that fact.

Further, the Railway Department is charged with a substantial increase in the rate of interest since 1915.

We are building for the future. I want to emphasise that fact. Our policy is not only for the immediate present but for half a century or a century ahead. Much of the work we are doing on the North Coast Line and elsewhere, and which is perhaps resulting in apparent over-capitalisation immediately, will be found to be of the greatest use to the State in future. All these schemes which the Government are developing for future generations are, nevertheless, somewhat of a tax on our railway administration and finance at the present time. Hon. members opposite should bear in mind that important fact—that we are building for the future as well as for the present.

Mr. MORGAN: Do you not think you are imposing too great a burden on the people to-day?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. It is not possible for any Government to build railways only for the immediate present. Incidentally to their immediate policy

they must look ahead. A private firm or individual may look five years or ten years ahead, but a Government must look half a century or a century ahead in mapping out its policy. I am sure that hon. members of the Committee realise that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, that is the steel works company, has had the best brains of the country at its disposal, yet for years it had no return, although it had invested millions of pounds. It had to wait, just as the Commonwealth Bank had to wait. The Commonwealth Bank to-day is showing handsome profits, but it showed a loss at first. So, if we take a short-range view of the railway position we may be alarmed; but, if we take a long-range view and get a proper perspective of State economics, the railway administration will have upon us no such terrifying effect as hon. members opposite profess to feel.

Hon. members opposite know quite well that in the Commonwealth statistics we can find records to show that millions of pounds are lost yearly by private enterprise and industry, so that not only State enterprises are losing money and showing deficiencies. The Federal trading concerns are disclosing losses of millions of pounds. Take the Federal shipping line, the War Service Homes Department, and other Federal activities.

Mr. MAXWELL: We have taken every opportunity to expose that position.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am trying to show that there are deficiencies outside the Railway Department, and that other Governments and private concerns make losses. But I am not offering that as a justification for the railway deficiency. What I am offering as a justification are the various other aspects of State policy which I have outlined.

The hon. member for Oxley outlined a list of suggestions which he said would bring about an improved railway position. With all due respect to the hon. member, I do not think they would have that effect. The hon. member, in the first place, urged that we should appoint a Commission to inquire into railway administration. It is absolutely unnecessary. After careful consideration for years and consultation with the best brains in the Railway Department, I am satisfied that the only way to show a surplus is to increase fares and freights. There is a simple line of policy which we could carry out to-morrow, but it is a question whether the end would justify the means. Are we going to alter the distribution of our taxation? Are we going to relieve the land monopolists, the sheep kings, or the money lords of this State, of taxation by further increasing our fares and freights on the people generally?

That is what is involved. It is a matter of State economy and political economy. Are we going to readjust the burden of taxation? Are we going to wipe out the deficiency in the Railway Department by increasing fares and freights, or are we going to ask the wealthy industries of Queensland to pay a reasonable proportion of the subsidy necessary to help to build up and develop this great young State?

Mr. VOWLES: The Government are hitting the little man just the same.

*Hon. J. Larcombe.*

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think so. I have figures here dealing with the fares and freights, and I do not think we are unduly hitting any producer in Queensland. The policy has been carefully devised and considered, and we have changed it wherever possible to assist the small producer.

Owing to the financial position with which we are faced it is impossible fundamentally to change the basis of policy laid down by hon. members opposite when they were in power. There are many advantages that we would like to see materialised in Government policy, railway policy, and in legislation, but, owing to the immediate financial position, the Government are not able to effect those changes. As a result of the war, and as a result of other embarrassing circumstances, the financial position of all Governments of the world has been seriously imperilled. We have the present exchange problem, which is not a difficulty created by Labour administration, but it is seriously affecting the Railway Department and seriously affecting the Government, just as it is affecting private industry and trade. For a period of over four years there were no increases in fares and freights under the Labour Government in Queensland.

I now go further and support a statement that I made, but which I did not support previously, to the effect that the percentage increase in fares and freights in Queensland during the last nine years has been lower than any other State. These are the figures showing—

APPROXIMATE INCREASES IN PASSENGER  
FARES.

	Per cent.
Queensland ...	25.7
New South Wales ...	66
Victoria ...	48
South Australia ...	Various increases.
Western Australia	30

On those figures the increase in fares and freights in Queensland has been less than in other States in the Commonwealth since 1914. That is a consideration that should be borne in mind by hon. members.

Strangely enough, hon. members opposite when criticising the railway charges have said nothing about shipping charges. What about the increase in shipping fares and freights? Substantial increases have taken place in shipping charges for more reasons than one. One reason, because of increased working expenses, and another reason because the shipping companies are asking for unreasonable profits.

There have been increases in other directions apart from the shipping charges. For instance, the telephonic charges since 1914 have increased by 25 per cent. for some calls, and 150 per cent. for other calls. Telegraphic charges have been increased by 33 per cent., and the postage rates have been increased by 50 per cent. All those increases have taken place since 1914.

Let me now give a comparison of the first-class fares for 300 miles in Queensland, as compared with other States, to show the remarkable advantages to the people of Queensland over the people in other States.

[Hon. J. Larcombe.

where anti-Labour Governments are in power—

FIRST CLASS FARES FOR 300 MILES

	s.	d.
Queensland ...	49	1
New South Wales ...	59	8
Victoria ...	52	5
South Australia ...	58	6
Western Australia ...	50	0

Second class fares show a similar advantage in favour of Queensland. They are as follows:—

SECOND CLASS FARES FOR 300 MILES.

	s.	d.
Queensland ...	30	11
New South Wales ...	39	9
Victoria ...	35	2
South Australia ...	39	3
Western Australia ...	31	3

Notwithstanding the enormous concentration of population in Victoria, the small area, and the comparatively small cost of working, the long distance fares are enormously greater than those in Queensland under a Labour Government. Frequently we have through the Tory press a comparison of the taxation in Queensland with Victoria.

What about the increase of taxation in Victoria through the railway fares, which are higher than the fares obtaining in Queensland? Those figures are never shown on the balance, but they must be taken into consideration.

Mr. KELSO: Are those figures for a distance of 300 miles?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. KELSO: Does the same thing apply in respect of the figures for 100 and 200 miles?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. I have the figures here for 100 miles, and I will give them.

FIRST-CLASS FARES FOR 100 MILES.

	s.	d.
New South Wales ...	21	11
Victoria ...	18	11
Queensland ...	18	3
South Australia ...	19	9
Western Australia ...	16	8

Mr. MOORE: Those figures do not favour Queensland to any great extent. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The longer the distance the greater the advantage in favour of Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the difference between the Queensland and Victorian figures?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It must be remembered that the whole of Victoria could fit into the electorate represented by the Chairman. We find for a distance of 300 miles—the distance for which the people want reasonable fares—a great increase in fares of other States as compared with Queensland.

Mr. KELSO: You might give us the figures for 50 miles.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I want to say a few words on the question of freights. It is not necessary for me to apologise to the Committee for discussing the Estimates of the department to the extent

that I have done, because I realise their importance, and I also realise that I am not speaking particularly to members of the Committee, but to the taxpayers of the State. I therefore want to have the remarks I have made set up in "Hansard" as a reply to the criticism of hon. members opposite, because without any such reply an unfair construction might be placed on the Government policy and railway administration, and an injustice to the Commissioner, his officers, and employees might be perpetrated.

Let me give the increase in merchandise rates since 1914-15 in the various States of the Commonwealth and New Zealand. They are—

#### INCREASE IN MERCHANDISE RATES SINCE 1914-15.

Queensland ... ..	25 per cent.
New South Wales ... ..	52 per cent.
Victoria ... ..	43 per cent.
South Australia ... ..	44 per cent.
Western Australia ... ..	29 per cent.
New Zealand ... ..	40 per cent.

There again it will be seen how fortunate the people of Queensland are in regard to the increase in freights since 1914-15. The increase in Queensland has not been as great as any of the other States of the Commonwealth or New Zealand.

I have comparisons here showing the favourable freights from a Queensland point of view. The hon. member for Murilla and other hon. members opposite quoted comparisons which were unfavourable to Queensland. It is quite true that all comparisons are not favourable to this State. How could they be, when we consider the difference in population, the mileage, and the area?

I now submit a few comparisons which will show that many freights are favourable to Queensland. Take cattle, for instance—

#### RATES FOR CARRIAGE OF CATTLE.

	100 miles per head.	
	s.	d.
Queensland ... ..	8	2.29
New South Wales ... ..	10	11.07
Victoria ... ..	11	1.2
South Australia ... ..	10	9.75
Western Australia ... ..	12	6

Mr. CORSER: Give us the value of the cattle in the different States.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It should cost just as much to rail cattle in Queensland as in any other of the States of the Commonwealth.

Mr. MOORE: You said they were less.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say so now, but they should be more.

Mr. MORGAN: Why should they?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Because of the large area and small population, and because we have the greatest amount of railage in Australia.

Mr. MOORE: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. MORGAN: Did not we have that in 1912?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and we also had deficits, too. The hon. member for Murilla has come into the Committee rather late, and has not had the

benefit of hearing my replies to his statements.

Take the rates on pigs in smaller quantities than truck loads for 100 miles—

	Per head.	
	s.	d.
Queensland ( $\frac{1}{2}$ L van), 30 head—		
55s. 2s. ... ..	1	9.3
New South Wales ( $\frac{1}{4}$ truck, i.e., 15 head)—65s. 11d. ... ..	4	4.8
Victoria ( $\frac{1}{2}$ truck, i.e., 15 pigs)—		
56s. 6d. ... ..	3	9.2
South Australia—per head ... ..	3	0
Western Australia ( $\frac{1}{2}$ truck, i.e., 35 head)—50s. ... ..	1	5.2

Then, again, take potatoes. The comparative figures are—

#### RATE TO PORTS, 100 MILES.

	Per ton..	
	s.	d.
Queensland ... ..	10	9
New South Wales ... ..	11	5
Victoria ... ..	10	10
South Australia ... ..	12	11
Western Australia ... ..	13	9

The Committee must bear in mind that the "to port" rates give the producers the opportunity of sending their produce to market, and that must be borne in mind when dealing with the railway policy of Queensland. The rates for smaller quantities are—

	100 miles, per ton.	
	s.	d.
Queensland ... ..	12	11 to ports
New South Wales ... ..	24	10 up country and to ports
Victoria ... ..	21	4 up country and to ports
South Australia ... ..	21	0 up country and to ports
Western Australia ... ..	22	4 up country and to ports

The comparison of fruit rates in the various States is also interesting. The rates are—

#### TRUCK LOADS TO PORT.

	100 miles, per ton.	
	s.	d.
Queensland ... ..	10	9
New South Wales ... ..	14	2
Victoria ... ..	16	0
South Australia ... ..	17	0
Western Australia ... ..	13	9

#### SMALLER QUANTITIES TO PORT AND ELSEWHERE

	100 miles per ton.	
	s.	d.
Queensland ... ..	17	2
New South Wales ... ..	24	10
Victoria ... ..	16	0
South Australia ... ..	27	3
Western Australia ... ..	22	4

[11.30 a.m.]

#### FARM PRODUCE—100 MILES PER TON.

	s. d.	
Queensland ... ..	10	9
New South Wales ... ..	11	5
Victoria ... ..	10	10
South Australia ... ..	12	11
Western Australia ... ..	13	9

Mr. MORGAN: "To port"?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; not "up country." The produce comes to the market, and the rate is framed

*Hon. J. Larcombe.]*

to enable the producer to bring his produce to the market where he wants to sell.

Mr. VOWLES: You are talking about potatoes. We import them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We grow them, too. We grow farm produce. These rates are of enormous advantage to the farmers.

		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	
Queensland	...	22	11	To ports.
New South Wales	...	35	5	Minimum, 1 ton.
Victoria	...	25	2	Minimum, 1 ton.
South Australia	...	38	0	Minimum, 10 cwt.
Western Australia	...	31	6	Any quantity.
. BUTTER—PER TON, 100 MILES.				
Queensland	...	22	11	To ports, any quantity.
New South Wales	...	24	10	Full truck-loads.
Victoria	...	25	2	Minimum, 1 ton.
South Australia	...	38	0	Any quantity.
Western Australia	...	31	6	Any quantity.

I could quote more comparisons which would reflect favourably upon the Queensland railway policy and administration, and which would show how fortunate our primary producers are, but I think the foregoing is sufficient to establish the point I have been endeavouring to make.

Mr. MORGAN: You admit that freights from 200 miles upwards are higher in Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not admit anything of the sort. The hon. member told the hon. member for Townsville that there was no 500-mile fare on the railways in Victoria.

Mr. MORGAN: And there is not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have figures here which were supplied to me by the Railway Department, and which show that that statement is not correct. It might have been correct when the hon. member for Murilla was in Victoria, but it is not correct to-day.

Let me say a word about the attitude of hon. members opposite on the question of increased fares and freights. One hon. member opposite said that he disapproved of these increases. The hon. member for Windsor approved of the increases and of the policy of the Government. He said, in 1921—

“The Minister, on the previous evening, had referred to his advocacy, some considerable time ago, of an increase in fares and freights. He was exactly in the same position to-day with regard to fares and freights. His opinion was that, before many months had gone by, fares and freights would have to be raised again.”

Mr. G. P. Barnes said, in April, 1917—

“He was afraid that they were shirking to a large extent the real point which ought to receive first consideration from the Committee. . . . He contended that the railways should be made to pay. . . .

[Hon. J. Larcombe.

He believed that the only proper way of achieving the end the Commissioner and Government should have in view was by an all-round increase in fares and freights.”

I think that also. I think the only way of making the railways pay is to increase fares and freights, but I differ from that policy. We had the admission from the hon. member for Warwick that there should be increases in fares and freights to the extent of meeting working costs and interest.

The hon. member for Albert, speaking in April, 1918, said—

“Speaking as a country member, he would have no objection to an increase of freights provided every member of the community was treated in the same way. . . . They wished to see them pay, and, if necessary, the freights would have to be increased in order to enable that end to be achieved.”

That is where I differ. I do not think we should increase fares and freights sufficiently to make the railways pay.

The “Morning Bulletin”—a Rockhampton publication and a supporter of hon. members opposite—said, in September, 1923—

“Why should these producers and these users of the railways have received this ‘subsidy,’ as Mr. Larcombe terms it? Why should there have been this preferential treatment? It is not given in aught else. A user of any other public utility has to pay his share of what that public utility costs, and generally a little over. Because he is a producer he does not get the service for less than the man who does not come within that category.”

I differ from the journalistic supporters of hon. members, too, in regard to that aspect of Government policy. I say that the producer should not be asked to carry the whole of the increase in freights and fares necessary to bring about the balancing of the railway ledger.

Mr. KELSO: What proportion of the loss should be borne by the consolidated revenue?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As much as reasonably can be borne. I want to point out to the hon. member for Kurilpa that 70 per cent. of the railway deficit is on country lines. That is an important fact as showing that the Government have all the time framed their policy with the intention of increasing wealth production and increasing population and developing the country.

The question of rolling-stock has been raised during the debate, and this is an important phase of the railway policy. In our programme for 1924-25 we include an expenditure of £734,741 for rolling-stock. That is a substantial amount and will be spent in purchasing further engines, wagons, and rolling-stock in general. We have several important contracts let, and we ought to augment the rolling-stock of our railway service considerably during the currency of the present year.

Mr. MOORE: It is about time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have been doing a good deal more than was done by previous Governments. Some time ago the leader of the Opposition



gave a table showing the comparison of miles of railway opened in Queensland with the increase in number of the rolling-stock. That is not a sound argument, because the locomotives to-day are of a more powerful type, and it does not require as many to-day to haul a certain tonnage as it did in 1914.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the shortage in trucks?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The shortage in trucks very often is the result of those who have trucks not unloading them expeditiously. Lately we have had to increase our demurrage charges because we were not getting our rolling-stock back as quickly as we might reasonably expect. We have more powerful locomotives to-day and more economy in the use of wagons.

When dealing with the question of rolling-stock the tractive power of the locomotive must be taken into consideration. The tractive power has increased from 7,623,975 lb. weight in 1914-15 to 9,759,890 lb. weight in 1923-24. That is a consideration that must be borne in mind. Let me give the leader of the Opposition what I consider to be a better comparison—the ratio of engines and rolling-stock to train mileage.

PERCENTAGES OF ENGINES, CARS, AND WAGONS TO TRAIN MILEAGE.

Years.	Engine.	Carriage.	Wagons
1914-15.. ..	.005	.003	.108
1923-24.. ..	.006	.007	.129

The loads are bigger now than they were in 1914-1915.

Mr. MOORE: For short distances.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For very long distances, too.

Let me remind hon. members, too, of the expenditure on rolling-stock, wages, materials, and repairs:—

EXPENDITURE ON REPAIRS TO LOCOMOTIVES.

£	
During nine years of Labour Administration .. ..	3,300,000
During nine years of anti-Labour Administration .. ..	1,193,000

EXPENDITURE ON REPAIRS TO CARRIAGES AND WAGONS.

£	
During nine years of Labour Administration .. ..	3,220,000
During nine years of anti-Labour Administration .. ..	1,119,000

So we find that the Government is not neglecting the important matter of rolling-stock.

Hon. members opposite have criticised the condition of our rolling-stock. Certainly this is a phase of our policy that requires very close attention, and as far back as 16th September I discussed the matter with the Commissioner, and asked him to let me have a report indicating the condition of rolling-stock in Queensland. It is of a satisfactory nature.

This is his report—

“Locomotives are in a generally satis-

factory condition, but owing to the extraordinary heavy traffic offering many engines are called upon to do great mileage. However, the provision made in this year's Estimates for additional engines should give relief. Tenders for thirty PB15 engines close on 16th instant.

“Carriages are in good condition, and are better than they have been since the war period. Their general appearance is satisfactory.

“Wagons are in a good state of repair, but owing to the unprecedentedly heavy traffic there is a temporary shortage which has been provided for in current year's Estimates.

“Stations.—A steady programme of painting has been in progress during the last few years, with the result that their appearance is very satisfactory. Their condition is good and ample accommodation is provided for the present.”

I have reviewed the main points of the criticism which has been offered by hon. members opposite. I have not dealt with every point, but I want to assure hon. members that I have made a note of their suggestions and criticisms, and they will have careful consideration. If at a later stage of the debate any hon. member wants a reply to any point which I have omitted, I shall be pleased to give it.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I have listened, as I am sure have other hon. members, with a considerable amount of interest to the speech of the Minister. I would like to say right from the start that in criticising the railway policy of the Government there are no reflections of any kind made on the officers of the Railway Department. I think that hon. members on this side, with hon. members on the other side, realise that in the gentlemen who are in control of our railways we have men equal to those in any other State of the Commonwealth. I think that, if they were allowed more freedom in the railway policy, we should not be in the position that we are unfortunately in to-day.

There was one matter which the Minister did not touch upon in the course of his remarks which I would have liked to hear him say something about. We notice in the press to-day that a contract has been let for thirty locomotives for the Queensland Government. We also notice that the contract for these locomotives has been let outside the State. The Government may have some reasons which we do not know of for letting that contract go out of the State. There is only a difference really of £1,000 per engine between the second tenderer and the successful tenderer, the Clyde Engineering Works. Unless the Government have some information to give the Committee to justify their action in the letting of the contract I stand for Queensland and Queensland employees every time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So do the Government. There is a difference of over 17 per cent.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know exactly what the difference is.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I want the hon. member to bear that in mind. That is the reason for the action of the Government.

*Mr. Taylor.* }

Mr. TAYLOR: Is that their only reason?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, principally.

Mr. TAYLOR: Then I contend that it is an insufficient reason for letting the contract go to New South Wales. The hon. gentleman has been telling us this morning that he does not expect the railways to pay, as there are indirect advantages conferred on the people of the State by running the railways at a loss. I contend that, if these locomotives were built in Queensland, more indirect advantages would accrue to Queensland and to the workers of Queensland than we are going to gain by the increased expenditure of £27,000 or £28,000 involved.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would remind the hon. member that there are two considerations—the matter of price and the matter of time.

Mr. TAYLOR: The matter of price and the matter of time will not hold water for a moment. If there was such urgency so far as time is concerned, I maintain that the Government could have split the tender up and have had the locomotives they wanted hurriedly constructed in New South Wales, and the others constructed in Queensland. They probably could have made arrangements with the Clyde Engineering Works to build the locomotives which they wanted promptly; but I contend that our own engineers in Queensland should have had the construction of these locomotives.

If ever there was cause for the indictment of the Government for years past in failing to assist the local manufacturer and giving local industry help, it is to be found in this particular case. If our manufacturers, with ports close to their doors, cannot compete with the Southern manufacturers in the supply of locomotives, it is sure proof that the Government policy of taxation and the burdensome imposition upon manufacturers has prevented them from successfully competing with their Southern rivals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How is it that they tendered for the dredge and beat English companies and New South Wales companies?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And for the Tully River mill?

Mr. TAYLOR: How is it that they have not been able to do it in this case? I say that it is unfair to Queensland and the manufacturers of Queensland to let that contract go to one of the Southern States. Any hon. member who knows anything knows that, if there is one well-equipped concern for the building of locomotives in Australia, it is Walkers, Limited. They have coal at their door, and everything they require. I do not know what the facilities of Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan are, but they have been building locomotives for the Queensland Government for many years, and Walkers, Limited, have done the same thing, and now this tender, for the sake of £27,000 or £28,000 in a contract amounting to £170,000, is going out of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan are building locomotives for us to-day.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very pleased to hear it. I would like to see them building the locomotives which are the subject of this contract—they, or Walkers, Limited, or some

other Queensland firm. The difference of 17½ per cent. does not carry much weight with me.

The total expenditure on our railways up to 30th June, 1923, was something over £50,000,000. The gross earnings for the year 1922-23 were £5,400,323. I would have given later figures, but I have only received the report of the department for last year this morning. During the same year the expenses were £4,714,262. The interest on capital amounted to £2,181,330, leaving a deficit on the year's working of £1,475,192. For the year ending 30th June, 1925, the Minister estimates that he will receive a revenue of £6,434,000, and the appropriation to which we are asked to agree is £5,160,386, leaving an estimated net revenue of £1,273,614, as compared with a net revenue last year of £706,138, showing an anticipated increase in net revenue for the year on which we have entered of £557,476. At the same time the Minister anticipates an increase in revenue of £750,000.

The point I want to make is that our total deficit on the railways during the last nine years of the present Administration has amounted to £11,504,000. The figures which the Minister quoted in his speech tell us that we are going to lose another £1,000,000 by the 30th June, 1925. That is where the seriousness of the position comes in.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There would not be a loss. The money would be in the pockets of the people.

Mr. TAYLOR: Let the hon. gentleman find it in their pockets. Hon. members know just exactly the position I take up in connection with freights and fares. The Commissioner, in his report, points out to the Government and the people of Queensland that he has to pay practically 100 per cent. more in salaries to-day than he had to pay prior to the war period.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And so have most firms.

Mr. TAYLOR: He also points out the increase in the cost of material that is used on these railways. I think the increased cost in rails amounts to about 70 per cent. A lot of the things that are vitally necessary, and which are consumed in large quantities by the Railway Department, show no signs of falling in cost to any appreciable extent, and I contend that the Railway Commissioner should have had a freer hand years ago in regard to fares and freights. I want to be clearly understood in connection with this matter. I do not want to see the people in the country penalised in any way.

Mr. MORGAN: They are being penalised.

Mr. TAYLOR: I say this—and I said it in speaking on the Estimates last year or the year before—that the people in the city do not bear their fair proportion of the railway rates. It is all very well to talk about the railways not paying. I do not expect the railways to pay during the first, second, or third year after construction; but when you have been running railways for fifty years and they are not paying, what about that? Do you call that developing the country? Do you call that assisting settlement, when you find the figures getting worse in many cases? Last year the Commissioner pointed out in his report that there were eight sections of the railways that were paying, but this year only six sections are paying—two of them have slipped away. The section

[Mr. Taylor.

which is paying and giving a better return than any other section in the State is the section from Northgate to Gympie. Why? The cost of material, the cost of construction, and the cost of the upkeep of the permanent way is just exactly the same as on other lines in Queensland. That section is giving such a good return, simply because along it there is closer settlement and greater development.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. It is getting its share of the Townsville trade now. Long distance trains are coming in.

Mr. TAYLOR: How long has it been getting its share of the Townsville trade? It has been paying for years. Last year, before the Townsville Railway was opened, it returned £68,000. It paid the year before. It is all "bosh" to talk about the Townsville trade.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does the hon. gentleman think that it paid because of its own business between here and Gympie, or because of the business from all the other lines?

Mr. TAYLOR: I am taking the Railway Commissioner's figures for that section between Northgate and Gympie. Last year, after paying working expenses and interest, it returned between £30,000 and £40,000.

Mr. COSTELLO: There is no road competition in that section.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know whether there is road competition or not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Is that return not due more to the increased accumulation of traffic from other lines coming over that section?

Mr. TAYLOR: There must be increased traffic.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. TAYLOR: You must have increased traffic to give increased profit on any section of the railway. The great point in connection with our railways is that we want to run our trains as often and as full as we possibly can. If that were done, it would probably help us in connection with fares and freights.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are doing that.

Mr. TAYLOR: We have the lines laid down all over the State, and a very fine railway system it is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I make bold to say that 90 per cent. of the traffic that comes over that section between Northgate and Gympie does not come from the settlement between here and Gympie.

Mr. TAYLOR: You tell the Commissioner that, and tell him that his report is wrong. I am always willing to accept the figures of the responsible officer of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is their method of allocating the earnings.

Mr. TAYLOR: What method would you adopt?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know of any better method. It is your reasoning that is wrong. You said the earnings on that line were due to closer settlement.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is closer settlement that is causing the heavy passenger and freight

traffic between those points, and making that portion of the line pay as it is doing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is the full train loads of wool from Longreach that are making it pay.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not talking about full trains of wool from Longreach, though I like to see those full trains of wool coming.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It all comes over that line.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would also like to see full trains coming over the lines in every part of the State.

Let me take the question of fares and freights on what we are growing in Queensland with regard to home consumption. My honest and firm opinion is that 80 per cent. of the freight—and this must be borne in mind when any increase is imposed—is paid by the consumer, and probably 20 per cent. is paid by the producer. When the goods are exported out of the State those figures are probably altered. It would probably be found that on account of having to compete with the markets of the world with these products the producer pays a larger percentage of freight on his exports than the person who buys his goods overseas.

The matter of our railways not paying has been referred to by several speakers. We would be quite satisfied with our railways not paying so long as they came within a reasonable distance of paying; but we do contend that a charge of £1,500,000 year after year on Consolidated Revenue is too heavy an impost to impose on the taxpayers in connection with these railways. If the report of the Commissioner for Railways is examined, it will be found that out of the total loss of £1,500,000 made on the railways, nearly £1,000,000 of this amount has been lost on the railways in the Southern Division, where we should have this closer settlement. We should not at the present time be losing such an enormous sum on the railways in the Southern Division.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Over 70 per cent. of that loss is made on branch lines.

Mr. TAYLOR: I quite admit that what the Minister says is correct. The political control or influence in connection with the railways arises from the fact that the railway managers have not a sufficiently free hand in directing what rate shall be paid and what rates shall not be paid in carrying on the service.

Mr. COLLINS: You talk of political influence, yet twenty-seven of your members were returned from constituencies in Southern Queensland.

Mr. TAYLOR: Would the hon. member for Bowen call this political influence? Prior to the last election a circular was sent out from the Railway Department in connection with taking the votes of the men on the railway and the collection of those votes. I am speaking subject to correction, but I understand that the cost of doing so ran into five figures. The men were to be paid for a certain time whether they worked half, full time, or none of the time at all. Does the hon. member for Bowen say that the Commissioner issued that order?

Mr. MAXWELL: It was political jobbery.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member knows that the Commissioner did not issue that

*Mr. Taylor.]*

order himself, and that he only issued it under instructions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The instructions are that the employees, where it is possible, are not to work on Saturday mornings.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Government paid for a lot of work at that election which was not done.

At 12 noon,

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

Mr. TAYLOR: However, the amount of money which had to be paid was something enormous, and there was no necessity for it. Arrangements could have been made to take the vote of every man in the railway service at a cost of about £200 or £300, and without any underhand means in any shape or form. There is only one interpretation that one can put on what occurred at that time.

The Minister when speaking a few moments ago referred to the Renard road train and the McKean cars. I think the late Mr. Thallon was responsible for the Renard road train, and I am not too sure who was responsible for the McKean cars, but what about the workshops at Mayne Junction?

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: What about them?

Mr. TAYLOR: They have remained stagnant for years. It is six or seven years since they were built, and they have never been occupied or used.

Mr. COSTELLO: What about the Willowburn works?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Secretary for Railways spoke about what Tory Governments had and had not done. The present Government have gone one better every time than the Administrations the hon. gentleman criticised. The great effort of the Government should always be to make our railways a paying proposition. Our railways cost us somewhere in the vicinity of £50,000,000. At the present rates of construction and costs, if we wanted to put them on the market to-morrow, after allowing for depreciation, they would be worth £70,000,000 or £80,000,000. Having that knowledge—that these railways only cost us £50,000,000 and that they would cost £70,000,000 or £80,000,000 to build to-day—there is greater reason than ever why our railways should pay. If we cannot nearly make them pay on the basis of an expenditure of £50,000,000, how on earth are we going to make them pay on the rising costs experienced during the last two or three years? Had the Minister taken my advice, he would have raised his fares and freights, some time ago, especially as far as the cities are concerned. Although that would not have covered the whole of the deficit with which we are faced at present, it would have gone a long way in that direction.

As I said at the commencement of my remarks there is no reflection in any of my criticism on the management of our railways. We have every confidence in them. We are satisfied they are making the very best job they can out of a very difficult task. They have had a hard row to hoe during the last few years, and it is absolutely impossible for any section of men to make ends meet in face of the policy of the Government in running our railways. The

[*Mr. Taylor.*

railways are a business concern, and we look upon them as one of our best and greatest assets, but one values an asset according to what it is producing or earning for one. The Minister spoke about the losses made at Broken Hill. That concern did make losses, but the Government took over a paying business and made a loss of it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not correct.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is correct.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There were deficiencies for thirty years before we came into power.

Mr. TAYLOR: They amounted to about £10,000,000 over thirty or forty years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Take the percentage.

Mr. TAYLOR: The present Government are losing a quarter of the whole initial cost of the railways in about twelve years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The war revolutionised affairs.

Mr. TAYLOR: Probably the railways are not overstaffed at present, but hon. members know quite well that a few years ago they were over-staffed. The Government filled them up with employees from all over the place. With what result? In a very short time they had to fire a lot of them out. The hon. gentleman knows that perfectly well, and we all know it. That is not the way to make the railways pay. That is not the way to advance the interests of Queensland. If we are going to advance the interests of Queensland, let us be honest in our administration of the whole of the Government activities.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have less men per mile of railway now than there were in 1914.

Mr. TAYLOR: I accept the Commissioner's report as being a true report. I am not going to gain-say it in any shape or form. If that had been the policy of the Government all along, we would not have had such a tremendous loss as we have at the present time. The Minister said that £3,000,000 have been lost since they have been in power as a result of the abolition of the railway guarantee, and that another £500,000 have been lost on new country lines. But that only accounts for £3,500,000 out of the £11,000,000.

With regard to certain concessions that have been made to various industries which were in a perilous state for quite a long time, we do not criticise that because we think it only right. It is far better to make a loss to which the whole State contributes than to have a big industry such as the cattle industry wiped out of existence. The same thing applies in regard to Mount Morgan. There are times when a Government has to do these things; but all the same I think that some other system might be found by which charges such as that would not be debited against the Railway Department. When you analyse the thing closely, it is not altogether a fair proposition to charge expenses of that nature up against the department. The railway officials are carrying out their work, and it does not very much hearten the men controlling a big affair like the railways if they show deficits such as we have had each year when they know they are using their best efforts to

make the railways a success. Should a good opening become vacant in connection with the railways in any other part of the world the manager of our railways would have very little chance of securing the position should he wish to do so. The first thing the people having the giving of that position would want to know would be: What sort of a success he had made of the railways in his own country, and if he could only show a record such as we have to show in connection with our railways, what chance would he have?

I hope that during the coming year things will improve, and that we shall get the much greater carriage on our railways that we are all anxious to see, and that, when the Commissioner's report is placed before Parliament next year, it will be found that we have had a more successful year than the last.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): In discussing this Estimate I would like first of all to deal with some of the comments that have been made by hon. members who have preceded me in the debate, and I regret that the hon. member for Herbert is not in his place. That hon. member stressed the point that the Great Northern Railway was introduced and built entirely by the present Government. I think I shall be able to show that the hon. member was entirely wrong in that statement, and to show that many hon. members who are sitting on the other side of the Chamber not only said that they did not believe in that railway but voted against it.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We found the money for it, anyway.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is wonderful how the Minister always seems to want to appropriate everything which is good and to put on to the other fellow anything that is bad. He was quite poetic this morning. I think he must have spent some time reading the poets so that he would be ready for to-day's discussion.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Reading some of your speeches.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am going to show that in 1910, when that railway was introduced, quite a number of hon. members opposite spoke and voted against it. I do not know that the Committee will be very much surprised to know that even the present Premier spoke and voted against it, and even the hon. member for Bowen—

MR. COLLINS: Hear, hear! He will take all responsibility for any vote he gives.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We know that the hon. member for Bowen will always accept any responsibility—he never seeks to get behind someone else. The point I wish to make this morning is that these hon. members opposite have been claiming that anything which is good was done by them. The hon. member for Herbert was not in the House then, so I cannot accuse him of voting against it, but it is certain that some hon. members opposite did. I am quoting from "Hansard" for 1910, page 2998. The then Treasurer had moved that £2,320,000 be raised for "North Coast Railway." Then the present Premier, Mr. Theodore, immediately got up and said—

"I am against the raising of this money in the manner proposed. As I had not an opportunity of discussing this railway when it was before the House, I

would like to express myself upon it. Whilst I realise that portion of the railway might be necessary in the development of the coastal districts, I do not think this is a good method of financing the construction of this line. The financing of this line could be extended over a number of years, say for a decade. I know that portions of it need not be constructed for at least ten years, and by that time we could arrive at a method of financing it altogether apart from going on the foreign market."

What a wonderful change has come over the scene in connection with the hon. gentleman's opinion as to the method of obtaining money for railways, etc.! I wonder what the Premier has to say now about going to a foreign market to raise money for railways. When he came back from the old country in connection with some of these proposals, I told him that he had become a convert, and there is no doubt that he has become a convert, because we find even according to this morning's paper that another loan is being put on the London market, and I have no doubt that part of it is for railways.

Then there is my friend, the hon. member for Bowen. I am sure, Mr. Gledson, that you will not pull me up for being libellous when I say that the hon. member for Bowen is my friend. This is what the hon. member said in 1910—

"I intend to vote against this for several reasons. I believe the money could be better spent in taking over the Etheridge and Chillagoe railway. The arguments advanced in connection with the building of this particular railway are that the different localities will have to find 3 per cent. guarantee. In the statement delivered by the Treasurer this afternoon we are told that added to the Sinking Fund it would total the full amount of 4½ per cent. Well, the people of the North will have to pay their 1½ per cent., and will also have to pay the 50 per cent. over and above what this people will have to pay on their railway. When the Government took over the Mount Elliott railway, why did they not come down with a proposal to take over the other railway as well? Why penalise the people in the far North by making them continue to pay this extra 50 per cent. on the Chillagoe line?"

Then the hon. member for Bowen further on, after one or two interjections—and he was pulled up by the Chair I notice—said—

"I am giving reasons why I am going to vote against the North Coast Railway, and one reason is that I think this loan money can be spent to better advantage. I am not going to vote the money to finance this railway."

It will be very interesting to find out how the vote really went.

MR. COLLINS: Quote what the hon. member for South Brisbane said at the time. He was then the hon. member for Bowen.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for South Brisbane is here, and he is quite capable of quoting for himself, but if I can find it on this sheet I will quote it. I see it is at the foot of page 2999—I am not going to quote the whole of it, but only the first sentence—I have not read the whole of it

*Hon. W. H. Barnes.]*

before. The hon. member for South Brisbane said—

“Although I am in favour of this railway, I do not approve of the financial methods of the Government, and for that reason I shall vote against this appropriation.”

I think it is only fair to say that that is not the whole of the speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane. I have only read the commencement. Why should we not put these things into “Hansard”? When one sees good things being seized upon by the Government and claimed for their own, it is just as well to find out the truth. I shall read out the names of those who voted against the motion—

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Allen, Barber, Collins, Coyne, Ferricks, Hamilton, Hardacre—

Mr. RYAN: It was a party vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was not a party vote. The list goes on—

Messrs. J. H. Hunter, Mann, May, Mullan—

The hon. gentleman is sitting on the front bench over there now!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Read the question.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The question was—

“That the sum of £2,320,000 be raised for the ‘North Coast Railway.’”

(Opposition laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I moved an amendment for a minimum wage, to which your Government objected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: After “Mr. Mullan” follow these names:—

Messrs. Murphy, O’Sullivan, Payne, Ryland, Theodore.

Public, please note!

“Mr. Winstanley.”

(Opposition laughter.)

Here are the men who represent the Great North! Hon. members who were representing the Great North at that time had so much loyalty to the North that they voted against a national proposition like that! (Opposition laughter.) Does it not strike you, Mr. Gledson, as being exceedingly strange that hon. members who should have had enough vision, at any rate, to see the needs of this great State—including hon. gentlemen who are leading the Government to-day—should have voted against such a proposition? It is extraordinary to me. Have you ever felt that you would like some of the pages of “Hansard” wiped out? (Laughter.) I can assure you that there have been times when I would have liked to see pages of “Hansard” wiped out, and I am certain there are members here this morning who would like to see some pages wiped out, too. The hon. member for Cook interjected that it was a party vote. It was not, for I find amongst the “Ayes” these names—

Messrs. Lennon, Lesina, Mulcahy, Nevitt.

Mr. W. COOPER: Why go back to such ancient times? (Opposition laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very pleased to hear the hon. member asking me why I should go back. The Minister has been going back, and I want to go back, too.

The Minister trotted out certain things about the Railway Department. I have here

!Hon. W. H. Barnes.

the last Auditor-General’s report, just issued to-day, so that I cannot be accused of quoting an old document. But permit me, before I deal with it, to refer to one or two matters mentioned by the hon. gentleman. He spoke about tank engines. I can well remember when they were introduced into Queensland, and I admit that they did require some alteration; but anybody who travels on the Ipswich-Sandgate line will find that they are running to-day, and they are the best proposition the department ever had.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS interjected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman does not like taking any gruel; he likes giving it. It is his duty now to take some gruel. What is the position? The position is that these engines are ideal engines for short journeys. I do not say that the engines are exactly of the same type, because we all know that the engineers in the Railway Department are always seeking to improve upon the designs of engines. But is it not a fact that quite recently another order has been given for tank engines?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not so much the engine, as the cost of maintaining the roadway.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is one mistake in the Railway Department, and I know something about it. Have not our bridges, as a result of requiring heavier rolling-stock, had to be strengthened again and again? That has been due to an initial mistake made in connection with the rolling-stock. Those engines are ideal engines, and the man who had to do with the introduction of those engines is dead. At any rate he was looking ahead when he agreed to the construction of tank engines, and he is being copied to-day by the Minister.

The PREMIER: Why place those responsibilities on a man who is dead?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Would not the hon. gentleman like to have some of his acts laid on a dead man? He will soon be a dead man politically, but I hope it may be a very long time before he is dead other than in the political sense. Have you ever noticed, Mr. Gledson, that somehow or other the Premier now seems to be dodging his duty? You rarely see him in the Chamber now.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman will not be in order in continuing on those lines. The matter under discussion is the Railway Estimates.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I was dealing with the Railway Estimates when the Minister interjected, and I replied to that interjection.

Let me now deal with the McKeen car. That had a connection with a dead man—make no mistake about it! Who was responsible for the introduction of the McKeen car? Why, the late Mr. Thallon, and no better man ever occupied the position of Commissioner than the late Mr. Thallon. I say that with all due respect to the present occupant of the office, who is an ideal man. Do not forget that in connection with experimental work on the railways you have sometimes to do things in the hope that it will suit the needs of Queensland. I spoke to a driver of the McKeen car the other day, and he said to me, “The McKeen cars are excellent now. I have been on one for

fourteen years—ever since they have come here—and I have mastered them.” We know that for some railway jobs and for some private jobs they are used to-day, and we know that they are most excellent things, and the Minister cannot deny it. He cannot deny that some McKean cars are being used to-day.

The hon. gentleman made reference to other matters which I need not go into just now, except that I want to deal with some figures contained in the Auditor-General's report for the present year. According to the report the gross earnings increased by £293,656 and the net earnings increased by £17,149. The expenditure increased by £276,487. The point I want to make here is that the expenditure increased to almost the same extent as the gross earnings. The annual interest charge increased by £135,023. The gross earnings for the year were £5,714,036, which constitutes a record, and the working expenses amounted to £4,990,749, which has been exceeded on only one occasion, and that was in 1920-21, when it amounted to £5,048,492. Hon. members who preceded me were quite right in their statements. What is the position to-day? I appeal to the Government because they have to face the position. The railways, after all, are nothing but a big business concern.

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

HON. W. H. BARNES: Can any person continually go ahead with a big business concern and find that from year's end to year's end there is a loss without making some provision to make it pay?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your party did the same thing for years.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am going to knock the Minister right over in that connection, if I have the time. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot do that. (Renewed laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will proceed to do so immediately. I am sure that the Minister does not take it that I mean a physical combat. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, no! (Renewed laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: If a physical combat did take place, I would appeal to the Attorney-General, who is a good-natured fellow, to come to my assistance and end the contest. (Laughter.)

The loss on the railways—and it is a serious matter—from 1915-16 up to the present time has been £11,426,899. The Minister said that previous Governments were responsible for that. I shall quote further. In 1914-15 there was a surplus of £48,651 after paying working expenses—I am quoting from the report of the Auditor-General, page 93. I shall show how the present Government have made the railways in regard to deficits a case of “Johnny Walker going strong.” The position is due entirely to the fact referred to by the hon. member for Windsor. There have been influences at work which have prevented the Commissioner—a most capable man—from having his own way.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Commissioner is not a man who would tell any hon. member that such is the case, but that is my judgment.

The following figures show how the deficits have increased since 1915-16, the first year of extreme socialistic rule:—

DEFICIT ON RAILWAYS.		£
1915-16	...	508,244
1616-17	...	737,388
1917-18	...	1,028,008
1918-19	...	1,421,328
1919-20	...	1,229,579
1920-21	...	1,739,475
1921-22	...	1,743,270
1922-23	...	1,475,192
1923-24	...	1,593,066
Total	...	£11,475,550

That makes a total deficit after allowing for the surplus of £48,651 made by the previous Government—and I want that noted—of £11,426,899. The Minister has the audacity in this Committee to say that the administration of the Government has been so satisfactory that everything in the garden is lovely. That kind of loveliness is awful.

MR. MAXWELL: It is all weeds.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not want such loveliness in my garden. The hon. gentleman must realise the position.

There is another point—and on this I did not quite catch the Minister—and if I am unfair in my criticism, he will not think that it is due to any desire on my part to distort facts. I did not quite catch what the Minister said in regard to the revenue increase and the expenditure during certain years. I shall not be out in my quotations, as I will quote from the report of the Auditor-General. For ten years, from 1st July, 1914, to 30th June, 1924, the earnings increased by 56.12 per cent. and the expenditure by 110.47 per cent. If I caught the Minister correctly, he disguised that very largely. He quoted a later period after he had put a wet blanket over the other period to cover it up.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I quoted nine years' figures under a Labour Government and nine years' figures under an anti-Labour Government.

[12.30 p.m.]

HON. W. H. BARNES: What is the position? There was an increase of 54 per cent. between the earnings and expenditure in that period. I want to be fair. The Auditor-General says that for the five years, from 1st July, 1919, to 30th June, 1924, the increase in net earnings was 43.4 per cent., and the expenditure 35.23 per cent. Where are we going?

MR. DASH: Right ahead.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Right ahead! I say that there are financial warnings which show that there is going to be an absolute disaster to the State, if we continue. The report states—

“Returns for the last five years on the gross capital invested, and also on capital invested on open loans, were—

—	All Lines.			Open Lines.		
	£	s	d.	£	s	d.
1919-20 .. .. .	1	7	11	1	10	2½
1920-21 .. .. .	0	9	9	0	10	7½
1921-22 .. .. .	0	14	2½	0	15	4½
1922-23 .. .. .	1	7	10	1	9	11½
1923-24 .. .. .	1	7	3½	1	9	1½

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

The Minister cannot claim that there has been a falling off in connection with the traffic or anything of that description. The Minister is face to face with this position. To-day money is costing us 6 per cent. Here we have returns averaging over five years which probably show a return—I am only estimating and have not worked it out—of about 1 per cent.

The PREMIER: The money expended on railways is not costing anything like 6 per cent.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Some money that we are now procuring is costing us 6 per cent. Is not the increased rate one of the reasons for the bigger interest bill now?

The PREMIER: You are making a comparison between the actual earnings on the money. The actual cost was about £4 12s.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I shall get right back to the Premier's arguments. If railways cost £4 12s. for the money expended and we only get 1 per cent. in return, where are we going? Some may say that we are developing the State by the expenditure, but the Premier is dead against developing the State in certain directions. It must not be forgotten that nearly everything that this Government touches is going to the bad. I say that, in the face of our monetary needs and the fact of ours being a young country, we must face the position—the Premier smiles! The hon. gentleman may be smiling because he is going to get out of it and put the burden on someone else; but this is a big question that must be faced by the Premier and by the public of Queensland.

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

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I listened to the very long speech of the Secretary for Railways this morning. I think the hon. gentleman talked more rubbish in an hour and a-half than I have heard since we were on these Estimates last year. The hon. gentleman also endeavoured to cover up the real facts of the position in exactly the same way as he did last year by quoting all sorts of irrelevant figures which had nothing at all to do with the position of to-day.

The PREMIER: There is nothing irrelevant about them.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier was not in the Chamber to listen to the Secretary for Railways. Evidently he got so disgusted with the fallacious arguments put forward by his colleague that he left the Chamber.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is most unfair. I was here and was very much interested. I was sent for by an hon. member of the Opposition.

Mr. MOORE: I am sure the hon. gentleman could not have been impressed by the arguments put forward. They were absolutely ridiculous—

The PREMIER: They were borne out by facts.

Mr. MOORE: The Secretary for Railways started off by saying that we did not understand the policy of the Government. It is just this question of Government policy that affects the whole question of the success or otherwise of the railways. The whole policy of the Government of to-day has been the

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*

reason for the enormous loss on our railways. The policy of the Government in regard to land has decreased settlement, and the policy of the Government in regard to nationalisation and socialisation has caused the loss on our railways.

The PREMIER: What do you mean by decreased settlement? There is more settlement on our land than ever previously.

Mr. MOORE: I will quote the figures for 1906, 1914, and 1922 to prove what I say.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF LAND OCCUPIED IN QUEENSLAND.

Year.	Area.		Increase in Eight Years.
	Acres.	Acres.	
1906	265,381,856		
1914	358,331,163		92,949,307 (increase.)
1922	328,044,542		30,286,621 (decrease.)

The PREMIER: Surely you know how puerile that argument is.

Mr. MOORE: Hon. members opposite say that the railways have shown an indirect benefit in that they have increased settlement, and, when we show that, instead of increased settlement, there has been decreased settlement, they say it is a puerile argument. The whole cause of our trouble is this decreased settlement. As the Commissioner pointed out some years ago, we are building railways in advance of settlement. We are getting too great a length of railway for the amount of traffic carried over it.

The PREMIER: Do you want us to close down on construction?

Mr. MOORE: They have closed down on a large number of railways now, or are only keeping them partially going.

The PREMIER: Members of the Opposition waited on me this morning urging me to build further railways.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister made the definite statement that the community received an indirect benefit from the railways because of the increase in land settlement, and I am pointing out from the official figures that land settlement has decreased by 30,286,621 acres in the last eight years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Take the number of settlers. You are talking pure bunkum.

Mr. MOORE: The following table will show the amount of settlement, and whether increased settlement has been brought about by the railways. I am going to be quite fair in this matter.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF AREA OF LAND UNDER CROP.

Year.	Area.		Increase in Eight Years.
	Acres.	Acres.	
1906	559,753		
1914	792,568		232,815
1922	863,755		71,187



Now let us take the tonnage carried.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Take the wealth production. It has increased by £206,000,000.

Mr. MOORE: The wealth production has nothing whatever to do with it. The wealth production of the State has increased merely because of the high prices obtained during the war. The quantity has not increased, but only the value. Let us take the tonnage carried—

Year.	Train Mileage.	Tonnage Carried.	Average Tonnage per Train Mile.
1914-15 ..	11,988,521	4,970,873	·41
1922-23 ..	10,917,584	4,208,989	·39

There is a decrease in the tonnage carried, a decrease in the train miles run, and a decrease in the average tonnage per train mile.

Where on earth is the indirect benefit to the State that the Minister talks about? He is unable to show it, because the figures show a decrease. The Minister, in his endeavour to bolster up the railway policy of the Government, says we are getting an indirect benefit from the amount of money expended.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So we are. Wealth production has increased by £206,000,000.

Mr. MOORE: I will show the increase in freight rates generally—

#### FREIGHT RATES GENERALLY.

Year.	Tons.	Revenue.	Average Rate per Ton.
1914-15 ..	4,970,873	£ 2,516,380	s. d. 10 1
1922-23 ..	4,208,989	3,290,471	15 8

The increase equals 5s. 7d. per ton, or 55 per cent. The recent increase of 5 per cent—20 per cent. on sheep and wool—will add approximately 12 per cent. as compared with

1914-15, making total increase to date 67 per cent.

#### FREIGHTS AND FARES COMBINED.

Year.	Earnings per Train Mile.	Increase Per Cent. over 1914-15.
1914-15 ..	s. d. 6 4½	..
1922-23 ..	9 11¼	55

The recent increase of 5 per cent.—20 per cent. on sheep and wool—and 7½ per cent. on fares—minimum increase, 1d.—will add approximately a further 10 per cent. as compared with 1914-15, making a total average increase in fares and freights of 65 per cent.

I am only quoting this because the Minister made the point that the loss on the railways was made up by the indirect benefit given to the State. It has been the practice of the Government during the whole course of their administration to say that, but the position shows that we are not getting that direct benefit. We are attracting people from the country to the towns and decreasing the tonnage carried on the railway. I will now give the figures showing the position in regard to the increased earnings per train mile.

The increased earnings per train mile cannot be explained by increased loads. I am not going to say that from Roma Street, where the trucks are loaded, they are not getting a better return, but instead of there being an increase per train mile for the State generally, there is a decrease. The average load per train mile is—

Year.	Train Mileage.	Tonnage Carried	Average Tonnage per Train Mile.
1914-15 ..	11,988,521	4,970,873	·41
1922-23 ..	10,917,584	4,208,989	·39

#### RAILWAY DEFICITS.

Eight years—		
1907-08 to 1914-15 ..	..	£148,472
1915-16 to 1922-23 ..	..	9,882,484
Contrast—		
1914-15 (surplus) ..	..	48,651
1923-24 (deficit) ..	..	1,585,000
		(Approximate)

#### COMPARISON OF STAFF AND BUSINESS OF RAILWAYS.

Year.	Employees.	Train Mileage.	Tonnage, Goods and Live Stock.	Mileage per Employee.	Tonnage per Employee.
1914-15 ..	14,936	11,988,521	4,970,873	803	332
1922-23 ..	16,838	10,917,584	4,208,989	648	250

Increased staff has necessarily followed increased mileage of railway open for traffic, but there has been no corresponding growth

in the business of the railways—in fact, the reverse. A policy causing drift to the big towns and cities would account for this. The

Mr Moore.]

Government Statistician shows the following:—

DRIFT OF POPULATION.

—	Increase.	Increase Per Cent.
Eight years to 1914—		
Cities and Towns ..	52,688	23.2
Shires .. ..	104,881	34.2
Eight years to 1922—		
Cities and Towns ..	64,005	32.9
Shires .. ..	16,646	4.1

That shows that, instead of getting the anticipated increase throughout the country—where we should have more passengers and more traffic on our railways—we have considerably less in the country than we should have and a greater increase in the towns. We are not getting the indirect benefit which the Minister claims that we are getting.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The increase is not as great as it is in the other States.

Mr. MOORE: The real test of success in railway administration is increased settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: More settlers and more wealth production—and that is what we have shown.

Mr. MOORE: That is what we want to get, but it is what we have not got. The figures show decreased settlement and a larger expenditure on the railways.

At 12.45 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MOORE: There is one thing on which I would like to reply to the Minister. It was stated by the hon. gentleman that the consumer paid 90 per cent. of the freights. I say that that is altogether bunkum. He does not know anything about it at all. The consumer does not pay. He sends his produce to Brisbane and gets an account sales, showing the amount he receives for it, less freight and less other charges. But when produce goes back to him he has to pay the freight on it. Does the hon. member mean to say that, if a man living 12 miles out of Brisbane sends produce to Brisbane and a man at Warwick sends produce down also, the man at Warwick gets more for his produce because he sends it farther? The prices are paid according to the quality of the produce, and the producer has to pay freight both going down and coming up in every case.

I want to deal now with the question which the Minister passed over rather lightly, that is, the shortage of railway trucks. I have already pointed out the discrepancy in the policy of the Railway Department in building a large mileage of railway and not keeping up with the building of engines, trucks, and wagons, and carriages in a corresponding manner. The Minister pointed out that the engines pull more to-day than seven or eight years ago, and I quite admit that they have a greater tractive power, but the fact remains that there is an extraordinary shortage of rolling-stock.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. MOORE: It is a fact. In the report of the Department of Mines, it was pointed out that the Mount Mulligan coalmine lost

[Mr. Moore.

sixteen and a-half days through a shortage of wagons to take away its output.

I will just quote another instance to show how the shortage of trucks is affecting people in the country. This is an extract with regard to the timber trade on the Cooyar line—

‘REGRETTABLE POSITION.

“SHORTAGE OF TIMBER WAGONS.

“Our loaders are experiencing great loss of time and money owing to the Railway Department failing to fill the orders for trucks. The haulers are about to be stopped through shortage of vehicles. The total number of trucks ordered by Messrs. Boldery and Davis, of Cooyar, for the month of August, were as follows: Boldery 216, Davis 80; totalling 296 trucks. Out of 296 trucks ordered there were only 91 received, which is a very small percentage. Owing to this a number of persons have been thrown idle. Both Cooyar and Wutul yards are becoming congested. There are now 323 logs at Cooyar and 320 at Wutul, totalling 300,000 superficial feet of timber, waiting for trucks, and logs are arriving at the yards, from 40 to 60 daily. It is hoped that Cooyar will get fairer treatment in regards to trucks in future.”

I have another statement here to the same effect.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have had that for twenty years.

Mr. MOORE: It is well known that we have to wait six or eight weeks for trucks, and sometimes more. I have here some figures showing the rolling-stock built by the previous Government and by this Government. In 1912-13, 1913-14, and 1914-15 the Railway Department built 2,641 trucks, 37 engines, 93 lavatory carriages, and 74 suburban carriages, and 230 coal wagons. In 1919-20, 1920-21, 1921-22, and 1922-23 only 886 goods wagons were built.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We spent a lot on “rebuilt.”

Mr. MOORE: I asked the Minister to give me some figures with regard to the number of trucks built. He gave me an answer to my question, and I pointed out that the Railway Department were going back in trucks, and now we find that there are a lot of “rebuilt.” The figures I asked for should have included “rebuilt,” and they show that there is a shortage. There is a shortage at practically every railway station.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are economising by carrying bigger wagon loads.

Mr. MOORE: All the figures will go to show that the wagon loads throughout the State are of a less tonnage than in 1914-15.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The loads are improving.

Mr. MOORE: Perhaps so on certain sections like the section between Northgate and Gympie. When you get out into the more distant parts they are not improving.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner says exactly the opposite to that.

Mr. MOORE: The Commissioner's figures prove my contention.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I quoted the figures this morning.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister quoted the figures to suit his own case.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. MOORE: Take the figures given by the Commissioner in connection with the total mileage and the total tonnage, and you will see whether the loads are improving or not. The figures show that the loads are not improving, but that we are going back. We have built only eighteen engines in that period and thirty suburban carriages and nineteen lavatory carriages. The number of coal wagons have been lumped with the goods wagons. The figures show that we are getting behind in that direction. People in various parts of the State have drawn attention to the shortage of trucks and the difficulty of securing adequate provision to take their produce away. These figures show the mileage constructed, cost, etc., for the periods stated—

	Miles Constructed.	Miles Constructed per Annum.	Amount Expended.
9 years to 1915	1,701	213	£ 13,771,813
9 years to 1924	1,067	134	15,515,342

The Minister made a comparison, and said that a previous Government had put forward a special railway policy, and that the present Government had to carry it out. They had every justification for putting it forward.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They put forward a proposal for railway construction to cost £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 in 1915 during the last session of Parliament so as to defeat us at the elections.

Mr. MOORE: In 1915 the railways showed a surplus.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The elections were the justification.

Mr. MOORE: In 1915 the railways showed a surplus, and seeing the Government of the day had a system that was paying and giving an adequate return to the country, they were perfectly justified in making extensions from which they expected to get an adequate return.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They had deficits for thirty years.

Mr. MOORE: Where extravagance comes in is in expending a large amount of money when you are not getting an adequate return, and you are obtaining less and less. That is the fault with the present system. For the period 1907-8 to 1914-15 there was a deficit of £148,472, and for the period 1915-16 to 1922-23 there was a deficit of £9,882,484.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There were deficits for thirty years.

Mr. MOORE: With a young country just beginning its career and starting new railways, you naturally expect deficits. They are unavoidable, but when the country is developed to a certain extent and the railways become a paying proposition—

The PREMIER: You should be fair.

Mr. MOORE: When the railways are brought to a paying position and they are

handed over to another Government, and in nine years that Government shows a loss of £11,000,000, it indicates extravagant administration and shows that the policy of the Government is wrong.

The PREMIER: It is quite true that during the last year of the Denham-Barnes Administration the Government showed a small railway surplus, but that was at the expense of the railway employees who were only being paid 8s. a day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They stopped the automatic increases, too, which this Government had to carry on.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier, in speaking in this Chamber in 1910, said—

“I congratulate the Treasurer on the financial position of the railways. Queensland is in a very fortunate position in regard to the whole of her railway system. It is not so much the genius of the Government that is responsible for the good position of our railways. Nevertheless, despite the increased extension of railways into unpopulated districts, the railways have been earning fair interest on the cost of construction.”

He congratulated the previous Government on the position of the railways. We have the unfortunate position of having an increase in freights and fares placed upon us.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your party advocated it, too.

Mr. MOORE: This increase was not placed on the people of the country because they had not done their duty, but because the policy of the Government has retarded land settlement, because of the whole policy of the Government in depopulating country districts, and because a large number of people in the country were not able to earn sufficient to keep them going and so they came into the cities and towns.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the tonnage of agricultural produce carried on the railways has declined?

Mr. MOORE: No, it shows a slight increase.

The PREMIER: You ought to be fair.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What were your figures?

Mr. MOORE: There has been an increase in the agricultural area selected.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am speaking of the tonnage on railways.

The PREMIER: You said just now that the tonnage was not increasing.

Mr. MOORE: I said that the total was increasing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Take the tonnage on the railways?

Mr. MOORE: I am not going into petty details. The hon. gentlemen are simply attempting to cover up the true facts.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the area under agricultural production and the agricultural tonnage on the railways have not progressed?

Mr. MOORE: It does not say that, because some industries show an increase—although all the others are going back—that there has been an increase in settlement.

The PREMIER: Do you say that, because the production of minerals is going back, the whole State is going back?

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: Minerals are a very small item.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was a very big item.

Mr. MOORE: What I want to point out is that the Government have increased freights and fares. The Minister has not attempted to justify that increase. I want to call attention to the remarks of the Minister in 1913, when he said that it had been proved in all parts of the world that a reduction in fares and freights actually meant an increase in revenue. Yet we have the same Minister now bringing in a increase in both fares and freights!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On the advocacy of your party they should be higher so as to make the railways pay.

Mr. MOORE: Here is a statement made by the Premier on 6th September, 1924—

"It is true that a small percentage increase on freights and fares—20 per cent. would yield £200,000 or £300,000—but it would not be just to increase the freights of the Queensland railways. It would be a serious imposition on workers toiling in the country to increase the railway freights. They are worse situated than workers in the city, and they are entitled to as much consideration as the city workers. I have been against increasing the railway freights, because it means levying an impost upon the produce and necessaries of life of the workers who live in the country."

Nevertheless, we are going to have that increase.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have not increased them as much as they have been increased in other States.

Mr. MOORE: In view of the expression of opinion given by the Premier and Secretary for Railways, I am going to move a reduction in the vote by £1.

The PREMIER: Whom would you take it off? (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I am taking it off the whole vote, and the hon. gentleman can distribute it among those who he thinks are entitled to share in the reduction. I would take it off the Minister if I could, because it is mainly his maladministration and the policy of the Government that have brought about the present position of the railways.

The PREMIER: The salary of the Minister does not come into this vote. (Government laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I know that. I said that I would take it off his salary if I could. I am not in a position to allocate the reduction, but, if I were, the reduction would be considerably greater than £1. I beg to move—

"That the vote be reduced by £1."

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Any unbiassed person listening to the speech which has just been made by the leader of the Opposition must support a vote of censure on this department. What has been the history of this department since the present Government came into power? Year after year there have been deficits on the working of our railways, until they now attain the huge figure of over £11,000,000. There [2 p.m.] could be only one excuse for losses like that—that the railways were serving some good purpose in other

directions. That is the only excuse which could justifiably be advanced by a Government, but facts do not prove the correctness of that assumption in regard to this Government. If it could be shown that this huge loss was increasing our productiveness and settling our people on the land, thereby checking this flow of population to the cities, I would be quite prepared to admit that it might possibly pay to work our railways at a loss; but that has not happened. Since 1915 there has been an increasing flow of population to the city and a decreasing country settlement. Prior to 1915 the position was quite the reverse. There is therefore no justification whatever for this continuous ruinous loss which is placed on a small population of something like 825,000 people.

It is the business of the Opposition to note these matters and lay them before the electors. On the question of increases in freights and fares, I certainly think that, when the amendment of the leader of the Opposition comes to the vote, it should have not only our support, but the support of the Premier, who stated that any increase in freights and fares must fall most heavily on the country worker, and that he will suffer more severely than anybody else. It is generally admitted that, if one thing more than another is necessary in Queensland to-day, it is the encouragement of settlement in country districts. Seeing what has happened in this regard, on the Premier's own admission, we must view the action of the Secretary for Railways in increasing freights and fares as a distinct discouragement to, and an increased hardship on, the country worker, and we must certainly claim the Premier's vote on this amendment.

Perusing the history of the State, we find that year after year there has been a huge annual loss in connection with our railways without any compensating benefit. We have increased freights and fares and a lessened train service. While that has been going on we have had a lessened train service. Trains have been cut out, causing inconvenience to country residents, which they would be quite prepared to submit to if any good results accrued. With a lessened train service we have had an increase in the number of employees. The department is also suffering a loss because of insufficient rolling-stock and the unduly heavy capitalisation that has taken place on our railways. I notice from the report placed in our hands to-day that the capital cost of the line from Mackay to Bloomsbury is given at £15,000 per mile. It is all very well to talk about increased cost of material and so on, but I contend that that large capitalisation has been brought about by the political system pursued by this Administration. I myself have seen on the very section of line referred to seven men standing round a tip dray, and anyone who knows anything about it knows that three shovelmens for one tip dray is quite sufficient. That is the sort of thing that is causing this capitalisation of £15,000 per mile. I would like to go into this exorbitant cost of construction, but I know that I would be ruled out of order, as that comes under the Loan Fund Estimates. This high cost has nothing to do with the officials of the department. It is purely the result of political influence and that bugbear in their platform in regard to the day-labour system.

I would also like to make some comment in regard to the lack of discipline in the

[Mr. Moore.

railway service. I do not know what else to call it. Those who travel about the country find evidence from day to day of the apparent total disregard by employees of instructions from their chiefs. The other day I happened to be at a big sugar-mill in the North. The sugar-room was getting full, and I was told by the manager that he had been promised by the General Manager in Townsville that he could have all empty trucks going past his mill to take his sugar to Bowen, and he also pointed out that each one of those trucks would earn about £2 in loading in taking the sugar to Bowen for shipment. Although those empty trucks were travelling south to Bowen, they were allowed to go past his mill and the sugar was allowed to accumulate in his store. That is the sort of thing that is going on. I remember a little incident when I was travelling from Gladstone to a station south of Gladstone. A train crew got into the carriage in which I was sitting, and the fireman—quite a young man—was complaining about the cleaners. He pointed out that he could not get his engine cleaned, and that he had to clean his own engine that morning. According to him, they seemed to boss the service, yet they are the lowest grade in the running staff. I suppose that not very long before he had been a cleaner himself. These are the things you notice when you travel round the country. This is largely owing to the policy of job control that the party now in power encourage. That is where the trouble is. It is not with the heads of the department. No matter how wisely and efficiently the heads of the department may administer the department, no matter how intelligent may be the instructions they give, they are not carried out. These are some of the causes that lead to the losses that are now occurring in the Railway Department.

This morning the hon. member for Windsor spoke about the large order for locomotives being placed in the South, which should have been placed in Queensland, because we all know that there is unemployment in our iron trade. Is the fact that this order was placed in the South not an indication of the high cost of production that is prevailing in Queensland as compared with the other States, which has been largely brought about by the policy adopted by the present Administration? Why is it that the Ipswich Railway Workshops cannot do that work? We have one of the finest engineering shops in the Commonwealth in Maryborough, also good ones in Brisbane, yet for some reason or other Southern firms are able to put in lower tenders. It must be because of the high cost of production, which is entirely due to the policy which has been followed by this Government since they have been in power.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Tell us why Walkers Limited compete with Southern firms.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Secretary for Railways was good enough to invite me to be present at the opening of the Proserpine railway, and I thank him for the very kind treatment I received. He will understand that there is nothing personal in what I am saying. On that occasion speeches were made. The hon. gentleman evidently realised the true position in connection with the constantly recurring losses on our railways, but he fell back on the old "gag" that our freights and fares are lower than those in the

other States. I took occasion to contradict him on that, as it is a public matter. I have a report of his speech here. He dwelt upon the fact that the long distance freights in Queensland were less than those charged in other States.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Fares—not freights.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have the "Courier" here, in which it is stated—

"The Minister added that to-day Queensland freights for agricultural products were the lowest, and the fares for long distance carriage the lowest in Australia."

I pointed out that, taking 500 miles—which is a fairly long distance—the figures showed that the rates in the various States were—

	<i>s. d.</i>
New South Wales ...	197 6
Victoria ...	233 3
Queensland ...	268 4
South Australia ...	297 9
Western Australia ...	246 8

South Australia was the only State that was higher than Queensland. I was quite justified in the position I took up on that occasion.

I noticed that, when the leader of the Opposition was concluding his speech a little while ago, both the Premier and Secretary for Railways triumphantly interjected that the increase in agricultural produce carried on our railways was an indication of the general prosperity which was accruing under their rule. I have the figures for the last two years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Take a nine years' comparison.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have not got the figures for nine years. I would point out, without having access to the figures, that in all probability that has arisen from the increased amount of sugar-cane carried on the railways. Any increase in that direction most certainly does not lie to the credit of this Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why?

Mr. SWAYNE: During that time two big mills have been established in the North, and their existence is certainly not due to the present Administration. Tenders were called for these mills before they took office. The legislation in the sugar industry which has led to the increase in traffic is due to the action of the Right Hon. W. M. Hughes in giving a fair price, and of Mr. Bruce in placing an embargo on the importation of sugar.

I have here the figures showing the amount of agricultural produce carried by the railways during the last two financial years, and they are a contradiction of the contentions of the hon. gentleman. They show that, no matter how light the increase in the freights has been, during the last period of this Administration the output of agricultural produce has decreased, if we are to judge by the amount carried by the railways. In 1922-23 the quantity of agricultural produce carried on the railways amounted to 741,829 tons, whereas last year, 1923-24, the tonnage of agricultural produce carried was only 731,783 tons.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your figures are wrong.

*Mr. Swayne.]*

Mr. SWAYNE: They are taken out of the report of the Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have got the wrong figures. Look at page 20.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have here the report of the Commissioner, and I find that those figures are correct—741,829 tons in 1922-23, and 731,783 tons in 1923-24.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What page are you quoting from?

Mr. SWAYNE: Page 111 of the Commissioner's report.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On page 20 you will find that the tonnage of all agricultural produce amounted to 1,140,000 tons.

Mr. SWAYNE: Does that include sugar-cane?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, agricultural produce includes sugar-cane.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have not time to look at that. Hon. members opposite have stood upon these figures with regard to agricultural produce, and I have in my hand the report of the Commissioner, and I find in the table on page 111, under the heading of "Agricultural produce," the figures which I have quoted. I take it that they are correct.

An hon. member is quite justified in basing his conclusions on those tables, and my statement, based on those figures, is borne out that there has been a falling-off instead of an increase in the carriage of agricultural produce. The question of rolling-stock is one that requires most earnest consideration, and I am sorry that Queensland locomotives are going to be built outside of Queensland. We have our workshops and our workmen, with plenty of cheap coal, and there is certainly something wrong when work of this kind goes outside of Queensland. There is a shortage in all railway vehicles, but I believe it is more acute with locomotives. It is no use the Government building additional lines unless they build rolling-stock to meet the needs of those new lines. If the Government do not do that, then serious loss will be the result. The question of rolling-stock requires effective handling, and from what I can gather in going about the country, it is not being effectively handled. I say emphatically that I do not believe for one moment that all these happenings are due to the official management. It is all due to the system that has been brought about. I would like to hear the Minister's explanation for the decrease in mileage per employee, and tonnage per employee for 1922-23, as compared with 1914-15.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is because of more effective loading, and more powerful engines.

Mr. SWAYNE: For the nine years prior to 1914-15 the increase in mileage open for traffic was 52.4 per cent., and the increase in the construction of engines 74.2 per cent., carriages 53.8 per cent., and wagons 69.4 per cent. For the nine years since 1914-15 the percentage increase in the construction of engines has been only half the percentage of the increase in miles open for traffic. For that period the percentage increase in miles open for traffic was 24.8, whereas the increase in engine construction amounted to 13.3 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The engines are much bigger and more powerful to-day.

[Mr. Swayne.]

Mr. SWAYNE: If you are going to open up additional mileage, then you must construct a proper proportion of rolling-stock.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We do not require the same number of engines per train mile as in 1914, because we have very powerful locomotives to-day.

Mr. SWAYNE: A certain thing came under my notice quite recently, which I think could very well be told here.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The time allowed the hon. gentleman under the Standing Orders has expired.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburr*): I wish first to congratulate the Premier and the Secretary for Railways on the completion of the North Coast Railway. A high tribute must be paid to the workmen who completed the section between Mackay and Townsville and the section between Mackay and St. Lawrence. Any one who has travelled over the line will bear me out that it is a very good and splendidly-built line. I wish also to offer my thanks to the officials of the department for the courteous manner in which they have always received me and attended to those matters which I have brought before them.

The North Coast Railway is one of the best examples of railway construction that has been done by this Government. It has brought Townsville into touch with Brisbane and Cairns into touch with the Southern portions of the State. I hope that, when the Ministers and the officers of the department proceed to Cairns to open the line officially, they will take as many of the hon. members opposite who represent Southern constituencies with them as they can get to accompany them so that they can see what North Queensland is like. I feel satisfied that, if they are taken to North Queensland, they will be as much impressed with that part of the State as they were with the Dawson Valley lands when the Secretary for Lands took them there recently.

One of the most important matters to be considered so far as Townsville is concerned is in connection with the work that has to be done for the railway system of the North. A good deal has been said about the up-to-date manner in which the Ipswich workshops were able to turn out the work, and it has been said that it was equal to similar work in any other part of Australia. I hope that all the work for the railways in the North will be done at Townsville. We have the tradesmen, and we feel quite certain that the work can be effected as efficiently and well as in the South. I would like to impress upon the department that work is at times held up in the Townsville workshops because of the shortage of material. That adds greatly to the cost of the work. Through a lack of foresight in the early days when the workshops of Townsville were constructed, no provision was made for an expansion of the system in the North. The railway yards are so crowded at the present time that it is almost impossible to bring trains in or out of the station when shunting is going on. When trains are arriving from the North or South, all shunting operations have got to cease. I hope that, when the department is considering the remodelling of the yards, something will be done to make the yards better than they now are.

Provision for a good deal of work to be done in the North is made on the Estimates. Here is some of the work for which provision has been made—

	£
Remodelling station yard and additional buildings at Stewart's Creek ... ..	1,500
Electric Staff, Stewart's Creek ... ..	750
Fencing, Stewart's Creek to Proserpine ... ..	5,000
Lighting ... ..	1,000
Relaying ... ..	20,000
Sanitary system ... ..	400
New machinery ... ..	4,500
Electric light and power ... ..	3,000
Goods shed ... ..	5,000
Additions and alterations to workshops ... ..	11,000
<b>Total ... ..</b>	<b>£52,150</b>

As it is coming to the close of the year, a fair number of unemployed will be collected in and around Townsville owing to the fact that the meatworks will be closing and the sugar season ending. I ask the Minister, if it is possible, to start some of this work immediately so that at least some of the unemployed will be able to get employment, and their homes will be brighter at Christmas than would be the case if no work was started before the end of the year.

[2.30 p.m.]

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That will be done.

Mr. DASH: I feel sure that many of the people of the North will be grateful for the hon. gentleman's statement. In the North last year we were allowed to carry on in our workshops some construction work, building new wagons and other work. On page 21 of the report of the Commissioner for Railways for last year we read—

"In the Northern Division 46 'V' wagons, 14 'V.H.', 9 'H.' and 12 timber bogies (2-feet gauge) were built at Townsville, while 44 locomotives were overhauled, 4 carriages, and 25 wagons were rebuilt, and many others repaired."

If there is any more rolling-stock to be made for the North Coast Railway, Townsville should get its fair share. I notice from the report that the department have accepted tenders for the building of new locomotives. The locomotive question has been a burning one for some considerable time in North Queensland. We know that the Railway Department did the best that was possible under the circumstances, because, before the line was linked up, it was almost impossible to land a railway engine at Townsville owing to the very heavy expense involved, and we had to carry on with the engines at our disposal. New engines are now being delivered, and we trust that some of those engines will be sent to the North to give us an opportunity of keeping the rolling-stock up to date and the trains up to time. It has been stated all along the line that, so far as the Northern trains are concerned, there has been a big percentage up to the mark and on time; but we know that it is almost impossible to keep all trains up to time because of the fact that, if one train is delayed at a siding, that naturally throws other trains behind. That is the cause of some of the late running of trains. Some

people have stated that the reason for the late running of trains has been that employees wanted to build up overtime. That is not correct, because in the North employees do their best to get their trains in on time, and I want to refute any statement to the contrary.

A very important matter that wants to be dealt with in connection with our railway yards in Townsville is that of the erosion which is going on at Ross Creek. Only last year the department spent a considerable sum of money in building a wall on the creek bank to prevent the banks being washed away and to prevent the encroachment of the water upon the railway yards. I wish to point out to the department that on the right bank of Ross Creek there is a good deal of erosion now taking place. Every tide that comes in and goes out and every flood that takes place washes away yards and yards of the bank, and at present the washaways are in close proximity to the Railway Department's property—that is, the property in which the officers of the department are housed. There has been a movement on foot by the progress association of the Railway Estate and South Townsville to communicate with the Government and local bodies for the purpose of having a dredge placed at the mouth of Ross River to pump the sand back to the low-lying portion of South Townsville. That would reclaim an amount of land which would almost pay the cost of the dredging and refilling. Some years ago the Townsville Harbour Board's engineers and experts appointed by the Harbour Board to go into the question of putting an embankment across Ross Creek, where it junctions with the Ross River, pointed out that it was possible to do this work and that it would involve no engineering difficulty. The progress association has written to the Townsville Council, the Harbour Board, the shire council, and also to the Treasury Department asking them to co-operate in seeing if something cannot be done to carry out this work. At the present time the banks of this creek, together with the refuse that comes down during flood time, are being washed into the harbour, and the Harbour Board is constantly dredging the refuse from the basin, whereas, if this embankment were constructed across Ross Creek and a portion of the creek filled in, it would save the Harbour Board thousands of pounds a year in dredging. In addition, the land would be saved instead of being washed away by the flood tides and floods.

I see by the Estimates that a good deal of money is to be expended in connection with the Townsville workshops, and I hope the department will see that the most up-to-date machinery is purchased for these workshops, so that they will have an opportunity of competing successfully with the Ipswich workshops, where there is an up-to-date plant at present. It is no use the department at the present time putting the cost of work at Townsville against the cost of work at Ipswich, because at Townsville we have no up-to-date machinery such as they have at Ipswich. Furthermore, the lines in use in Townsville run right into the workshops, and there is a risk of accident when shunting is being carried on. I trust the department will give every consideration to the matters I have mentioned, and that during the next financial year the Townsville workshops will

Mr. Dash.]

get a fair share of the work, and that they will become a hive of industry.

At 2.37 p.m.,

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

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I consider that the Minister's reply to the alleged criticisms of the other side has been sufficiently effective to make it unnecessary for me to enter the field again. In speaking on the Financial Statement, I instanced certain criticism by the Melbourne "Age" of the Victorian railway system, and all their comparisons as to mileage costs were in favour of Queensland. The general idea that these railways should be run as private railways would be run was stressed yesterday by the hon. member for Oxley. He apparently does not understand Australia. His ideas of a country are all taken from countries smaller than any one of half a dozen electorates in Queensland; where transportation is carried on by a dozen or twenty private railway companies, and where some of the worst accommodation in the world is to be found on some of these private lines, notably the London and South-Eastern. In coming to the consideration of a State-owned railway system in a country of this sort, he is apparently unequipped with sufficient information to permit him to get a proper perspective. For instance, we have a railway system which is largely the working plant of a great public estate of over 400,000,000 acres—unique in the world—and when on top of that we see how these railways have brought to Queensland the only decentralised system in use in Australia we can recognise that, if there is no bookkeeping profit, still these railways and their management deserve well of this country.

Speaking from the purely local point of view, I thank the Minister and the Commissioner for the excellent work done in the improvement of the western train system. Although hon. members on the other side seem to take it for granted that we are now about to close up railway construction for years to come, I would urge that, as £500,000,000 could be found in Australia for war, the Commonwealth—which is largely taking over the job of providing funds for the States, or at least of controlling loans for the States—should find £150,000,000 for the purpose of making necessary railways and doing that which has remained an electioneering placard for the last forty years—the locking of the rivers of Australia. This being done, one of the first necessary works should be the Charleville-Blackall line, another connection with the New South Wales railway system and its extension to Hungerford, Thargomindah, Eromanga, Windorah, and on to Boulia—a line which will probably come on much quicker than is anticipated, because it is part of the Commonwealth system of the North-South line, and will naturally be built contemporaneously with that line. There is also ahead an extension south of the line to Cunnamulla.

The statement that the railways are overmanned or overstaffed and that they cost too much is largely the despairing wail of people who see only one way of making the railways pay. On the one hand they do not like to see freights and fares increased, and on the other hand they complain of the railways being overstaffed; and, if they cared to put

[*Mr. Dash.*

it into actual words, they are people who believe in grinding the heads of the employees of the railways on the doorstep, which is the old Tory way. These deficits in our railways—which have been continuous for forty years—have been part of the natural condition of operating State railways and extending them, so that we have now over 6,000 miles of railway serving a population of 325,000. Although there may be bad service given in every utility, public and private, the people responsible for most of the criticism of the railways should, first of all, ask themselves whether they are giving to the State railway system good citizenship. We find—especially on first-class carriages—that we have such bad citizens travelling that the towels have to be chained up. In the more Southern States, where the figures would give the idea that they have a more criminal population than we have here—

Mr. KERR: You have to chain up the soap in this place. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD: That has only been since the hon. member has been here. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: It was before that.

Mr. BEDFORD: They knew the hon. member was coming. The position is that bad citizenship is given to the State system. There are plenty of men who hog a large amount of room in the railway carriages, who put up their feet on the seats, and destroy generally the property which is really their own, although they have got such a bad sense of citizenship that they cannot understand it. If there be bad service in the Railway Department in a few rare instances, there is also an amount of bad citizenship among the people who travel. The work done by the Railway Department in making it possible for the poor people of the back country to come to the sea has largely been made valueless by the fact that a few people on the beaches on the sea coast have bogged all the building sites and charge like the Light Brigade for the two or three weeks that these people are in town. Seeing that the Department of Public Lands has certain estates down at Burleigh on which it is spending a large amount of money in building a road, the Railway Department should make some arrangements with the Department of Public Lands and establish large accommodation houses for the people who travel on the railways to the sea, relieving them from the pirates who make an excursion to the seaside practically impossible. At the same time there should be a composite ticket which would carry the people over the railway and include accommodation at the seaside. That would tend to increase the revenue of the Railway Department.

The State railway systems of Australia should do something like what is done by private-railway systems all over the world. They not only carry their people at much higher fares than here from point to point, but they also establish railway hotels at each big centre, so that, after they get the profits of carrying them on the railway, they also get the profit of accommodating them during their stay at the point to which they are travelling. For instance, it is up to the Railway Department to establish on railway property railway hotels at Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, and Brisbane, and in suchwise provide that State Socialism—seeing that it has all the jobs that do not pay—the post office, the railways,



and so on—shall get a hand on some of the jobs that do pay.

One of the worst statements by a man pretending to be an Australian legislator was made in this Chamber the other day by the hon. member for Oxley. He said that the department should buy its material in the cheapest market. If there is one thing that must appeal to any Australian, it is the fact that every Labour Government in Australia has shown itself to be truly Australian by insisting upon buying all its necessaries in the Australian market. The Tory Commonwealth Government, the Tory Government in South Australia when in power, and the Tory Government in New South Wales, have continuously sent as much money out of the country as possible on the ground of alleged cheapness. When the Rockhampton Harbour Board wanted a dredge, it sent abroad for the purpose and referred the impudent request to the Commonwealth Government that the £11,000 duty on it should be remitted. I trust that the Commonwealth Government, bad as it is, will not be as bad as that. Where our Government have had a chance of placing contracts for public works inside Queensland they have done so; but the discrepancy between the tenders in the case of the contract just let was so great that the Government had to give it to New South Wales, which, after all, is inside Australia.

We not only have the hon. member for Oxley—one wonders how England could bear to part with a man of his transcendental abilities—saying that this country has had too much sentiment of late, and that it should buy in the cheapest market, apparently cherishing the idea—seeing he says that the railways are over-staffed—that some kind of profit should be got by getting cheaper labour and grinding it down to the position which existed in 1912. No matter what happens our Government is not likely to do that. We say that our job as a railway carrier is to give the best possible service for the least possible money, always remembering that it is a railway system which is developing 400,000,000 acres of land which is unalienated and remains the property of the State. I do not think any hon. member on this side has any sympathy with a man who suggests that we should buy goods even from Germany if they are cheaper and put our own people out of work. It is only just another proof of the general insincerity of the most concerted of all the cockney actors who have ever struck this country.

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

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): In supporting the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition I want to confine myself to the point—that is the action of the Government in increasing fares and freights on the Queensland railways.

The Government have endeavoured to make a considerable amount of capital out of the fact that their policy is to run the railways at the lowest possible cost to the people, but their actual administration differs entirely from their promises at election times. The Commissioner's report for 1916 states—

“An amended classification, both goods

and coaching, came into operation as from 1st November last. These classifications meant an increase in the rates and fares, but were so arranged as to affect only slightly the cost of necessities of life. The issue of return tickets, except within the suburban area, was abolished—single journey tickets only being issued. This alteration was responsible for a considerable increase in the revenue derived from passenger traffic.”

That is what we have as the first act of a Labour Government during the first year of its administration. The Commissioner, in his report for 1917, states—

“Additional revenue, of course, could be obtained by raising rates and fares to make up for lack of traffic, but this would mean increasing the burden on those who have had the enterprise and courage to take up the work of pioneering. How, then, are these sections of railway to be made to pay if rates and fares are not increased, or the residents in the benefited district not taxed to make up the deficiency? It might be worth while to consider the appointment of experts who could instruct persons on lands served by such lines how to get the best results from their land, and by means of advertisement and demonstration, stimulate settlement in such districts.”

To-day every time the question of fares and freights is raised the Government contend that the only possible way to make the railways pay is by increasing fares and freights. We on this side are asked if we are prepared to support such a policy. The Government's policy has had such an effect in Queensland that the Government are unable to obtain additional revenue through the Railway Department because the country has gone back. Country people have drifted to the city looking for work, and many of them have had to exist on Government rations. The Government have never made a thorough examination to ascertain what is the real trouble. It is no use telling us on the one hand that freights and fares will have to be kept as low as possible, and then on the other hand taking action to solve the difficulty and saying that the only way to solve the difficulty is by increasing freights and fares. In 1920 the Government further increased the freights and fares by 17 per cent. and 19 per cent., and just recently the passenger fares were increased by 7½ per cent., with a minimum increase of 1d. I take this opportunity of emphatically protesting against this additional burden upon my constituents, and what is happening to my constituents is happening to the people in the whole of the metropolitan area. The Government claim to have increased passenger fares by only 7½ per cent., but I venture to say that on the Enoggera line the increase generally amounts to 17½ per cent. That imposition is far too great.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: What fares are charged on the Ashgrove tramline?

Mr. KERR: There is a heavy imposition there which may be removed some day.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I did not hear the hon. gentleman protesting about that.

Mr. KERR: I did protest. I intend to support the leader of the Opposition in his motion of censure on the Government for

*Mr. Kerr.*]

increasing fares and freights to the extent they have done. During a twelve months' period 800,000 passengers travelled on the Enoggera line between Wilston to Mitchelton and paid £18,663; but owing to the recent increase in fares, they will now have to pay an additional £3,330 per annum, which is equivalent to 17½ per cent. That is too much to impose on any people at one time. The statement by the Government that the increase was only 7½ per cent. is more or less misleading. They were quite honest in stating that the minimum would be one penny, but an increase of one penny on the Enoggera line has meant not an increase of 7½ per cent., but of 20 per cent. There were in some instances increases of 20 per cent. in the fares there, and an increase generally of 17½ per cent. That is the action of an allegedly-Labour Government, or, to call them by their more correct name, a Socialist Government, although they forget that their socialistic principles have at times reduced the standard of living. The imposition of this increase means that a man in the vicinity of the Enoggera line—and most of them are on the basic wage—has to pay approximately £5 a year more out of his wages. My remarks in regard to the Enoggera line also apply to many other metropolitan suburbs.

There are some astounding anomalies on the Enoggera line, but apart from these anomalies the fares are too high altogether. It seems unreasonable and inconceivable that a season ticket holder from Alderley to Brisbane has to pay more for a twelve months' season ticket than if he paid his fare daily.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Surely that is not correct?

Mr. KERR: I am glad to hear the Assistant Home Secretary make that remark.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I would like you to give me the figures.

Mr. KERR: Season ticket holders travelling once a day for six days a week have to pay 1s. 3d. a year more than if they purchased their ticket daily. If the season ticket holder does not use the ticket on ten holidays in the year, he has to travel thirteen times before he gets the value for his money. The advantage to the department in having season ticket holders is that they have the use of the money for twelve months and are saved expense in printing and the officers' time in issuing the tickets frequently. The cost of the season tickets on the Enoggera line is out of proportion to the daily fare, and should be immediately reduced.

Let me take another area. Ascot is three-quarters of a mile further from Brisbane than Alderley, yet the season ticket from that station is £1 4s. 9d. less. Compare Ascot and the people who live in Ascot with the district on the Enoggera line and the people who live there! Affluence in comparison with the basic wage.

Let me take another instance. The return fare from Doomben to Brisbane is 7d. as against a fare from Enoggera to Brisbane of 5d. The people of Doomben pay £5 19s. 3d. for a season ticket as against £7 10s. 6d. the cost of a ticket from Enoggera. The difference is £1 11s. 3d. against Enoggera, yet Doomben is 1½ miles further from Brisbane than Enoggera! Why this inconsistency?

[Mr. Kerr.

Then take Toombul. The daily fare is greater than Enoggera, yet the season ticket is 19s. 3d. cheaper. The same thing applies in regard to Nundah. The same

[3 p.m.] disparity exists in connection with other lines. Morningside is the same distance as Alderley, and is not only 19s. 3d. cheaper per year, but is 1d. a day cheaper. Take Chelmer—which, I think, I may refer to as an aristocratic suburb. The fares to Chelmer are 2d. higher than to Enoggera, but a season ticket is 9s. 6d. cheaper than a similar ticket to Enoggera. It is difficult to reconcile these two facts. Fares generally are far too high on the Enoggera line.

Why I am talking about the Enoggera line is because the Commissioner's report states that the Enoggera line paid in 1914—I think that was just after the guarantee—£5 19s. 5d. per cent., and the average of all the lines of Queensland that year—when the Queensland railways paid interest and working expenses—was £3 13s. 9d. That shows that the Enoggera line paid a handsome profit on the investment at that time, and the traffic on that line has gone up considerably since then. I did work it out one year, and found that it paid somewhere in the vicinity of £7 10s. and £8 10s. per cent. on the amount invested. I am subject to contradiction on this point, but I think the profit was somewhere in that vicinity.

The difference between the last Government—I was not connected with it in any way—and the present socialistic Administration is that the previous Government was a very successful Administration while the present Government are proving most unsuccessful. I am not going to take up the attitude that the Commissioner for Railways and his staff are not doing their job, nor do I say that our railways are over-staffed. I do not know if they are and I cannot say that; but the Commissioner would have put the fact in his report if, as is alleged, his department was over-staffed. It is pleasing to read the Commissioner's annual report for 1914. Here is an extract from it—

“I am exceedingly pleased to record that the railway revenue for the year is the largest yet earned. This is due to the advancement of the State, the extension of the railways, and consequent expansion of traffic.”

We must remember that at that time that Administration built more railways than have the present Government. Of course that was the policy of the Government at that time. Notwithstanding the fact that they built hundreds of miles more lines, the traffic expanded.

Mr. HYNES: And the employees' wages were the lowest in the Commonwealth.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member says so, but the hon. member's party has reduced the wages of railway employees, and the hon. member is part and parcel of that party. That is similar to their fallacy that railways should not be run for the purpose of making them pay but for the purpose of allowing people to travel on them free, or as free as possible. Hon. members opposite have to recognise where they stand to-day. The railways are a business proposition.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. member should take the average wage and the average

working hours of to-day and compare them with those for the period he mentioned.

Mr. KERR: In regard to wages, the Queensland Government have followed what they term to be the policy of Tory Governments in other States. When the other States increase wages, Queensland followed their lead—

Mr. HYNES: That is wrong.

Mr. KERR: That is a fact. There were no Labour Governments there. The hon. member will take credit for anything, and he and his party must take the credit when they next go before the people for the increased fares and freights. They cannot talk the bunkum they are now giving the people and expect them to swallow it.

During the last election campaign the Government party promised cheap fares, cheap food, and a high standard of living; but when they get an opportunity, what do they do? They increase fares and freights, reduce wages, and reduce the standard of living. You cannot get away from facts. "Hansard" will show that they voted for a reduction in the railway service.

I want to ask the Secretary for Railways to go further into the question and see if he cannot reduce the fares on the Enoggera line. In comparison with other lines they are far too high, and some better basis should be adopted in regard to season tickets. I ask the Minister to give that matter very serious consideration.

Unfortunately members of the Government have side-tracked the amendment that has been moved, and have gone all over the globe in the matter of railways. This amendment is a protest against the recent increase in fares and freights. I have not had an opportunity of going through the Commissioner's report for 1923-24, so I have to take the following figures from the report for 1922-23:—

Year.	Total Tonnage, Goods, and Live Stock Carried.	Average Cost per Ton.
1914-15 .. .. .	Tons. 4,970,873	s. d. 10 1
1922-23 .. .. .	4,208,959	15 8

There was a decrease in the latter year in the tonnage carried, yet the average increase in the charge per ton since 1914-15 was 5s. 7d. That gives a percentage increase of 55 per cent. irrespective of the recent increase. Now take the figures in regard to agricultural produce—

Year.	Tons Carried.	Average Rate per Ton.
1914-15 .. .. .	876,621	s. d. 6 0
1922-23 .. .. .	1,191,871	9 2

That shows an average increase of 3s. 2d. per ton, or an increase of 53 per cent. apart

from the recent increases. Now let us take the earnings per train mile—

EARNINGS PER TRAIN MILE (FREIGHTS AND FARES COMBINED).

1914-15	..	..	..	s. d.
1922-23	..	..	..	6 3½
				9 11½

That gives an increase of 55 per cent. That increase in freights and fares would not have been warranted unless there had been a serious drift in the Railway Department. There has been a serious drift, and the Commissioner for Railways time and again has pointed out what should be done. He has not hesitated in his report to say what should be done. In 1917 a Royal Commission was appointed to make full inquiry into the administration of the railways in the State of Queensland. That Commission went very exhaustively into the question of the failure to pay interest on capital invested. The Commissioners had this to say—

"It is, therefore, fairly obvious that the falling away in the net revenue is not due to the personality of the present Commissioner, and as his higher administrative subordinates are almost the same as at the time he produced 4 per cent., it is also fairly obvious that the falling off in net revenue should be sought in some other quarter."

Mr. HYNES: We have had a war since 1914.

Mr. KERR: This was in 1917, and the war was practically over at that time. I venture to state the Queensland railways were not a loser in regard to the war, after the Commonwealth had paid its quota to the Queensland railways. It rather gained. The additional traffic in connection with fares was a compensating factor so far as Queensland is concerned. Of course the price of material increased. That is the report of the Commission, one of the members of which was the Assistant Home Secretary. I think it cost somewhere about £2,000. Surely the question I have asked is a pertinent one. The Assistant Home Secretary was formerly an employee of the Railway Department, but I do not know that he had a vast knowledge of the department. A man in the Railway Department is only a cog in the machinery, and is no more competent to be a Commissioner than any other person. It is obvious that there is something wrong. It is not the Commissioner or his officers; and, if it is not the fault of those officials, is it the policy of the Government which is wrong? Is it good policy for the Railway Department to give subsidies and rebates and get nothing back in the way of compensation? The Minister often says that the Railway Department is doing wonderful work. It was doing that work before he had charge of the department, and it paid its way, and there was a greater area of land in Queensland under cultivation. That position can be brought about again, but the problem will have to be tackled. The railways are showing an annual loss of £1,500,000, and the rebates to mining companies have been quoted as a reason for the deficits, but the rebates made in that direction last year were only about £161,000. It is not these small concessions we are looking for. We are looking for the £1,500,000. We want to follow out the best policy to make the Railway Department pay. If the Government do that, there will be no necessity by increased fares and freights to tax men who are on the basic wage in

Mr. Kerr.]

the Enoggera electorate and other electorates of Queensland.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): I would like to compliment the Minister and the Commissioner for Railways and staff on their very capable administration. One often has to go abroad and make comparisons between the various activities in other States and his own State. We may often gather valuable information abroad which will assist us here. We can also tell the people of other States of the conditions in our own State which are worthy of their imitation. I have made it a practice in previous recesses to visit one State or another in Australia, and during the last recess I visited New Zealand in order to gain information. My experience in travelling through the various States of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand has satisfied me that we have nothing to be ashamed of in the way of railway administration in this State; indeed we have very much to be proud of. Whilst I do not wish to decry the administration of the railways in any other State of Australia or in the sister Dominion, I would like to say that in every Government office in this State you will get civility from the officers. You will find the staff on the railways right from the porters and drivers to the head officials are capable and efficient men. It was a pleasure to me, after coming back from New Zealand, to see the capable men who were in charge of our trains in Queensland as compared with those in New Zealand. Whilst they were civil enough in New Zealand, they were dull, and they were lacking in a knowledge of affairs connected with the comfort of the passengers generally. In the other States of Australia they are similar to our officials, but we have everything to be proud of in this State, and the discipline which obtains through the State is highly complimentary to the Commissioner and the Minister. It is pleasing to be able to say this after hearing hon. members on the other side constantly attacking this branch of the public service. They seem to have the idea that to attack this department is to attack the Government; but, if they went abroad and had the information which they should possess, there would be more of praise than of condemnation in their criticism. Before leaving the matter of the staff, let me say that there have been fewer industrial disputes amongst the railway employees in Queensland than in any other British possession in the Southern Hemisphere. There is no doubt that with their absolute discipline, carefulness, efficiency, brightness, and preparedness to go on with the treatment which they are receiving—which, to my mind, under the prevailing circumstances, is the best they could possibly receive—we have less industrial trouble than any other Australasian State. (Opposition interruption.) The Commissioner seems to be able to handle the men in a way in which the officers in no other State can.

Mr. MORGAN: What does the "Railway Advocate" say?

Mr. CARTER: I do not care what the railwaymen's journal may say. I can see things as well as anybody else, and there is more satisfaction here than anywhere I have been, and it is to the credit of the administration and the staff that there is more industrial peace in this State than anywhere else.

[*Mr. Kerr.*

There has been a good deal of lamentation on the other side of the Chamber about the rolling-stock on the Queensland railways. The rolling-stock in Queensland, from the carriages down to the trucks, compares favourably with that in any other part of Australasia. If anybody thinks differently, let him go abroad and have a look at the rolling-stock on other systems. No trains in any part of the Southern Hemisphere run more punctually to-day than in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARTER: It is true that in Queensland during the war, as elsewhere—when there was a shortage of material and it was not possible to repair the engines—trains could not always run to time; but, to the credit of the general discipline of the staff who are handling the trains to-day, it is rare that we have one late. I dare say that I travel on the railways as much as any hon. member. I represent a country constituency over 300 miles away, and I am constantly up and down and into other parts of the State, and my experience is that in no part of Australasia do trains run more punctually and well than here. I think it is fair that the people should know that. That hon. members on the other side, for purely political purposes, should get up and speak as they have done is something of which they should be ashamed.

Mr. KELSO: We have not run the staff down once.

Mr. CARTER: In the other States in the South the railway systems have an advantage in comparison with ours. In this State we have a greater mileage than in any other State in Australasia, and we have more single lines; but, in spite of the fact that we are running under greater disabilities, we succeed in doing better than the other States. All things considered, we should be very proud. If we had more double lines, as they have in Victoria, we would then be able to have still better service in train running. Despite the fact that Victoria is a small State with double our population, and with more double lines than Queensland, yet our railways are so well managed that we can give as good service as the most economically situated State. When the leader of the Opposition was speaking, he stated that the increase in freights and fares was driving people out of production. He also said that the farmer was being cursed by what he termed a badly-run railway. Hon. members opposite realise that the freights and fares are lower to-day in comparison with the purchasing power of money than they were in 1914. The sovereign will not buy as much to-day as it did then.

Mr. MORGAN: The same thing applies to wages.

Mr. CARTER: Wages have gone up.

Mr. MORGAN: Wages are not of the same value now as they were in 1914.

Mr. CARTER: There is a greater charge on the railways to-day. Wages have increased and material is more costly; but the railway service gets a better deal in the way of payment than it did in 1914. We are treating the railway men as men, and in the way men should be treated. They consider it is an awful crime to impose an increase of 7½ per cent. The leader of the Opposition said that that increase was driving people

out. What is the position? These figures show—

OWNERS ENGAGED IN CULTIVATION.			
1915	...	...	22,095
1920	...	...	23,201

These figures show an increase of 1,106 after five years of Labour administration

Mr. KELSO: What are the figures to date?

Mr. CARTER: I am dealing with my own figures at present. There has been a considerable increase since 1920. Let me go a little further. These figures show—

VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION APART FROM DAIRY PRODUCTION.

				£
1915	...	...	...	5,023,304
1920	...	...	...	10,386,233

Those figures show an increase of £5,362,929.

Mr. MORGAN: Those figures include wool.

Mr. CARTER: I did not say they did not include all agricultural products. These figures show—

VALUE OF DAIRY PRODUCTS.

(Butter, Cheese, Condensed Milk, and Milk for Domestic Purposes.)

				£
1915	...	...	...	2,041,666
1920	...	...	...	6,038,528

During the five years the figures have more than doubled, yet hon. members opposite tell us that the increase in freights and fares is driving people off the land. I could go on quoting more figures, but time will not permit me to do so. Just a moment ago I heard the hon. member for Enoggera crying about the fact that the increase in freights and fares was driving the people off the land and bringing them into the city.

Mr. MORGAN: Quite true.

Mr. CARTER: Then the hon. member set out to charge the Minister with not giving a cheaper fare to the city by comparison with the country, and letting the country pay for it.

Mr. KERR: I did not say that at all.

Mr. CARTER: That is exactly what the hon. member inferred. The hon. gentleman is not prepared to advocate a reduction in the fares in the country districts, and all he wants is a reduction in the fares for his constituents at Enoggera—allowing the country people to pay for it.

Mr. KERR: No. I dealt with the country fares as well.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. gentleman did nothing of the kind. The hon. gentleman speaks with two voices in this Chamber. First, he does not want people driven off the land, and then he wants cheaper fares to and from his particular electorate at any cost. The hon. member made comparisons of the fares from his and other electorates. He does not do anything in this Chamber but work the parish pump.

Mr. MORGAN: The pot calling the kettle black.

Mr. CARTER: I would like to refer to one or two matters in connection with my own district. (Loud laughter.) I would like to thank the Minister for the amount of railway construction work that has been going on in the Upper Burnett—that is not my

district—in the interests of the people who desire to obtain good land for farming and dairying purposes and have an outlet for their produce. The activity of the Railway Department in constructing three lines to Monto is something of which the Government might well be proud. Those lines will open up fertile country capable of settling 8,000 or 9,000 people. That railway will be connected with Gladstone, one of the best ports in Queensland, and within 100 miles of Monto. I am exceedingly pleased with the work done in the last two and a-half years in that district, but I want to call the attention of the Minister to the need of pressing on with that work. There are a great many settlers now in the Upper Burnett whose only useful outlet is from Monto down to Gladstone. They have now to cope with the difficulty of a very rugged range to reach Gladstone. I am sure that the Minister is entirely in sympathy with the work, and I hope that the Railway Department will hasten on the construction of this branch. I have a number of letters which I can show the hon. gentleman from a number of settlers in that area who desire to get the shortest possible route to a seaport. They are desirous, with me, that the Minister should push ahead with the Many Peaks-Monto section of the railway so that they will have direct communication with a port by the shortest possible route.

I desire to draw the attention of the Minister to another need, and that is the necessity for remodelling and improving the Gladstone Railway Station.

Mr. MORGAN: Have they got a port there?

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member has travelled there and knows that for himself. The station was built many years ago, and at the time no provision was made for such a volume of traffic as it is asked to cope with to-day. I know it was in the mind of the Commissioner some considerable time ago to remodel the station to give the district a better service. The people of Gladstone are suffering many inconveniences to-day. They have only a platform on one side of the line, and people have to take a great risk in crossing and recrossing the line. The people should not be compelled to take those risks, and I am hopeful that the department will at the earliest possible moment remodel and improve the station so that it will not only cope with the present trade, but be able to handle the immense trade I know it will have at no distant date from the Upper Burnett area. These and a few other improvements the people of my district will greatly appreciate and be satisfied with.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): We have been deluged on this vote with figures from both sides of the Chamber to show the effect of freights in Queensland as compared with freights in the southern States. The finances of the Railway Department have reached such a calamitous state that, like the hon. member for Oxley, I think it is high time the Government gave some consideration to devising a policy to improve the situation.

Mr. BUTCOCK: Tell us how you would solve the problem.

Mr. KELSO: I have hardly risen on my feet before the hon. member for Barcoo wants me to tell him how I would advise the Minister on the matter. I would like the Minister to tell us the remedy he

*Mr. Kelso.]*

proposes to adopt. If hon. members on this side had the opportunity of gaining the Treasury benches—and I hope it will not be very long before they do—we shall soon show what difference we can make.

Mr. BULCOCK: Tell us what you would do for the well-being of the community.

Mr. KELSO: I would be pleased to do so, but, as I have only twenty-five minutes, I prefer to continue my speech in my own way.

Mr. BULCOCK: Five minutes of constructive criticism would be worth twenty minutes of destructive criticism.

Mr. KELSO: The Minister told us this morning that we had the very best of Commissioners and the very best of [3.30 p.m.] Ministers. By way of a suggestion for economy I shall start right with the Minister himself. The hon. gentleman told us that he is not proposing to do any further railway construction during the year, barring, of course, the South Brisbane-Kyogle-Grafton line—

Mr. CARTER: And other railways under construction.

Mr. KELSO: It seems to me that the hon. gentleman will be out of a job during the next year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not next year.

Mr. KELSO: When the hon. member for Barcoo was speaking the other day he gave me a little information which I did not previously understand. Here have I for the last year been trying to get some improvements for Nundah—

Mr. CARTER: Where is Nundah?

Mr. KELSO: Nundah is the hub of the Universe, and that is where I come from. (Laughter.) I am very anxious about these improvements, and I am still hopeful, but the hon. member for Barcoo stated that it is well known that, if you want a thing, you must go to the Minister.

Mr. BULCOCK: I said when you want a minor thing done.

Mr. KELSO: I think the Minister will bear me out that I have never approached him on any matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A good many have done so, but they do not get all they want.

Mr. KELSO: That leads me up to what I want to get to. Is not a great deal of the trouble in the Railway Department today due to the fact that so much has to be done through the Minister?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Well, your party passed the Railway Act.

Mr. KELSO: We are faced with the fact that there is a tremendous deficit, and that deficit is increasing every year. Hon. gentlemen opposite have asked for some constructive criticism. I shall try to give some. I can show a way by which we can save the salary of one Minister during the year, because I cannot for the life of me see why, if no railway construction is to be undertaken, the Minister should not do the right thing and allow the Commissioner to be unfettered by any political considerations. We realise that political considerations have affected the running of the railways during

[Mr. Kelso.

the administration of this Government in the past, and unfortunately that state of affairs exists to-day. Possibly the Minister's duties could be merged into those of another department without the slightest difficulty. That is something for the Minister to think over.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you not think that you and I are in the same boat?

Mr. KELSO: I do not think so. I am not referring to the hon. gentleman's attention to his constituency. Of course we all recognise the hon. gentleman attends to that, as he should. I believe that, if we placed the affairs of the railway management—and construction, too, if necessary—in the hands of a man like the Commissioner, allowing him to run the railways to the best of his ability and without political interference, the constructive skill of the Commissioner, aided by his very able lieutenants, we would enable him to successfully reconstruct the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your party had that opportunity.

Mr. KELSO: Never mind about that. This party have been in power nine years and they have had only a succession of deficits. People are beginning to wonder where things are going to end, and I am suggesting a way out of the difficulty. They can make the railways pay in every other State in the Commonwealth. That is rather peculiar. New South Wales was the only exception, and the reason why the railways did not pay there was that a Labour Government was in power at the time. That is an extraordinary thing. This blight has laid a hand on the finances of our State, and the policy we are pursuing at the present time is piling up huge deficits annually. We need to evolve some new scheme whereby it will be possible to make ends meet. I suggest that the Minister should place the matter before the Cabinet and give it a trial. We have in the Railway Department men who have spent a lifetime in the work of the department, but it is only natural that these men cannot carry out a settled and continuous policy when they are always subject to political interference. I quite admit that the principle at the present time is to try and get as much as you can from the Minister. Let us get rid of that. Let us put the Commissioner in the same position as the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank. Let him be in a position to say to the Minister, "That is my business and not yours." On one occasion a member in the Federal Parliament asked a question regarding the Commonwealth Bank of the Minister who had charge of that department—the Treasurer I presume—and the Minister very rightly said he would not dare to ask the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank such a question because that officer had the right to manage the bank as he thought fit.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is a very wrong principle.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member may think that is a wrong principle, but I think that has been the secret of the success of the Commonwealth Bank. You have one man guiding the destinies of the bank. He has a settled policy, and he can carry it out without interference, and, if he had been interfered with by the Government of the Commonwealth and by every member coming along and trying to get this, that, and the

other thing, he would not have gone very far.

Mr. DASH: Have you never been in the Commissioner's office for anything?

Mr. KELSO: I have been in the Commissioner's office, and I say that is the proper place to go in order to place matters before the Commissioner. Why should not different matters be placed before the Commissioner? But the Commissioner should be independent. No matter what member goes to him, the Commissioner should have power, without any interference from the Government, to say, "I will do this," or "I will not do this." At the present time he has not that power. If the system suggested were given a trial, not in a day or in a year, but slowly and surely, the affairs of the Railway Department would be straightened up and we would have a better result than we have at the present time. Hon. members opposite ask if we advocate sacking men wholesale, and if we advocate increasing fares and freights, and so on. It is for us to give these experts a chance to justify themselves without any political interference, and then we shall know, for the first time in the history of Australia, whether it is possible for these experts to do the work we believe they can do. In America the president of a railway is the guiding star, and he is assisted by experts, and if the same system were applied here, it should work very well.

The hon. member for Warrego criticised the hon. member for Oxley and took him to task for suggesting that we should buy our material in the cheapest market. The hon. member for Warrego said, "It is a fact that certain railway contracts for locomotives have been given to the South, but the money is kept in Australia." I would ask is that any good to Queensland? Is that any good to Walkers, Limited? Is that any good to Evans, Anderson, Phelan, and Company? Is it not a fact that we have to run this State as best we can, and, if that contract goes out of Queensland, so much less work is provided in Queensland? Last year the Premier stated the principle on which the Government were willing to deal with contracts of this kind. He said that a preference was given in Queensland to Queensland firms to the extent of 15 per cent., and that it would pay us well to retain the work in Queensland even if we gave a preference up to 15 per cent. The Minister told us by interjection that 17 per cent. was the difference between the tender of the Clyde Engineering Works and the next tender. I would like to ask him why quarrel over 2 per cent. for the sake of £75,000 amount of work being done in Queensland? I think the Minister would have been very well advised—and he will hear about it yet from the men who ought to have got that work—to accept the tender of either Evans, Anderson, and Phelan or Walkers, Limited, whichever was the lower of the two, in order that that work should be retained in Queensland.

There has been a great outcry on the part of those people who live a short distance from the metropolis, whose fares were not very high, and who have had them increased. Let me take the case of a short distance on the north or south side, where the fare is 2d. We are told that no increase shall be less than 1d. The increase on that fare brings it to 3d., which is an increase of 50 per cent.

The Commissioner should look into that matter, because it is a source of annoyance to a lot of people that because they live near the city the ratio of increase in the fares is 50 per cent. It may be possible to give the public the benefit by providing that, if the 7½ per cent. increase is less than 1d., there shall not be an increase. The increase in question may be only a small amount, but it is causing a great deal of annoyance to the people concerned, and it is being generally commented upon.

When the hon. member for Mirani was quoting the figures in the report of the Commissioner for Railways to show that the carriage of agricultural products had increased during the year, the Minister referred the hon. member to page 20 of the report, but the hon. member for Mirani did not catch what the Minister said and referred the matter to me. I took the opportunity of looking up the report, and I find the agricultural produce, including sugarcane, carried on all lines in 1922-1923 and 1923-1924, respectively, to be—

	Tons.
1922-1923	1,191,871
1923-1924	1,140,900

I can hardly see how, in the face of those figures, the Minister can say there has been an increase in the agricultural produce carried over the lines in that period.

Mr. BULLOCK: In any case, does not that period represent a drought period?

Mr. KELSO: The argument raised is that there has been a greater amount of land taken up and put under cultivation, but the figures do not show that. It is the policy of the Government to do away with freehold and only to have leasehold. If the hon. member will refer to the figures he will see that there has been a reduction in the amount of land taken up, and, if that is so, it reacts on the railways.

Mr. MOORE: The amount of tonnage carried is less.

Mr. KELSO: I quoted that, and the hon. member for Barcoo suggests that that is because of the drought.

There is another point to which I wish to draw attention. There is a lot of talk about pilfering on the railways. I think the hon. gentleman ought to inquire into that matter.

Mr. COLLINS: There is a lot of talk, but is there any proof?

Mr. KELSO: Quite a number of people say they have proof, but it does not pay them to come forward and make themselves conspicuous. The fact is that at Roma Street and other terminal stations it is common property that there is a tremendous lot of pilfering going on. The Minister could very well tell us about that. He knows the amount which has been paid in claims. I have the authority of a business man to say that to his knowledge there is a tremendous amount of pilfering going on in the railways at the present time. A man may know the thing is going on, but he does not want to advertise himself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is no greater than under previous Governments.

Mr. KELSO: Never mind that. I would like to know exactly what the amount paid for compensation is. From the information I have, I believe the amount is so big that

the Minister ought to take some steps to see that the offenders are prosecuted.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** Prosecutions take place frequently.

**MR. KELSO:** If the Minister says that men have been prosecuted for pilfering on the railways, we have never heard of it. The cases must have been heard in camera.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** It is no higher in the Railway Department than outside.

**MR. KELSO:** That is not the point. The Minister is supposed to be in charge of the department, and it is not only the cost to the State which has to pay these claims that we have to consider, but also the annoyance to the people who should receive the goods. They expect to receive a full consignment, but they find that they do not, and in some cases they do not get any at all. It is a very bad thing for the department that there should be so much pilfering, and these men should be prosecuted. We heard stories a few years ago that it did not suit the Government to have these men prosecuted.

**MR. HYNES:** What is the use of making wild statements? Give a concrete case.

**MR. KELSO:** I am not making wild statements. I am saying that there should be some prosecutions to act as a deterrent to other men who are breaking the law. Pilfering is rife, and the Minister knows it.

The hon. gentleman this morning gave us a number of reasons why he said the railways did not pay—we had the war, the cost of material had increased, wages had gone up, and so on—but what I wanted to get from the hon. gentleman by way of interjection was whether he was in favour of free railways. He does not say. He does not indicate whether he thinks that the cost of the railways should be a charge on the general community, but he says that the deficit of £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 is the State's contribution towards making the conditions of the people in the country easier than they are. If that argument is good, the next step is to say that there should be a deficit of £3,000,000, and that it would make the conditions still easier for the people in the country, and in the towns as well. That is the only logical conclusion for the hon. gentleman to come to, and that means free railways.

**MR. MORGAN:** That would suit the country people.

**MR. KELSO:** It would, but the hon. member forgets that, if we had free railways, somebody would have to pay, and in the long run the people generally would have to pay. The question is: Are the whole of the people of the State to pay for the railways, or are we to put the burden on the people who use them? If you agree with the principle that the consolidated revenue should bear half the cost of the railways permanently, then you are agreeing to a principle which may be applied without any end. Every other industry in the State might claim the same assistance. It might say that, in order to keep certain men going, the community should pay half the cost. I would like the Minister to tell us what proportion he is prepared to say the community should bear—20 per cent., or 30 per cent., or 40 per cent. of the total cost of the railways—or whether the total cost should be charged to consolidated revenue. If he will do so, we shall know where he is. It is no use for people

[*Mr. Kelso.*

to talk about deficits year after year if we know that the policy of the Government is to run free or partly free railways.

It would be very interesting to know what proportion they consider should be free, and what proportion should be paid for. If there were no other States to compare with, perhaps the Minister would have some right to claim that, under the circumstances, the railways were being properly run, and that the people in the country were being let down as lightly as possible; but unfortunately for him he is subject to a comparison between Queensland and the other States, so the hon. gentleman will have a very hard job to justify these continuous deficits on the railways. When a comparison is made with another State hon. members opposite say, "Yes, but Victoria is only the size of a little pocket handkerchief, and has as many people in Melbourne as we have in Queensland." We could make a comparison with New South Wales, where the railway system has cost twice as much per mile as our railways have cost.

**MR. CARTER:** Nonsense!

**MR. KELSO:** If the hon. gentleman will look up the figures, he will find that what I say is correct.

**MR. BULCOCK:** I have always contended that our lines were cheaply constructed.

**MR. KELSO:** They have been cheaply constructed, but we have a gauge of 3 feet 6 inches. If you are going to make a just comparison, you must make a full comparison, and take the capital cost in the State with which you are comparing this State. The trouble is that year after year the Minister has to come and tell us that there is another big deficit; yet we find in New South Wales they are able to pay their way and make sufficient to pay interest on the cost of construction, and if I am not mistaken, they are able to show a small surplus this year.

**MR. BULCOCK:** They have five times as many people as we have to transport.

**MR. KELSO:** The hon. gentleman may be quite right in saying that, but that simply leads me to a question of Government policy. What are the Government doing to encourage people to come here? We were told by the Minister this morning that the Government did not look five years ahead, or ten years ahead, but they look fifty years ahead. What for? Is it to have a big mileage of railways? If the hon. gentleman is looking fifty years ahead for a bigger mileage of railways, then he must look forward to a tremendous increase in population when that time arrives. It is no use contemplating building railways to serve fifty years ahead, if you are not going to look forward to the traffic to warrant that expenditure. The only way to get that increased traffic, apart from the natural increase—which is slow—is to formulate some scheme of immigration. We know perfectly well that the policy of the Government is not to encourage immigration, but rather to discourage it. They know perfectly well that it does not suit their book to have people coming into the State. The other day the hon. member for Warrego stated that the newcomers from the old country into this State should not have a vote until they had been here five or six years.

**MR. COLLINS:** He is entirely wrong.



Mr. KELSO: I am glad the hon. member for Bowen agrees with me.

Mr. COLLINS: That is my opinion.

Mr. KELSO: We want here people of our own kith and kin.

Mr. CARTER: Are you a "pom"? (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: I came to this country when I was four years of age, so, if the hon. gentleman can call me a "pom," he has a very long imagination.

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

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenston*): I have listened to this debate since its commencement, and I have been long enough here to know that the utmost desire of the Opposition is—by fair means, and if not by fair means, by other means—to discredit the Government and the departments under their control. From what I have heard from hon. members opposite, if they had their way, they would hand the railways over to a syndicate and have them run on similar lines to what private railways are run in other countries.

Mr. KELSO: Who said that?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It has been said.

Mr. KELSO: Not to-day.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The remarks of the hon. member for Nundah were something to the same effect.

Mr. KELSO: Don't strain them.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He talked a lot about political influence, asked conundrums, and held up a noose for people to put their heads into so that he might tie it up. No one is simple enough to allow him to do that.

There has been a lot of talk about comparisons with Victoria. If we are to make comparisons, we should make them with a State situated similarly to Queensland, and if it is not similarly situated, no fair comparison could be drawn. Queensland, with a population of 825,000, has a railway system of 6,000 miles. Some of those railways pass through good country, and some through country that is not good. Miles and miles of practically useless country have to be traversed at times in order to reach good country.

Mr. EDWARDS: And some railways run through country which is not cultivated and has not yet been opened up.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is simply due to the fact that the land is held under the freehold tenure which is advocated by the hon. member, and the freeholders have no intention of cultivating that land, but are simply holding on to it until development increases its value, and then they will sell it.

Mr. CLAYTON: You all do that on that side.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The owners of that freehold, in many instances, have never spent a penny on the land. Much of this land is good scrub land on our North Coast, and the owners have adopted a dog-in-the-manger attitude in respect to it. That is one of the difficulties confronting settlement in Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS: Was not your Government returned on the policy of bursting up those estates?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Such an argument carries no weight. Victoria has been frequently alluded to, but it is only the size of some Queensland electorates. Victoria has a network of railways all over the State, and has twice the population of Queensland. No construction work is being carried out there at the present time. The only time of recent years that the railways of Queensland showed results anywhere near paying interest on their cost of construction was a period when the various lines under construction had reached a certain stage and less construction work was being done than heretofore. At the next election, however, ten or eleven proposals, most of which were not likely to be paying propositions, were passed by the Government. Some of those railways have been constructed. The bulk of the railways which are not paying at the present time are those railways which run into agricultural districts, such as the hon. member for Nanango represents. They open up and develop the country. The rates charged on those railways make it an utter impossibility for them to pay. The hon. member for Nundah said that they should be put on a business footing and be made to pay. There are two ways of making the railways pay. One is by increasing the freights and fares, and the other is by reducing wages. Hon. members opposite have in their minds, although they do not say so, that expenses could be reduced in a direction which the Government are not going to reduce them. What is the use of hon. members, by inference and innuendo, suggesting that goods are being pilfered on the railways, that the department knows all about it, but are afraid to prosecute? That is a contemptible attitude to take up.

Mr. KELSO: It is a fact, all the same.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If the hon. member's friends know that this is taking place, they should make a straight-out statement, so that an investigation could be made to prove the statement. I am satisfied the Railway Department takes just [4 p.m.] as much trouble and goes just as far as any private individual to see that goods are not pilfered during transit on the railway. We know that in shipping and even on motor lorries things go astray, and certainly some things go astray on the railways, but not through carelessness or neglect, because I believe that goods are not interfered with to any appreciable extent.

Mr. KELSO: Wait until the Minister gives the figures that we have asked for.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: When the hon. gentleman does, we shall see that the trouble has not been greater in proportion than were similar happenings in the past, and we shall find that not so much pilfering takes place on the railways as in connection with shipping, and the hon. member for Nundah, if he is honest, will admit that there is little justification for his statement. It is simply a matter of inference and innuendo to say these things are taking place and not make a straight-out charge.

Mr. KELSO: There is no need to; the figures that will be given by the Minister will prove the charge.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They will prove something, but not what the hon. member alleges they will prove. I am satisfied on that point.

Mr. KELSO: They will.

*Mr. Winstanley.]*

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The hon. member said that pilfering was a public scandal, and that his friends have told him about it. If his friends have such information, why did they not go to the Commissioner, who would attend to their complaint? I am quite satisfied the Commissioner would have inquired into it.

Mr. KELSO: He did.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: What more does the hon. gentleman want?

Mr. KELSO: Compensation was paid.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Well, what more is wanted?

Mr. KELSO: The men responsible should be prosecuted. You want to protect the wrong-doer.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I do not. The hon. member is saying that people do these things and are not prosecuted. I guarantee that, if anybody was caught and the charge was proved against him, he would have to take the consequences. If the hon. member can prove to the contrary, why does he not prove it? If the hon. member submitted proof we would listen to him, but he does not. He simply throws out these innuendoes, and they are not worth very much.

The hon. member also said something about "Queensland work for Queenslanders." Of course, that is a pretty old cry, and it began with the cries "Australia for the Australians" and "Australian work for Australians."

Mr. KELSO: Not a bad cry, either.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No; but it can be narrowed down, not merely to a State, but to a town. The hon. member says "Queensland work for Queenslanders." If so, why should work for other parts of the State be monopolised by Brisbane? Why should not Maryborough say "Maryborough work for Maryborough," and Townsville people say "Townsville work for Townsville"?

Mr. KELSO: Why not?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And other towns would say that what was needed for such towns should be confined to those towns. It seems to me a pretty rotten cry.

Mr. TAYLOR: You want locomotives built in New South Wales.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I am not a one-eyed person. We have no more right to claim that Brisbane work should be done in Brisbane than that Maryborough work should be done in Maryborough, and so on. If hon. members opposite had their way, we would go back to pre-federation days and impose a protective tariff that would militate against the welfare of the community. If that is their policy, let them stick to it, and find out how they will get on if they try to carry it out when occupying the Treasury benches.

Mr. TAYLOR: You would sooner pay doles.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Narrowed down, we find that there is nothing in that cry.

I wish to make one or two remarks in connection with the linking up of the North with the South, and of the great difference it has made to North Queensland.

At 4.5 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I am sorry the hon. member for Wynnum is not here now. Like

[Mr. Winstanley.

some other hon. members he does not make his statements straight out, but tries to convey the idea to this Committee and to the people outside that members on this side have done things in days gone by the very opposite to what they have done. This morning the hon. member quoted a division which conveyed the idea that members on this side of the Committee voted against the North Coast railway. Anyone who looks at "Hansard" will find that that is not so. When that railway was proposed, neither plans, specifications, nor books of reference were placed on the table, as is usual in such cases. As a consequence, amendments were moved, and the members voting in the division quoted were voting for the amendments and not against the North Coast line. It is an easy matter by these devious methods to convey ideas that are absolutely untrue. In my opinion it is a contemptible method, and one that I am not going to follow. The North Coast line has made a wonderful difference to North Queensland, as everyone knew it would; but it is rather remarkable that, although it is fourteen years since it was passed by Parliament, it practically had to be constructed by the present Government, for up to the time they came into power practically nothing worth speaking about had been done in connection with that railway, and the present Government—who know the necessity for it, because most of the members of the Government are fairly familiar with the North—have made an effort to get the line constructed and have done something in that direction. It is a well known fact that previously part of what is regarded as the North Coast line was of a very makeshift sort of character. It served its purpose for the time being, but since the line has gone through a great deal of money has had to be spent in relaying and strengthening the line, and also on fencing and a good lot of other work. Ayr is one of those places which finds itself, under existing conditions, rather inconvenienced. While the conveniences were all right when the line from Townsville to Ayr was a divisional board tramway, now that it is part and parcel of the North Coast line it is found that the station and yards need improvement and enlargement. I notice that on the present Estimates there is a sum of £600 for enlarging the engine shed at Ayr, and £600 for an extension of the goods shed. They could have done very well with £6,000 for more extensive station buildings. That amount could have been very well spent had the money been available, but the Railway Department, like other departments, has only a certain limited amount at its disposal, and it has to do the very best it possibly can with the amount available. The present station is really an apology for a railway station on a line like the North Coast line, and I am hoping we shall not have to wait very long before there is a change in that connection.

A great deal has been said about the rolling-stock both in regard to locomotives and trucks. There can be no doubt that the further you get away from the head centre the worse things become. That is one of the disadvantages of having the capital in one corner of the State, and people living in the north, north-west; and central-west find it very difficult to have their wants and their requests attended to. The people living in and around Brisbane complain about the

carriages or about the fares and freights, but if they got away to some of the northern districts and saw the conditions there they would find that the people there have much more room for complaint than they themselves have at the present time. As regards locomotives, the further you get North the harder they are worked. The great difficulty there is in keeping them in good repair, and in a good many instances they are overloaded. They are bad enough on the Great Northern line, and I believe they are much worse on the Cairns line and in the hinterland. I certainly think there is need for quite a number of new locomotives, and like the hon. member for Mundingburra, who expressed the hope that some of these new locomotives would find their way up to Townsville, I hope some of them will find their way further north still.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: To Charters Towers?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Charters Towers is just as much entitled to consideration as any other place. The Commissioner for Railways, on page 21 of his report, under the heading of "Rolling-stock" states—

"The increase in size and weight of locomotives and the continually increasing number and age of engines and vehicles render apparent the necessity for providing greater repair facilities. The most effective means of doing this is by making provision for more light repair work at outside depôts, leaving the heavier work for Ipswich, Rockhampton, and Townsville. In pursuance of this policy additional facilities and staff have been made available at several depôts."

I think that something should be done for Charters Towers in that respect. I think it would be a good thing not only for the Railway Department but for Charters Towers if some of these repairs which at present are sent down from the western country were fixed up at Charters Towers. The Chamber of Commerce there have written to the Secretary for Railways in this connection, and have stated their case very fully and frankly. They say—

"Charters Towers is an established inland city, and it is in the interests of the State to keep the people here and stop the present tendency to migrate to the big coastal cities—and in many cases to leave the State altogether.

"To concentrate all the works at Townsville is undesirable in view of the fact that there are better facilities for expansion at Charters Towers."

The hon. member for Mundingburra pointed out how cramped they were for room in Townsville, particularly in connection with the workshops, and said that erosion was taking place on Ross Creek which was making things more difficult—

"On the ground of economy Charters Towers is more suitable.

"The land required can be got for nothing here, but land is dear in Townsville.

"It is unwise to build all the workshops on the coast, which would be particularly vulnerable in the event of war.

"A considerable amount of Government money is invested here, and the

Government would be protecting its own interests by stopping depreciation of its assets."

In this connection the Government are interested to the extent of about £60,000 in Charters Towers. I certainly think that something might be done in this direction, because, if it should happen—I do not think it will—that the town was practically to be abandoned, the Government's chance of getting anything would be very small indeed, and anything, however little, which is done towards keeping the town alive will be a help and an encouragement to those who are trying to keep the place together. The Chamber of Commerce points out—

"We have a much better climate, being 1,000 feet above sea-level.

"Our water supply is better, and the price is 2s. per 1,000 gallons as against 3s. 6d. in Townsville.

"Charters Towers would be healthier and more comfortable for the workmen, and the better conditions should produce better results both to the workmen and the department.

"Timber can be better seasoned here than on the coast owing to the drier climate, and is consequently more suitable for woodwork, which would be considerably more durable.

"The cost of living is less here than at Townsville."

It is rather remarkable—yet it is a fact, as anybody who looks at the figures will see—that, although Charters Towers is an inland city 82 miles from the coast, living has always been cheap there. It is one of the cheapest places in Queensland owing to cheap land being available and the enterprise of the people. The people in Charters Towers find it is cheaper to live there than in a great many places on the coast. Workmen can build their homes there on land free of cost. These reasons have been submitted to the Railway Department, and I am sure they will receive due consideration.

A good deal has been said in reference to the earning power of the railways. It is well known that for very many years the Great Northern Railway which runs from Townsville out into the western country was one of the best paying lines in Queensland. It paid 6 per cent. and 7 per cent. for many years. In recent times it paid as much as 10 per cent. on the capital invested. I find that last year that section paid £1 7s. 9d., which shows the enormous difference between traffic last year and in years gone by. Nobody can say that the Railway Department is responsible for that. Everybody knows that there has been a slump in mining and a decrease in the number of cattle carried, and that consequently there has also been a decrease in the haulage of timber and in other commodities which are dependent on mining and on the cattle-raising industry, all of which are due to circumstances over which neither the Government nor the Railway Department have any control whatever. Consequently, if an hon. member blames the department or the Government for the falling off in receipts, it can only be from a desire to blame the Government whether they are responsible or whether they are not.

I should like to say something with regard to the rail motors. On lines where it does

*Mr. Winstanley.]*

not pay to run trains it may be wise for the Railway Department to get over some of our difficulties on small branch lines by running rail motors. The hon. member for Wynnum referred to the fact that the McKean cars were still being used. I would remind the hon. member that the point which was made against the Government who bought them was that, although they said they were bought as an experiment, they bought half a dozen of those cars, and the question arises whether it is right to buy half a dozen cars as an experiment when one or two would serve the purpose just as well. As a matter of fact, only about two of them ever gave any service after they got here, and, if my memory serves me correctly, the late Secretary for Railways himself admitted that it cost more for fuel to run one of them—because they are very expensive in that respect—than to run a C16 engine. That was certainly a blunder for which the previous Government were responsible, as well as for quite a number of other blunders. Yet one would imagine from hearing hon. members opposite talk that everything done by previous Governments was good and wise and that since this Government came into power everything has been far from right. I am confident in my own mind that, although quite a number of new railways are not likely to be paying propositions immediately, nevertheless, the policy of the Government will be proved in the long run to be a wise policy. In days gone by the policy was to let people go on to the land and stay there for many years without a railway, whereas the policy of this Government is that railways shall precede settlement—which means that they will be built before there is much traffic offering for them—and that is, I think, a sound policy.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Narango*): In discussing the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, I think that we should look further than the mere running of the railways or their administration under present conditions. I maintain that it would be quite impossible for any Government or any railway management to make the railways in Queensland, or any other State for that matter, pay their way if the policy of the Government with regard to the development of the country is against it. That is the conclusion to which anyone who studies the position in Queensland to-day must come. For years there has been a constant drift from the country districts of Queensland into the large centres of population, which must retard business on the railways.

That has assisted tremendously in piling up the huge debt that we have on the railways to-day. The Minister stated that past Governments were responsible for approving of the construction of hundreds of miles of railway which they had no intention of constructing, and he went so far as to state that they were approved of for political purposes.

Mr. COLLINS: They approved of the construction of fourteen railways during their last session.

Mr. EDWARDS: I ask the hon. member for Bowen to cast his memory back a few years when he and the Secretary for Railways went into my district and many other districts in Queensland and recommended the construction of certain railway links as being essential to the welfare of people of

Southern Queensland. They recommended that they should be constructed immediately.

Mr. COLLINS: I was not a member of the Public Works Commission at that time.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Secretary for Agriculture was also a member of the Public Works Commission, and, with the present Secretary for Railways, he recommended the construction of certain lines, many of which have not yet been commenced, although those recommendations were made over nine years ago. Let me call the attention of the Secretary for Railways to the fact that in some cases railway construction was actually started when the settlers, following a definite promise that they were to have railway communication immediately, went into the virgin scrubs of Queensland over 30 miles from railway communication, and the railways have only just now been opened. That is one of the things that is causing the people to drift from the country to the large centres of population. The Minister stated that the only possible way of making the railways pay was by increasing fares and freights, but in that statement the Minister shows that he has no business ability whatever, and is not capable of placing the railways on a sound footing.

Mr. DASH: Should we hand them over to the hon. gentleman?

Mr. EDWARDS: I think I could make a better fist of them than the hon. member for Mundingburra.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are the only person who thinks so.

Mr. EDWARDS: Possibly so. I am one of those who can claim to have done something for the railways of Queensland by hard work, which is a great deal more than hon. members opposite can claim. Fully 30 per cent. of them were union organisers. Not only did the Minister contend that it was necessary to increase freights and fares in order to make the railways pay, but he stated that, if the Opposition were in power, that is the way they would go about making the railways pay. Anyone who has studied the position in Queensland must realise that that would be an absolutely wrong way. There is only one way to make them pay, and that is by good administration and by the development of the country, so that the railway trucks and passenger trains coming from the country will be carrying full loads.

The hon. member for Quenton in a glaring statement charged the present Government with inefficiency in carrying out its pledged policy in this State. There is one plank of their policy that I do believe in. One of the planks included in the programme to the Government put before the electors in 1915—and I believe in it—was a definite promise to see that the large estates alongside of railway lines would be brought under cultivation. The Minister told us to-day that the existence of those big estates was one of the reasons contributing to the huge deficits on the railways to-day.

Mr. DASH: You believe in the freehold system.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is an admission that the Government have absolutely failed in the policy that they went to the country on in 1915. They have been incapable ever

[*Mr. Winstanley.*

since of carrying out their pledge to the people to bring that land under cultivation.

I want to refer to another matter which I consider is a most important one in the administration of the railways. We have heard in this Chamber over and over again that the Government use no political influence in connection with the running of the railways. I want to show that their policy has brought about such a position that the Commissioner and his officers, who are supposed to be responsible for working the railways in the interests of the State, are tied hand and foot in the matter of engaging employees for railway construction works. I hold in my hand an extract from the "Daily Mail" of to-day in regard to the labour supply for the Murgon to Windera line. It states—

"Considerable discontent is expressed locally at the system of employing labour on the Murgon-Windera branch line, which is under construction. Men have arrived lately by the dozens from Brisbane, and were put on, whilst the local unemployed, who in some instances have been waiting for many weeks to get work on the line, have been passed over."

I maintain that the officer responsible for the carrying out of that construction work in the interests of the State, and in the interests of the Minister, who is largely responsible to the people of Queensland, is placed in a position that he had to depend on the Director of Labour in Brisbane to get his labour for the line. A big principle is involved in this matter. The men in the country districts are well able to carry out this work. They are mostly young, able-bodied men, who would be only too pleased to get that work, and in many instances subsequently become settlers in the district through which the railway is passing. That would be a distinct move in the policy of decentralisation. I understand that this is a principle which practically applies to the working of the whole of our railways, and that the Commissioner, who is responsible for the railways, has no hand in choosing those employees.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is quite true.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is absolutely impossible for any officer to make a job pay unless he has the right to choose the men required for the job.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Is a railway officer not at the Labour Bureau when the men are chosen?

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member who has just interjected should remain quiet when railways are being discussed in this Chamber, because had we not the spectacle last session of him making statements which he could not back up?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You were one of the men who congratulated me.

Mr. EDWARDS: The railways cannot be worked on a business basis while that principle is continued. Officers are appointed to the job to carry it out in the best interests of those employing them, but they have nothing to do with the employment of their men. The thing is ridiculous and cannot work successfully.

I wish also to refer to the recent increase in fares and freights. The Government failed absolutely in the carrying out of their policy in the matter of the development of

the large estates alongside the railway. They failed absolutely in their promise to the electors of Queensland when they turned round and raised the fares and freights; and this applies more particularly to the promises made to the country people.

A good deal has been said this afternoon about the increase in freights and fares as affecting the city. We can readily realise how much greater the burden must [4.30 p.m.] be on those in the country. There is a considerable difference between placing  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on a fare of 5d. and 6d. and placing it on a fare of £3, which many a country person has to pay to get to the city. One can realise how the increase affects the man in the country as compared with the imposition on the man in the city. Naturally the greater burden is on the country producer. I shall quote what the Premier said at the Trades Hall, as reported in the "Standard" of 5th December, 1923—

"It is true that a small percentage increase in freights and fares—20 per cent.—would yield £200,000 or £300,000, but it would not be just to increase the freights of the Queensland railways. It would be a serious imposition on workers toiling in the country to increase the railway freights. They are worse situated than workers in the city, and they are entitled to as much consideration as the city workers. I have been against increasing the railway freights because it means levying an impost upon the produce and necessaries of life of the workers who live in the country."

That is what the Premier said last year, yet twelve months afterwards the Government come along and break that promise to the country people. Not only did they break that promise to the country people, but it indicates to me that the Premier has no power whatever at present. To me it appears that any statement the hon. gentleman is prepared to make on behalf of his Government is soon discredited and the tables are turned against him. I have no doubt that, when the hon. gentleman made that statement in 1923, he had every confidence that he would be able to carry it out; but his statement has been turned down by the Government, and freights and fares have been increased. While this condition of affairs goes on we can never expect the railways of Queensland to pay. I consider the raising of fares to be the most fatal thing it is possible to do. If the hon. gentleman is going to run the business successfully, he has to get the population of the country interested in that business. At the present time motor traffic is competing against our railways even from great distances out in the country. This is simply because of the conditions under which the people have to travel. The present rate of fares to country districts is simply preventing people travelling as they should travel. I hope that the Government will see fit to bring about a policy of development of country districts that will give the Commissioner for Railways the assistance he deserves in the running of his railways. It is quite impossible for him to make the railways pay if the Government are against him in their policy of land settlement. When one goes through the country districts at the present time he realises that a very large percentage—I believe I can say 70 per cent.—of the settlers

*Mr. Edwards.]*

are discontented and dissatisfied with their lot.

Mr. DASH: Absolute rot!

Mr. EDWARDS: When you hear "rot" coming from that hon. member you can understand that it comes from the place where rot should come from. What we are discussing in this Chamber is a serious matter, not only to this generation but to the coming generations. Whether the railways are going to pay or not depends on the policy of the Government. If they assist the primary producers to carry on agricultural pursuits as they should be carried on and make the people contented, the eyes of the city will again be turned to the country instead of country people desiring to come to the city to look for positions in the public service, which is of no value to this State.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): I would like to refer to one or two matters, and I regret that the time is so short. I know that the Minister, as a matter of courtesy, wants to reply to some of the statements made by some of the members of the Committee, and I would like to draw his attention to one or two things that concern very much the people in my electorate. First of all I would like to refer to the traffic service between Brisbane and Ipswich. Unfortunately the shortage of rolling-stock has made it impossible for the extensive alterations on that line to be made that should be made. I think the time has arrived when an important centre like Ipswich, which is only 24 miles from the capital, should have a train arriving in Brisbane a few minutes before 8 o'clock. There are factories in Brisbane in need of a certain class of labour, and that labour is available in Ipswich; but the factories cannot get that labour and that labour cannot get to the factories because no train arrives from that town in time for the work. That could very easily be rectified without putting on any additional trains if the train at present running were expedited. There is no reason why it should not run express from Darra or even from Goodna, and the other suburban trains could easily pick up the passengers. Since the House met in the daytime the hon. member for Ipswich and myself have had to travel down by the train leaving Ipswich at 7.40 a.m.. That train runs express from Chelmer or Graceville, but long before the train gets there it is considerably over-crowded. In one carriage that I came down in the other day eighteen people were standing, and over and above that there were twelve or thirteen passengers sitting. That can only be overcome by additions to the service and by running that train as an express train from a point further away from Brisbane than Chelmer or Graceville. It should run express at least from Darra or Oxley. The difficulty that the people of Ipswich suffer from is the fact that so many trains are goods trains, and they are not getting the service from Ipswich that they deserve. When I made the remark "deserve" I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the report of the Commissioner received to-day discloses this state of affairs. From Ipswich and the eight stations towards Brisbane the bookings, not including season tickets, for the year amounts to 787,062, and the revenue from passenger traffic alone, including season tickets, amounts to £57,413. If I take another suburban line—say the line from Cleveland—I find that the bookings at

Cleveland and the twelve stations towards Brisbane amount to 461,931 or some 300,000 less than from Ipswich; and the passenger traffic revenue, including season tickets, amounts to a miserable £41,233. These two sets of figures certainly illustrate the fact that Ipswich and the eight suburban stations to the east of Ipswich are of far more importance to the Railway Department than the stations on the Cleveland line, although they are situated an equal distance from Brisbane.

I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the shocking anomalies that exist in the matter of railway fares to the two centres. The new railway time-table containing the whole of the revised fares in the State is not yet issued, so I have to take the figures which have existed for some time. The second-class fare to Cleveland, which is 23 miles away, is 2s. 2d., and from Brisbane to Ipswich, 24 miles away, 3s., which represents, as compared with Cleveland, an addition of 10d. for one mile. East Ipswich is situated 23 miles from Brisbane, and the second-class fare is 2s. 8d., or 4d. less than the fare from Ipswich to Brisbane, which is only one mile further. Why that 4d. is put on for one mile beats me, and why 10d. is put on for one mile in the case of Ipswich to Brisbane, as compared with Cleveland to Brisbane, is also a most remarkable thing. Ipswich has its own suburban area, which is of large extent, and it has its own shopping centre. It has a decent suburban area to the east of the city, and it is high time that area was treated the same as the Brisbane suburban area, and that suburban fares ruled. I am satisfied the department would lose nothing by it. The traffic is not as great, because the area, it is stated, is not sufficiently large for suburban fares to apply, and the first-class fare is 7d., which is altogether out of proportion to what suburban fares should be. I will quote the figures with regard to distances and fares on the lines from Brisbane to Ipswich and Brisbane to Cleveland, respectively—

Miles from Brisbane.	Station.	Fare.	Miles from Brisbane.	Station.	Fare.
		s. d.			s. d.
24	Ipswich ..	3 0	23	Cleveland ..	2 2
23	East Ipswich ..	2 8	23	West ..	2 2
22	Booval ..	2 6	22	Cleveland ..	2 2
20	Ebbw Vale ..	2 4	20	Ormiston ..	2 2
19	Dimmore ..	2 2	19	Wellington ..	2 0
17	Redbank ..	1 9	17	Point ..	
				Firkdale ..	1 9

Why the centres from Redbank to Ipswich should be penalised to this extent I do not know. I am satisfied that it is an oversight. The railway fares ought to be adjusted in suburban areas on a mileage basis. If the 23 miles from Brisbane to Cleveland are treated as a suburban area, then the 23 miles from Brisbane to East Ipswich should be a suburban area, and should, at any rate, carry the same fares. I hope that attention will be given to this matter. It is not the first time attention has been called to it by the hon. member for Ipswich and myself, and we are of opinion that the matter should have been attended to in the last rearrangement of fares. The growth of the population of Ipswich has been steady, and it is growing

[Mr. Edwards.

faster than any other centre in Queensland, barring one or two mushroom mining centres, and its suburban residents certainly deserve every encouragement. When the Ipswich railway station is completed—and we shall only have to wait one more year for that—there will be a better opportunity for an efficient service between Tivoli on the north and Wulkuraka on the west, right down to Redbank on the east, and it will be a suburban traffic that will pay well. I would like to remind the Minister and the Commissioner that it took probably twelve months of battling to get a Sunday train run from Ipswich to Goodna for the benefit of people who wished to visit patients in the mental hospital and for other purposes on Sunday. Although we were assured time and again that it would be a failure, it has been found to serve a very useful purpose and it is well patronised by the public. A large centre like Ipswich, with a population of 25,000, has to put up with the fact that its last train leaves five nights a week at 10 o'clock. It is high time that we had a train leaving Ipswich at a later hour than that—perhaps at 10.35 or 10.40 p.m., and running as far as Redbank or Goodna. It is quite time that this matter received attention, and that Ipswich was treated as it should be—that is, as a town with a suburban area of its own, and I commend the request to the Minister's consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I reply, first of all, to the hon. member for Bremer, whose request will receive consideration. Also to hon. members opposite. I do not think hon. members opposite have submitted their amendment seriously. At all events it has been discussed in a half-hearted way which indicates that there is not much seriousness behind it.

I want to point out that, if the policy of hon. members opposite were accepted, freights and fares on the Queensland railways would be substantially increased. They have for one thing declared for an independent Commissioner. What would be the first change if, as suggested by hon. members opposite, absolute power were conferred on the Commissioner to fix fares and freights? The present Commissioner, or any other Commissioner, would impose such freights and fares as would balance the railway ledger. Yet hon. members opposite want to build up a railway control in that way, just as they have built up one in the Federal sphere regarding banking, although—remarkable and contradictory as it may seem—they denounced a similar policy in regard to the Commissioner of the Queensland Government Savings Bank and other phases of State policy. At present the Commissioner rightly recognises that the matter of fixing freights and fares is largely a matter of Government policy and has courteously allowed the Government to decide it; but, if the policy of hon. members opposite were put into operation, I say unhesitatingly that there would be a substantial increase in freights and fares immediately.

Mr. MORGAN: How can other States make their pay?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I want supporters of the Country party in the country to know that their representatives stand for increased fares and freights. I want the supporters of the Opposition generally outside to know that the policy for

which their representatives stand would lead to substantial increases in freights and fares.

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would like to say further that hon. members opposite—the most influential of them—have all advocated increases in fares and freights to the extent of making the railways pay.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is true, and I have their speeches here. I referred to them this morning.

Mr. MORGAN: All city representatives.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. The hon. member for Albert was not a city representative, the hon. member for Warwick was not a city representative, but they both not only advocated increases in fares and freights but also increases sufficient to make the railways pay. That shows the absolute insincerity of hon. members opposite who refuse to subscribe to the policy laid down by their leaders. This amendment is brought forward in a way in which they are entitled to bring it forward for the sake of gaining political kudos; but we on this side are under an obligation to expose the hypocrisy, inconsistency, and insincerity of the amendment. In the first place, the policy of the Opposition, notwithstanding what they may say, is one which will increase fares and freights, and in the second place their leaders have time and again advocated that course.

Let me refer to the question of railway locomotive contracts. I desire to point out that the tender which was accepted from the Clyde Engineering Company of New South Wales was 17 per cent. less than the lowest Queensland tender—that from Evans, Anderson, and Phelan—and 23 per cent. less than the next lowest tender from a firm in this State—that is, from Walkers Limited. The lowest tender from Queensland specified a time which made it impossible really for the Government to accept it, and, although in the second lowest tender the time was nearly as satisfactory as in the case of the successful tender, the Government held that they could not grant such a substantial preference to a Queensland firm, although recognising that Walkers Limited and other Queensland firms have competent plants.

The policy of the Government is protection to Queensland industries and protection to Queensland workmen. We have given contracts to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds to Queensland contractors in the past few years. To-day we have contracts with Queensland contractors to the extent of about £400,000. We have the Ipswich workshops and other workshops working full time. Hon. members opposite seem to ignore these facts. The workers of Queensland in Messrs. Walkers, Limited, and with Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan are working full time. All the time the Government are endeavouring to the fullest degree to keep work within the State. But no Government can accept any tender in this State or any other State without qualification. There are certain qualifications and conditions which must be observed. A firm must claim only a reasonable degree of profit, and must have reasonable equipment and an efficient plant. These factors must be borne in mind in considering every contract. The Government could not give

*Hon. J. Larcombe.*]

a contract to any Queensland firm irrespective of price, and anyone who would say so would be saying something that would be ridiculous and absurd. Such action would be betraying the trust which is reposed in Ministers and in Parliament. We are the custodians of the public purse, and we must see that the tenders that are submitted are reasonable, and, if they are, the orders will be given to Queensland firms.

A ridiculous bogey has been circulated by hon. members opposite to the effect that wages and other conditions do not enable Queensland tenderers to tender reasonably and satisfactorily. The tenders that have already been accepted from Queensland firms show that that is a bogey. I have information here taken from the Commonwealth statistics to show that the percentage available for profits and general expenses in the manufacturing industry is higher in Queensland than in any other State in Australia. What have hon. members opposite to say to that?

The question of losses as the result of pilfering and other causes was raised. I have already indicated by way of interjection that there has not been any increase in the losses in that direction under the present Government as compared with previous Governments. Last year the percentage of claims paid amounted to .039 per cent. of the revenue, and during 1911-1912 the loss was .099 per cent. of the revenue, so that there was very little difference in the relative position last year as compared with 1911-1912. The percentage of loss is fractional. All the time the department is protecting those who consign goods over the railways, and protecting the property of the department. Hon. members opposite may rest assured that there is no oversight in regard to that phase of railway policy.

Another question that has been raised is the effect of railway policy upon production. I challenged the figures of the hon. member for Mirani and the leader of the Opposition, and I want to confirm now the statement I made by way of interjection. I said that there had been a substantial increase in the amount of agricultural produce carried over the railways under the present Administration as compared with 1914-1915.

The figures are—

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE CARRIED OVER RAILWAYS.		
1914-1915	...	876,000 tons
1923-1924	...	1,140,000 tons

What is the use of hon. members opposite denying the accuracy and the convincing nature of those figures? They are contained on page 20 of the Commissioner's report. They represent the amount of agricultural products, including sugar—which is an agricultural product—carried on the railways. This morning I quoted figures to show that under nine years of Labour Administration the increase in wealth production amounted to £206,000,000 which is a very substantial increase. Last year the wealth production of the State was £63,000,000—a record for the State. The case submitted by myself and other hon. members on this side of the Chamber has been absolutely confirmed by quotations from official documents.

There are a few minutes yet remaining for hon. members to discuss this vote, and I do not intend to detain the Committee any longer. I certainly say that the amendment

[Hon. J. Larcombe.

has not been discussed by hon. members opposite in a spirit of seriousness. Their own platform and policy stand for the exact opposite and the very negative of the amendment.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I, too, want to congratulate the Government for the good work they have done in connection with railway construction in North Queensland. Any hon. member looking at the tables supplied by the Commissioner must notice that there has been a considerable increase in the mileage in North Queensland during the last few years. That is as it should be.

I have been listening to hon. members opposite talking about political influence in connection with our railways. I have listened to those statements for the last nine sessions of Parliament. I do not know whether they are able to exercise this political influence. It may be that they can, because I notice that out of the twenty-nine hon. members opposite, twenty-seven represent Southern Queensland, one represents a portion of the North, and the other represents portion of the Central district. Therefore, were the State divided into three divisions, a strong Conservative Government would be in power in Southern Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I ask the Minister to give consideration in the near future to relaying the line between Proserpine and Bobawaba. I notice on the Estimates an amount of £20,000 to relay the line from Stewart's Creek to Bowen. I would remind the Minister that there are about 40 miles between Proserpine and Bowen that require relaying just as much as the line between Bowen and Stewart's Creek.

The opening of the North Coast railway has had a marvellous effect upon North Queensland. I am reliably informed that where 1 ton of fruit a week was consumed at Proserpine before the opening of the railway, the consumption is now 5 tons a week. (Hear, hear!) I want to congratulate both the Commissioner and those responsible for the running of the fruit train from Bowen direct to the border, as it enables the fruit-growers of Bowen to get their fruit on the Sydney market in the best condition. Every telegram I have read in the Bowen "Independent" reads something like this—

"Fruit arrived by train in good condition."

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: That means, as a rule, fair prices for the producers. The connection of the Northern and Southern railway systems has meant a great benefit to the fruit-growers in the Bowen electorate.

At 5 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 30th July, I will now put the questions for the vote under consideration: the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Railways; the amount remaining unvoted for the Department of Public Lands; the total amounts remaining unvoted for the Trust and Special Funds Estimates, 1924-25; the Loan Fund Account Estimates, 1924-25; the Supplementary Estimates, 1923-24; the Supplementary



Trust Funds Estimates, 1923-1924; the Supplementary Loan Fund Estimates, 1923-24; and the Vote of Credit on account for the year 1925-26.

Question—That £96,308 only (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) be granted for "Railways—General Establishment"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 15.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Kelso
" Barnes, G. P.	" King
" Bell	" Logan
" Corser	" Moore
" Costello	" Morgan
" Edwards	" Nott
" Elphinstone	" Swayne
" Fry	

*Tellers:* Mr. Edwards and Mr. Kelso.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Gledson
" Bertram	" Hanson
" Bruce	" Hynes
" Bulcock	" Jones
" Carter	" Land
" Collins	" Larcombe
" Cooper, F. A.	" Mullan
" Dash	" Riordan
" Ferricks	" Stopford
" Foley	" Wellington
" Gilday	" Winstanley
" Gillies	

*Tellers:* Mr. Foley and Mr. Gledson.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Peterson	Mr. House
" Vowles	" Conroy
" Warren	" Smith
" Deacon	" Weir
" Clayton	" Dunstan
" Petrie	" Wilson
" Sizler	" Farrell
" Bar es. W. H.	" Wright
" Maxwell	" Bartley
" Kerr	" Payne

Resolved in the negative.

Question—That £96,309 be granted for "Railways—General Establishment"—put and passed.

The following items were then put and passed:—

Department of Railways (balance of vote), £5,064,077;

Department of Public Lands, £284,555;

Trust and Special Funds, 1924-25 (balance of vote), £5,673,390;

Loan Fund Account, 1924-25 (balance of vote), £4,380,481;

Supplementary Revenue Estimates, 1923-24, £377,210 14s. 6d.;

Supplementary Trust Fund Estimates, 1923-24, £569,219 4s. 7d.;

Supplementary Loan Fund Estimates, 1923-24, £391,515 13s. 3d.;

Vote of Credit on account, 1925-26, for the various departments and services of the State, £2,500,000.

The House resumed.

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

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

#### RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

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

"That the resolutions be received on Tuesday next."

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 5.5 p.m.