

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 1924**

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## TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER, 1924.

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

## SOUTH BRISBANE-KYOGLE-GRAFTON RAILWAY AGREEMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message conveying His Excellency's assent to this Bill.

## QUESTIONS.

SAVING TO RAILWAY DEPARTMENT FROM USE OF COAL FROM BOWEN STATE COALMINE.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the cost of coal to the Railway Department at Bowen and Townsville before the building of the Bowen Coalfields Railway?"

"2. What has been the saving to the Railway Department on coal used from the Bowen State Coalmine since the opening of the Bowen Coalfields Railway?"

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

"1. 42s. 3d. per ton to Bowen; 39s. 3d. per ton to Townsville.

"2. £39,923 to end of September, 1924. The price paid at present for unscreened coal at Collinsville State Mine is 16s. per ton. Allowing freight at ½d. per ton per mile, the price at Townsville would be 22s. 10d. per ton, approximately, and at Bowen 18s. 3d. per ton, approximately."

CONTROL OF QUEENSLAND AMBULANCE TRANSPORT BRIGADES.

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

"1. Is it intended to place the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigades under the control of Hospitals Boards where constituted?"

"2. Does he consider such action would be in accord with public opinion on this matter?"

"3. If the action indicated is not intended, will he endeavour to introduce legislation this session to incorporate the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade as a separate body?"

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) replied—

"1. Each case will be considered on its merits."

"2. See answer to No. 1.

"3. No."

MEN ENGAGED ON WINDERA BRANCH RAILWAY.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Narango*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. How many men are at present engaged on the construction of the Windera Branch line?"

"2. Is he aware, as stated in to-day's press, that grave discontent exists owing to the system of selecting labour for work on this line in Brisbane while local men who, in many instances, have been waiting for many weeks for employment on this work are being passed over?"

"3. Does he sanction this method of employing men from Brisbane while local men are being left unemployed?"

"4. When will this line be open for traffic?"

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

"1. 135.

"2. No.

"3. See answer to No. 2.

"4. It is anticipated the line will be opened for traffic about the end of December."

MEN ENGAGED ON RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION WORK, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1923, TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1924.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"How many men were engaged on railway construction work on 30th September, 1923, 31st December, 1923, 31st March, 1924, 30th June, 1924, and 30th September, 1924?"

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

"30th September, 1923, 3,479; 31st December, 1923, 3,136; 31st March, 1924, 2,468; 30th June, 1924, 2,598; 30th September, 1924, 1,813."

STATE STALLIONS, AND RESIGNATION OF MEMBER OF STALLIONS BOARD.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Is it the intention to send the State stallions to the same districts as last season?"

"2. If not, why is this not being done?"

"3. Is it a fact that members of the Stallions Board recently resigned; and, if so, how many?"

"4. What was the reason for such resignations?"

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

"1. No, excepting in relation to two districts.

"2. The stallions were purchased to help in the improvement of the draught stock in the State as a whole, and were not bought for service in particular districts.

"3. One member only resigned.

"4. He resigned because he disagreed with a decision in relation to the allocation of the stallions."

TENDERS FOR THIRTY LOCOMOTIVE ENGINES—ESTIMATES, HOURS, AND WAGES.

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

"1. *Re* tender for thirty engines, was a price quoted or estimated by the Railway Workshops, Ipswich; if so, what was such price or estimate?"

"2. What are the hours provided and rate of wages under our Queensland Arbitration awards for employees in work of engine construction?"

"3. What are the hours worked and rates of wages paid for similar work at the Clyde Engineering Works, New South Wales?"

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

"The information is being obtained."

REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION ON PUBLIC WORKS ON PROPOSED REDCLIFFE RAILWAY.

Mr. Warren (*Murrumbidgee*), without notice, asked the hon. member for Mitchell, as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Public Works—

"1. What is the present position in respect of the expected report of the Commission on the proposed Redcliffe Railway?"

"2. Is it the intention of the Commission to finalise this report at an early date?"

"3. If not, will he explain why the report is not being finalised?"

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*) replied: The answers to the hon. member's questions 1, 2, 3 are—

"The Public Works Commission are not prepared to finalise their report on the necessity or otherwise of giving railway facilities to Redcliffe, until a proper survey be made enabling the cost to be given of bridging the mouth of the Pine River and Hayes' Inlet."

ALLOWANCE FOR TRAVELLING EXPENSES PAID TO HON. W. H. BARNES WHILE ACTING AS A MINISTER OF THE CROWN.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), without notice, asked the hon. member for Wynnum—

"Will the hon. member furnish particulars of the amount obtained by him from the Government for expenses while acting as a Minister of the Crown?"

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) replied—

"I will answer the question by stating that while acting as Secretary for Public Instruction, Acting Premier, Secretary for Public Works and Treasurer, the following amounts were received by me:—

	£	s.	d.
Education Department—			
During the years 1908-09, 1910-11	105	17	10
Acting Premier—			
During the years 1913-14...	218	2	4
Public Works—			
During the years 1909-10, 1914	216	12	11
Treasurer—			
During the years 1910-11, 1914-15	249	6	0
In addition to the above departments the amount of £30 9s. was paid for steamer fares, making a total of	810	8	1
from which, however, there should be deducted expenses of private secretary and attendant	57	10	9
making a total of ...	£752	17	4
for a period of six years."			

**CONTRACT OF CLYDE ENGINEERING COMPANY FOR  
SUPPLY OF RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES.**

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

“Have the Clyde Engineering Company expressed a wish to be relieved of their contract for the supply of thirty locomotives to the Railway Department?”

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

“I have nothing to add to the press statement I made yesterday to the effect that the company are not keenly anxious to go on with the contract. The matter has not yet been finalised.”

**PAPERS.**

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

Twenty-ninth Report of the Auditor-General under the Supreme Court Funds Act of 1895.

Second Annual Report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL.**

**INITIATION.**

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Public Service Act of 1922 in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

**SUPPLY.**

**RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.**

**RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.**

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Pollock, *Gregory*) presented the resolutions reported from Committee of Supply on the 3rd instant.

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

“That the resolutions be now received.”

Question put and passed.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.**

The resolutions being taken as read,

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

“That the resolutions be now agreed to.”

And hon. members indicating a desire to discuss resolutions 3, 4, 14, 17, 29, 34, 36, 45, 48, 53, 66, 68, 70, 72, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 83, and 85—

Resolutions 1 and 2 agreed to.

Resolution 3—“*Executive and Legislative*”—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I want to call attention to the fact of the Premier not allowing the motion of which I gave notice on Friday to allow three extra days to discuss the Estimates to go as a formal motion so as to give hon. members an opportunity to discuss the Estimates fully.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why did you not give notice of your motion earlier?

Mr. MOORE: I did not have sufficient time. I thought the Premier would give sufficient time to allow hon. members to consider the Estimates adequately. When the Standing Orders were framed there was not nearly so much business to be considered on the Estimates as there is at the present time. We did not have the enormous expenditure then that is going on now. It is certainly necessary that hon. members should be given an opportunity to discuss the Estimates when there is such a large amount of expenditure to consider.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You spent three or four days talking about the exclusion of war from the school books.

Mr. MOORE: It is not for the Secretary for Public Lands to dictate to hon. members as to what they should talk about.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: They have every right to discuss matters which they consider of some importance to the country. The hon. gentleman might just as well correct hon. members sitting on his side, as they took an active part in that debate.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: They had every right to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They had to reply to the silly arguments raised on your side.

Mr. MOORE: It was not necessary for hon. members opposite to reply to the speeches of hon. members on this side. There was any amount of criticism of the Government, and some hon. members opposite were more severe in that criticism than hon. members on this side.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yet, you want us to give more time.

Mr. MOORE: It is impossible in the time allotted to give sufficient consideration to the various items of expenditure provided for. The Estimates provide for the expenditure of about £25,000,000, and there is about £11,000,000 that has not been discussed.

The PREMIER: No other Parliament in the British Empire devotes as much time to the consideration of Estimates as we do in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: Possibly no other Parliament requires the same amount of discussion.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. MOORE: They possibly do not have the same amount of wasteful expenditure. It is only reasonable that the Opposition should be given full opportunity to discuss the amount of money that is going to be expended during the coming year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Remember the time when you could not be

*Mr. Moore.*



heard inside the Chamber and carried on the discussion outside. Why not do that now?

Mr. MOORE: I gave notice for Friday, under the provision of the Standing Orders, to allow this Chamber three extra days in which to discuss the Estimates. It is necessary that the amount of money to be spent and the manner in which the Government propose spending it on the Trust and Special Funds and the Loan Fund Estimates—it is necessary that they should be fully discussed, and the Premier would be wise in allowing Parliament the fullest discussion on this very important question. The amount of money to be expended is large. The report of the Auditor-General was only tabled on the last day that the Estimates were considered. If Bills had been introduced at various periods beforehand, to permit the report of the Auditor-General to be tabled before the discussion of the Estimates was almost finished, the position would be different. Unfortunately that course was not followed, and the information that hon. members were looking for some considerable time only arrived on the last day which was allowed for consideration of the Estimates, and we could not use much of the information contained in that report. In view of that fact, it is only fair that a sufficient further time should be given to this House to go fully into the question of the expenditure of this money. We want to obviate as far as possible the occurrence of the amount of unforeseen expenditure that occurred last year. I regret that, although ample time was available before the hot weather set in, the Premier did not see fit to allow my motion for the three extra days' discussion on the Estimates to go through as formal.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): I am pleased that the leader of the Opposition has drawn attention to this matter, because I think it is something that should be ventilated. The Standing Orders set forth the fact that the Committee have a certain period in which to discuss the Estimates, and it seems an absolute lack of fairness on the part of the Opposition that they are not keen enough to allocate the time they have to expend so that they may discuss the whole of the Estimates placed before the Committee. Hon. members on this side of the House are just as keen to discuss those votes as are hon. members of the Opposition, but it is a notable fact that hon. members opposite continue useless discussions, thereby absorbing time that could be used to the advantage of the Committee generally.

I am somewhat astonished at their lack of foresight. If it were competent for me to do so, I should move that the vote be increased by £1 as an expression of our derision of the tactics of the Opposition. I regret that I cannot do so, because, if I could, I have no doubt the House would severely censure the Opposition. They have full opportunity to plan their campaign; they meet in caucus and have conferences with the Country party; they are kept in order by their "whip," and I cannot see why they could not have thought of this matter before the fifteenth day on the Estimates. The matter should have been arranged long before the discussion on the Estimates started. The Opposition would then have spent an allotted time on each vote and would not

have prepared a lot of useless matter that they could not use. Apart from the fact that hon. members opposite have wasted their own time, they have also wasted the time of the Committee in order to have certain matters placed in "Hansard."

Mr. EDWARDS: Did not the hon. member waste time three years ago in asking for a commission of inquiry into the Ipswich railway workshops?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: That is all right. The hon. member is wasting his time. The hon. member's time could be better spent in cleaning his own farm, which I understand needs cleaning. However, we shall not discuss that.

Mr. EDWARDS: You could not clean up the matter you set out to clean up. You proved yourself a "dud."

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I feel very deeply the want of tactics on the part of the Opposition, and I regret very much that the leader of the Opposition so lacked a sense of fairness that he omitted to bring this matter forward until the fifteenth day. Had the hon. member thought of it on the fifth day, something might have been done, and I have no doubt hon. members on this side would have helped to get the extra days this session. I do not say they would do it again, because, although the Opposition are so lacking in tactics, it is hardly likely that we should come to their assistance again. It is to be deeply regretted that the hon. member did not think of this matter beforehand so that we might have had an opportunity of discussing all the votes, which we desired just as much as hon. members of the Opposition.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I also regret very much that the Premier has not seen fit to accept the motion placed on the business paper by the leader of the Opposition. This session has been an extraordinary one in that each of the departments was in such a state of chaos that it was necessary for the Opposition to tackle each vote individually. Apart from that state of affairs, we also had some huge financial dealings to discuss on the various votes as we went through the Estimates. Undoubtedly this session has been extraordinary in that regard. The hon. member for Bremer must share, with his party, a good deal of the blame.

The SPEAKER: Order! I desire to point out that the matter the hon. member is discussing has been disposed of. While a reference to the subject might be in order, I cannot permit a discussion.

Mr. KERR: I regret that the Premier cannot see fit to provide an opportunity to discuss some of these large votes. Hon. members of the Opposition set out to reach the Trust and Special Funds, amounting to over £5,000,000, and the Premier unfortunately has withheld his permission to deal with those votes.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Apparently the position in this Parliament is that the Government claim the right to dictate to hon. members of the Opposition what time they shall take in discussing any subject, and almost what they shall discuss.

Mr. BEDFORD: They do not know what to say themselves.

Mr. Moore.

Mr. SWAYNE: So long as he keeps within Standing Orders, every hon. member has the right to speak as he thinks fit and as he thinks to be in the interests of those he represents. On the question of whether a sufficient time has been allowed [10.30 a.m.] for the discussion on the Estimates, with the extension that has taken place in these votes year after year, we are now asked to vote twice as much money as we were asked to vote nine years ago, and it must be obvious to anyone that more time is requisite. I just want to point out some of the matters that are going by the board.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not propose to allow a discussion on those lines. Hon. members will have the opportunity of discussing almost everything during the passage of the resolutions. I will permit a reference to the question of which notice was given by the hon. member for Aubigny, but, the matter having been decided by the House, I am not going to allow a discussion on it at this stage.

Mr. SWAYNE: In order to enable Parliament to perform its duty, sufficient time should be given for a full discussion on all questions of public importance. We did not meet till the end of July, and we shall probably finish before the end of October. The session will only have lasted three months, and, supposing we sat another month, if necessary, or even longer, have not the people the right to expect that we should devote another month to the discussion of their business? They pay us to do this work, but year after year we are getting more and more inefficient as a Parliament on account of the restrictions that have been placed upon the free discussion of matters of public importance.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am not going to enter upon a discussion of this matter, as I feel we might thereby curtail the small amount of time at our disposal, but I want to support the contention of the leader of the Opposition and to say that in these matters we are governed to no small extent by the information that is given to members of the Opposition by Ministers of the Crown. We were unfortunate this session in not receiving from the different Ministers full information at an early period during the discussion of their Estimates. Had we received that information at the proper time, it would have curtailed a great amount of the discussion. I might instance the Department of Public Instruction. We have throughout been given a very small amount of information by Cabinet Ministers. In addition to that, on this occasion matters have been so nicely arranged that the Auditor-General's report did not come to hand until practically all the discussion on the Estimates was concluded. We want to base our arguments on facts and on the general working of the departments throughout the year, and we were prevented from so doing by the tactics of the Government, which have resulted in curtailing the opportunities for discussion which the House is supposed to offer us. The hon. member for Bremer has stated that the Opposition could have arranged things better for themselves. We do not guide the destinies of the Estimates. We know that on this occasion members of the Government and hon. members opposite have discussed at consider-

able length many of the votes on the Estimates so that it was impossible for us to say how long the discussion on a particular Estimate should last. Hon. members opposite have the greater say in that connection in that they have a greater number of members to speak. I want to support the contention of the leader of the Opposition and to say that we are entitled to greater consideration and more information in regard to the various departments than we have received during this session.

Resolution 3 agreed to.

Resolution 4—"Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—Chief Office"—

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I want to discuss this vote to afford the Premier an opportunity of telling us whether during his recent visit to Great Britain he urged that it would be wise on the part of the British Government to retain the preferential duty on sugar. During his visit we understand that he was persona grata with the British Government, and that he addressed meetings explaining how successful the Queensland Government had been in State enterprises. I think he published a book, and also addressed meetings of members of the House of Commons on Labour legislation. I would like to know whether during that time he thought of the sugar industry, and, seeing that he had their ear, whether he pointed out that it would be wise in the interests of the Empire to continue the preferential treatment of that industry. I know it is a Federal matter, but Mr. Bruce at the time was doing his utmost to secure us that preference. Seeing that the Premier had the advantage of being in close touch with the British Government, as one of the same party, I should like to hear from him whether he thought of raising the question and doing something to secure the continuance of the preference we were then getting. We are now getting only half the preference which we received from the Baldwin Administration.

There is another matter I have brought up by means of questions during the session. I then said that, in view of the dead-set which is being made against the sugar industry in the South, it would be as well to appoint a joint committee composed of members from each side of the House to meet together and discuss the matter. This is a matter which concerns Queensland's chief agricultural industry, and it seems of sufficient importance to Queensland to justify every public body in the State considering the best means of dealing with the hostility that has been created in the South against our great industry. The Parliament of Queensland is the chief public body in the State, and we might fairly consider the question of appointing a joint committee. We have appointed joint committees on far less important subjects than this. We had a joint committee appointed to consider the subject of the parliamentary bar. The Premier evidently did not think the Queensland sugar industry was of sufficient importance to render it advisable that two or three members from each side should be appointed to meet and discuss what can be done for the sugar industry in view of its present critical position. I raise my protest against the attitude taken up by the Premier. I feel sure the sugar districts in the North will consider the matter of sufficient public importance for the consideration of hon.

*Mr. Swayne.*<sup>1</sup>

members of both sides. I think that the Herbert electorate will remember these things.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I recognise that I may be getting a little outside the particular vote, but it is a question of policy, and, being a question of policy and the Bill founded upon the resolutions not having been introduced, I think I shall be in order in asking the Premier whether, in view of the proved financial position as shown recently by figures which have been disclosed to the public, he still intends going on with the stamp duty of 2d. on cheques?

The TREASURER: Give notice of that question.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It seems to me that these pin pricks which are hampering the business community are vital to the interests of Queensland. The hon. gentleman gave a reason when we were discussing the question in Committee for the placing of this burden upon the people. Have the hon. gentlemen's reasons not been blown away by the figures which have since been disclosed? I think it is a big matter. The hon. member cannot treat the matter lightly. The trend of things is such that commerce is being hampered by the constant burdens which have been placed upon it by the Government. I want strongly to stress the grievous burden which the Premier is placing on the community, and the fact that other States are going in the opposite direction. The Premier may put the matter lightly on one side, but it is a matter of the gravest concern to the community generally.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I would like to emphasise the point made by the hon. member for Wynnum. The extra duty on cheques may seem an infinitesimal amount; still it is more important than appears on the surface. When the proposal was first mentioned I pointed out that it was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Hon. members on the other side do not seem to get in touch with the commercial community, and do not realise the serious position in which they are placed. Taxation is becoming intolerable, and now, on top of it all, we are getting what is to me and a good many others a very irritating form of levy. I would stress the desirability of eliminating the proposal altogether, and thus giving the commercial community an opportunity to balance the ledger.

The TREASURER: The Government have to balance the ledger.

Mr. MAXWELL: The note struck by the hon. member for Wynnum is a very apt one. We are getting near the end of our tether. It is all very well for hon. members opposite, who draw their travelling expenses and salaries, and to whom everything in the garden seems beautiful; but, if they were to go around the different districts, I say unhesitatingly that they would realise that, if any relief could be afforded to the commercial community, that relief ought to be given. The position regarding unemployment is most acute and the hon. gentleman should realise that, when reductions are being made in certain directions, he ought not to harass the business community, but rather help them. It has been pointed out that, in view of glowing reports we have received, it is

possible that the financial stringency of the State will be removed and that all will be well; but, at the same time, I want to point out from my point of view that there is altogether too much borrowing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must deal with the resolution.

Mr. MAXWELL: I realise that, but I want to stress the point again in the hope that the hon. gentleman will give it the consideration which hon. members expect.

Resolution 4 agreed to.

Resolutions 5 to 13, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 14—"Home Secretary's Department—Chief Office"—

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I want to raise just one point on this resolution which was not discussed during the passage of the Estimates, and that is in connection with the relief of soldiers. The vote has been reduced, and I think that anything in that direction should be fully explained. I think that men who have done their bit and have fought for us have a right to receive every consideration.

Resolution 14 agreed to.

Resolutions 15 and 16 agreed to.

Resolution 17—"Home Department—Health"—

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): My reason for indicating a desire to speak on this resolution was primarily that apparently some of the health requirements in the city and adjacent parts have not been fully met. For the moment I want to emphasise just one thing. The Health Department has had its attention drawn to the fact that there is a considerable menace to health through the fact that a sewer that was constructed about ten years ago—I may be a little wrong as to the period—to take away sewage through Kingfisher Creek into the river has recently been allowed to be discharged into Norman Creek, and anyone living adjacent to Norman Creek knows that it is a menace to health. If the Home Secretary or the Commissioner of Public Health were to go into the neighbourhood, they would find that so vile has been the effect that newly painted houses have become blackened as a result of the stench from that creek. I have communicated with the South Brisbane Council, the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and also with the Commissioner of Public Health. While a local authority may be prepared to borrow £150,000 from the Australian Mutual Provident Society for the improvement of roads, a much greater need is the preservation of health. People are asked, and properly so, to keep their premises clean. If it had been possible to take an x-ray of some of the stomachs of people who have been compelled perforce to suffer from what is taking place out there, it would have disclosed at least that a very serious wrong had been done. Our first consideration should be the lives of the young children and the splendid neighbourhood that is being absolutely destroyed through either a local authority not doing its duty or someone failing to do his duty in that connection. I think the South Brisbane Council should be told that they must either do their job or they should

[Mr. Swayne.

be sent about their business. I have communicated with the Commissioner of Public Health on several occasions, and I have always received prompt replies. If the South Brisbane Council are not prepared to do their duty with any council that may be associated with them in the matter it is time they were made to do it, and the public health should no longer suffer in that direction. I am perfectly satisfied that, if hon. members passed that way, they would bear out my contention in connection with the offensiveness of this creek, especially at low tide. It is an absolute abomination. Some time ago, I think something like £23,000 was granted to the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board to construct a sewer to take away that filth, and now apparently for some reason or other the rubbish and the excreta that formerly entered Kingfisher Creek has again been diverted into Norman Creek. It is a matter affecting the public health, and is of the gravest concern to the district. I have hesitated in discussing the matter before in this House, but the correspondence that has passed, especially with the South Brisbane Council, has been treated lightly, and not with the grave concern that it demands. I therefore ask the Minister to see to it that his officers get busy and compel this nuisance to be removed.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): I would like to support the remarks made by the hon. member for Wynnum. It is absolutely necessary that drastic action be taken in the interest of public health. The condition of affairs in connection with the creek in question is absolutely scandalous and should not be allowed to exist in any civilised community. If the matter is allowed to remain as it is at present, in another month or two we shall probably have an outbreak of typhoid fever in that locality.

Mr. HANSON (*Buranda*): I wish to endorse the remarks of the hon. members for Wynnum and Kennedy. Anyone who lives in the vicinity of that vile ditch knows that what they have said is absolutely true. It is a menace to public health, and so bad has the condition of this ditch been during the past few months that a number of people in the locality are looking for houses in other districts, with a view to getting out of the locality altogether. Apparently this matter has been too big for councils in South Brisbane in the past, and it looks as if it is too big for the present council also. It is time that the Government stepped in and compelled the council to deal with this open drain so that the nuisance may be removed and the people in the locality given an opportunity of living, as they desire, as clean a life as possible. Whilst this nuisance is allowed to exist the health of the people round about Deshon Estate is endangered, and immediate steps should be taken to abate it.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I would like to assure hon. members who have raised this question that the Commissioner for Public Health is quite alive to the necessity for taking action in this matter. I understand that it is a long-standing nuisance.

Mr. HANSON: Yes.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I understand also that it is a question that has been considered from its various aspects for a number of years. Some time ago the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board dealt with

the position by putting in a sewer, which had the effect of removing the nuisance for a number of years, but recently the nuisance has reappeared in an aggravated form.

Mr. HANSON: Hear, hear!

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Some information was sought of the position at the time, and if my memory serves me correctly, the information furnished by the Commissioner for Public Health was that something which had to be done to the sewer rendered it necessary to hold up the sewage for a time, and this accounted for the nuisance. I have not had time to get into communication with the Commissioner for Public Health since the matter was raised by the hon. member for Wynnum; but I can give hon. members the assurance that the matter will be looked into fully, and I can assure the hon. members for Wynnum, Kennedy, and Buranda that the powers of the Commissioner will be exercised to the fullest extent possible in an endeavour to get rid of the nuisance and prevent a repetition of the state of affairs that has been described.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would like to say a few words in support of the remarks already made by the preceding speakers. I go through that district twice a day and oftener, and I say without hesitation that—to use plain English—it is about the most stinking atmosphere one could possibly go through. It is absolutely disgusting. If a breeze is blowing at all, the nuisance can be detected at the tram terminus. It is a menace to health. The Coorparoo, Stephens, and South Brisbane Councils worked upon a common plan and abated the nuisance when it previously existed. During the progress of the operations of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board pumping operations were carried on, and it took away all the drainage from the creek. These pumping operations have now been discontinued, and the old nuisance has returned. Something ought to be done to mitigate it. It is a very grave nuisance, and one of long standing. Without doubt, it imperils the health of the people living within a radius of half a mile who get the benefit of this rotten stink. It is no good mincing matters. This matter requires urgent attention and drastic action. We have put up with it long enough, and unless the authorities see their way clear to take definite and decided action, I am sure we shall find a body of men rising up and taking action to protect their rights, and I would not blame them in the slightest degree. They certainly have a claim against the authorities for allowing this nuisance to continue. If they do rise up in their wrath and take this contemplated action, the authorities will be to blame and nobody else. I sincerely hope that the Commissioner for Public Health will take drastic action to see that this nuisance is removed.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I desire to ask the Home Secretary if he will inquire from the South Brisbane City Council why they have taken no steps to pass an efficient by-law to deal with noxious trades. The present by-law dealing with noxious trades may properly be termed a burlesque because the council are not game to act on it, and, if they did and anybody tackled them on it, it would involve a lot of legal expense and would result in nothing being accomplished. This has been brought up before, and I am now speaking on behalf of a large section of

my constituents, who complain that they have approached the council with the object of getting a by-law framed to cover noxious trades.

I notice by this morning's paper that a by-law has been framed dealing with the smoke nuisance, but not with noxious trades. I ask the Minister to inquire why nothing has been done to frame a by-law to prevent anybody establishing a noxious trade within the area that should be protected. According to the existing by-law, anybody may establish a noxious trade right in the heart of the residential portion of South Brisbane and the council would be powerless, under their present burlesque by-law, to deal with the nuisance.

Resolution 17 agreed to.

Resolutions 18 to 35, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 36—"Department of Justice—Chief Office"—

HON. W. H. BARNES (Wynnum): I am glad to notice that the Attorney-General is in his place in the House this morning. I again desire to refer to the case of McAvoy and Tarrant. That case was heard in Maryborough, where McAvoy was defendant and a verdict was brought against him as a defendant in a civil case. Subsequently it was ascertained that one of the parties who swore she was present when a certain document was signed was proved to have been 80 miles away at the time. It was subsequently again brought before the notice of the Department of Justice—I am making an *ex parte* statement, I admit, on this phase of it, as I have not consulted the Minister; and ex-Inspector Donnelly, who was put on

the case, said the previous verdict [11 a.m.] ought to have been annulled straight away, because it was a verdict against the evidence which was subsequently brought under the notice of the department. I laid the matter before the minister and he very courteously said to me, "If you will ask Mr. McAvoy to come in, I will see him." I am sure the Minister will not deny that statement. McAvoy has been left penniless, and his wife is bordering on distraction over this case, which, in my judgment, is an absolute miscarriage of justice. I am not suggesting that in the first case the evidence did not go in the direction of justifying the first verdict. On this point I have not discussed the matter with the Minister, but I wrote to McAvoy's home and said that the Minister would be prepared to see him. I am now in receipt of a letter from McAvoy, who tells me that he came 240 miles to see the Minister, and the hon. gentleman, for some reason or other, passed him over to another officer, who was most courteous to him. I say very deliberately that, if the information given to me is correct, then McAvoy is suffering a very grave injustice indeed, because—I hope the Minister will deny it if I am wrong—the person who got the verdict is a person whose character at least is not an extraordinarily good one. His character will not stand the closest scrutiny, and, if the few things which McAvoy got together as a result of his struggle are to be seized as the outcome of the verdict given on evidence that was not complete, then I say the department ought to step in and prevent that man from being penalised in the way he is being penalised to-day. I had a letter from McAvoy only yesterday and in his letter he says plainly,

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"If anyone attempts to come to my home again, I will put a bullet into him." I am not justifying that—I would never justify a thing like that. The process of the law may disclose that justice is slow, but no man can justify a thing like that, and I have written to him on no account to resort to extreme measures; but I am certain that, unless justice is done, the Government will have the wife in a lunatic asylum. I want to know from the Minister, who was most courteous to me when I spoke to him about it, how it is that, after giving me an assurance that he would see this man, he did not see him at all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): The hon. member for Wynnum brought this matter up on the Estimates in Chief and subsequent to that the hon. member had a few words with me on the matter, when he expressed his deep sympathy with McAvoy and his wife in their trouble, and I then assured him that I would be prepared to do anything within reason to see that McAvoy got justice.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is true.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I made the suggestion to the hon. member for Wynnum that, if McAvoy were to call upon me, I would be glad to discuss the matter with him and see if anything could be done to help him. I understand that the hon. member wrote to Mr. McAvoy in terms of our discussion, and arranged for McAvoy to call. McAvoy called subsequently, and I was extremely busy at the time. I immediately sent for the Solicitor-General, and gave him a hurried synopsis of the case, with which I may say he was not unfamiliar, but I impressed upon him the necessity of getting one of his most tried officers, seeing that I could not see Mr. McAvoy myself, to interview Mr. McAvoy and go thoroughly into the case and find out if it were possible to do anything to assist him. I want to say from what I know of the case that McAvoy is entitled to every assistance we can give him.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Hear, hear! Thank you very much for making inquiries.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I told the hon. member for Wynnum that Mr. Dickson, the Crown Prosecutor, had entered a "No true bill" in the case against Tarrant. Notwithstanding that, I think candidly that McAvoy is the victim of a set of circumstances over which he had no control, and we ought to do everything to help him. Since my officer interviewed Mr. McAvoy, I have had his report submitted to me, and I have discussed the matter with the Solicitor-General. We find that McAvoy, as the result of the difficulties in which he has been landed by this case, is in more or less impecunious circumstances. We have therefore come to the conclusion that, to help this man, his case should be remitted to the Public Curator, and I have already approved of that course being adopted. I am sorry I had not the opportunity of seeing the hon. member for Wynnum prior to the sitting of the House, as I might have relieved him of anxiety. I have already approved and directed the official solicitor of the Public Curator to go into the case with McAvoy with a view to setting aside or varying the interpleader judgment recorded against him if this is proper in the circumstances.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Thank you very much.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I cannot do anything more than that. If I can do anything to help McAvoy, I will do so. I think he is an unfortunate man who has been brought into difficulties through this case.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He has lost his all. Resolution 36 agreed to.

Resolutions 37 to 44, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 45—"Treasury—Chief Office"—

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): This is one of the most important resolutions we are faced with to-day in connection with these matters. The Auditor-General's report, which was handed to us only on the last day of the discussion of the Estimates, has revealed quite a number of things which demand the consideration of the House. For instance, the report states that during the month of March, under a certain clause in the agreement, an amount of £533,000 had to be repaid to the Commonwealth Bank as a result of the transfer of the savings bank business and the shrinkage in the deposits. I have always contended that the handing over of our Government Savings Bank was a gross blunder and a shocking piece of business for the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am prepared to admit that by 30th June—I want to be absolutely fair in my criticism—the amount was paid back as the result of the excess during the intervening period. The point I want specially to make is that for that amount of £533,000, on which, if the Government Savings Bank had been retained, we would have been paying 3 per cent. or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—I presume, because the Government, owing to financial stringency, could not find money for the Commonwealth Government in any other way—we now have to pay 5 per cent. for it. The Government do not realise where we have drifted in that regard, and the whole thing indicates that they are distinctly to blame for the manner in which they have conducted the finances of the State.

Then there is a very illuminating thing on page 11 of the Auditor-General's report to which I want to refer. I notice that in the statement of receipts and expenditure for the year ended 30th June last in connection with the Loan Fund we had a tremendous amount of money in the Bank of England at the end of the financial year.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: What?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes—the tremendous amount of 3s. 9d. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: Do you think it is trivial to have a balance of 3s. 9d.?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know, but apparently the Government have said, "Rake in all the money you possibly can." The Government no doubt did all they possibly could to make the position as good as it could be made at the end of the year.

The TREASURER: Does the hon. member contend that we should not show a balance?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would like to know whether there has been any rigging done, and whether the amount which appears as a credit should have appeared as a debit.

The TREASURER: Do you suggest that the Bank of England would rig the account?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, but perhaps the Treasurer might do a little rigging.

The TREASURER: It is distinctly disorderly to make an imputation of that kind.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not want to insinuate that the hon. gentleman would do what was improper, but apparently everything has been done to get in all the money he possibly could. The Auditor-General shows that there is an amount of £66,000 which, if it had been dealt with in the way it ought to have been dealt with, would have turned the surplus into a debit. Does the hon. gentleman say that the Auditor-General is wrong?

The TREASURER: He is right, but it does not bear out your imputation that anything wrong has been done.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I find that the Auditor-General makes some reference to a sum of £419,724. There is some doubt as to whether the expenditure of that sum was properly undertaken.

The TREASURER: He does not put it in those words.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is trying to get out of it by a back door.

The TREASURER: Why do you not quote the Auditor-General's exact words?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I intend to quote the Auditor-General's statements in regard to some of the things which have been done. On page 14 he says—

"An amount of £2,282,420 8s. 6d. has been received by the Treasury under 'The Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920,' but £2,702,144 18s. 3d., or £419,724 9s. 9d. in excess of receipts, had been expended thereunder at 30th June, 1924."

This is the Auditor-General's comment—

"It is questionable whether the expenditure of the £419,724 9s. 9d. in excess of receipts, without the required authority of the Governor in Council, is in accordance with section 6 of the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1890."

The TREASURER: That is what the Auditor-General says. What does the hon. gentleman say? He says that we expended money without the sanction of Parliament, which is a different thing.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have quoted the exact words of the Auditor-General, and I am sure that any man who reads that quotation will come to the conclusion that the Auditor-General is under the impression that the Treasurer has done something improper.

The TREASURER: No. The Auditor-General says, "It is questionable." Will the hon. member for Wynnum tell me how it is questionable?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer will have an opportunity of answering my contention later on.

The TREASURER: Tell me where it is questionable.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Auditor-General makes some very stringent comments with regard to several things, and it is up to the Treasurer to get up in his place and explain them.

The TREASURER: Tell me what you think is questionable with regard to that transaction.

*Hon. W. H. Barnes.]*

HON. W. H. BARNES: Spending money without having it authorised in a proper way is what is questionable.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman knows that the authority referred to is the authority of the Governor in Council.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes. The Governor in Council should have given his assent. The Treasurer knows that.

The TREASURER: The Governor in Council means a meeting of Ministers with the Governor presiding.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It all points to the fact—we have seen it in connection with the spending of money by Ministers—that there is an extreme looseness and a kind of “go as you please” in connection with important affairs of the State. I am perfectly justified in referring to these matters, because it is certain that we are drifting—the Treasurer knows it—at an alarming rate.

The TREASURER: I know the hon. gentleman is a very poor critic of the Auditor-General's report.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman does not like the criticism. Is it not a fact that we have drifted to a very large extent in spending money on ventures that are practically unprofitable and that we have ceased spending money on ventures that do pay? If I know anything about finance, I know that, when people are looking into the heart of things, they cut off those that do not pay, and keep those that do pay. What is the Treasurer doing? He is stopping expenditure in connection with workers' dwellings.

The TREASURER: No—not stopping expenditure.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Not absolutely, but what was the answer given in this House? It was that only the buildings that had been approved of last year were being carried out this year.

The TREASURER: We have limited the expenditure, but we have not stopped it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that, if I were entitled to an advance under that Act, I could not get it to-day for the one reason that the Government have not got the money to advance. The Government are pouring their money into ventures that are not paying, and they are stopping expenditure in connection with those that do pay. The money expended on the erection of workers' dwellings pays at least 5 per cent. to the Treasury and shows a profit in addition; yet we have the Treasurer finding money for other things which are adding to our losses very, very considerably. The position is very acute.

What do we find in connection with the American loans, which were supposed to be such an excellent thing for Queensland? They are costing £6 10s. 5d. per cent. We were told that those loans were going to be of great benefit to Queensland. We were told they disclosed wonderful financing. It must be realised that the Treasurer is actually up against it, and the position he occupies to-day is one that is becoming increasingly embarrassing by reason of the fact that he does not know how to control the finances of the State.

Resolution 45 agreed to.

Resolutions 46 to 52, both inclusive, agreed to.

{Hon. W. H. Barnes.

Resolution 53—“*Department of Agriculture and Stock—Chief Office*”—

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I first want to find out from the Minister what the policy of the department is going to be in connection with votes that have been taken in connection with the formation of pools—I am now speaking of something that has actually happened—and turned down when submitted to the people. A vote was taken in connection with the banana pool, and the vote went against the pool. Yet, notwithstanding that adverse vote, a pool has been formed. A vote was also taken in connection with a maize pool. We find, according to an utterance of the Director of the Council of Agriculture, if he is reported correctly, that, notwithstanding the pool was turned down, it is to be proceeded with. If that is so, the Minister should give some explanation to this House. If that is correct, it is only idle to submit questions to the people at all. If the principle of submitting matters to the parties concerned is right, then once a pool has been turned down that should be final. No departure should be allowed from the principle which has been affirmed in the particular districts to which the reference has been submitted.

The Minister has explained that much good has been done through the assistance which the department gave to men in the country who were in need of supplies. I hold in my hand a document which does not show very much love for the farmers. Not only was a charge of 5 per cent. made for the supplies that were given, but, in addition, interest at the rate of 5 per cent. is also charged. I do not know whether that interest charge is 5 per cent. per annum or not. The official account I have shows a handling charge of £1 9s. 10d.—it is not put down as “commission,” as that would not be aristocratic enough—and a 5 per cent. interest charge of £1 12s. 7d.

I want to call attention to another fact. I repeat what I have said in this House before, that the State Produce Agency is fortunate in having in charge of it a gentleman like Mr. Park, who is a capable man. I am making no reference whatever to a man behind his back. In addition to being a capable man, Mr. Park is eminently fitted for the job.

MR. KING: Did not the State Produce Agency commit a breach with respect to the egg pool?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I shall have something to say on that at a later stage. I shall show that an egg supplier who sent his eggs to the egg pool and to a private firm for a period extending over twelve months obtained different rates for his eggs on the same day and lost over the whole period about £50 in connection with his dealings with the egg pool.

It is perfectly certain that if the State Produce Agency had not purchased about £57,000 worth of produce for the farmers, it would not have made the profit it did on the whole of its transactions of £1,300 for the year. If they had not been able to buy that £57,000 worth of goods for the farmers, they would have shown a deficiency instead of a surplus. In other words, that surplus came out of the farmers' pockets. The farmers have had to pay for the running of the State Produce Agency. A very beautiful business from the point of view of the State Government! They had these full

trucks of fodder, many of which were bought at auction, and they just reconsigned 5 per cent. of that fodder. A very excellent business indeed! There is no competition so far as Government supplies are concerned. The goods are invoiced to them without any competition at all. It is a very rosy thing indeed, but it goes to show that a State enterprise cannot be conducted on commercial lines. If it were, it would go to pieces. It is my duty to put this business before hon. members this morning, and to show the way in which the farmer has been got at by the Government under the name of relief.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The authority administering the Primary Producers' Organisation Act comes within the scope of this vote, and it is the general opinion throughout the State that the system under which that Act is working is wrong, and that what is wanted is organisation on a commodity basis. Quite recently I moved a resolution affirming that an amendment of the Act was desirable. On that occasion the Secretary for Agriculture contradicted me, and stated that the present Act permitted of the necessary change in the working of the Act being effected. At the time I did not know, but afterwards I found out, that on the very day I moved my motion the proceedings of a meeting of the district council were reported in the Mackay "Mercury." The report gave a legal opinion from a barrister of note to the effect that it is impossible under the existing Act to bring about the alterations in the system that are generally allowed to be necessary. Afterwards, I endeavoured to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that legal advice had been obtained on the subject and was available. The hon. gentleman simply quibbled, and said that it did not appear in the minutes of the district council. I do not think the hon. gentleman ever had an opportunity of seeing those minutes. I think I am justified in bringing before the Minister the fact that this legal opinion appeared in the Mackay "Mercury's" report of the proceedings of the District Council, published on the 19th September. I understand, too, that Mr. Woolcock, the parliamentary draftsman, also expressed the opinion that the Act does not permit the desires of the primary producers of Queensland being given effect to. I am sorry that the Secretary for Agriculture is not in his place, as the hon. gentleman would then have had the opportunity of telling us—in view of these opinions which cannot be gainsaid—whether it is his intention to continue with the Act as at present and not to amend it to render it effective.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): There are one or two things on which I would like an opinion. The Minister said he would give the information as we were going through the votes, but, unfortunately, we did not get it. One matter is that of relief, where it was distributed, and the price charged. I understand that the whole of the relief has been charged at a flat rate for the whole of the period. I think that most unfair. If a man started to feed his stock during the drought period, commencing early, it is unfair and places him at a disadvantage if he is to be put on a flat rate with the man commencing at a higher rate.

As the hon. member for Wynnum pointed out, 5 per cent. commission was charged and also 5 per cent. interest, and the whole

method of distribution was wasteful in the extreme. Instead of purchasing the fodder at Wallangarra and distributing it from that point, it was brought all the way down to Brisbane and reconsigned back to the people who required it. That meant [11.30 a.m.] double handling and double freight, and was a most wasteful way of doing the business. Now we find that the farmers are charged 5 per cent. interest on the amount of the purchase money, in which all these extra charges are included. It is a most unfair charge, and should be looked into to see whether the Minister cannot devise some system whereby the unwarranted expenses incurred would not be charged to the farmers. We pointed out when fodder was being procured that it would be much better if the fodder was purchased at the point of entry into Queensland instead of being brought all the way down to Brisbane. No notice was taken of that advice, and we were told that it had not been decided at that period in what manner the fodder would be charged. The department waited twelve months before sending out accounts, so that the farmers had no possible knowledge at the time of the liability they were incurring, and now they have accounts sent on to them at a flat rate, to which many of them strongly object, because they consider they should have been allowed to purchase fodder at the price ruling on the day it was purchased. In some cases the Government did make money available, and the farmers purchased their own supplies; but in other cases the farmers were advised to take the fodder that would be supplied by the State Produce Agency, and they accepted that fodder on the understanding that they were to get it at the price ruling on the day of delivery. Now they find they have to pay a considerably higher price. There must be some reason for pooling the whole of the fodder purchased, but I cannot understand the reason. It appears to me that it would be far more simple for bookkeeping purposes to charge the farmers the price ruling on the date the fodder was purchased by them.

The pig pool at Atherton seems to be one of the most extraordinary activities that the Government have undertaken. There is only one company at Atherton that buys pigs, and that is a co-operative company. It seems to me that now they have two sets of directors—one for the pool and one for the co-operative company—doing exactly the same work. The only thing that I can see that the pig pool does is to protect the non-shareholder in the company as against the shareholder. The pool distributes the profits amongst all suppliers of pigs. That means that the shareholder who put his money in to start the factory is placed in a worse position than the non-shareholder who did nothing to start it. The pool has made arrangements with the factory by which they will get the whole of the supplies coming to hand. We find that they made a levy of £194 11s. 7d. for doing exactly the same work or for double-banking the work of the directors of the company. I cannot understand what the object of the Minister was in establishing this pool: what benefits accrued to the people who are in it; and what the object is in going against the principle that has always been followed in connection with effective co-operative companies—that is, to see that the shareholders

Mr. Moore.]



and suppliers of the company receive the profits to the exclusion of the non-shareholders. This pool board seems to be doing diametrically opposite to what is always recognised to be the fair thing—that is, the pool board is establishing the claim of the non-shareholder to participate in profits, though he has done nothing to assist in establishing the factory. I cannot understand what the object of the pool is, or what benefit accrues to the people. I only wish that the Secretary for Agriculture was in his place this morning, so that he could give us information as to the benefit which accrues to the people on the land from the pools. It seems to me that they are increasing in number without giving the people concerned any benefit whatever.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): It is necessary that Ministers should, if possible, be in their places when these resolutions are going through the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: It seems to me that before long the Secretary for Agriculture will require to go into the question of whether it is not advisable, now that the Council of Agriculture is established at a huge expense to the State, to close up the Department of Agriculture or a big portion of it, especially when we consider that the Council of Agriculture is practically a duplication of the Department of Agriculture. There are officers in the Council of Agriculture doing practically the same work as officers of the Department of Agriculture. That is a matter which should receive very careful consideration. The farmers should be able to go direct with their difficulties and troubles to the experts of the Department of Agriculture, who are the men who are fitted to deal with these things. The farmers are very often referred from the Department of Agriculture to the Council of Agriculture. There is nothing else but confusion in the matter.

I want to say a few words in support of the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in connection with the working of the State Produce Agency. It is unfortunate that we have to spoonfeed an agency such as this in the way it is being spoonfed at the present time. During the drought periods through which Queensland has passed during the last few years, the State Produce Agency made the credit balance it has at the present time out of the purchase of fodder in the Southern States and the handling of it here, just the same as any middleman's business would do. I think that is entirely wrong. Take the cotton seed, for instance, which was obtained from the British-Australian Cotton Association for starving stock. Although the farmers could order it from the British-Australian Cotton Association and the Department of Agriculture, the business went through the channel of the State Produce Agency, and another 10s. per ton was put on the top of the price, which the unfortunate settlers had to pay. I do not think that any business man would for one moment say that that is the best way to run a business. If the State Produce Agency cannot be run without these spoonfeeding conditions, the Minister should either reconstruct it on co-operative lines or close it up altogether. I believe that a business should stand on its own feet. If it cannot do that without getting Government doles—because that is what it really amounts to—something should be done to close it up.

[Mr. Moore.

I would like to refer now to the State stallions. While I am not a believer in State enterprise—nor in State stallions for that matter—I think the Minister is treating the people in the districts where the State stallions travelled last year in anything but a reasonable manner. Anybody who has had anything to do with the breeding of stock knows that many of the mares which were put to the horses last year are not in foal, and the stallions should have gone back into the same districts again if for no other reason than to prove that the Government were sincerely desirous of giving the people a fair deal. They are asked to send down two guineas before the services of the horse are granted at all, and that has been practically a loss in many cases. I think the Minister has not done the best that could be done in the interests of the owners of the mares. The stallions should have gone back to the same districts for at least a second year, and the Minister would be well advised to consider the advisability, not only of sending back a stallion, but of sending back the same stallion to various districts. I know something of what I am speaking about, because I have been breeding horses for some years, and I hope the Minister will consider my suggestion. I take it that the member of the board controlling the stallions who resigned did so for no other reason than that—knowing something of the business—he felt that my suggestion is reasonable and that he could not agree with the Minister.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): With reference to the supply of fodder for starving stock through the State Produce Agency, which has been mentioned by other hon. members, it is a fact that the people in all the districts I represent were able to get their fodder on credit and at a cheaper rate than the amount charged by the department. It has been shown by the hon. member for Aubigny that the State Produce Agency bought the fodder on the open market. It would be much better to reconsider the whole thing, so that the fodder could be purchased at absolutely the cheapest price, should it be necessary to give further relief at any time, and cut out the profit. If that could be done it should be done.

Another matter which I regard as a matter of urgency affects the Council of Agriculture. It should declare its intention with regard to "The Producer" newspaper, and say straight out whether it is to take part in politics. Anybody who has followed the articles in the paper must know that there is a distinct bias in every article. If there is anything to be said in favour of the Government party, it is said; but if there is anything to be said in favour of this party, there is nothing about it. Everything is done to throw a slight on hon. members on this side. I believe it was stated in a leading article that the intention was to take an active part in politics. It was distinctly understood that the Primary Producers' Organisation was not to be a political organisation. It draws its revenue from every producer, and the people who elected the Council were never consulted as to the political party they wished them to support. If this organisation is allowed to take an active part in politics, that will be the end of the whole concern. It can exist only as a business organisation, and it was constituted for that purpose, and no departure from that line of action should be allowed. The

Secretary for Agriculture is Chairman of the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. EDWARDS: I suppose he told the members to take an active part in politics.

Mr. DEACON: If they take an active part in politics, as is their announced intention, then we have every reason to believe that they will be expected to back up the Government. I hope the Secretary for Agriculture will realise his responsibilities in the matter, and will realise that, if active politics are indulged in, the organisation will be broken up. I would regret very much to see the organisation break up, because it can be made very useful; but if it were reorganised on the lines suggested by the Country party, it would become much more useful than it is to-day. It is the intention of the Government and the Director of Agriculture to reorganise, and, although it is not quite clear as to how that reorganisation is going to be brought about, I believe it is intended to add certain members from commodity boards to the present body. At the present time there is a serious complaint that the organisation is too expensive, and if more members are added it will become still more expensive, and will give still greater ground for complaint. The only way to reorganise sincerely is to elect members to represent those industries with which they are concerned. I hope that will be done, and they would be sufficient to constitute the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I endorse the remarks made by the hon. member for Cunningham. It would be absolutely wrong to allow politics to interfere with the Local Producers' Associations. The Primary Producers' Organisation scheme has been in existence for about two and a-half years, and it has to a certain extent been free from political control, and I hope that the organisation will not now be allowed to take an active part in politics. I have attended many meetings of Local Producers' Associations. In many instances the attendance is not great, but there is a certain section who carry on the business of the Local Producers' Association, and, whilst at times they discuss matters of importance to the State generally, on many occasions they deal with local matters. They seem to take a greater interest in discussing something concerning their own locality. At the Local Producers' Association meetings there are men with different shades of political opinion, and I want to tell the Secretary for Agriculture, as Chairman of the Agricultural Council, that once he allows politics to be introduced into the Local Producers' Associations it will have the effect of causing the organisation to lose its very best men. Those men attend the meetings entirely in the interests of the association, quite apart from politics altogether. If politics are introduced, it will interfere with the work which we believe will be beneficial to the farmer as time goes on.

There is another matter I wish to bring forward that I did not have the opportunity to discuss when the Estimates were going through. It is of interest to farmers and stockowners in my district, and is in connection with the issuing of permits for stock that have to travel by road or rail. I brought this matter up on the Estimates last year, but unfortunately nothing has been done to relieve the situation. The stock inspector at Maryborough, together with the meat inspector, has an office in the police

court. Both officers are very attentive in connection with any correspondence they receive for the issue of stock permits, but the duties of the stock inspector take him into the country, and this precludes him from being constantly in attendance at his office, and, as the meat inspector has to visit the slaughter-yards around the town, the office is frequently closed for two or three hours during the day. The result is that farmers and stockowners coming into Maryborough for permits are put to considerable inconvenience. Business people and others often book a truck for the conveyance of cattle and horses into the country, pay the necessary deposit, and, when they go round to the office for a permit, they find the inspector absent. I trust that the Minister will see that something is done to relieve the situation. People have been put to a great deal of inconvenience from this fact on many occasions. If a junior was appointed to the office, or the C.P.S. or some other officer in the courthouse building were empowered to issue permits, the situation would be relieved. We could go a little further than that, and allow people in the outer districts—taking my electorate, for instance—who wanted to move stock to obtain permits from the police in the various centres instead of having to go into Maryborough. If such a course were adopted, it would be of great assistance to stockowners.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I want to raise my protest in connection with the dealing of the Department of Agriculture and Stock with the farmers to whom they supplied fodder in their extremity. The hypocrisy disclosed in connection with that treatment is so conspicuous that the House and country should be extremely thankful to the hon. member for Wynnum for having brought the matter up. It will be found on page 73 of the report of the Auditor-General that the interest charged on those transactions amounted to £2,678 16s. 6d., which is made a first charge against the farmers. In addition to interest another 5 per cent. was also charged. Consequently, you have twice the amount stated as a first charge against the farmer for services rendered by the Government to him during a critical period of the year we have left behind. The real point in connection with the matter is that the Government pretended to be a help to the farmers. It was claimed that the Government were rendering a conspicuous service by procuring supplies of fodder in order to save cattle and stock generally, but when their very act of service is made to result in a profit to themselves, one can see immediately that the act has to be discounted enormously. I do not say that one of these amounts might not be a fair charge, but when it is remembered that the farmer has to pay from £5,000 to £6,000 for the services rendered, the great good that may have been connected with the service must be discounted to a great extent.

There is another direction in which the farmer has been penalised during the past year. This may not be referred to in the Auditor-General's report, but it is common knowledge that the farmer was charged 7s. 9d. to 8s. a bushel for seed wheat supplied by the Government. That might be all very well under other circumstances, but not when we know the farmer has been allowed only 5s. for his wheat. No private dealer in seed wheat would be allowed to dispose of it

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under such conditions. It is possibly true that a further dividend over the 5s. may yet be given to the farmer, but no matter how great it may be—it may amount to 2d. a bushel—it will leave an enormous disparity between the amount paid to the farmer and the price he had to pay to the Government for seed wheat. I protest against the farmer being penalised to such an extent. It seems to me that the primary producer, no matter what position he may take up or what services he may require, must be pounced upon immediately and the last ounce taken from him. These are days when we must turn round and consider how the man on the land is to be kept contented and encouraged to remain where he is. It is pin-pricks such as I have mentioned that are having a disastrous and disturbing effect on the farmers of the community.

[12 noon.]

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I notice that the Government have established quite a number of pools while others have been turned down. The Director of the Council of Agriculture quite recently visited the Kingaroy district and advised the farmers there to hold on to their maize for another week or two, because, he said, although the pool had been turned down, it might still be brought in. It seems to me that the Government have adopted the policy that they are going to have a pool, whether the vote of the producers is favourable or otherwise. We had an instance of the Government's disregard of the voice of the people at the time of the referendum in regard to the abolition of the Legislative Council. Although the vote was against the abolition of the Upper House, the Government abolished it, and it appears they are adopting the same policy of disregarding the voice of the people in regard to pools.

At the present time Mr. Macgregor is away with Senator Massy Greene endeavouring to persuade the farmers to take over the British Australian Cotton Association gineries and the physical assets, as they are described. Last year Parliament passed the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act, in which it was laid down definitely that the amount of interest to be paid to shareholders outside the suppliers in these co-operative concerns should be limited to 5 per cent., and I notice that Mr. L. R. Macgregor and Senator Massy Greene are proposing that the co-operative company to be established to take over the cotton gineries should issue debentures at 8 per cent. Evidently this co-operative company is not to conform to the provisions of the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act, and on this point the Government are particularly inconsistent. In order to show the way things are apparently drifting through the Government going on with pools that have been turned down, I would like to quote the remarks of Senator Gardiner at the Eight-hour Dinner held in Sydney on the 5th of this month—

“People had talked of the resolutions of the Brisbane Labour Conference and its attitude towards the socialisation of industry, yet to-day they had a Government actually legislating for the socialisation of the latter industry.”

These remarks show where the Government are heading so far as the Council of Agriculture is concerned, and where their legislation is leading so far as the man on the

land is concerned. It is quite time that the men on the land woke up. I had the opportunity of listening to the Premier at Lowood when he was announcing his agricultural policy, and at that time I remember reminding the farmers there of the words of a little nursery rhyme—

“Said the spider to the fly.”

To-day it would do no harm to the farmers to have that little rhyme repeated. I would like some explanation from the Secretary for Agriculture in regard to the wheat pool. The Auditor-General, on page 80 of his report, has this to say—

“The quantity of wheat delivered to the board during this year was only 144,506 bushels. Growers have been paid 5s. per bushel for prime quality milling wheat, and costs amounted to 20.12d. per bushel.”

In this case it seems the growers had been paid 5s., and the cost of handling that wheat amounted 1s. 8.12d. per bushel, making 6s. 8.12d. in all. As the hon. member for Warwick stated, most of that wheat had been sold for 7s. 8d. or 8s. per bushel. As I understand that the farmers have so far only received 5s. of the total payment of 6s. 8.12d. by the Wheat Pool, and it has been sold at from 7s. 9d. to 8s. a bushel, I would like to know from the Secretary for Agriculture what has happened, or what is likely to happen, to the balance of the money.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I think the Secretary for Agriculture might have answered the questions asking for certain information. I would like to know from the Minister what action his department proposes to take with regard to advances under certain Acts which are administered by the department. The Government pretend to be very proud of an amendment to the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act, by which the Department of Agriculture was to make available to settlers advances up to £200 for stock and for other purposes without security. We find to-day that, though new settlements have been established, this Act has been absorbed in the Agricultural Bank Act, and they are administered now under one roof. The advantages which the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act gives to new settlers seem to have been to some extent lost under the new measure. Whilst people with only a very few head of cattle were supposed to get this advantage, we find in connection with applications for assistance which are coming from the Downs and other parts of the State that settlers are told by the Minister that this Act did not provide for anybody except the beginner, and that the man who had lost all his cattle was not to receive this assistance. The settlers in the Upper Burnett—who, surely, are beginners—are making applications, and the information they are given is that the money is not available for settlers in the Upper Burnett. People who are invited to come to the State and settle on the Upper Burnett are beginners. They are under a separate Act, but surely they are not going to be deprived of facilities which are essential in starting settlement and in building up individual farms. This is a matter of very great concern to hundreds of people who are settling on the land. The Minister should see that these concessions which the Act makes available are provided for the

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settlers. The Agricultural Bank is administering, under the Department of Agriculture, the whole of these advances. It seems a shame that there is a greater amount appropriated for the building of workers' dwellings in the city than there is to build homes and for farms throughout the whole State. That is an unfortunate anomaly. If we are to get out of the present difficulties with regard to settlement, we should make available these advances in a much more generous way than that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now dealing with matter which has been dealt with on a previous vote.

Mr. CORSER: The Agricultural Bank is now administered by the Department of Agriculture, and this is the only time I can discuss it. I wanted to take this opportunity, seeing that the Secretary for Agriculture is in his place and it affects his department, to remind him of the necessity for a more lenient administration than hitherto.

If I am permitted, I want to deal with another matter which concerns the people in the country districts. When they do get stock they have to apply to the Department of Public Lands for wire netting to protect them from vermin.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: It is really a matter for discussion on this resolution.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot deal with the vote for wire netting on this resolution.

Mr. CORSER: At any rate, I hope the Department of Agriculture will take the matter into consideration.

On page 75 of the Auditor-General's report it is shown that the total loss on cotton was £40,389, and, as stated by the Auditor-General, that loss has been borne equally by the Commonwealth and the State Governments—not in accordance with the agreement made at the last conference, of which we have heard so much—but as a result of an undertaking made by Mr. Hughes when Prime Minister and carried out by Mr. Bruce. We find, however, that the proceeds from the sale of cotton seed to the farmers amounted to £3,191, and that the State's loss was reduced by that sum accordingly. That fact supports my claim that the seed is really a valuable commodity which should belong to the farmer himself, and indicates the great benefit that the British-Australian Cotton Association receives from the agreement. It would be very interesting to know what the Government receive through the department or the State Produce Agency for the sale of other seed, which I understand is disposed of at £5 per ton. It is not credited to the Department of Agriculture, and so apparently goes through other channels. The Commonwealth does not share in the proceeds from the sale of such by-products, but I think it might be found that the State's loss was totally wiped out by them. Although the Minister may claim that the State has lost through the guarantee, I think that, if we could follow all these proceeds through the various channels through which they pass, we should find that the Commonwealth was the only loser.

It seems an anomaly that a Board should be constituted for the supposed purpose of deciding on the districts to which the State stallions should be sent and the conditions

under which their services should be available, but that, nevertheless, the decisions of that Board should not be final. First of all, the Board intimated that a stallion was to be sent to the Burnett, but some other influence got to work—there is only one influence above that Board, and that is the Minister—and its decision was pushed aside.

This horse was taken and sent to some Labour electorate instead. You could not expect any man who had any respect for his decisions to stay on the Board under such circumstances. Whilst the Secretary for Agriculture claims that Mr. Baynes resigned, I contend from what little I know of the operations of the Stallion Board, that Mr. Baynes was compelled to resign because the opinions of members constituting the Board did not count for anything, and the members were only in the same position as a lot of commissioners in Queensland, who are placed in their positions to take the blame of actions of the Government. The Government give them the dirty work to do, because they do not want to be responsible for it themselves. They appointed a Stallion Board to bear the brunt of any blame in connection with the allotment of the stallions, but the decisions of the Board count for nothing against the intentions of the Minister. Mr. Baynes could take no other course than resign, and the Minister calmly states that his resignation was received. It will be agreed that one must approach these matters in some spirit of resentment when we know that certain recommendations that were made by the Board were brushed aside. I must point that out in justice to the electorate I represent, and in justice to the Stallion Board. Last year I went to the Minister in connection with the allotment of stallions, and he said, "You want me to use my political influence with the Stallion Board. The idea of you asking me to use my political influence with the Board to get it to alter its decisions!" The decision of the Stallion Board was over-ridden, and over-ridden by the Secretary for Agriculture, and Mr. Baynes did the right thing and resigned. It is unfortunate that we have not more members of the community who are in a position to stand up to their opinions, and refuse to act merely as figure-heads for the convenience of the Government, and save them from the trouble which must result through their not acting at all times above-board.

Resolution 53 agreed to.

Resolutions 54 to 74, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 75—"Department of Mines—State Mining Operations"—

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): I wish particularly to draw attention to the extremely serious position presented to us in the Auditor-General's report arising out of various mining ventures. On page 100 of the report is perhaps the most illuminating thing we have had presented to us in connection with these matters during the life of any Parliament. One can scarcely believe that there was a matter like this when the Secretary for Mines presented his case the other day.

The Secretary for Mines stated that he was perfectly satisfied with the Department for Mines and the various ventures he is controlling; but, when we are brought face to face with the facts presented in the report of the Auditor-General, it seems alarming that any

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Minister seized with the responsibility of office should for a moment state that he is satisfied with what is found there. The debit on the Chillagoe smelters has increased from £243,881 in 1920 to £974,830 in 1924. The reading of the Auditor-General's comments in this business are so informative, and at the same time so serious, that it is right that it should appear in "Hansard." The report says—

"In view of the successive yearly losses since 1920, and the financial position generally, the general manager recently submitted for the consideration of the Government a proposal whereby the smelters would operate during that part of the year when the sugar and other industries are to a large extent inoperative. The obtaining of ore supplies will, however, be continuous.

"It may be mentioned that the first year's operations of the smelters—1920—disclose a profit of £1,375 3s. 6d. In that year, as will be seen on reference to the statement at the foot of page 107, the price of copper was £95, but it has since decreased to £66 18s. at 30th June, 1924.

"In respect to lead, however, the prospects are encouraging, as after falling £10 in 1921, as compared with the previous year, it has gradually recovered, and at 30th June last it was worth £31.

"At the request of the hon. the Premier, the financial position of the Chillagoe works and Mount Mulligan coalmine was considered by the Under Secretary Treasury, general manager State Smelters, and myself, and after due deliberation the following recommendations were submitted:—

"1. The accumulated loss on the working account of the Chillagoe State Smelters, amounting to £281,821 17s. 9d., be written off.

"2. The indebtedness to the Treasury of the Mount Mulligan Coalmine—£188,279 15s. 7d.—be written down to £100,000."

Mr. MAXWELL: That is how these concerns are run on socialistic lines.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The report continues—

"3. The annual interest charges on the Treasury liabilities of both undertakings be suspended until either shows a surplus after payment of working expenses."

That shows the position is almost a hopeless one; yet the Minister in a perfectly satisfied attitude revealed to us his opinion regarding this State mining venture! There is nothing so serious in all our experience as the shameful and loose way in which the money of the people is being expended in this direction. The Auditor-General makes it perfectly clear in his report just where we stand in this matter. On page 9 there is a further reference to the amount involved in this matter in the Trust Accounts. It says—

"The excess in actual trading transactions represent £765,647 8s. 2d."

The Auditor-General then proceeds to show how that amount is made up, and the Chillagoe State Smelters Fund is shown to be responsible for a debit of £723,502 1s. 4d., or an increase for the year of £251,856 7s. 2d.

The State Advances Corporation (Settlers' Branch) debit has increased from £29,297 2s.

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7d. to £198,704 9s., an increase of £169,407 6s. 5d. The debit balance in connection with the Workers' Dwellings Branch has decreased slightly. The State Enterprises Act Fund shows an increased debit. I realise that more than mining matters have been mixed up in my references as I have been quoting from page 8 of the Auditor-General's report. The matter is so serious that one can scarcely realise what caused the Minister to give it the complexion he did when referring to the matter a few days ago.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You were not here. I quoted a loss on the Chillagoe mines. Do not put words into my mouth that I did not use.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman was perfectly satisfied with the conduct and management of his department.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not say so. You are putting words into my mouth that I did not use.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The matter is so serious that I demand an exact statement from the Government as to what they intend to do in connection with their mining ventures. The other day the Government imposed upon the primary producers and those who travel an amount of £375,000 in additional taxation, yet here we are losing hundreds of thousands of pounds. Why should the primary producer have to pay extra taxation while this is going on?

Mr. HARTLEY: Why pay extra taxation to keep Mount Morgan going? That taxation amounted to £112,000.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: This is a most serious matter. No man would put his own money into such a venture as the Chillagoe mines, and I maintain that we should be as careful of the funds of the country as we are with our own funds.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Anybody can make a profit out of produce, but it is difficult to make a profit out of mining.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Minister has tried to draw me off the track. The hon. gentleman interjected about profit on produce. Had the Department of Agriculture and Stock not imposed on my friends in the country, the producers of the land, a charge of between £5,000 and £6,000, instead of having a profit of some £1,200 the State Produce Agency would have shown a loss of some £5,000. That is where produce comes in, and probably there are other businesses experiencing the same conditions.

Mr. EDWARDS: They made that profit out of the pockets of the primary producers of the State.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes, under the guise of helping the farmer, the Government help themselves. Something more should be said on this serious matter of shortages than has been said by the Secretary for Mines. Look at the loss on coal.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are no losses on coal.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Every time the hon. gentleman's department makes a sale there is a loss on coal; whether it comes from the Styx or anywhere else, it does not cover the cost of production.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Railway Department gains.



Mr. G. P. BARNES: And then the Government fall back on the ratepayer and the primary producer and impose extra railway freights and fares on them. That shows their love for the farmer! They penalise the farmer to cover the shrinkage that takes place in other directions.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Our coalmines are very successful and of great benefit to the Railway Department.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The loss is almost unbelievable. We are going into recess again in the course of a few days, and by the time we meet again next year we shall be able to make a survey—as we are making to-day—a survey which will be too late—of the disastrous losses which accrue from day to day in connection with our mad and disastrous mining ventures.

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*): I require a little explanation in regard to an item in connection with the State Coalmine at Mount Mulligan. The Auditor-General, on page 108 of his report, gives the indebtedness of this mine at 21st July, 1923, as—

	£	s.	d.
"Principal ... ..	137,642	19	3
Interest ... ..	11,260	7	0
Total ... ..	£148,903	6	3"

Then the Auditor-General goes on to say—

"On 27th June, 1923, the company's offer to sell the equity of redemption and give quiet possession for the sum of £5,500 and the cancellation of all debts was accepted, and on 1st July, 1923, the mine was taken over on behalf of the State by the general manager of the State Smelters at Chillagoe, under whose supervision it is operated.

"The amount of £5,500 was to be paid at the rate of 5s. per ton of coal obtained, but, in consideration of a cash payment, £5,250 was accepted in full settlement."

Then we come a year ahead, and we find that it starts under the new régime at 30th June, 1924, with the following liability:—

#### TREASURY INDEBTEDNESS.

	£	s.	d.
Loan (Purchase Account)	142,892	19	3
Trust (Working Account)	45,386	16	4
	£188,279	15	7

In the liability to the Treasury of £142,892 19s. 3d. it will be noticed that the principal of £137,642 19s. 3d. as at 21st June, 1923, has been included, and also the cash payment of £5,250, but the amount of £11,260 7s. due for interest has been dropped out and no explanation is given. The effect is that in the future the capital indebtedness of that company will always show £11,260 7s. less than it really is, and in order to show a profit it will not have to pay interest on that amount. The amount of £11,260 7s. for interest—which was one of the liabilities of the company the year before—should have been included, only at 5 per cent. it will give an advantage apparently of £550 per annum, and the purchase account would then have been that much more. It makes one wonder whether this sort of thing is obtaining in regard to other transactions—that, when taking over some charge against a property, the interest indebtedness has been quietly

dropped out, with the result that there is so much less to pay interest in order that the undertaking may show a profit. The whole thing is misleading. An amount of £11,260 7s. of the people's money has gone into this mine, and the Government have lost all trace of it. The Minister might explain how it is that that amount is not included in the purchase money.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Puddington*): I do not intend to let the hon. member for Warwick put words into my mouth which I did not utter. He stated in the course of his speech that I was thoroughly satisfied with the result of the operations at Chillagoe. I have never made such a statement. In my speech dealing with the matter last week I mentioned the loss at Chillagoe, and deplored the fact that there should be a loss, just as there are losses in mining operations right throughout the State.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Your general attitude indicated that you were satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I wish to correct the idea which has been created that I was thoroughly satisfied. Although there was a large loss at Chillagoe, I want hon. members to appreciate the fact that the mining industry is different from a State butcher shop, for instance. I was going to say that a fool could run a butcher shop or a produce agency, but the mining industry is a speculative industry. In a speculative industry you cannot see a pick's point ahead of you, and you do not know what ore supplies you are going to get. Further than that, we are subject to the market. Australia does not create the market or fix the price of copper. Australia does not fix the price of any metals that we produce, with the result that most of the smelting works in Australia are idle, and those which are working are working at a heavy loss, including Chillagoe. I know that the country appreciates and deplores the depression in the mining industry, which is the aftermath of the war conditions. When prices are right this depression will disappear. I would like to quote the following figures from the last annual report of the directors of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company:—

	£	s.	d.
"The total revenue for the year resultant on the operations at the mine amounted to ... ..	679,016	5	0
The expenditure chargeable to the above income, including development and depreciation, amounts to ... ..	744,138	0	5

Showing a loss in the mining treatment and realisation of ... .. 65,091 15 5"

In the great Mount Morgan mine, where they have a concentration of ore and have not to run about the country looking for ore, on the actual working expenses last year they showed a loss of £65,091 15s. 5d., and the loss would have been over £100,000 had the Government not come to the assistance of the company and granted a concession equal to a subsidy of £57,000 for the year. The loss at Chillagoe is £57,000, while at Mount Morgan it is £65,091 15s. 5d. That proves that the loss at Chillagoe is not due to bad management or faulty administration. It is not due to incompetency either of the

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Minister, the general manager, or the staff, but to the metal market, which is something over which we have no control, and to the depression which still exists in the mining industry, Hon. members opposite ought to appreciate that fact. Are we to close down Chillagoe and all those many miles of railway because we are living in a depressed mining period, or are we to continue under the policy suggested by the general manager and keep the smelters going and carry the industry on until such time as metal prices improve? Apart from that loss, there is a charge of £46,120 for interest on capital, but I do not take that into consideration; and the remaining loss is actually less than the loss on the great Mount Morgan mine. Yet we do not hear the daily papers criticising the Mount Morgan Company.

Mr. KING: The taxpayers are not paying that.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: A good deal could be said on the other side, too.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The taxpayers are asked to foot a bill of £57,000 for the Mount Morgan Company. There are compensating benefits in keeping Chillagoe open. We get a much increased revenue through the Railway Department. Instead of a few hundred pounds, it has increased to several thousand pounds. We keep employees in the Railway Department and 1,500 men at work on the field who would otherwise be out of employment. After all, one of the functions of a Government is to find employment. I deeply deplore the fact that we have a loss on Chillagoe, and the hon. member for Warwick is quite wrong in saying that I glory in it.

I say distinctly, without fear of contradiction, that the State coalmines are valuable assets, and are highly successful. It is true that we have sold coal more cheaply to the Railway Department probably than we should have done. It would be quite easy to show a big profit on the Bowen and Styx River and Baralaba coalmines, but we are charging the same price.

Mr. MOORE: You charge as much as you can get, or the private mines would run you out of business.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. There is a private mine as near to Mount Morgan as the Baralaba State coalmine, and the Mount Morgan Company is taking 100 tons of coal a day from Baralaba. We are selling that coal at 14s. 9d. a ton.

Mr. BRAND: It costs you 17s. 4d. per ton.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was costing us 17s. 4d. at the end of the financial year, but I pointed out in my previous speech that since 31st May the cost has averaged 13s. a ton, and the profits have averaged £150 a week. We have a new tunnel and a strip of half a mile of coal ready to take out. Moreover, in any private enterprise there is always a loss in the initial stages, and a lot of the money spent at Baralaba was spent in development work, and should be charged up to the whole of the coalmine. Hon. members opposite do not understand mining.

Mr. BRAND: You do not understand business.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In all coalmines you have to go through a period of development. (Opposition interjections.)

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The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. gentleman address the Chair and not take so much notice of interjections.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At the Styx River coalmine, represented by an hon. member on this side of the House, we charged £1 per ton to the Railway Department and £1 5s. per ton to others. Those figures prove that we give the Railway Department a cheaper coal than it received previously. At Collinsville we charge 14s. per ton for slack coal, 16s. per ton for unscreened coal, and £1 per ton for screened coal. I have proved from the figures of the Railway Department that £44,000, representing a profit of 24 per cent., was saved through one mine to the Railway Department. Had we charged the Railway Department a higher price for coal—

Mr. EDWARDS: The Railway Department would have been in a worse position than it is in to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is all the one Government. (Laughter.) Cabinet deliberately decided to charge the Railway Department a lower price for coal than it was paying previously. We have the right to reduce the price of coal.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Why be generous when you cannot afford to be generous?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is a price fixed for all time, and probably the only reduction in price will be for overseas trade. We can make our mines profitable to the department at those prices after they have gone through the period of development and are in proper working order. There is no copper mine in Australia that can be worked to-day at a profit under present conditions and while the present metal prices obtain. No mine is working at a profit. One of the best mines in the world is the Mount Morgan mine, and I think it ranks third as a dividend-paying mine, but this year it shows a loss, despite the fact that they were assisted by the Government last year to the extent of £57,000. Hon. members opposite say nothing about that. It was probably better to do that than have all the men employed by the Mount Morgan Company thrown out of work and placed on the labour market or forced to carry their swags. That mine showed a greater actual loss of £7,000 on working expenses than the Chillagoe State smelters.

Mr. ROBERTS (East Toowoomba): It is shocking to hear the Minister criticising business people and telling them what they should do, and then to hear his defence in connection with his own department.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is a speculative industry, and you do not appreciate that fact.

Mr. ROBERTS: I recognise that the policy of the Government cannot continue. It has to reach a stopping point some day, and I think that will be very shortly.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister told us that the coal from the State coalmine is being disposed of at a price less than the cost of production. The accumulated loss on the working account of the Chillagoe State smelters, amounting to £231,821, is to be written off, and the indebtedness to the Treasury of the Mount Mulligan coalmine is to be written down by £88,279. That will

mean a tremendous dead loss to the State for all time, and on top of that the taxpayers are told that no interest is to be charged until a profit is shown. However hopeful the Minister may be, it is my opinion that under present conditions it will be many years before any profit will be shown by these activities, and during that time there will be an increasing public debt as a result. The Minister stated that the Baralaba State mine is producing coal at a cost of 17s. 4d. per ton and it is being sold at 14s. 9d. per ton. Where is any business ability shown there? It would be honest and fair to sell the coal for at least the cost of production, and then, if there were any loss, it could be explained. I want to know why the State mines are being worked in competition with private mines and selling their coal at a loss.

The cost of mining coal at the Styx River mine is 29s. 6d. per ton, and the department is landing it over to the Railway Department at 20s. per ton. Private enterprise is being supplied with it at 25s. a ton. That is not fair. All should be treated alike, and they should be made to pay the cost of production.

I was looking up some figures this morning in connection with the Mount Morgan Company, and I find that they are also to be found at page 99 of the report of the Auditor-General. We are paying a very large amount of money to keep the men working in that mine. The time will soon arrive when the Government will have to cease to work these industries at the expense of the State. It cannot be continued. The Government state that these men must be employed. It is unfortunate if they should be unemployed, but we should look for some other avenue where they could be profitably employed.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: The assistance given by the Government to the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, Limited, has been—

	£
1922 (a few months) ...	12,862
1923 ... ..	45,992
1924 ... ..	53,703
Total ... ..	£112,557

That expenditure is still continuing. The only reason that I can imagine for the rebates being continued is that the mine happens to be in the electorate of the Home Secretary. I well remember the occasion when the application was before Cabinet. I know the case which was put up for the subsidy by the Home Secretary, who was then a private member. At that time I could not see any justification for this rebate. I contend that, if there is not a speedy possibility of this industry paying, the continuance of the expenditure will be a wilful waste. We do not know what other industries this industry is competing with and closing up.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Any hon. member who looks at this question from the broad aspect of the welfare of the State and the benefit to the people will agree that the policy of the Government with respect to State coalmines is sound. Hon. members opposite state that it is not fair that the people of the State should bear the losses on the Styx River and Baralaba State coalmines. They show their absolute lack of

knowledge of mining when they criticise the loss on the Styx River mine at Hartley, which has only been operating for about six months, and the Baralaba mine, which has been operating for about three years. I will undertake to say that, except in some surface goldmine, no mine in Queensland will show a profit in the first three years.

Mr. MOORE: You are wrong. I can point to a coalmine that did.

Mr. HARTLEY: The point I desire to make is that on both those fields private enterprise failed. The Styx River mine is no new discovery. When this Government came into office it was held by a syndicate in Rockhampton. They had held it for a number of years, and were waiting for the time when the advent of a railway would develop the country and make the mine profitable. Fortunately this Government came into power in the meantime, and I, with one or two others, knowing of these deposits, induced the Government to develop them. The people who held the coal leases could have developed them.

Mr. MAXWELL: "Fools rush in."

Mr. HARTLEY: Well, this time it is the angels who are treading. Both the Baralaba and Styx River coalmines were held by private syndicates for ten or twelve years before the State undertook their development. When the time is arriving when these mines will be earning a profit, there is a great cry that the money of the people is being thrown away on them.

Mr. KERR: Of course, it is.

Mr. HARTLEY: If the Styx River mine was abandoned to-morrow, every mile of country that has so far been prospected would be rushed and taken up by syndicates. That is what is at the back of the criticism of hon. members opposite. It would be better for the "fat men" supporting those hon. members politically if they possessed the Styx mine, as they would be able to bleed the railway service of the State by charging any price they liked for coal along the North Coast Railway. Because the Government hold that mine at present, they will be able to have a half-way coal supply between Mackay and Rockhampton, thus considerably reducing the cost of fuel on the railways.

Three times the Geological Department condemned the Styx coalfield. In spite of that condemnation on two occasions gentlemen representing big companies, one in Scotland and one in another place I am not going to mention, asked me to stand out of the road of the development of the Styx mine, and allow them to get possession. One was prepared to put £70,000 into the Styx mine and the other £40,000 to develop that mine as a coalmine. If it was of that value to those syndicates—one a Scottish company and the other an Australian company—what value is it to the State? The value of the Baralaba and the Styx coalmines to the State for the purposes of assisting railway transport, and also later on for export purposes and for steamship navigation, cannot be estimated. Hon. members can get an idea of their value from my statement—and it can be verified very easily by friends of hon. members opposite, if desired—that one company was prepared to pay £70,000 and another £40,000, even after the Geological Department in Brisbane had condemned the Styx field three times. In face of that and

*Mr. Hartley.]*



of the encouraging results the Minister is getting from both fields of the sure expansion of the industries of the State, thus causing a great demand for coal locally, I hope that this "stinking fish" policy of the Opposition will prove to be worthless and the mines will be shown to be of great value to the State in the development of a coal trade in the Southern hemisphere. By having these mines the Government are able to run our railways much cheaper than they would if they had to pay through the nose to any private enterprise, and all the profits we shall get eventually will go into the people's Treasury, and will be for the benefit of the people, and not for the big fat friends of hon. members opposite—the racehorse-owners and motor-car owners. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I want to reply to the extraordinary arguments put up by the hon. member for Fitzroy and the Secretary for Mines. The hon. member for Fitzroy argued that the Government were perfectly justified in spending public money on State coalmines, even if they were losing, because some individual was prepared to spend £70,000 of his own money in a speculative enterprise. A private person is perfectly justified in spending his own money on a speculative enterprise if he likes, but it is a very different thing when you are spending public funds. The hon. member for Fitzroy would be perfectly justified in putting his own money on a horse race if he likes to do so, but he would not be justified in putting public funds on a horse race. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I quoted Mount Morgan to show that Chillagoe was not making a loss because of incompetency.

Mr. MOORE: The Mount Morgan mine and the Chillagoe mines may be on a totally different basis. I do not know whether they are or not. All we do know is that the State is losing over £200,000 a year on Chillagoe and other mining

[2 p.m.] enterprises round about there, and the Secretary for Mines says that we have to continue that loss until the prices of metal increase sufficiently to enable the State to make a profit. We have not the slightest evidence to show whether this is going to take place in the near future or in the distant future. It may never come. It seems an extraordinary position that we have to go on losing a vast amount of money every year because, as the Minister says, we have not the opportunity of fixing the prices of metal—that they are fixed outside. Mining enterprise is in no different position to any other enterprise. Take the ordinary producing industries. They have not the power to fix their own prices. The prices are fixed in the world's markets, and what happens when the prices fixed are lower than they have been accustomed to? It either means

greater efficiency, working longer hours, or working for less money. That is what has happened to the farmers throughout this State.

Mr. COLLINS: Is that what you advocate?

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of what I advocate. It is being done. The hon. member must know from the farmers in his own district that, if the prices of produce go down, they have to work longer hours to make ends meet or they must have greater efficiency, otherwise they have to go out of the industry. They do not get the Government to come to their assistance. The Government cannot assist every industry in the State. It is all very fine for the Minister to say that the loss on Chillagoe is only £57,000 a year, but he did not take into account the £46,000 due for interest. The interest has to be paid by the State exactly the same as the loss on working expenses.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If you add the interest to the loss in connection with Mount Morgan, the loss will be over £100,000.

Mr. MOORE: Mount Morgan is run by a private company. If they like to carry on at a loss, that is their business, and it has nothing to do with me at all. If the shareholders like to pay calls, or if they have an accumulated capital that they are prepared to lose, that is their look out; but it is a very different proposition when the State is using public money upon a speculative enterprise.

Mr. COLLINS: The State subsidises Mount Morgan.

Mr. MOORE: That is so, but I do not know whether it is a wise thing or not. They do not seem to be getting any further forward.

Mr. COLLINS: Why don't you declare yourself?

Mr. MOORE: I have declared myself. I said at the time that I did not think the State was justified in embarking on the enterprise, and I do not see any end to it. I do not see that there is any use in going any further. If I could see that by paying a subsidy for one or two years more they were going to be placed on a good footing, and are likely to be continued as a payable industry, there would be some justification for that, but not if it is going to come to the position of being a totally unprofitable industry.

Take the three State batteries at Charters Towers, Kidston, and Bamford. Each of them shows a loss. Each of them apparently is not treating enough stone to be of any indirect benefit to the State. We have a debit balance at Charters Towers of £422 15s. 9d., at Kidston of £1,939 12s. 11d., and at Bamford of £4,628 3s. 2d. On page 87 of his report, the Auditor-General gives a summary of the transactions for 1923-1924—

	Charters Towers ("Venus").	Kidston.	Bamford.
Number of crushings .. .. .	37	40	3
Ore treated .. .. .	360 tons	1,932 tons	24 tons
Treatment charges .. .. .	£272 18s. 11d.	£553 15s. 6d.	£33 4s.
Less on operations for year .. .. .	£65 10s. 8d.	£1,139 8s. 1d.	£212 2s. 1d.

Mr. BEDFORD: The £213 2s. 1d. includes £165 6s. 4d. for wages of caretaker.

Mr. MOORE: It is all loss.

[Mr. Hartley.

Mr. BEDFORD: What would you do with the existing plant? Would you not take care of it?

Mr. MOORE: It is not only the caretaker's wages. They treated 24 tons at Bamford, at a cost of £33 18s., or practically £1 10s. per ton. There is also an indebtedness of £13,717 in regard to Bamford, £17,084 for Kidston, and £2,639 for Venus.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Don't forget that during the war period these batteries produced all the molybdenite in Queensland to carry on the war.

Mr. MOORE: There is no war period now. It is six years since the war closed, and these ventures are still being continued at a loss. I want to see some finality. The Minister gives us no indication that he sees any finality. He merely says that he has no opportunity of fixing the prices of metals, and that until those prices become remunerative there is going to be a loss, and that we are going to lose on these ventures every year.

Mr. BEDFORD: Would you let the caretaker go and allow the plant to rust?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that the caretaker looks after the plant in that way.

Mr. BEDFORD: Every mining plant requires to be looked after.

Mr. MOORE: I am not talking solely about mining plants. In other cases the venture is abandoned and the plant put on one side, and there is no caretaker, but nothing happens to the plant. The caretaker does not have to go round cleaning it all the time, I suppose. It is protected from the weather.

Mr. BEDFORD: What if a plant is out in the bush without any protection other than what the caretaker can give?

Mr. MOORE: I do not suppose that mining plants are out in the bush without any protection. However, we have this large amount of indebtedness to the Treasury, and there is a further loss each year. We do not seem to be getting any further ahead. It seems a wrong principle to use public money in gambles such as these.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: We have not had any results to warrant this expenditure. If we had invested loan and trust money in other ventures, we could have got self-supporting industries which would have been of value to the State, and which would have provided employment for people, who would not have had to be subsidised by the State. This loss is going on indefinitely, and the Minister must recognise that this position cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. All through the Auditor-General's report we find all sorts of things happening in connection with the mining industry. I will take one instance as an illustration. Take the State arsenic mine at Jibbenbar.

The ore treated in 1922-1923 was 4,219 tons, but the Auditor-General states that the quantity of ore treated for 1923-1924 was "not obtainable." Surely a mine working for the State like that must have some records to show the amount of ore treated! In 1922-1923 the average cost per ton was £35 10s. 6d., whereas last year it was stated to be £43 1s. 3d. We were told that, when arsenic was costing £36 10s. 6d. to produce per ton, the mine was in the developmental stage, and that as the development took place the cost

of output would be reduced; but in this case it costs more to get a ton of arsenic than it did when the mine was in the developmental stage.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It showed a profit last year.

Mr. MOORE: But the cost of production went up by about £7 a ton.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is due to the different percentage of the ore being mined.

Mr. MOORE: We were told that the cost was high previously because the mine was in a developmental stage, but that they had rich bodies of ore, and that, when they started to mine them, the cost would be considerably reduced. When there was a loss on the mine we were told that it was because it had been supplied for poisoning prickly-pear at £10 a ton. Now, when the cost price is £43 1s. 3d., we are told that it is sold to the Lands Department at cost price for that purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Lands Department has always paid the difference between the £10 and the cost of production.

Mr. MOORE: The point is that the loss on the mine was attributed to the sale of arsenic at a low rate for prickly-pear poison.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not say that.

Mr. MOORE: Now it appears that the loss in that respect is to be increased. One does not expect that under normal conditions the cost of production of any mine would increase to that extent in twelve months, but rather that, as the mine became developed and more efficient—and we were told that the mine was closed down for three or four months for the purpose of overhauling the machinery and making it more efficient—the cost of production should decrease. Instead of that we find that, although the amount of ore treated is not available, the cost per ton has gone up. That is what I call inefficiency in some part of the department. We ought to be able to ascertain the reason for the increase. We ought not to be told that it is because the mine is being developed. It does not continually want money to be spent on development. There must come a time when it is at its full working efficiency, and I can quite understand that it has reached that stage to-day and ought to be at its full producing capacity after the machinery has been overhauled.

I just want to refer to these matters and not to deal with them fully, because I think they should come under the discussion of the Trust Funds to a large extent. The three batteries I have mentioned are not paying interest or working expenses. It is most deplorable that we should go on losing money. The Auditor-General pointed out that the Styx River field, for instance, was in a disturbed area, and it could not be said whether the mine could be worked profitably or not. We find now that it is unprofitable. Probably they thought they might be able to get coal at a cheaper rate, but it is evident that they have not been able to get the advantage they should have got; and probably the whole secret of the fact that the Railway Department are taking coal from it is that the Railway Department would not take it at all if they did not get it at that low rate. Probably they could have got it elsewhere for exactly the same price as they are paying

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for Styx River coal, and probably just as efficient coal, too.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They would not have got it for the price at which we have been selling it.

Mr. MOORE: They are getting it in the rest of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Prior to the opening of the Styx River mine they were paying £3 and £3 7s. 6d. a ton.

Mr. MOORE: There is no doubt that Blair Athol would be able to mine coal at a very low rate, and that, were it given a chance, it could drive the State out of business, but the State is not getting any advantage out of it. We are simply losing money, and it is high time the Government took stock of the position with regard to ascertaining whether, under the present financial position, we can afford to cast aside lightly the whole of the interest which should accrue to the State. It has been definitely stated that the amount involved in these various enterprises is not to be liable to the payment of interest until those enterprises have become paying propositions. There is no evidence that there is a likelihood of them reaching a paying position. In fact, all the evidence points to the fact that they are likely to go on losing indefinitely. Certain work which should be carried out is being left undone because the money is being expended in enterprises that are returning no benefit to the people or to the State in general, and such a state of affairs should not be allowed to continue.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Since we had an opportunity of discussing matters in connection with mining we have received the Auditor-General's report. It would be better for all concerned in discussing the Estimates to have that report placed in our hands a lot earlier in the session.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I hope the Government will give consideration to that matter in the near future, and will request the Auditor-General to hurry up with his report so that we can discuss the Estimates in a proper manner. (Hear, hear!) During the discussion on the Estimates of the Mines Department I was at a disadvantage, in common with many other hon. members on this side, in not having the full facts before me. Now we have the full facts before us, and I want to point out to the Opposition that all our State enterprises are not failures. I would like to know where the Opposition really stand. First of all, I would like to know if they are in favour of State enterprises, or are they opposed to all State enterprises? This Yes-No attitude is not satisfactory to me as a Government supporter. I realise that the reason they are complaining about State coalmines is because we have taken certain dividends from the pockets of private companies and shareholders, which would have gone into their pockets had there been no State coalmines in competition with their own. In New South Wales they used to have the Coal Vend., which was a monopoly that could dictate to the New South Wales Government the price the New South Wales Government would have to pay for their coal, just as we could have an organisation in Queensland dictating to the Queensland Government what they would have to pay for Queensland coal. We have

done away with that form of competition by establishing our State coalmines.

Let the truth in regard to these State coalmines be told to the public. I want the Opposition to look at the profit and loss account on page 86 of the Auditor-General's report. I am one of those who did not have a commercial training, because commercial training really means buying an article at 4d. and selling it at 6d., and it does not require a great deal of training to be success in that line. Under the heading, "Profit and Loss Accounts," the Auditor-General states—

"After allowing for an approved rate of depreciation, interest on overdraft (5 per cent. on loan and 6 per cent. on trust) in coalmines that have reached the production stage, and for depreciation only on arsenic mine, the net profits and losses are as under:—"

He then goes on to show that the Bowen coalmine showed a profit of £338 11s. 4d. for the year. For the previous year the Bowen coalmine showed a profit of £5,395 7s. 2d.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Give us the next one. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: Hon. members opposite can laugh. I will prove my case before I let it down. The Bowen State coalmine is shown to be indebted to the Trust Fund Account to the extent of £4,062 14s. 4d., and to the Loan Fund Account to the extent of £76,182 0s. 2d. If we turn to page 88 of the report, we read—

"Bowen State coalmine—Saleable coal produced, 74,866.65 tons."

The following items and figures are also contained in the Profit and Loss Account:—

	£	s.	d.
"To Mine Working Expenses	49,427	7	11
Repairs and Renewals	1,733	0	10
Insurance	1,396	11	3
Depreciation	1,967	18	3
Interest to Treasury	3,635	6	0
Fares and Travelling Expenses	259	16	4
General Expenses and Royalty	2,680	16	9
Profit on Year's Working	338	11	4
Total	£61,939	3	8

Mr. KERR: How much was paid in income tax?

Mr. COLLINS: I always considered that the profit on any money that I have had to invest was the interest on my capital. Well, we find that the Bowen State coalmine, after paying interest on capital invested, royalties, depreciation, and all charges that are made in every business, shows a profit on the year's working of £338 11s. 4d.

Mr. MOORE: What are the losses on the other State coalmines?

Mr. COLLINS: State enterprises have, in my opinion, to show a cash profit to be a real success. They have to show a profit to provide for their development as well as to pay interest on the capital invested. I might illustrate that in this manner: If the management of the Bowen State coalmine thought it advisable to sink a shaft 10 miles away from the present one, we would require money from the Bowen State coalmine to enable that shaft to be sunk to carry on

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developmental work. That is what I would call a paying proposition. That is what I have been trying to teach the coalminers in my electorate.

Mr. COSTELLO: You should teach that to the Government, too.

Mr. COLLINS: Let us turn back again to page 36 of the report of the Auditor-General, and we find—

"It is noted that the rate of depreciation has been of such an amount as will reduce developmental costs to nil at end of twenty years."

That is not my statement, but the statement of a gentleman whom we are paying a fairly large salary to audit the accounts of the State. He has been trained in business methods. The Auditor-General further states—

"Profits were reduced from £5,419 13s. 2d. in 1922-23, to £378 11s. 4d. this year."

"Screened coal—The demand for screened coal (over 14,000 tons in 1923) necessitated the erection of an up-to-date screening plant, which is being constructed."

That goes to show, according to the report of the Auditor-General, that since the Bowen State coalmine has reached the producing stage, it has shown a profit of over £5,000.

Mr. CORNER: Are you going to read the losses on the other coalmines?

Mr. COLLINS: I am satisfied that a man like John Brown, one of the largest coal proprietors in New South Wales, would be quite willing to pay £100,000 for the Bowen State coalmine.

Mr. FRY: How do you know? Have you been talking to him?

Mr. COLLINS: I have not been thirty years connected with mining in this State to know that it is not necessary to answer the senseless interjection of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. FRY: I think it was a very sensible interjection.

Mr. COLLINS: Let me try to prove the reason for hon. members of the Opposition complaining about our State coalmines. Hon. members opposite are in favour of the shipping companies, and their friends used to send their coal from the Southern mines to the North, which meant profits to the ship-owners. Of course, hon. members opposite are true to the people with whom they are associated. I hope they will continue to be true, and then we shall know exactly where they are. This morning I asked the Secretary for Railways the following questions—

"1. What was the cost of coal to the Railway Department at Bowen and Townsville before the opening of the Bowen coalfields?"

"2. What has been the saving to the Railway Department on coal used from the Bowen State coalmines since the opening of the Bowen coalfield?"

The answer I received was—

"1. 42s. 3d. a ton to Bowen; 39s. 3d. per ton to Townsville.

"2. £89,923 to the end of September, 1924. The price paid at present for unscreened coal at Collinsville State mine is 16s. Allowing for a freight of

1d. per ton per mile the price at Townsville would be 22s. 10d. approximately and at Bowen 18s. 3d. per ton approximately."

That is the answer to the Opposition. Not only does the Bowen State coalmine show a profit of over £5,000 since it reached the producing stage, but it has saved the Railway Department up to the end of September of this year no less a sum than £89,923. That is not the only good result so far as North Queensland is concerned.

Mr. FOLEY: That compensates for the loss on the State coalmines.

Mr. COLLINS: As my friend the hon. member for Leichhardt interjects, that saving more than covers any deficits on the three coalmines at Bowen, Styx River, and Bacalaba. I believe that in future the Bowen State coalmine will be one of the most valuable assets that any Government could possess.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I am satisfied that even if our friends opposite got into power they would not dare, after the Bowen coalmine has been in operation for another two years, to sell to private owners.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: There has been another good result. By the very fact of our establishing that coalmine we have increased settlement in the North. When this Government took office there was nothing but trees and bush at what is now Collinsville. I know as I visited the locality myself. Now we have two thriving townships, one at the State coalmine which is called Collinsville, and another 3 miles away and which is called Scotville, named after Mr. Hall Scott, the chairman of the Bowen Consolidated Mine.

Mr. KING: That is a private mine.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. It gives us an opportunity of testing the arguments of hon. members opposite in the matter of a State-owned mine and one owned privately.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: There we have on the one hand a State-owned mine and 3 miles away we have a privately-owned mine which will enable us to make a comparison in the working of the two mines. Has the privately-owned mine proved a success and been able to pay dividends? Anyone acquainted with mining knows full well that it takes time to develop mines. As the Auditor-General points out, even in connection with State coalmines they need an up-to-date screening plant at Bowen. I am satisfied we need not be disheartened at the State coalmines. They are going to be a valuable asset to the State. I want to emphasise the same point that I used on the Bowen coalfields. I said it was no use sending me into Parliament to advocate the bringing about of a co-operative commonwealth unless we had co-operators in the shape of the workers in general behind us. I am satisfied that, when our own people working in our State coalmines realise the true position, they will give us as good a return so far as labour is concerned as they give to private enterprise. Chillagoe is a matter that requires close attention.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is the other fellow's electorate.

Mr. COLLINS: It is not a question of being in the other fellow's electorate. Everyone knows that I have stood up against all criticisms in this House in relation to matters appertaining to my own electorate, and I have always come out on [2.30 p.m.] top.

Chillagoe wants close examination, if what the Minister says is true, that we shall not be able to produce copper at a profit until it reaches £80 per ton. As I said years ago, unless we can produce copper at £70 per ton, Queensland will have to get out of copper production. Anyone who has read the history of the great copper mines in the United States of America knows that they are producing enormous quantities at a low cost owing to their leaching processes and other modern appliances. They have huge deposits, and they are not treating a few thousand tons a year, but hundreds of thousands of tons, and we shall either have to get these huge deposits or our methods will have to be improved if we are to compete in the world's markets.

Coming to the remarks that have been made about the iron and steel works, and the expenditure mentioned in the Auditor-General's report, I am one of those who hope that the Government are not going to abandon that proposal.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: I thought I would be in order in referring to the matter on this resolution.

The SPEAKER: Order! This resolution has to do with the vote for "State Mining Operations."

Mr. COLLINS: This has to do with mines.

Mr. CORNER: It is only a dream. It is not a mine.

Mr. COLLINS: It is referred to in the Auditor-General's report under the heading "Department of Mines."

The SPEAKER: Order! This resolution deals with "State Mining Operations," and I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to that question.

Mr. COLLINS: Some of the money spent by the department, according to the Auditor-General, was spent in investigating iron ore deposits in various parts of the State. While the amount of £49,000 mentioned by the Auditor-General seems a fairly large sum, I hope the Government are not going to abandon the iron and steel works proposal—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. COLLINS: And that further investigations will be made in regard to iron ore deposit, so that in the near future we shall be able to demonstrate that when we do embark in that undertaking we are able to get our iron ore nearer than we understood would be the case when we were discussing the establishment of iron and steel works.

Reference has been made to the question of establishing an export trade in coal. Had the iron and steel works been established at Bowen, there would have been no need to worry about an export trade for coal, because the consumption of these works would have been so great that there would have been from 500 to 1,000 men working at the Bowen State coalmine, instead of 165 as at present. It would also have meant that we would have

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had thousands of people settled on the land to supply the needs of coal miners on the one hand and the people engaged in the smelting of the iron ore and the manufacture of steel on the other hand.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I do not think we can leave the matter where the hon. member for Bowen left it. He has dealt with the State coalmine at Bowen, but he would not give us the losses in connection with the other coalmines. He said that there had been a profit last year in connection with the Bowen State mine of £333, and he made a good deal of the fact that interest and royalties had been paid.

Mr. COLLINS: Also depreciation and other things.

Mr. KERR: His facts in regard to the Bowen State coalmine are quite correct.

The hon. member is looking for a declaration as to what we as an Opposition would do in regard to these ventures. I have no hesitation in stating where we stand in regard to this matter. According to the Auditor-General's report, the Baralaba State coalmine shows a loss on last year's transactions of £4,886 14s. 8d.; Styx, No. 2, a loss of £14,384 3s. 9d.; and the balance of account on the wrong side as at 30th June last in the case of Baralaba was £6,756 7s. 5d., and in the case of Styx, No. 2, £19,303 10s. 5d. The net losses on last year's transactions alone on State coalmines was £19,524 4s. 8d., and the accumulated debit on 30th June last was £34,323 11s. 9d.

I have given the operations of the State coalmines. It is impossible for the Minister to believe that everything is all right with the State coalmines.

Mr. GLEDSON: We are waiting for an argument from you.

Mr. KERR: The Minister referred to the fact that royalties are being paid by the various mines as well as interest and depreciation. Of course, royalties are being charged in the Bowen State coalmine as stated by the hon. gentleman, but have royalties been paid by the Baralaba mine? Of course they have not. It is like the State sawmills in regard to the timber areas. When the royalties are charged they are paid back to the State to make the accounts balance as near as possible. It is no use the hon. gentleman taking up the attitude that everything is as it should be with regard to these mines. You have to analyse the position of the Trust Fund moneys a little further.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the Trust Funds in connection with State enterprises, and I must ask him to refrain from so doing.

Mr. KERR: I want to say that all this money which is being lost to the State is not only loan money, but also Trust Fund money, and it is time we had a stocktaking in regard to it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: This money is put into State coalmines, and no hon. member opposite has given any just reason why we should continue losing this money.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would you do away with the State coalmines?

Mr. KERR: I certainly would not retain all the State coalmines to-day. The Govern-

ment have had experience in regard to Warra.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would you shut them down and sell them?

Mr. KERR: The Government should never have started them.

Mr. HARTLEY: What would you do if we had never started them?

Mr. KERR: The Government have got themselves into a bungle, and they must do what they can to get out of it. The Government should never have started these undertakings. They are causing a tremendous loss to the State. There is only one way to deal with the State coalmines, and that is to get rid of them. The hon. member for Bowen said that some one had offered £100,000 in connection with one mine. I advise the Government to accept the amount and square some of the accounts instead of going on with these losing ventures.

Mr. HARTLEY: Now we know where you are. You believe that private enterprise should make profit out of the coal bill of Queensland.

Mr. KERR: Private enterprise has never had the chance in Queensland that it should have had. If the State coalmines were in the hands of private enterprise, and they were showing a profit, the State could levy an income tax on that profit. That is something we are losing by State enterprise.

The SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. KERR: There is no justification whatever for the continuance of the State coalmines when private enterprise can enter the field.

Mr. HARTLEY: Have you considered the fact that you would lose the £39,000 which is being saved to the Railway Department?

Mr. KERR: We are losing £1,500,000 there a year. That is only an attempt to side-track the whole issue. The outstanding principle to be decided by any Government is whether State enterprise is going to have the field.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss State enterprises on this question.

Mr. KERR: It is a question whether the community can stand losing this amount. The State mines have been a sink for the Consolidated Revenue, the Loan Fund, and the Trust Funds of this State for too long. There is interest to be paid on the money invested in these mines, and the Government, since they have come into power—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: By reason of their State coalmines have accumulated a huge deficiency. I venture to say that the time has arrived when some consideration should be given to something in that direction.

The SPEAKER: Will the hon. member resume his seat? I have already pointed out to him that this is not the vote for State enterprises and he cannot discuss the policy of the Government in regard to State enterprises now. As he persists in attempting to do so, I must ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego): The very mild criticism which has been offered by the

leader of the Opposition can be very easily answered. The raucous ignorance of the hon. member for Enoggera, who discovered electrical apparatus as an adulterant of milk, may be ignored. Everybody knows that every State in Australia operating in railways, if it could purchase coalmines, did so—having been forced into the position by the abnormal prices charged by the private coalowners. Victoria is not a State where there is much black coal, but the price charged for Newcastle coal to the Victorian railways caused the Victorian Government to open up an inferior scam at Wonthaggi, because even with the expensive forms of mining they had to adopt there, owing to the small seams, it was cheaper for them to supply themselves with coal in that manner than to buy it from Newcastle. Everybody knows that before the Bowen State coalmine was opened the price of coal at Townsville was somewhere about £3 3s. a ton on the wharf. It is now somewhere about half that figure.

Then take the adjoining State of New South Wales. Prior to a Labour Government being in operation, and before there was any such thing as State enterprise in coalmining in New South Wales, western coal—of which 5 tons are equal to 2 tons of Newcastle coal—was being supplied to the western railway system of New South Wales at practically the same price as Newcastle coal. The Labour Government in New South Wales reserved an area of the coal-bearing land at Lithgow, and began to sink for the coal. Then a change of Government took place and the Tory Administration which succeeded at once closed down on that coalmining, with the result that the price of coal immediately rose again, although it had dropped 2s. in anticipation of the opening of the State mine. A little later Labour returned to power, and the coal prospect was again opened. A shaft was sunk for the coal and development went on, and coal was produced, with the result that the New South Wales railways are now paying 9s. a ton less for coal than they were in the days of private enterprise suppliers. In order to provide that no trick of politics such as a change of Government should permit a Tory Government to close down that mine after it was in operation, the last Labour Government in power in New South Wales did the very slick thing of vesting the coalmine in the railway authorities, so that it would need an Act of Parliament and not merely administrative action to close it down again.

Anybody who knows anything about mining knows that development is just as much a part of the working plant—and is not to be called a loss—as the capital cost of the ploughs that are put on the farms for development. As showing how under better conditions of mining and better development Beralaba has ceased to show a loss and is showing a profit, I have only to draw attention to figures showing the fortnightly production during the last four months. The selling price of coal from that mine is 14s. 9d. per ton, and the Opposition have made a great deal out of the fact that only a few months ago it was costing 17s. 4d. per ton for coal which was being sold at 14s. 9d. per ton. They overlook the fact that the Government were selling at 14s. 9d. per ton to a Government activity like the railways, and that if there were any loss, it was only

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a matter of taking it out of one pocket and putting it into another. These figures show the fortnightly cost of production—

Fortnight ended—	Cost per ton—
	s. d.
31st May	13 1½
14th June	13 5½
30th June	12 10½
12th July	14 0½
26th July	14 0½
9th August	13 0½
23rd August	13 1
6th September	13 6

During the last three months the profit on operating costs has been £1,760. In any case, even if this did show a bookkeeping loss, the fact remains that no large system of transport, such as the railway system is, can afford to buy coal from a private owner. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company—which does not require anything like the quantity of coal required by our railway system—discovered it was being bitten by private enterprise, and decided to obtain a mine of its own.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): A short time ago when the Chillagoe smelters were under discussion, the Minister pointed out that the mines operating in connection with that venture had arrived at such a stage that they were going to be conducted on proper business lines. I can scarcely follow the argument of hon. members opposite in connection with such a serious matter, and I cannot understand them treating it with a certain amount of levity. The Auditor-General says, at page 100 of his report—

“At the request of the Hon. the Premier, the financial position of the Chillagoe works and Mount Mulligan coalmine was considered by the Under Secretary Treasury, General Manager State smelters, and myself, and after due deliberation, the following recommendations were submitted:—

1. The accumulated loss on the working account of the Chillagoe State smelters, amounting to £231,321 17s. 9d. be written off.
2. The indebtedness to the Treasury of the Mount Mulligan coalmine—£188,279 15s. 7d.—to be written down to £100,000.”

The thing seems to be a monstrosity; yet we have hon. members opposite treating the position with levity, and trying to make the people believe that it was absolutely essential to write off those amounts to keep the men in employment at Chillagoe and in the mines worked in connection with the Chillagoe smelters. It stands to reason that this state of affairs cannot go on unless we are prepared to run up against a dead end. It is not that the Government do not realise the position. The Secretary for Mines took exception to the statement made by the hon. member for Warwick that the hon. gentleman was optimistic in leading the House to believe that the mines were going to present a different appearance altogether. Until I analysed the Auditor-General's report I was under the impression that the State mines were going to assume a better paying aspect altogether after hearing the Minister's speech.

Hon. members on this side of the House are criticised because we have had the temerity to draw the attention of the public

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to the position. There is no need for us to draw the attention of hon. members opposite to the position. They know it. There is only one thing we could do and that is to draw the attention of their bosses—the people outside—to it.

Mr. WEIR: Not your bosses?

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes, our bosses too, but we are here as free men and are not shackled in any way. The third recommendation submitted by the officials on the position of the State smelters was—

“The annual interest charges on the Treasury liabilities of both undertakings be suspended until either shows a surplus after payment of working expenses.”

After hearing the remarks of the hon. member for Warrego, naturally it is with a certain amount of temerity that any hon. member on this side should dare to criticise this matter; but we have the report of the Auditor-General, and that is better than the opinion of this heaven-born financier and mining magnate. On page 103 of the Auditor-General's report the following paragraph appears:—

“The following table shows the indebtedness to the Treasury dating from 30th June, 1920 (the inception), to 30th June, 1924:—

	£
1920	243,531
1921	292,215
1922	525,160
1923	710,618
1924	974,830

It will be seen that the yearly increase in the indebtedness has been consistent, and last year amounted to £254,212 over the previous year.”

Then the report states—

“It has now been decided to discontinue the charging of interest until the works are in a position to pay same, as per Treasury letter 26th September, 1924.”

If interest at the rate of 6 per cent.—which is a low rate—was charged, it would mean £55,000. After all this money has been thrown away in these sinks—and they are sinks—we are asked what we would do. What would we do to meet such a position in the conduct of our own business or as directors of a concern? We would wipe them out. The Government are supposed to be the directors of the people's estate. How are they conducting that business? We have an example in the report of the Auditor-General. It is time that hon. members on this side spoke with a very pronounced voice, more particularly with regard to the Secretary for Mines in his shady transactions, because I say undoubtedly they are shady.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Toowong made reference in his speech to myself and said that my transactions were shady. That remark is particularly offensive to me, and I ask that he should be called upon to withdraw it.

Mr. MAXWELL: If it is offensive, I will withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member for Toowong said that the transactions of the Secretary for Mines were shady, he must

know that the remark was not in order, and he must accordingly withdraw.

MR. MAXWELL: If the hon. gentleman considers it offensive, I will withdraw. I did not refer to him personally.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: You did.

THE SPEAKER: I hope that the hon. member will withdraw the remark.

MR. MAXWELL: All right, in deference to you, Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw it.

MR. HARTLEY: You ought to be ashamed of saying it.

MR. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): It was not my intention to say anything further on this vote, but after the remarks of the hon. member for Toowong something should be said. We should point out where the loss has been. The hon. member has tried to make the House and country believe that the Government were responsible for the loss on the Mount Mulligan coalmine. Private enterprise was responsible for the loss there. It was not the fault of the Government at all. They had just taken over the mine, and they had to take over the liabilities that had accumulated for a number of years under private enterprise management—the management of the Chillagoe Mining Company, Limited. That company refused to give the Government the Mount Mulligan coalmine at the time when they handed over to the Government the Chillagoe smelters and the Etheridge Railway. They hung on to the Mount Mulligan coalmine, and said they would not give it to the Government but would work it themselves. They then entered into an agreement to supply the Government with coal at 27s. 6d. per ton, but were unable to carry out the agreement. They received an advance from 27s. 6d. to 32s. a ton from the Government, but they were still unable to carry out the contract. Consequently they accumulated a deficit of £148,903 on the working of their mine. This may be seen plainly in the Auditor-General's report. Notwithstanding those facts, the hon. member for Toowong gets up in this House and blames the Government for the loss on the Mount Mulligan mine. The hon. member knows that the Government had to take over from the Chillagoe Mining Company, Limited, the loss of £148,903 which stood against the Mount Mulligan mine.

Anyone who understands the conditions of mining knows that with an output of about 200 tons a day it is simply impossible to carry on if there is a capitalisation of £188,279. That is what the Government had to shoulder. That money was expended before the Government took over the Mount Mulligan mine. The Chillagoe Mining Company, Limited, started their mining operations and commenced the erection of coke ovens. They started to dig them out of the solid rock at an excessive cost, instead of placing them on top of the rock. The Government would never have done that. By such methods private enterprise ran up a big capital cost for which there was no need. When it was decided to give the project best, the Government realised that they could not carry on successfully with this great capital cost. The hon. member for Toowong should be honest, and not charge the Government with the cost of the Mount Mulligan blunder. The Government took the proposition over when the company could not carry on any longer; they took over the whole liability, with an accumulated

capitalisation of £188,279. This meant nearly 4s. a ton extra to meet interest alone. The whole thing was ridiculous. No coalmine could carry on under such conditions with such a huge capitalisation. I do not blame the Government for what they had to do when taking this risk. They did the only possible thing. Much money has been spent in a direction that will never be of any benefit, and it should be wiped off, and not remain as a charge against the production of the mine.

The same thing applies with regard to other State mines. Baralaba has been charged with the cost of mismanagement and trouble of which, I suppose, this Government has to bear the brunt. The mine was over-capitalised, and the capital cost should be brought down to a scale that will allow the mine an opportunity of showing what it can do. As has been pointed out by the Minister, the mine is beginning to right itself, but no coalmine can right itself if it is to be burdened with a cost that is not a right charge against it. We know that the position, according to the Auditor-General, is not as good as it might be; but the Opposition should use fair arguments and blame the Government only for that which they are responsible for, and not blame them for something with which they have had nothing to do.

MR. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): If it is true that the Government took over a certain liability in regard to the Mount Mulligan mine, and advanced something like £140,000 to the owners of Mount Mulligan, as stated by the hon. member for Ipswich, then it is no credit to the Government. If they

[3 p.m.] advanced that enormous sum of money to the Mount Mulligan people without finding out the exact position of that mine, then they are guilty of gross negligence in that particular, and I fail to see that there is anything in the argument of the hon. member for Ipswich, who endeavoured to saddle the blame on to someone else.

With regard to the saving spoken of by hon. members in regard to the coal supplied to the Railway Department, I am of the opinion that that saving could still have been effected, and the money which has been lost on the State coalmines still be in the hands of the Government if they had bought their coal from private enterprise. Notwithstanding the statements that have been made here, I still contend that the private coalmines in the Central district could have supplied the wants of the Government, and the money that has been lost would never have been lost. Anyone who knows anything about mining knows that, when a field goes down or peters out, the mining machinery, no matter how good it may be, is practically worthless. It is practically only scrap iron, and I really cannot understand the Government advancing such a large sum to the Mount Mulligan people.

When the Government first embarked on mining it was one of the most calamitous ventures that this State ever took on, and I feel sure that the Government would be only too glad of an opportunity to retrieve their steps. If they only knew where these things were going to lead them, they would never have taken them on under any consideration whatever. However, they did embark on these ventures, and we have to make the

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best we can of them. We know Chillagoe has been a disastrous failure, and now we are told that £280,000 is going to be written off. That is a very nice way of disposing of a debt or a loss. It is a great pity business people cannot wipe out their losses in a similar way. If they could, everybody would be in business, and things, no doubt, would be all right, but, unfortunately, they cannot do it.

In addition to the £280,000 which has had to be written off in connection with Chillagoe, an amount of £100,000 is to be written off in connection with Mount Mulligan. We might just as well wipe off the whole lot at once, because it is going to be a total loss. It is quite evident from what we know, and what we see, that the whole of that money is going to be lost. As I have said on several occasions, if that money had been spent in North Queensland in permanent development work, the Minister would have something to show for it; but he allowed himself to be carried away by his ideas as to what mining was going to do for the State of Queensland. His judgment led him astray, and as a consequence the State is involved in a loss in connection with these ventures—not of tens of thousands of pounds, but of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

We are told now that a new system of working is being proposed so far as Chillagoe is concerned—that it is going to be made a seasonal occupation or something of that kind. Why was not that done before? Why was it left until this late period? We have had several different systems of operation tried, yet the enterprise has been going to the bad all the time. The Minister told us in his speech on the Mines Estimates that he saw no reasonable prospect of copper becoming a payable proposition for quite a long time, so far as he was able to judge.

**THE SECRETARY FOR MINES:** Not until we have up-to-date treatment.

**MR. TAYLOR:** From what has been said here this afternoon, and from what we otherwise know, the total production of copper in Queensland in comparison with the world's production is only a drop in the bucket compared with what is produced in the world. How is the Minister, with the negligible quantity of copper we produce, going to introduce the methods of which he speaks? He knows that we have no hope of introducing such methods. We have the right to give the Department of Mines the most severe criticism we possibly can in connection with its operations for the past year, and in fact for several years past. The arsenic mine, according to the Minister, is likely to show a profit for the year. It should have shown a profit before this year, because the Minister told us this afternoon that the Department of Public Lands paid the arsenic mine at Jibbenbar the difference between the £10 a ton, at which the arsenic was sold, and the cost of production, so that, contrary to what we were led to think, the arsenic mine lost nothing at all in selling its arsenic to the Department of Public Lands at £10 a ton. There was an idea prevalent in the public mind that the arsenic was being sold at £10 a ton, and that the loss was being charged to the mine. Now we are told that that loss is not being charged to the mine, but that the mine is getting the full cost of production for all the arsenic which it sells to the Department of Public Lands. With that knowledge, I

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say that the arsenic mine should have been in a better position than it is in to-day.

I hope that the Minister will not take on any more mining ventures of any kind, and that, if any of those £100,000 buyers for coalmines whom the hon. member for Bowen mentioned this afternoon come along he will not let them get out of his office until he has sold some of these mines and got a deposit. I believe it would be good business for the State, and I think the Minister will be well pleased if he could only get relieved of them.

**MR. HARTLEY:** It would be good business for the mining speculator.

**MR. TAYLOR:** If it is good business for the mining speculator, it ought to be good business for the State. The State mines have a customer for all the coal they put out. They have the Railway Department for a customer, and there is no competition in that regard. What is good for the one should be good for the other. The State coalmines have been the cause of a lot of the increased taxation which is being imposed to-day, and they certainly have been the cause of the loss of thousands of pounds which has to be made up by the taxpayers of the State.

**MR. DEACON (Cunningham):** After listening to hon. members on the Government side I feel very sorry for the Secretary for Mines, who has my deep sympathy. The Government closed the Warra coalmine, which was a loss. They supply the Railway Department with coal, and yet they cannot make their mines pay. So far as copper mining at Chillagoe is concerned, if the Government are keeping the mines and smelters going merely for the sake of giving men work, it would pay them to close down the mines and works and give the men £2 a week each. You have only to look at the number of men employed to see that the State would save money in that way.

I listened to the hon. member for Bowen, who spoke of the Bowen coalmine and said what a good proposition it was. I feel sorry for the Secretary for Mines because this year it is worse off than before and it should have been better. It is the same mine, and, if a mine is being developed, the position should be better instead of much worse. Yet we are told that the mine has a larger production and the same plant and the same men are at work, and still the result is worse.

After hearing the hon. member for Fitzroy and the hon. member for Bowen as mining experts, I have come to the conclusion that I will not have anything to do with mining. So far as Baralaba and the Styx River are concerned, I have heard what another hon. member has said in this Chamber—a member who knows much more about mining than I do, and he showed how those mines would never pay as compared with the Blair Athol mine. It would be much better for the Government to cut the loss at Baralaba and Styx River and take over the Blair Athol mine, where there is some coal to be got. It is bad business to carry on a bad enterprise. If we are going in for coalmining as a State enterprise, let us have a place where there is coal. If we are going in for copper-mining, let us go to a place where there is copper. At the present time we are sinking money in places where there is neither coal nor copper, and, if the Government decide to go on, I hope, for the sake

of the mining industry and for the sake of the Minister, that they will handle much better propositions.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): It seems to me that the Government have been very unfortunate in their mining ventures. It reminds me of a company which raised £100,000 to put into mining. It was to spend equal amounts of its own money and the Government's money, but unfortunately the company only spent the Government's money and the Government fell in. I think it is equally unfortunate that the Government has been falling in here. If copper were something over £80 a ton, the Government might scramble home to a certain extent, but I would like to ask the Minister whether he has taken into consideration the probability that these losses will go on for many years and that we may be working a dead horse for a considerable time. Is this not a time when the Government should sit down and do a little reckoning to see whether this sort of thing shall be allowed to continue? It is far better for business men sometimes to cut their losses in the first place. It might have been better for the Government to let their £90,000 go in the first instance instead of throwing more of the people's good money after it.

The hon. member for Warwick wanted to know if the Government would write off any loss to the farmers if the price of produce went down. That is a very pertinent question, and I would very much like an answer to that question, too.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Government wrote off £220,000 when they repealed the Railway Guarantee Act.

Mr. WARREN: The farmers did not have that amount to lose. That was the amount of money they had to find. Just recently I took a deputation to the Treasury Department in connection with a tramline that had been over-capitalised. It had been built out of money borrowed from the Treasury.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARREN: That tramline cost considerably too much.

The SPEAKER: Order! The resolution under discussion is "State Mining Operations."

Mr. WARREN: I am only pointing out that those people asked that a certain amount be written off, but the Government would not agree to reduce the amount.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARREN: They were unsuccessful in obtaining a reduction in their indebtedness; but, if they had been treated in the same way as the State mining ventures, they would have obtained a reduction. How far are we going in these matters? Are we going on indefinitely writing off these losses? This act of writing off is an absolutely immoral transaction, or at least it is not a good business proposition. If the Government carry this on much further, we shall not know where we stand. It is time the Opposition fully ventilated this matter. Some people are saying they are sorry for the Minister, but I would extend more sympathy to him if he would sit down in a business-like manner and go into the matter and cut the loss. He would deserve more sympathy for adopting reasonable and business-like

methods. The Minister should consider whether it is going to be worth while mining copper in the near future. Is the State going to carry this dead weight continually, or is the Minister going to consider the position and wipe out these activities instead of continuing to write off losses?

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I merely desire to say that the arguments against the State coalmines are very much overdone. The Secretary for Railways assures me that the saving effected on the Queensland Railways by purchasing State coal works out at £43,000 per annum. That is the actual saving on coal bought from the State coalmines. The actual money invested in these coalmines amounts to £180,000, and the saving of £43,000 per annum means a clear profit of 24 per cent. on the capital invested. How anyone can say that the mines are losing is beyond me. When the Railway Department is saved that money by buying that coal, surely the Government or some Government department is making a profit out of it. After all, it is only a book entry, but the profit is there just the same.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It is wonderful the apologies that can be put up by hon. members opposite for the mistakes and losses made by the Government. The last example by the hon. member for Gregory is rather in keeping with the action they adopt on these occasions.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is absolutely accurate.

Mr. VOWLES: On the same line of argument, why did they close the Warra coalmine?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You wanted us to continue it on.

Mr. VOWLES: It only lost £47,000, but it created employment.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was a water mine—not a coalmine—that was why it was closed.

Mr. VOWLES: One of these Northern coalmines is in the electorate of the Premier, and the only justification for keeping it going is that it helps to create voters and keeps people in the district, otherwise his electorate would be extinguished.

Mr. BEDFORD: Did you not recommend the Government to purchase the Warra coalmine?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes.

Mr. BEDFORD: It shows what a good judge you were of a water-coalmine.

Mr. VOWLES: It shows what sort of a Government they are if they took my advice. (Government laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: That is the most effective criticism we have had.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not an authority on mining, as the hon. member for Warrego professes to be. I am only a lawyer.

Mr. BEDFORD: Not a lawyer—a solicitor.

Mr. VOWLES: All right, a solicitor—not a "wild-catter." It is rather alarming, when you come to consider the amount of money that is being constantly written off as a result of the perpetration of mistakes of the past. There is no justification for carrying on a losing business, when it is possible to divert the capital into some

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reproductive source where the same wages will be paid as are being paid by the losing venture.

The hon. member for Bowen asked what would we do in connection with these losing ventures. We have already plainly told hon. members opposite what we would do. We would give them a fair trial on their merits; and if they were proved not to be a fair business proposition, we would not carry them on. That is what we ask the Government to do. The Government have given some of these ventures trial on trial, and the coalmines at least have shown loss upon loss.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Would you create competition and wipe them out by allowing private enterprise to charge what prices it liked in order to extinguish them?

Mr. VOWLES: That is merely an artificial way of trying to justify bad business. Private enterprise could mine its coal at a decent price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Look at the way the butchers used to run up the prices of meat.

Mr. MAXWELL: Don't get on to the State butcher shops.

Mr. VOWLES: If the Government propose to run State enterprises, they must run them on business lines, otherwise they do not act honestly by the people who have to find the revenue and refund the trust moneys which have been used in these ventures. If the Government are aware that these losing concerns will continue to be losing concerns, they are not carrying out the trust reposed in them by the people who returned them to power.

I have often referred to the money which is being lost annually in State batteries. State batteries are all right in a minor way so that prospectors can have their ore treated; but when we indulge in mining ventures in the gigantic manner in which the Government have done, and then have the hon. member for Ipswich coming along with the apology that the £88,000 written off as a dead loss was not the result of Government action at all, but the mistakes of a private company, then the action of the Government in bolstering up a losing concern by going in as mortgagee and continuing the loss, instead of writing it off and cutting it, was very culpable indeed. To carry on the mine in the future with that knowledge is only paving the way for greater losses. I trust that the Government even at this stage will realise their responsibilities of office. They are not in office to play "ducks and drakes" with public funds. If they intend to carry on business in opposition to private individuals, they should carry on that business in a legitimate manner. They are not dealing with their own funds, but are in the position of trustees with a solemn duty to perform, and that duty is to see that the funds entrusted to them are not misused.

Resolution 75 agreed to.

Resolutions 76, 77, and 78 agreed to.

Resolution 79—"Department of Public Lands"—

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego): The examples that I am about to give on the matter of

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this resolution are locally confined to the Warrego, but in reality they have a State-wide and generally an Australian-wide application. The position of the pastoral industry as regards wool cannot well be bettered; but, seeing that £49,000,000 worth of the total of £56,500,000 worth of the clip of the year before was exported as greasy wool, one would naturally believe that the labour market of the States and the pastoral industry generally of the States should be helped by the Commonwealth putting an export duty on greasy wool. The present clip is estimated as worth £64,000,000, and in the matter of exchange alone the pastoralists of Australia could secure an additional £2,000,000 by insisting on Australian credit for wool purchases being made in Australia, so making us independent of the present exchange ring on the other side of the world.

The remedy generally for the condition of the wool trade—which looks as if it has not one backward feature in it, by reason of an abnormal price for wool—is that, if there was a higher duty placed on woollen manufactures, there would be a better price obtainable for the pastoralists from foreign and Australian purchasers of the raw material.

Mr. VOWLES: What has excise to do with land?

Mr. BEDFORD: A great deal as regards the condition of the industry.

Mr. VOWLES: You are dealing with a Federal subject.

Mr. BEDFORD: It may be a Federal subject, but it has its bearing on the State.

Mr. VOWLES: Not under the vote for the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. BEDFORD: Therefore the position of the pastoralists, the position of the Department of Public Lands, and the position of the State generally, could be largely helped by some fiscal assistance, which would give the producer of raw material even a better chance than he has at present.

In the matter of the beef trade we find that Britain and all British dependencies—and to Britain we give a preferential duty which is utterly without reason or justification—are generally such good friends to Australian industry that the decrease in the supply is as under—

#### BRITISH PURCHASES FROM AUSTRALIA, 1921-22.

	£
Beef ... ..	1,616,075
Lamb ... ..	2,073,276

And in 1923-24 those figures had dropped over £900,000 for beef and over £1,070,000 for beef and mutton. British Malaya took £44,000 worth of beef and mutton in 1921-22, and only £29,000 in 1923-24; and so on right through the whole gamut of preserved meats. Britain, India, South Africa, and all British possessions are forgetting us because of the Argentine interests vested in Britain being so strong, which results in Australia being practically ousted from the market. Australia's natural retaliation should be the wiping out of all preferential duties to everybody, no matter who they are, and the institution of an export duty on greasy wool to see not only that the work of manufacturing that wool is retained in Australia, but



that we secure the larger price of nearly 20d. to 25d. a lb. to the Australian producer.

The other losses preventing the South-west of this State and Queensland generally from getting up to their 99½ per cent. efficiency in the pastoral industry are in one instance due to the sabotage of capitalism, which will not in some cases in times of plenty go to the expense of paying wages for the crutching and jettling of maggotty sheep.

To a large extent this sabotage could be answered by a new award being given for shearing maggotty sheep, which would naturally make the people responsible less liable to proceed with their sabotage. One of the great menaces in the

[3.30 p.m.] Warrego district is the prickly-pear, which has now got as far as the Warrego River, and which threatens to go further west. If it does go further west, it will mean good-bye to a large area of some of the finest and best sheep land in the world. There are other pests, such as the Noogoora burr, which in all good seasons takes a larger and larger toll of the best of the river flats in the best portions of these great sheep pastures of the West. This burr has now reached as far as Gumbardo, and I consider that it should be declared a pest, the same as prickly-pear; and seeing that it is the beginning of a pest, energetic action should be taken to eradicate it before it gets as bad as the pear is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The owners of the land will not do anything in this matter.

Mr. BEDFORD: Some of the local authorities are bad offenders. I would have liked to see double the amount placed on the Estimates for the purpose of supplying dingo netting for the dog country. The law should be altered by taking out of the fencing clause the word "may," and inserting the word "shall," because there are large squattages almost surrounded by dog fences which have been erected at the expense of the selectors. These large station-holders have been loafing on the small man, and in some cases the small man is loafing on the big stations.

Mr. BRAND: What about the State stations?

Mr. BEDFORD: The State stations are doing their proper work in the proper way. They have been up against the same condition as to low cattle prices as any other station-owner, and I do hope that, just as soon as a depot can be established for the State stations, Dillalah, which is close to a railway line and good sheep country, will be cut up for selection. Generally, that also applies to all lands within reach of railways that are unable for sheep. The cattlemen in every case must be pushed further and further out for the sake of the more valuable wool crop. Recently certain newspapers have been congratulating the pastoralists on the fact that the United States of America embargo has been lifted from Australian sheep. That is a thing that is to be deplored, and not a matter for congratulation. The Australian flocks have been built up at the cost of a hundred years' experience. They are the work of a unique country—of a country with no parallel in the world—and just as Turkey and South Africa refused to permit the exportation of either Angora rams or cock ostriches, so should Australia prohibit stud sheep from going outside Australia.

An important factor in the production of Australian wool has been the dry climate, with a low rainfall, except at the proper time. In the south-west of this State the area is so dry that the ordinary insects of commerce, those which are imported, cannot live. The bug, the flea, and the cockroach cannot live at Thargomindah, and the Opposition candidate nearly lost his deposit there, too. (Government laughter.) There is a scheme under the Department of Public Lands of supplying netting. There should be a larger appropriation and more netting supplied, and the cost of dingo segregation should be added to the rent of the holdings. The advantage of sheep as compared with cattle needs very little argument. Where cattle will employ 1,000 men sheep will employ 15,000. I have no figures relating to the number of holdings in South-West Queensland which went out of sheep, but a parallel country is the west of New South Wales, in regard to which figures are extant. In sheep the west of New South Wales lost £11,500,000 in wages from 1904 to 1920. In 1891, in the western division of that State, there were 15,379,000 sheep; and in 1893, 16,028,000. On one station on the South Australian border they carried 14,000 sheep and 6,000 lambs in June, and at the shearing muster in September there were only about 9,000 sheep and no lambs at all. In the Wilcannia district one pastoralist secured 150 dog scalps in eight months, and out of 11,000 sheep he lost 7,000 in the same time. On properties in the West Darling there have been great losses from dingoes. The following comparison of sheep numbers on properties in the West Darling before and after the invasion will indicate the effects of the dingo:—

Station.	Sheep Numbers before Dingoes came.	Reduced Numbers Owing to the Dingo.
Momba	490,000	No sheep.
Langawirra and Sturt's Meadows	80-160,000	
Yancannia	160-170,000	34,000
Grassmere and Cuthowarra	23,000	No sheep.
Morden	60,000	4,000
Tarella	40,000	No sheep.
Wonnominta, Nunderra and Packsaddle	80,000	"
Tongo	15-20,000	"
Yanfara	60,000	"
Salisbury Downs	80,000	"
Bootra	30,000	2,918
Yandama Group	53,000	No sheep.
Quinyambi	20,000	"

In a few years there will practically be no sheep left in that country at all.

The procedure of South Australia could well be followed. South Australia found out all this twenty years before we did, and this is how that State dealt with the situation—

"That State, faced with exactly the same position, successfully coped with it by passing an Act which provides that lessees may form themselves into groups of not less than three, and petition the Government to declare the land comprised in the group a vermin area. The Government then provides the money to enclose the group with a dogproof fence and maintain it, and the lessees within

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the group are constituted a vermin board for their own area, and it is their duty to strike a rate on themselves sufficient to repay the loan with interest in twenty-

one yearly instalments, the loan to be made a charge on the land."

This is how that measure worked in South Australia.

Station.	Sheep. Numbers before Dingoes Came.	Reduced Numbers Owing to Dingoes.	Increased Numbers after Legislation Introduced.
Paralana .....	120,000	32,000	70,000 and possibly further in- creases
Nulyurgerie Lake Charles .....	No record	Abandoned	Upwards of 10,000
Yardea Station .....	80,000 to 90,000	Abandoned	50,000
Carri-werloo and two other stations .....	100,000	Abandoned	100,000
Moorarie and six other stations (7,500 sq. miles) ..	No record	Abandoned or slightly stocked with cattle	Upwards of 300,000

That is mainly the way to meet the difficulty—group fences and the people benefiting by them having their country constituted vermin areas and being forced to strike a rate on themselves to repay the cost of improvements in twenty years.

Our system of selection ballots is supposed to be conducted on the exceedingly democratic principle that everybody has an equal right. That is no good to the country. It is a well-known fact that there are a couple of pastoralists—there is no need to mention names—who let it be understood that anybody who draws a selection anywhere near their country has got just as good as a "Tatt's" ticket and can get £5,000 without ever going on his ground. I myself know of a case where a ballot was won by a "grass merchant." He never intended to stock the country, but he let it on agistment and got £1,300 in agistment fees in the year and paid the rent out of it. That is not a bad case, comparably with the dummyming of selections. It is not a case for instances but for general application. The country does not get the proper benefit when the public estate is not properly handled, and is not handled with the closest eye to the greatest amount of profit that can be got out of it. I believe that all candidates in a ballot should be men of experience, and should prove their bona fides before the examining board, and that afterwards the sportsmanlike method of a ballot should be resorted to; but in no case should there be condonation of the fact that city men and old women in the cities can win ballots and not use the land for the practical purposes which the Act intends but for the purpose of making money as a side line.

Mr. LOGAN: Do they do it?

Mr. BEDFORD: They do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you know of any "dummy" in your electorate, I will proceed.

Mr. BEDFORD: One of the worst resorters to dummymism is the exponent of that pastoral disease known as "Kidmanism." It is not necessary now to more than allude to the general effect of this gentleman's methods on the selection of land and the pastoral industry generally in New South Wales and South Australia. Wherever he has gone—buying stations on the "run down" principle, and running them on the "fall-down" principle—ruin has followed. If we

take it on the basis that £1,000 spent on cattle will use the same amount of country as will require £15,000 spent in wages with sheep, then we can see what a menace a man can be to pastoral progress and general settlement if he is permitted to force the best sheep country in the world out of sheep into cattle. In the south-western portion of my electorate this man runs stations on the "fall-down" system to such an extent that there are no fences. He will pay mustering fees to the selectors and run his cattle all over that country. He will take up occupation licenses until the land is wanted, and then he will outbid any possible selector. So soon as bad seasons come he will stop paying the rent—but always using the country—and not pay any more rent until somebody else wants it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know that that has been done?

Mr. BEDFORD: I know that it has been done; and it is exceedingly difficult to make "Kidmanism" change its spots. It was born that way, and it grew that way. This highly excellent gentleman and exceedingly bad citizen—

Mr. BULCOCK: Is that the gentleman they fined £10 the other day in Victoria?

Mr. BEDFORD: I believe so. The quaint reason given by the magistrate was that no useful purpose would be served by imposing a heavier penalty on a wealthy man. Giving evidence before the Inter-rate Commission as to pastoral wages, Mr. Kidman objected to drovers getting £1 a day because, he said, when he first entered the pastoral industry as a workman he got 10s. a week; but he neglected to say that at the time he got 10s. a week half a sheep could be obtained at the lower end of George street, Sydney, for 1s. or 1s. 6d. He now wants the 10s. a week wages and 1s. 9d. per lb., or whatever it might be, for chops, and 5s. 3d. per lb. for wool. A man who is naturally biased and would think in that direction could not possibly be a good tenant in any direction. The whole of the pastoral land of the country, still the property of the State and always the property of the State, is let out to men who are merely trustees, but who make the mistake of thinking that, having got it, they own it for ever. A tacit arrangement in giving the lease is that the lessee shall not leave the country worse than he found it, yet in no case does this man Kidman leave the country

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as good as he found it. Right from one end of Australia to the other some of these "pastoralist pioneers," who are so hysterically and sentimentally talked about, have left their track of ruin. At one time salt-bush—one of the finest mutton pastures in the world—was all the way down the Lachlan River, but through greed and overstocking it died out, and to-day there is more salt-bush in California grown from seed exported from Australia than there is on the Lachlan River. Out in the West we are too ready to believe that mulga is an inexhaustible asset, but mulga has been eaten out at Cobar, and can be eaten out elsewhere. One can understand the pastoralists not being willing at times to face the great labour expense of lopping mulga in times of drought and resorting instead to cutting it down and destroying the asset; but there is no reason why the young mulga should not be given a chance to grow by a system of guard fires being insisted upon. At the present time our national heritage is being frittered away for the need of the moment; and, if there was ever a case where prudent husbandry should be observed, it is in the case of our great pastoral areas producing wool which has no like in all the world. The other day the selection of Rosedale in the Longreach district had 6,569 applicants. Another Rosedale was forfeited by the Land Court at Cunnamulla, out of which arose a case in connection with which I have received a general summary. Mr. McDonnell, of Sydney, who was the barrister engaged in the case from the beginning, has given a fairly full précis of the position. It is known that Kidman has not paid any Federal income tax for five years, and here was a case where the Department of Public Lands could not discover his burglary until the burglary had been committed. Here is a case where this man is shown to be one of the worst pastoral citizens Australia knows. Here is a case where this man, by a partnership unknown to the Queensland Government—partnership in regard to a Queensland property which worked in New South Wales, but did not appear here—has not only broken the land laws, but has beaten the income tax, and broken into fragments the law relating to the registration of firms. The position is that Kidman, Rowley, and Hain were a partnership, apparently without Hain's knowledge, in New South Wales, because they kept for six years nine different sets of books. The alleged partnership was known by five different names. That was for the purpose, among other things, of getting behind the income tax law of Queensland. The position outlined by Mr. McDonnell in connection with the trial at Cunnamulla, which resulted in the forfeiture of Rosedale, or Grazing Farm No. 457, Cunnamulla, is summarised in these words—

"When Mr. S. Kidman began to operate in New South Wales, his agents were Pitt, Son, and Badgery, and S. H. Hain conducted the actual business of inspecting and reporting upon station properties which Kidman sought to purchase. . . . He informed Hain that he was under great obligations to him, as his services had secured to him such a number of desirable investments, and he, further, told Hain that in view of this, he would finance the purchase of a property by Hain, for his own benefit, and told him to look out for a suitable place. . . . In November following, Hain

while inspecting a Queensland property for Pitt, Son, and Badgery, had occasion to pass through the pastoral holding known as Woolerina, on his way to Bindebango. He knew that Woolerina was for sale. From what he saw he concluded that it was suitable for Kidman to buy, as he had bought other properties. . . . Hain informed Kidman that Woolerina was a good property to buy, and Kidman instructed him to obtain an offer for it. Upon making inquiries, Hain found that Woolerina, as well as another pastoral holding known as Murramurra, and a Grazing Farm No. 457, Cunnamulla, known as Rosedale, belonged to the trustees of Clancy, deceased, and that testator had directed by his will that all his Queensland holdings were to be sold in globo, as going concerns. Hain conveyed this information to Kidman, who instructed him to obtain an offer of the whole of the above-named properties. The sum of £30,000 was mentioned as the price of these lands, and later Kidman signed a contract to purchase the same. Before he signed the contract Kidman told Hain that he intended to finance him in the purchase of these properties. When Hain was so informed, he advised Kidman to have the properties inspected by some other expert, which was done, the second expert reporting still more favourably on the properties.

"After the contract, upon signing which Kidman paid a deposit of £2,000, Hain was informed that the purchase had been made for the benefit of those who had assisted Kidman in many ways, he mentioning Messrs. R. Wilson, S. R. Rowley, and Hain, all of whom were, at that time, employed by Pitt, Son, and Badgery.

"Later on, Kidman informed Hain that he had ascertained that Mr. Wilson was a man of considerable means, and that he did not intend to include him in the proposed benefit. Kidman then told Hain that he considered that the best course would be to work the properties in a partnership, consisting of Kidman, Hain, and Rowley. Hain agreed to this, and instructed Mr. R. Houston, solicitor, to prepare a partnership agreement, and he produced a draft of this to Kidman. On reading this, Kidman stated that he did not want a long rigmarole drawn by a lawyer; that Hain could draw all that was required on a sheet of note-paper. This last-mentioned interview took place on 24th May, 1917, in Sydney."

Then Kidman decided it would be necessary to obtain a new contract. It was decided then that the trustees should amend the contract upon condition that £20,000 of the purchase money was paid to them forthwith. It was at once paid over to the trustees of the Clancy Estate. The summary of the facts by Mr. McDonnell continued—

"The trustees then amended the contract to read that Kidman purchased as agent for Hain and Rowley. It now became necessary that Hain and Rowley should arrange to hold the properties in question, and it was agreed that they should be valued separately. Woolerina was valued at £25,000 and Murramurra, together with Rosedale, at £15,000."

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The choice of the properties was decided by lot, Hain securing the first choice. He elected to take Woolerina, Murra Murra and Rosedale falling to Rowley. That was done. In December, 1917, Hain, in compliance with the earlier request of Kidman, drew up a short memorandum of partnership. This memorandum was submitted to Rowley, who recast portions of it. In January, 1918, Hain told Mr. Helmsley that the properties were held by Kidman, Hain, and Rowley as equal partners.

The solicitors told him Kidman could not legally be a party to such holding, and that Kidman should rest content with the position of creditor. Kidman did rest so content, and was fully paid with interest, and everything went on with the properties—Woolerina to Hain, and the others to Rowley—without Kidman being in any position except that of a man who advanced the money and was to receive the return of his purchase money and interest, which was duly paid.

About October, 1921, Kidman's agent, without the consent and knowledge of Hain, put stockmen on Woolerina, and mustered and removed the whole of the cattle, which were lost to the proper owners.

The summary continues—

"Included in the cattle removed by Kidman were 180 head which were Hain's own property, and did not belong to any partnership. In consequence of the mention of a firm called Rowley and Company in Kidman's letter, Hain called on the accountant who kept the partnership books of Hain, Rowley, and Company. He was informed by Mr. Brown, of F. C. Jordan, Public Accountant, that Kidman was not a partner, and that the original books containing his name had been withdrawn. Later on, Hain called on the same firm again, in company with Mr. Sky, who had been appointed receiver in the alleged partnership of Kidman, Hain, and Rowley. Two sets of books were handed over to Mr. Sky, and Hain then saw that the original books were exclusively in Kidman's name and had not been withdrawn, as he had been informed, but had been entered up current with those of the firm Hain, Rowley, and Company to, at least, a period in 1920.

"Hain gave Kidman and Rowley a notice of dissolution of any and every partnership which existed between them on 8th March, 1921. Hain received a reply from Kidman, but none from Rowley. On 21st March, 1921, Hain filed in the Equity Court at Sydney a statement of claim against Kidman and Rowley, claiming, *inter alia*, an account of the dealings with the cattle removed from Woolerina, and on 23rd May, 1921, a statement of claim was filed in the same court by Kidman and Rowley, in which Kidman claimed to be a partner with Rowley and Hain, in equal one-third shares, in the pastoral holdings, and stock bought from Clancy's Trustees, and that Kidman remained a member of such partnership until it was dissolved by Hain's notice of dissolution dated 8th March, 1921. Neither of the suits proceeded to a hearing, as the counsel of the respective parties arrived at a settlement. When a draft of the settlement was

shown to Hain, he disapproved of its terms, as it appeared to him to be an attempt to legalise a fraud. This protest was in writing, 15th June, 1921. He was afterwards assured by his counsel that under clause 10 of the settlement, all the parties would be obliged to conform with all the laws of Queensland affecting the holdings and partnership, and unless this was carried on, the settlement would be inoperative. Many months elapsed and nothing was done towards carrying out the terms of settlement, as regards the law in Queensland, and Hain was informed by the Crown law authorities of that State that the terms of the settlement could not be given effect to.

"In November, 1922, Hain applied to the Court for a decree directing that the defendants, Kidman and Rowley, carry out the terms of the settlement. On the hearing of this motion, it was asserted by Kidman's counsel that he was not a partner. In December, 1922, Hain returned to Sydney from Brisbane, where he was appearing before the Land Court in the matter of the threatened forfeiture of Woolerina. On his arrival in Sydney he was served with notice of motion in the Equity Court, under which the defendants, Kidman and Rowley, sought to compel Hain to transfer certain assets claimed to be owned by the alleged partners, including Woolerina. This notice was served on 21st December, and it was heard on 22nd December, 1922. As vacation had commenced, Hain was unable to obtain counsel, and appeared in person. At the hearing, Hain pointed out that, if he signed the documents tendered for his signature, he would become a party to a fraud on the land laws of Queensland. The order was made as asked for, but without prejudice to Hain's right to institute proceedings to set aside the decree upon which the order was based. About 12th March, 1923, documents were tendered Hain for the transfer of Woolerina, etc., which were signed by Hain with reservation. In the month of June, 1923, Hain was served with notice of motion for an order to compel him to execute the documents for the transfer of the assets of the alleged partnership of Kidman, Rowley, and Hain, without reservation, and the matter was heard on 1st August, 1923, and an order was made as asked.

"Hain tendered his surrender of the holding, dated 6th December, 1923, to the Crown. On Hain's return to Sydney from Brisbane, after attending the Land Court at Cammulla, where the holding of Grazing Farm 457 was investigated, he was arrested on 29th February, and imprisoned in Long Bay Penitentiary for non-obedience of the above-mentioned order. After several days Hain appeared before the court, and it was pointed out to His Honour, the presiding Judge, that the signing of the documents tendered would make Hain a party to a fraud on the Queensland land laws. His Honour said that the execution of these documents in New South Wales under the order of the court would not be illegal in this State, although it may be illegal in Queensland, but as it was stated that the Queensland authorities

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were aware of the true condition of affairs, they would be able to conserve their own interests. The signing of these documents being the only alternative to an indefinite term of detention, Hain executed them.

"The whole of these references to the court by way of motion, arose out of a contract of sale of Woolerina to William Naughton. Kidman sold this holding to J. R. Loughman for £5,000, but that purchase was discovered, through his solicitors, that the title was tainted. Kidman then offered it to William Naughton, at Menzies Hotel, Melbourne, for £5,000. He then offered it to E. J. Cordner in Melbourne for £4,600; finally to Naughton for £4,200. This was done by Kidman, who was, at that time, not justified in meddling with the assets of the alleged partnership. It must be remembered that a large sum of money was lying in the Treasury, Brisbane, to the credit of the lawful holding of Woolerina. This sum of money would reduce the actual purchase money of Woolerina to about £1,600 for a lightly-improved holding of 633 square miles.

"After Hain had become aware, through the advice of Mr. Hemsley, that the Queensland Government would not allow Kidman to hold further leaseholds of Crown lands in that State, without the permission of the Minister, Hain took over the ownership of Woolerina, and the other rights attached to it, as his own holding, and his partner did the same with regard to Murra Murra and Rosedale, Grazing Farm 457. Kidman's only claim on these properties was as the creditor for the unpaid balance of purchase money. As already stated, Kidman told Hain and Rowley, in 1921, that they still owed him about £11,000. They sold 3,000 head of cattle and the proceeds amounting to about £20,000, were received by Pitt, Son, and Badgery, who say that they paid these proceeds to Kidman. At all events, Hain and Rowley did not receive a penny of it. It was shortly after this that Kidman assumed the position of sole owner and took possession of and removed the whole of the cattle running on Woolerina. It is to be noted that in the acquisition of Clancy's properties in Queensland, Kidman only expended £2,000 of his own moneys. From the sale of cattle from Woolerina, there was realised the total sum of £38,172. And Murra Murra was sold to W. R. Munro for £11,000, and the sheep which were on that property were sold for £1,700."

Finally Kidman sold this property to Norton for some ridiculous amount—I believe about £5,000 was the amount paid for it—and Norton was left apparently in possession, but he also received an indemnity from Kidman that his £5,000 would be safe if he could not get a title. The title of the lease was vested in Hain. Kidman could not give a title. Kidman in Queensland had nothing whatever to do with Woolerina, but in New South Wales he allowed himself to be a partner, lodged his choice of the six different sets of books, brought an action against Hain, and forced Hain—who was imprisoned for contempt for refusing to sign a transfer—to decide, after having been in gaol for two or three days, that he would not be a martyr

any longer, and that he would sign the papers which the New South Wales Supreme Court desired. The judge in the court, answering his objection to being forced to do a criminal thing, said that New South Wales laws had nothing at all to do with what was done by the laws of Queensland.

Here is a case where Hain elected to surrender the lease, and he should either be put into a position to get that lease back again or, if that is wrong, then at least Kidman should be prosecuted for in the first place having improperly held an interest in the lease, for having dummed a partnership in which he could be ostentatious in New South Wales and in which he would seem as small as possible in Queensland.

MR. KING: How long is it since this happened?

MR. BEDFORD: Only the other day.

MR. KING: He is still liable to prosecution.

MR. BEDFORD: Where? In New South Wales? The New South Wales law upholds Kidman as being a leasee or a partner in a lease and a partner also in a grazing farm—which, of course, he could not be in Queensland—because the litigation there takes no cognisance of the internal laws of Queensland. The document says at the end that Kidman is a partner by having had one of the sets of books for use in Queensland; he could be a partner in Woolerina, but not in Rosedale.

In any case he withheld from the [4 p.m.] gentleman in charge of the registration of firms here the information that he was a partner in Woolerina—that he was a dummy—which means that he was escaping income tax. It means also that he was breaking the law in regard to the Registration of Firms Act, and it means generally that a man operating in Queensland—making money in Queensland—could, by crossing the border, slip his fingers at the Queensland law and break it into as many pieces as he decided were useful.

To show the general character of this man, I have here a certified copy of a letter written by Kidman from abroad—the usual letter that a gentleman of that sort would write—suggesting to the representative of this precious partnership in Sydney that the grazing farm should be sold to Hain. Under the circumstances, I am about to suggest that it will be wise if the Government decide to tighten up the law and make alterations in it of which the following are merely suggestions.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot control New South Wales legislation.

MR. BEDFORD: I am not saying that you can, but you can control the matter here. Here is a suggestion which I make as to the tightening up of the law in order to prevent any recurrence of this, which, not to put too fine a point on it, is a crime. The Government should pass a Bill to prevent the holding of fraudulent interests in Crown leasehold lands in Queensland containing these provisions—

"1. Whosoever holds or attempts to hold any partnership or any interest (other than those set out in section 2 of the Amendment Act of 1917) not disclosed to the Minister, or any person who for any reason has been debarred from holding further Crown leasehold lands in Queensland without the permission

*Mr. Bedford.]*



of the Minister, holding or claiming to hold any land leased from the Crown in Queensland shall be deemed a fraudulent holder, and as such shall forfeit any and every Crown leasehold held by him under the Land Acts of Queensland.

"2. Whosoever, being a fraudulent holder as defined in the last preceding section shall enforce or attempt to enforce recognition of his alleged right against a valid holder or holders of Crown leasehold in Queensland in any Court outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Queensland shall forfeit all or any Crown lease or leases held by him in Queensland."

This should be made retrospective to catch any other gentleman who may be carrying on the same sort of business as Kidman, but whose operations are not absolutely known at present. Here is a matter in which the Land Act should be tightened up, and I hope the Government before long will take action on the suggestion.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): There is one particular phase of the question that I want to refer to, and that is the question of these resumptions. Some little time ago I asked the following question of the Secretary for Public Lands:—

"1. Has the Government resumed freehold land in the Banyan district?"

"2. If so, on what date was notice of resumption given?"

"3. Has the compensation payable yet been determined?"

"4. If not, when is it likely to be paid?"

"Answers:—

"1. Yes.

"2. 27th July, 1923, and 6th August, 1923.

"3. No.

"4. See answer to Question 3."

It seems to me a great hardship that these people who have had their land resumed have had to wait such a long time before getting paid.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How long?

Mr. MOORE: Twelve months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not a very long period in connection with land resumption.

Mr. MOORE: It is a long period to those people who have had their land taken from them. The land has been reselected, and no compensation has been paid. The non-payment is due to delay on the part of the officials of the department. The holders of land have to put in their claim for compensation, and the officials of the Department of Public Lands have to put in theirs afterwards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has to go through the Land Court. It is a slow process.

Mr. MOORE: It has not been able to get to the Land Court yet. Does it not strike the Minister as being a hardship that the people should be deprived of their means of livelihood when the land is taken from them and receive nothing in return?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Have you any idea of the nature of this land?

[*Mr. Bedford.*

Mr. MOORE: Of course, I have. The people who have this land from which the resumption is made want the money to work another property. The Minister sits back and says the process of resumption is long drawn out, and that the time taken in this case for compensation to be paid was not excessive. I say that it is very long. People are treated unjustly when land is taken away from them and the delay is due to the negligence or waste of time of an official of the Lands Department in placing his valuation in the department so that the matter can get to the Land Court. People are entitled to get compensation at the earliest possible moment after land is resumed from them. Last year the Government placed £518,000 on the Estimates for land resumptions, and they spent £153,877. This year there is only £60,000 put on the Estimate for land resumption. It appears to me that these land resumptions which were promised at election time are going to be held over indefinitely. We know that there is a large number of resumptions in the Burnett district that have not been settled, and which have to be brought before the Land Court. It is going to take a long way more than £60,000 to pay for these resumptions. I think it is unfair that people should have land taken away from them in this way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have still got the use of it.

Mr. MOORE: They have not still got the use of it, because a large portion has been taken up by fresh individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where has land been selected in regard to which compensation has not been paid?

Mr. MOORE: Part of Cannindah has not been paid for. The resumption value has never been decided by the Land Court. I have had two letters from the people in the Banyan district. I think that over twelve months is too long. One lady wrote to me and said she was anxious for the money to enable her to make a living by planting sugar-cane. She was unable to get any satisfaction or reply from the department, and did not know how on earth she was going to carry on. I went to the department to find out the position, and it turned out that she had put in her valuation to the department over twelve months ago and the department's valuation had only just arrived. It appears to me to be putting people to a great deal of inconvenience when the matter should be hurried up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a terrible thing to spend £750,000 on that area and then have this row about the value of the land.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of the Government spending £750,000. Any ordinary individual who has land taken from him has to be paid. Do you mean to say that, if the City Council took land, it would not be paid for in twelve months?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It takes a long period.

Mr. MOORE: I am complaining about that, and I say it is unfair and unjust to these individuals. The Crown takes possession of the property and allows it to be selected and the people to go on and make a living, and the individual who has had it taken away from him in the first place has

to wait indefinitely until slow processes have been gone through in the Lands Department before he can be paid for the land taken from him. The procedure should be hurried up.

I want to refer to the allocation of the Federal grant for main road developmental work. At the rate we are going it seems to me that the Government are not going to take advantage of the offer of the Federal Government and get the full benefit of the allocation.

Last year the Commonwealth allocated the sum of £98,000 on condition that the State of Queensland provided a similar sum for work on developmental main roads, and I understand double the amount is to be made available this year by the Commonwealth. Last year, so far as I can gather, only £44,672 was spent. At the rate we are going, it seems to me that the Main Roads Board is not going to take advantage of the offer of the Federal Government and get the full benefit of the allocation. If we look at the tables at the back of the report of the Board, we naturally expect to find the way in which that money was spent, but I am unable to find any record of the State's portion of it. There is a table showing the amount spent on each road from the Federal grant, but the allocation seems to be done in rather a peculiar way, and I have not been able to discover what principle has been adopted. This year, I understand, it is proposed not to allow other districts than those which have already benefited to get any of the grant, no matter how great their needs, but to concentrate on roads which have already been started, to enable them to be brought to completion.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is not that a wise policy?

MR. MOORE: It may be a wise policy from the point of view of the districts which are having the money spent in them, but it is pretty rough on other districts.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You will never get anywhere if you spread it over the whole State.

MR. MOORE: The Commonwealth Government adopted the policy that it was not fair that the money should be spent in only a few districts, and required that a list of the specified roads should be submitted to them, and that they should approve of the allocation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Commonwealth Engineer was very particular about carrying a road to completion before he would give another grant. He held that the road must be useful.

MR. MOORE: What is the good of waiting until you can make a perfect road for the full length of that road, when by spending a certain proportion on bridges and water crossings it can be made useful—just as the Main Roads Board is carrying out its work in the State?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Have you read the Act? I could not agree to any temporary type of road.

MR. MOORE: If the Minister will read the report of the Board, he will find that it points out the fears of local authorities, who think that they must have a macadamised road for the whole distance.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A main road—that is different from a Commonwealth road.

MR. MOORE: It is not a developmental road that I am talking about, and I would like to know on what principle this money is being allocated, because it seems to me that a large number of districts which have just as much claim as others have no earthly chance of ever participating in this grant from the Commonwealth if the present policy is followed—that is, the principle decided upon by the Main Roads Board. I think that when the Commonwealth granted a large sum of money last year, and double the amount this year—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. You will excuse me for knowing, will you not?

MR. MOORE: I know that a deputation waited on the Commonwealth Treasurer not very long ago, and the Treasurer said he was going to double the amount.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has not.

MR. MOORE: I do not mean that it was double last year, but that it is to be double this year.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is giving £94,000—the same as last year.

MR. MOORE: I think the hon. gentleman will find that my information is correct. It was stated in the press that a deputation waited on the Commonwealth Treasurer in regard to the matter, and, as a matter of fact, the Board in New South Wales has already made preparation for spending the extra amount of money.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was doubled there, because they did not take any money last year.

MR. MOORE: Not at all. We are going to get £180,000 odd.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All right; have your way; I am not going to argue with you.

MR. MOORE: Perhaps the Minister has not brought himself up to date.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: My usual position. I am ignorant of everything about my own affairs.

MR. MOORE: I am very sorry that the Minister should be in that ignorant position. (Laughter.) We were particularly interested in the deputation from Queensland, and we arranged for someone to represent us. We were forwarded the result of the deputation, and it was stated that the Federal Treasurer had agreed to double the funds available this year.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the basis of your knowledge?

MR. MOORE: Yes.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will not disturb it. I can assure the hon. gentleman that the £180,000 includes the £94,000 for Queensland, £1 per £1.

MR. MOORE: I trust the Minister will look further into the matter. He will probably find that I am right.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would suggest that the hon. gentleman should look further into the matter.

MR. MOORE: I have no need. What I am concerned about is the allocation of the money. Many districts have not been able to secure anything from this grant, and I do

*Mr. Moore.*

not think the money should be distributed in certain districts which the Government of the day consider are more entitled to it than others. It should be allocated to the different districts throughout the State so as to promote settlement and make conditions of rural transit better.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would suggest that the hon. gentleman should interview Mr. Hill, the Commonwealth Engineer, the next time he is in Brisbane, and ascertain his views on the matter. He is the man who controls the matter.

Mr. MOORE: I shall be very pleased to interview Mr. Hill. I have a shrewd idea that Mr. Hill has been influenced to some extent by the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have nothing to do with it.

Mr. MOORE: I wish the hon. gentleman had.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If I had it might be said that it was a political allocation, and I want to guard against that.

Mr. MOORE: Evidently somebody has been conferring with the Main Roads Board, which does not allocate the money on its own responsibility. Somebody else joins in besides the Commonwealth Engineer in deciding how the money is to be allocated. It is not intended that the Main Roads Board alone should have the right to allocate the money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has to be approved by the Government, and the knowledge necessary to make the best allocation is possessed by the Main Roads Board and not by the Minister.

Mr. MOORE: I quite understand that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would the hon. gentleman like £500 devoted to each electorate, and have a few stones put on some of the roads?

Mr. MOORE: There is no occasion to become silly over the question. This money is for a specific purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is what the hon. gentleman wants me to do.

Mr. MOORE: No. We have to discover which districts are best entitled to the money. We must spend it so that the most people will get the greatest amount of good, and the State will get the greatest amount of good by facilitating transport to the railways and enabling the railways to be in a better position than they are in to-day. It should not be expended on some specified area in which it may be of benefit in the future or where it will compete with a railway already built.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Commonwealth Engineer insists upon doing the work where the people will not have any chance of getting a road unless the Commonwealth grant is used to provide it.

Mr. MOORE: From my knowledge of the allocation of this money, I am sure the Commonwealth Engineer has been very badly misled if he came to the conclusion that in many cases the people would not have got a road but for the Commonwealth grant. If the Minister would look up the matter, he would probably see that he is placing a wrong construction on the intentions of the Commonwealth Government.

[Mr. Moore.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would not say in all cases, but in some cases.

Mr. MOORE: That is the point. Some influence has been brought to bear to have money expended in a certain direction, apart from any recommendation by the Main Roads Board.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I can assure the hon. gentleman that that is quite untrue.

Mr. MOORE: I am bound to accept the Minister's word. I can only suppose that he was not present at the interview when the suggestions were made.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not say that every suggestion made by the local authorities has been accepted by the Main Roads Board.

Mr. MOORE: The local authorities have made numerous suggestions, and in cases not much notice has been taken of them because the whole of the allocations were agreed to in secret conclave, and the question of how the money was allocated, whether it was allocated to the best advantage, and whether the Government will continue spending the Commonwealth grant in making main roads at an enormous expense in sparsely-populated centres without consideration of the claims—no matter how great is the need—of other parts of Queensland, is another matter. I want to know how this money was allocated. The attitude taken up in the allocation by the Commonwealth Engineer does not matter. I want to know who was responsible for the allocation, and whether the method of allocation is going to be continued on exactly the same principle as has been adopted up to date, which will preclude certain centres from getting a road on good terms.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Supposing I did the allocation and divided the money up amongst all the Labour electorates, would you not have a grievance then?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, I would have a just grievance.

Mr. KING: The Minister would not do that.

Mr. MOORE: I want to get at the number of people who are likely to benefit from the expenditure of this money, and whether, instead of spending an enormous amount of money on one main road—which would be very nice for the people who lived in the district, but to whom it would be no advantage when they had railway communication—the expenditure could not be spread over a number of districts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would you suggest leaving the road uncompleted, if it has been built half way now?

Mr. MOORE: No; but there is no necessity to construct the class of road that is being made. There is no necessity to spend £7,000 or £8,000 a mile on a road when an expenditure of £3,000 a mile would make a road amply sufficient and permanent for all classes of traffic that are likely to come on it for the next ten or twelve years. Is it wise to spend such a vast amount on a few sections in the scattered parts of Queensland when such a large number of roads are required, by which transit can be made cheaper, and which will serve a large number of people? I want to know whether it



would not be wiser to have a different allocation of the money so that the benefit may be spread over a wider area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't forget that the State is finding half the money.

Mr. MOORE: I am not forgetting that fact, but I have been unable to find, although I have looked through the papers, where the State's quota is coming from.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Bascoo*): I want to say a word or two about one phase of pastoral life, and that is in relation to the question of selection ballots, which I consider well worthy of consideration. The Minister in his wisdom some little time ago suddenly realised that the selection ballot system with respect to land is being very gravely abused. I take it the Minister has not realised that that was going on prior to the time he made the discovery.

Many people who were not eligible within the terms of the Act become applicants for available land because of agents conniving at their submission for the ballot so that the agents might secure a greater rake-off. So long as agents have a pecuniary interest in getting prospective selectors to submit their names to a ballot so long will there be a grave danger of abuse.

The other grave danger of abuse is that under the old haphazard system we had one man putting in applications for twenty, thirty, or fifty men, and they went and drew, and, of course, the odds of drawing something were in their favour, and the result was the old system of dummying and the ultimate reversion of a block to a previous owner or the consolidation of that block into a big squatter's holding.

There is only way whereby that system can be overcome. I understand that the Minister has recently endeavoured to ascertain the true position in this regard. I say unhesitatingly that for a long time I and many other hon. members have spoken against the system of balloting so far as the admission of dummies is concerned. In my own electorate and within recent years two or three dummies have been convicted of dummying land and have had their land withdrawn. Let us take the Rosedale block as a case in point. This block has been mentioned this afternoon. There were approximately 6,000 applicants for it, and 6,000 applicants at £1 a head would represent £6,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Guineas.

Mr. BULCOCK: We shall use pounds for the sake of convenience. That sum—I think it was £6,500—was distributed over a few agents, and I know one particular agent got somewhere in the region of £2,000 just for submitting the names of applicants to the Government land agent. For the life of me I cannot see why the Government cannot undertake this work themselves and wipe the private land agent out of commission altogether. Applications should be submitted direct to the Lands Office, and then it would not be necessary to charge £1 ls.—which rate enables a popular land agent to clear from £1,000 to £2,000 over one transaction—and the price could be fixed at about 5s., which would more than cover the expenses incurred. It is quite obvious that the man who goes in for one block of land does

not limit himself to one block. I know a man in the West who, like many other men, goes in for blocks of land year in and year out. Such men go in for every prospective available block, and it costs them £1 ls. a time. The man I have in mind spends £50 to £60 a year in applications. The agents are at present getting this £1 ls. a head, and in a few years after 1927, when a good deal of first-class land will be available, it is obvious that the rake-off to these agents is going to be tremendous. I am not particularly anxious as to whether the cost of the application is reduced or not, but I would like to see the Crown controlling the applications and the money going direct to the consolidated revenue. I am opposed to agents getting this continuous rake-off, which is essentially an incentive to graft and to putting people into the ballot who should not be in the ballot.

There is another phase of this balloting question. I am of the opinion that any individual who can show that he is a bona fide applicant should be allowed to compete for a block, but I think that experience should have something to do with the final determination. I cannot see why a widow from Sydney, a barber's clerk from Melbourne, a banker's assistant from Adelaide, or somebody in the old country, should be applicants for any land in Queensland that is available and has been worked and made profitable by people in that locality ever since the land was originally pioneered.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no prohibition against Queenslanders being applicants in New South Wales.

Mr. BULCOCK: I realise that. I also realise that there is a limitation in the Federal Constitution. The Minister says there is no debarbing of a Queensland in New South Wales. There is no [4.30 p.m.] debarbing of a Queensland in the face of the machinery, but, when you go into the machinery, you find there is a little "experience" clause that can be used and is used against Queensland and against Victoria and in favour of New South Welshmen, and the Minister knows that to be the case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is in the western districts.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am speaking of the western districts. If New South Wales is going to debar Queenslanders from access to land there, surely we should retaliate and debar New South Welsh people from access to our western lands until our own western demand is satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If we did that, they might place an embargo on our sugar.

Mr. BULCOCK: As a matter of fact, in New South Wales they have discriminated against us in certain matters, so that argument will not cut very much ice. Some system should be evolved whereby experience should be taken into consideration, and I do not believe that finance in connection with a pastoral application is a very necessary thing. I do not think the Minister ought to require a man to have £1,000 or the sum required for the survey fee, the first year's rent, and the cost of improvements.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is necessary in connection with ordinary selections.

*Mr. Bulcock.]*

Mr. BULCOCK: The banking institutions are only too willing at the present time to finance people who are successful in drawing a block of land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are you quite sure of that?

Mr. BULCOCK: I am. As a matter of fact I know of no selector who has taken up land recently who has not been able to get financed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do. I know of one man in your own electorate who drew a piece of land, and he could not get financed.

Mr. BULCOCK: When?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Some years ago. I am referring to a man who drew a block on Terrick.

Mr. BULCOCK: That was some years ago. I am talking about the present time. I know the case the hon. gentleman refers to. That was when wool was 3d. a lb. The hon. member knows the circumstances of the case as well as I do, and he knows that that man could not get financed because of the deliberate sabotage of his more powerful squatting neighbours. That is the whole story in a nutshell. The squatters will always seek to hurl the selector into oblivion if they can possibly do so.

Since we met last year we have had a Prickly-pear Lands Commission created. This Commission was created with the intention of dealing with pear in Queensland, and intends to spend in the clearing of pear in the vicinity of £100,000 a year for a certain number of years. In my electorate there has been some little attempt to deal with the pear, which is rapidly becoming a menace. Some two or three years ago in this House I drew attention to the fact that the pear in the Blackall area was becoming a matter of very grave concern, because a very considerable loss was incurred owing to the spoiling of the wool due to pear. Wool is the backbone of the State at the present time, and we cannot afford to lose any of the value of our wools. As a result of my representations on that occasion an officer from the prickly-pear sub-department was sent out to Blackall to determine whether the destruction of the pear was being carried out in the way the department desired that it should be carried out. Since then this Commission has taken over the administration of pear matters, and should make a special effort to deal with the isolated pear in the Blackall district, because it can be coped with at the present time. If it is allowed to go for three or four years, the same question that you find in densely-infested pear areas will present itself in the Blackall district, and a lot of that splendid country will be absolutely ruined and abandoned, as has been the case in one or two instances in the Blackall country at the present time.

I know two blocks at least that have been thrown in because the pear has gained such a hold that it is impossible to deal with it. It seems to me that with a dry, fine climate like we have in the Blackall area, and the fact that there are dense scrubs of pear, biological control might be tried. I do not know whether any experiments in that direction have been undertaken. I understand that the cochineal insect is being distributed in certain centres. I believe that

the climatic conditions at Blackall are such as to make it at least a good experiment to see whether the cochineal and the other forms of biological control will eradicate the pear in that district. Above all, I think there should be some closer supervision. We have a Crown lands ranger at Blackall who has to cover an enormous area of country—a bigger area than some of the Crown lands rangers have to cover in clean country where there is no pear to engage attention. This officer is overburdened with duties. He cannot possibly do the land work in his area, and at the same time give that attention to the eradication of the pear that he should give; consequently, the eradication of the pear is not being effectively dealt with as it should be. Many lessees do not understand the menace of the pear, nor the best methods of eradicating the pest. I think it will be well for the Prickly-pear Commission, first, to put a permanent pear officer in the Blackall district, and give him instructions as to the manner in which pear may be destroyed; secondly, establish biological experiments for control of the pear; and, thirdly, see that the squatters and those who were originally responsible for the spread of the pear do a fair thing in the eradication of the pest.

We have had a good deal of talk about State enterprises. It seems to me that the question of the supply of netting is becoming such a big question that we shall have to give it serious consideration. The only way this can be adequately dealt with is by supplying an unlimited amount of netting, so that the dingoes may be fenced out from the sheep. The destruction of sheep in the Western country to-day is absolutely appalling. No one can calculate the cost to the State per annum from the ravages of the dingo and the sheep fly. Take floods, droughts, and pestilences on the top of that, and there is no doubt that our sheep industry has a good deal to contend with. Since it is obvious that a perpetual supply of netting should be available, I would like to suggest that the Government might well consider the advisability, either in conjunction with the Commonwealth or as a State matter, of establishing works for the manufacture of netting for this purpose alone. If that were done—and it is the only way the dingo can be coped with—in two or three years the increase of the flocks would more than pay for the expense incurred. Even if it was a losing proposition, it would be a gain to the community as a whole. We know that at the recent wool sales our scoured wool brought 68½d. per lb., and that £1,500,000 of new money was brought into the State as a result of these sales.

I want now to say a word or two about resumptions. It has been said that three stations were to be taken for experimental purposes, and that it was to be determined whether the Land Court could fix a rent equitable enough for these holdings to be taken over by small selectors and made into a profitable venture. I understand that the negotiations in connection with Saltern Creek, Charlotte Plains, and Marathon are still going forward.

I think that we should decide once and for all whether it is possible under existing circumstances under the conditions suggested by the department to increase the production of wool by resumptions of this kind and cutting the holdings up into smaller areas. If it cannot be done, we are not going to growl

[Mr. Bulcock.]



very much about it. If it can be done, the matter should be proceeded with. Personally, I contend that, when you see wool bringing a high value, if the small man is going to compensate us in the matter of production for any cost there might be, then it should be undertaken. In any case I hope it will not be shelved. It is a very vital question in the West, and the Government should determine whether it can be profitably undertaken or not.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I should like to say something in regard to land selection ballots. A few weeks ago I asked this question of the Minister—

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

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

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

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

The Minister's reply was—

"The whole question is under review."

This is not a new question. It has been raised with reference to grazing farms and grazing homesteads on many occasions. Several hon. members have told us that applications for land come in from all sources, and the hon. member for Warrego has told us that it is held that the winner of a ballot is in as good a position as the winner of a "Tattersall's" sweep.

Mr. BULCOCK: They are advertised in that way in the West.

Mr. KING: There are applications from all sorts of persons who have not the slightest interest in the pastoral industry and who have not the slightest intention of carrying on the industry. I would like the Minister to try to tighten up the law in some way or other whereby only bonâ fide applicants can secure selections.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a big problem.

Mr. KING: I know it is, but, if the hon. gentleman succeeds in solving it, he will earn a halo.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Extinguish himself. (Laughter.)

Mr. KING: Although it is a big question, it would be a great satisfaction if we could devise a method by which bonâ fide applicants only would be admitted to the ballots and whereby Queenslanders—men engaged in this industry—young fellows particularly—could gain an opportunity to win a selection. They should receive preference as against city men or against men from New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia, or men from any other Australian State. I want to see our young Queenslanders getting the show to which they are entitled. It is particularly hard on a young fellow who started on a station as a jackeroo and who has been working year after year and attempting to get a selection by ballot, when he finds that year after year he does not succeed. There are hundreds of cases like that. I would just like to refer to the report of the Royal Commission on Land Settlement which sat in 1897.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will you apply the same principle generally—that only Queenslanders shall be eligible? You would be safe. (Laughter.)

Mr. KING: It would depend upon the circumstances. In any case I would not be an applicant for a selection. I want to see opportunities given to these men who are engaged in the industry. I am not engaged in the industry, and my application would not be a bonâ fide application. In the report of the Royal Commission on Land Settlement, in 1897, this appears—

"However great the demand may be for grazing farms in the Western and Central districts, there can be no doubt whatever that many of the applications received are of a questionable character, and that the practice of friends and relatives in considerable numbers putting in applications for the same grazing farm is likely to have a most injurious effect, inasmuch as many bonâ fide applicants resident in the colony and from the southern colonies have been unsuccessful at the ballot through the multiplicity of these applicants. This has become a matter of such importance as to demand the attention of the Government and Parliament, with the view of applying some remedy whereby bonâ fide applicants can be settled on the land. After carefully weighing the evidence given before them, your Commissioners recommend that for the future it shall be a condition that when grazing farms are open for selection priority be given to applicants who will reside on their selections for a period of five years."

Mr. BULCOCK: That has been given effect to.

Mr. KING: Yes. The report continues—

"Your Commissioners are strengthened in this recommendation by the evidence which goes to show that in the past grazing farms have been selected, not for the purpose of settlement, but for traffic and sale. Your Commissioners are further of opinion that there is evidence of a strong necessity for a close investigation into the bonâ fides of applicants for all classes of selections."

Mr. BULCOCK: It has always been that way.

Mr. KING: As far back as 1897 the attention of Parliament was sharply called to the fact that all these applicants were not bonâ fide. Later there was an amending Act passed, and I think the class of tenure was divided into grazing homesteads and grazing farms. Under the grazing homestead tenure the successful applicant had to put in five continuous years' residence on his selection, but I do not think it was necessary to do that under the grazing farm tenure. All the grazing farmer had to do was to have his residence conditions fulfilled by a duly appointed bailiff. Perhaps the Minister might be able to secure better and more satisfactory results if he made the term of residence longer. Since 1917 the condition of residence has been that there shall be continuous residence during the term of the lease, and I think that is quite right. When a selector takes up a selection with the idea of working it as a bonâ fide selector, he ought to reside on it for the full term, except during periods of sickness or when leave of absence is granted.

Mr. King.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A selector can sell his lease after a certain period to another person qualified to hold the land.

Mr. KING: Yes. He can sell after he receives his certificate of fulfilment of conditions. In some cases he can sell after three years, and in other cases after five years. I think it is three years in the case of grazing homesteads, and five years in the case of grazing farms. The selector can sell his lease, or mortgage it, or do practically anything he likes with it when dealing with a person qualified to hold it. I would like the Minister, in dealing with the question of selection, to take into consideration an amendment of section 60 of the Act. That section deals with cases where two or more persons jointly hold a selection. They can hold a selection, but they can only hold the area that would be available to one person. In such circumstances two persons should be allowed to hold an area double that allowed to a single applicant.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why stop at two?

Mr. KING: I could carry my argument on to three. A company can hold as big an area as it likes to hold. It is not confined to two, three, or seven times the area of a single selector.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A company cannot hold certain tenures at all.

Mr. KING: It could hold a grazing homestead tenure.

Mr. CORSE: It cannot take up that tenure.

Mr. KING: I was under the impression that a company could acquire and hold a grazing tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A company can hold certain pastoral leases, but not a grazing homestead tenure.

Mr. KING: I am mistaken then. There is another matter I wish to refer to, and it is this, local authorities complain that the roads are very much cut up by teamsters carting timber from the forestry reserves. I do not see why the Lands Department should not pay the local authorities some amount for the upkeep of those roads out of the timber royalties received. They do not pay the local authorities anything, although they have the benefit of the roads. It has been said that the local authorities could tax the teamsters. I do not know whether it is the custom of the Crown to engage teamsters or to have their own teamsters. If they have their own teamsters, there is no chance of putting the cost on to the teamsters. The teamsters cannot be charged a wheel tax as they are the servants of the Crown, and the by-laws do not bind the Crown. No rates are received from the forestry reserves, and the Crown pays nothing towards the upkeep of the roads. I ask the Minister to take into consideration my suggestion that a certain amount of the royalty received from timber should be set apart towards the upkeep of the roads and relieve the local authorities of a heavy expense.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I want to support the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo that the Lands Department should immediately make arrangements to handle applications for grazing selections. There would be no difficulty in the matter at all, and no extra expense would be incurred by the department, as the present staff could

[*Mr. King.*

manage the matter. Even if the department charged for this work, it could do it for half the amount that is charged by commission agents at the present time. Such an arrangement would be very much better for the applicants and all concerned. The fact that 6,500 odd applications were received for the Rosedale selection is sufficient warrant for the department making available to selection every acre of land in Queensland that is fitted for growing wool.

Mr. EDWARDS: Including State stations.

Mr. PAYNE: State stations are not suitable for growing wool.

Mr. EDWARDS: Some of them are.

Mr. PAYNE: Most of the State stations are in isolated localities, and are altogether unsuitable for growing wool.

The hon. member for Barcoo and other hon. members have said a good deal about the method of treating applications for grazing selections. I would like to see something done in the matter, especially to see that men living in Queensland—some of whom have had fifty or sixty applications in for selections year after year—are able to secure land; but I realise that the question is a very difficult one to handle. The Secretary for Public Lands interjected while the hon. member for Barcoo was speaking that New South Wales did not debar Queenslanders from going in for land selection there. They practically do so. A body of men is appointed there to select the applicants, and they can select whom they like.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They do not definitely debar them.

Mr. PAYNE: No, but there are plenty ways of killing a pig besides hitting it on the head. (Laughter.) When they have a Board to select the applicants, they may select whom they choose. I understand we have a system operating in the Burnett district under which the selectors are chosen, and I cannot see why that system does not apply to grazing selections. A good deal could be done to assist the native-born Queenslanders who have a knowledge of the country and of sheep-raising, and who submit applications year after year with very little hope of getting a holding. Something should be done to give these deserving young men who know all about the business an opportunity of making a home in the State in which they are bred and born.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAYNE: I am not in favour of proceeding along an imaginary line, and saying that a man in New South Wales should not be entitled to this and that in Queensland, but they are doing something of that sort in New South Wales. It is no good the Minister saying that they do not debar anyone in New South Wales. They do, by their system of selecting applicants. I repeat again that I do not think the Minister would do any harm if he applied the system prevailing in the Upper Burnett to grazing areas, and I do not think he would meet with very much opposition from anybody. The Government should give these young men who try year after year to get a selection a greater opportunity of getting that selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns*): I wish to reply to just one matter, and that is the question raised by the leader of the Opposition about main roads. I assured the hon.

member that he is entirely wrong about the amount allocated by the Commonwealth Government to the different States, but he would not accept my assurance.

MR. KING: I have a copy of the Act.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not care if the hon. member has sixteen copies. The Act is here showing that Queensland has an allocation of £94,000, and that is all we are getting.

MR. KING: That is the old Act. There has been a new one passed since then.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have been getting £94,000, to which we must add £1 for £1, making a total of £123,000.

MR. KING: The Bill I have seen—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All right. I hope you are right. There is no need to go any further on that matter. That is all we received.

Regarding ballots, of course it is easy to make suggestions. I have gone into the matter very thoroughly, and I must admit that I get to a dead-end in connection with every scheme on which I embark. It is very difficult to discriminate. I have gone so far as to investigate some of these so-called ineligible fathers and mothers, and in many cases I have found they are very suitable.

MR. EDWARDS: Yes; it wants a strong man.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I found one case where a barber drew a block, and he turned out to be one of the best selectors one could desire. When face to face with the matter, it is very difficult to devise a system to give entire satisfaction. I am against the idea of having a Board to select the applicants.

MR. EDWARDS: You already have a Board for the Upper Burnett scheme.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not really a Board.

MR. EDWARDS: It is.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where the land is so valuable, it would be a most dangerous thing to give either the Minister or a Board the power to select applicants.

MR. EDWARDS: Does not that apply to the Burnett scheme?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Burnett is not valuable property. (Laughter and Opposition interjections.)

THE SPEAKER: Order!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We never had more than three or four applicants for each block, and if hon. members do not recognise the difference between a valuable piece of sheep country and a piece for selection in the Burnett district, it is no use my speaking.

MR. BULLOCK: I do not suggest that the selection should rest entirely with a Board.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Someone must select the settlers, and I have heard of cases in New South Wales where those responsible have been accused of favouritism and of choosing their own relatives for suitable blocks. All the charges that can be made against an authority like that are made against that board. That land is nothing like our Western Queensland

lands. What will happen in 1927? We shall have 4,000,000 acres of the pick of Queensland available then. Everyone will be after that land, and, if you are going to put into the hands of any group of individuals the power to say who shall be the selectors, then they are going to come in for a good deal of criticism. If we can devise a method that will give satisfaction and at the same time retain the ballot system—which is the fairest system and does away with criticism—then that system will be devised, and we shall put it into the Land Act next year. We shall not have any great amount of land to be allotted for during the currency of the present year.

At 5 p.m.,

THE SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 30th July, I shall now proceed to put the balance of the resolutions.

Resolution 79 agreed to.

Resolutions 80 to 85, both inclusive, agreed to.

## WAYS AND MEANS.

### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

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

"(a) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1924-25, a further sum not exceeding £6,106,491 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(b) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1924-25, a further sum not exceeding £3,473,390 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(c) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1924-25, a further sum not exceeding £2,580,481 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(d) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1923-24, a supplementary sum not exceeding £377,210 14s. 6d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(e) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1923-24, a supplementary sum not exceeding £569,219 4s. 7d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(f) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1923-24, a supplementary sum not exceeding £391,515 15s. 3d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(g) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1925-26, a sum not exceeding £1,200,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]



"(h) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1925-26, a sum not exceeding £700,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(i) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1925-26, a sum not exceeding £600,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): There are one or two matters that I would like to refer to in these resolutions before they are agreed to. Considering the amount of money that has been wasted on a lot of State enterprises, I question whether we should agree to appropriate this amount of money.

The TREASURER: What amount do you suggest?

Mr. MOORE: I would suggest that a considerable amount should be knocked off from the Trust and Loan Funds Estimates, so that we may put a stop to some of the extravagances of the Government in connection with State enterprises. I would also suggest that an amount should be taken from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, so that we shall not have the extravagance of certain Ministers going on expensive tours, such as was indicated by the statement tabled by the Premier the other day with regard to the expenditure during the last twelve months. Some of these amounts seem to be reasonable, but others are scandalous. I have no objection to the expenses of the Premier or the Secretary for Mines when visiting England. I recognise that those duties had to be carried out, and we do not want to curtail the expenses of the representatives of the State when they are going home on important missions. I want to see Queensland properly represented, and, in my opinion, those expenses were not too high; but I certainly think that some of the expenses incurred by Ministers during the year were out of all reason. We asked a question last year as to whether the Secretary for Mines was doing electioneering work at his own expense when he went out into the Warrego electorate. We find now that the hon. gentleman received an allowance of £174, and incurred an expenditure of £481 for hotel expenses and £214 for car hire, and I have a suspicion that a considerable amount of that was incurred while doing electioneering work at that particular period. No one thinks that the Minister went out to the Warrego electorate to find copper mines or anything of that sort.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about oil? (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I think it is wrong that the public funds should be used for electioneering purposes in that manner. The country should not have to pay for privileges of that sort. If Mr. Bedford wanted to be elected, and that had any influence on the Minister's visit, I think the money should come out of the candidate's own pocket, and that the public funds should not be used for that purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do not forget that I made frequent visits to Melbourne during the year in connection with the British Empire Exhibition.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think the Minister travelled by motor-car.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I travelled by railway car.

Mr. MOORE: There are expenses incurred for motor-cars in the Warrego electorate during the election period.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I went to Mount Coolon by car.

Mr. MOORE: We know that the Secretary for Mines took a very extensive tour in the Warrego at that time, and it happened to fit in with imaginary ministerial duties.

Again, the expenses of the Secretary for Public Instruction are out of all reason. If a member goes once a week to look after his electorate, it is out of all reason that the public should be expected to pay for it. Nobody is going to convince me that this money was spent legitimately in the administration of the department of which the hon. gentleman is the head. He goes to his electorate at week ends, and by no stretch of imagination can that be called necessary from an administration point of view. It is not fair or just that public funds should be spent in that way. There are several appropriations in these resolutions which are out of all reason, and the Committee has no right to pass this money if the same amount of expenditure is going to continue. This is the first occasion that we have had the opportunity of getting a full list of Ministerial expenses.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What is wrong with them, anyway?

Mr. MOORE: I am sorry the hon. gentleman was not here when I was referring to his expenses, which I think were out of all reason.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is £3,500 in connection with the bribery case—don't forget that. That is why you are squealing at me. Opposition laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is time the hon. member for Aubigny dealt with the question before the Committee.

Mr. MOORE: To my mind this is a time when we have a right to express an opinion as to whether the expenditure of the Government has been right or wrong; as to whether they have been economical or unduly extravagant.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to point out to the hon. member that the question under discussion is the matter of raising money voted by Committee of Supply. The place for the hon. member to raise the point which he wishes to discuss was on the departmental votes.

Mr. MOORE: That means that we have to agree to these amounts whether we object or not.

The TREASURER: This is Committee of Ways and Means.

The CHAIRMAN: These resolutions specify the methods by which the money voted is to be raised. The money has already been voted by a Committee of this House.

Mr. MOORE: These resolutions make available to the Government certain sums for carrying out the work of the Government for the ensuing period, and it strikes me that this is the time when we should object.

The TREASURER: The money has already been voted. These resolutions determine the ways and means by which it shall be raised.

Mr. MOORE: It seems to me that it is a question of whether the money shall be made available. I suppose the hon. gentleman will admit that if we refuse to pass these resolutions the Government could not carry on.

The CHAIRMAN: I will make the matter clear by quoting what "May" has to say—

"Following the practice used in the Committee of Supply, which sanctions an explanation of all the Army and Navy Estimates upon the first motions relating to those services, the Chancellor of the Exchequer founds the 'Budget' Statement, which extends over the finances of the current year, upon the first resolution that he proposes to the Committee of Ways and Means, whatever may be the purport of the resolution; and the debate that ensues follows the lines traversed by the Chancellor's Statement. On the resolutions subsequently proposed in the Committee of Ways and Means, debate must be relevant to the resolution under consideration."

The hon. member will see that the question for consideration now is the Ways and Means by which the Supply already granted shall be raised.

Mr. MOORE: Then apparently the only place where we can discuss a matter like this—the question of whether the money has been wisely spent or not—is on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, and, as

I shall have an opportunity of speaking on this and other matters on that occasion, I shall do so.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions.

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

#### RECEPTION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

On the motion of the TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillogoe*), the resolutions were received and agreed to.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 2.

##### FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means was introduced, and read a first time.

##### SECOND READING.

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

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

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The outstanding question is the amount of money that is being spent on State enterprises. These figures show the position of these various enterprises under the control of the Commissioner for Trade to 30th June, 1924:—

Enterprise.	Indebtedness to Treasury.	Profit.	Loss.
	£	£	£
State Stations .. .. .	1,013,538	..	674,789
Butcher Shops .. .. .	112,143	9,321	..
Produce Agency .. .. .	18,432	..	1,767
Cannery .. .. .	160,469	..	68,477
Hotel .. .. .	9,899	12,381	..
Fish Supply .. .. .	77,591	..	39,719
	2,291,982		
Railway Refreshment Rooms .. .. .	Cr. 7,891	22,521	..
Totals .. .. .	2,284,091	44,253	779,752
Net loss to 30th June, 1924 .. .. .	..	..	735,499

The TREASURER: I am surprised at the hon. gentleman not raising this matter on the Estimates.

Mr. MOORE: If the Treasurer had given us an opportunity, I would have raised it on the Estimates, but failing an opportunity on that occasion, I must take advantage of the opportunity that now presents itself. The State butcher shops disclosed a profit of £40,650 to 30th June, 1913, which was

made on the wholesale disposal of meat which was acquired from the meatworks allegedly for war purposes. This profit was transferred to the State butcher shops in the financial year 1917-18. The railway refreshment-rooms and the State hotel are enterprises which are not subject to competition. These figures further explain the position in connection with State enterprises to 30th June, 1924:—

	Indebtedness to Treasury.	Net Loss.
	£	£
Enterprises under control of Commissioner for Trade .. .. .	2,284,091	735,499
Mining Enterprises .. .. .	1,587,244	455,869
Trawler and Steamer .. .. .	..	48,000
Totals .. .. .	3,871,335	1,279,928
	£	£
Net loss on all Enterprises (as above) .. .. .	..	1,279,928
Add uncharged interest (at 6 per cent.)—		
Mining Enterprises .. .. .	105,811	..
Trawler and Steamer .. .. .	14,892	..
		120,643
Total losses to 30th June, 1924 .. .. .	..	1,400,571

Mr. Moore.]



According to the Auditor-General's report, the Government have decided not to charge interest on certain money invested in the mining industry in this State until those enterprises become payable. The Secretary for Mines, by way of justifying this expenditure from public funds, pointed out that the mining industry is of a speculative nature. Experience has proved that there has been an enormous waste of public money in connection with State enterprises, and that very little benefit has accrued to the State. It is all very fine to talk about the enormous saving to the Railway Department through the various mining enterprises. We know perfectly well that the saving is more imaginary than real, because there are private mines in the various localities that have been opened up since the alleged high prices were charged, that can supply the Railway Department in North Queensland and in Central Queensland with all the coal required. Private mines are available to give the State all the coal it requires.

The report of the Auditor-General also discloses the fact that £230,000 has been written off the working account of the Chillagoe State smelters for all time, and that £33,000 has been written off the indebtedness to the Treasury of the Mount Mulligan coalmine for all time. This is all becoming an increasingly heavy burden on the taxpayer. It is time Ministers made up their mind as to whether they intend to continue on the lines they have done in the past and to continue accumulating these losses indefinitely. The Secretary for Mines held out absolutely no hope as to when these mines were likely to pay in the future. His only argument was that it was not his fault; that it was due to the prices of metals which were established outside the markets of Queensland, and consequently until those markets improved we would have to face losses each year. All these losses are an increasingly heavy burden on a small population. We are not getting an adequate return for the money expended. As the hon. member for Cunningham pointed out, it would be more economical for the State to close up the mines that were showing a loss, and pay each man engaged in them a pension of £2 a week.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do you recommend that?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is not progress.

MR. MOORE: It is not progress for the State to continue working these ventures at such a heavy loss.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Look at how the State butcher shops have saved the people of Queensland hundreds of thousands of pounds.

MR. MOORE: The hon. gentleman knows from experience in Toowoomba that the State butcher shops did not reduce the price of meat there by one-halfpenny.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about Brisbane?

MR. MOORE: The private shops in Toowoomba undersold the State butcher shops from the day of their inception, and they have undersold them ever since. The result has been that six of the State butcher shops there closed down because they could not compete with private enterprise. It is all

nonsense to talk about how these State enterprises have saved the people of the State money. That is merely an assertion, and no proof has been adduced to show that they have been saved money.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I suppose you say that if there were no State coalmines in Queensland there would be no coal vend here.

MR. MOORE: Before State coalmines were established coal was obtainable in Queensland at a reasonable rate, and there was no exploitation.

MR. HARTLEY: Of course there was. The railways were exploited.

MR. MOORE: The railways were exploited because of the policy of the Government.

MR. HARTLEY: They were sold third-class coal at first-class rates.

MR. MOORE: Coal which was known to be unsuitable was supplied to the railways merely to keep men at particular mines employed. The hon. gentleman knows that to be a fact. It was the pressure of outside organisations that compelled the Government to give contracts for coal to those mines to keep them going.

MR. HARTLEY: Could the men now employed at the State mines be employed outside of them?

MR. MOORE: Yes. The Blair Athol colliery is being pushed out of business—not through any fault of the miners themselves, but merely through competition by the State coalmines, which sell their product at a rate that does not pay, and which are producing coal up to the present at a loss.

MR. COLLINS: Would you close the Bowen State coalmine in order to allow the Blair Athol mine to be developed?

MR. MOORE: The hon. gentleman wants to pick out the one bright spot where a profit of £338 was made last year after the expenditure of an enormous amount of State money.

MR. COLLINS: It made a profit of £5,000 the year before. (Interjections from Government members.)

THE SPEAKER: Order! Order!

MR. MOORE: The fact that the Bowen State coalmine made a profit of £5,000 in 1922, and that amount dropped to £338 last year after all the money that was expended on its development, just shows how badly it is going.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You would close it down for the Blair Athol mine.

MR. MOORE: I would close it down if it meant that the Blair Athol mine would be enabled to build up a big export trade. The hon. member for Leichhardt in two speeches delivered by him this session spoke of the impossibility of the State mines competing with the Blair Athol coalmine if the latter were allowed decent conditions, and if the closing of the Bowen State coalmine would give that mine an opportunity of building up an export trade it would be a wise move. It would be wise to close down such State mines as continue to lose money, as the money could be used to better advantage in other ways. (Government interjection.)

[Mr. Moore.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair. The hon. member is inviting interjections.

Mr. MOORE: Hon. members have also talked about the necessity of throwing open for selection the land of Queensland allotted for redemption as soon as redemptions become due. I would like to know whether full advantage has been taken of the land already available for selection. I understand that some redemptions have not been taken advantage of, and that very suitable areas have fallen due for redemption during the last few months which have not been taken up.

Mr. BULCOCK: Where are they?

Mr. MOORE: In various parts of Queensland.

Mr. BULCOCK: Name some of them.

Mr. MOORE: I am not going to get myself into trouble by answering the hon. member. The hon. member knows perfectly well where they are.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BULCOCK: I have no knowledge whatever.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member should have a knowledge, because two of the areas are in the hon. member's electorate.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: It would also be better to cut up the State stations in order that we might have the necessary population on them. Hon. members have indicated that there has been an extraordinary demand for land in Western Queensland, as evidenced by the number of applicants. If the State stations were to show a tendency to pay within the next few years, it would be different; but unfortunately we seem to have got into the same position in this connection that we are in in regard to our State mines. When things improve and a better price for meat is fixed by outside sources, then the State stations may pay their way, but that time is very indefinite. In the meantime we have this loss increasing year by year. The Auditor-General calls particular attention to it in his report. In dealing with the increasing liability on the Trust Funds he rather suggests in one particular place that there is a doubt as to the legality of the amount of money that has been spent. On page 14 he says—

"An amount of £2,282,420 8s. 6d. has been received by the Treasury under 'The Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920,' but £2,702,144 18s. 3d., or £419,724 9s. 9d. in excess of receipts, had been expended thereunder at 30th June, 1924.

"It is questionable whether the expenditure of the £419,724 9s. 9d., in excess of receipts, without the required authority of the Governor in Council, is in accordance with section 6 of 'The Audit Act Amendment Act of 1890.'"

Apparently the Government exhausted every possible method to secure sufficient funds to carry them on. A little while ago the Treasurer, in his Financial Statement, made the definite announcement that £3,000,000 was to be the total amount of loan to be secured on the other side of the world this year. We have read in the papers during the last few days that a loan is being

floated for £4,000,000, and an explanation from the Treasurer appeared in to-day's paper to the effect that the extra million was to pay off an overdraft secured from the Bank of England to carry us on.

The TREASURER: The Commonwealth Bank and the Bank of England.

Mr. MOORE: I certainly understood when the hon. gentleman read his Financial Statement that the £3,000,000 proposed to be borrowed on the other side was for the purpose of paying off those liabilities and meeting future liabilities for the current year.

The TREASURER: No; I said it was to meet commitments for the present financial year in London.

Mr. MOORE: Surely a part of the money was to pay the Bank of England for the advance secured to enable us to carry on? It only means that we are getting to the stage when we must borrow more [5.30 p.m.] and more money. The amount of money that it was considered necessary to borrow this year has had to be increased already by £1,000,000.

The TREASURER: That will make no difference to our indebtedness.

Mr. MOORE: It does make a difference. One understands that when you secure an overdraft to meet current liabilities you naturally anticipate the amount of money you are going to borrow, and one naturally supposes that that amount is not going to be increased to any great extent. We anticipated—and I fancy the Treasurer anticipated at that time—that the amount of money required to wipe off present liabilities and to meet commitments for the current year would be £3,000,000.

The TREASURER: £3,000,000 is required in London at the present time to meet interest payments and to pay for indents. It will not meet maturing loans.

Mr. MOORE: We were led to expect that a definite sum would be required, and we now find that that amount has been increased. We do not know to what extent, but certainly the amount that we were led to believe was going to be borrowed has been increased by £1,000,000. It looks to me as though the Government are going in for another orgy of unforeseen expenditure this year to enable them to keep going an army of men who, if Government work is not continued, will be thrown out of employment. What I want to know is whether we are likely to be in any better position in twelve months or two years. Is the amount of loan money that is going to be expended going to place us in a position in twelve months or two years whereby, if the curtailment of loan money is enforced, as I consider it will be, these men will be able to secure lucrative employment, or will they be thrown on the unemployed market because the development of the State has not been what it should be owing to the expenditure of loan money on unwise ventures? The way to secure development is not by continuing the construction of railways into districts where the settlement is going to be problematical. After all, when we consider that out of 1,581 blocks of land thrown open in the Burnett district only 597 were taken up, and of that number 102 were forfeited, it does not appear that there is a very big demand for land of that class. Railways were built into that district for

Mr. Moore.]

the purpose of serving these lands, and it certainly looks as if that vast expenditure on railways is going to be an indefinite and increasing liability on the people of this State. If a certain amount of that money was expended in assisting to establish secondary industries that we want so badly in Queensland, we would be able to see some prospect of this expenditure being unnecessary in the future, as we would have established secondary industries which would enable people to secure employment. At the present time it seems that we are only getting into a worse position each year. Our loan indebtedness is increasing, and our industries are getting into such a position that we cannot compete with other people in Australia. The chairman of the Queensland Chamber of Manufactures the other night put the case very succinctly. When the Estimates for the Department of Public Works were before the Committee I quoted a statement by the Inspector of Shops and Factories, in which he said that the number of employees in factories had decreased and the number of employees in shops had increased by 916 last year. That is a statement that everyone must regard as tragic, because it shows that, instead of manufacturing what we require in Queensland, we are purchasing more and more from the South, and we are drifting further and further along the road to financial disaster. By expending money on enterprises that are not returning anything like the amount to the State that they should, by bolstering up with subsidies industries which show no possible hope of being able to stand on their own feet—at any rate within a reasonable time—we are placing a burden on the State, and we do not know how the people are going to carry that burden. When the Secretary for Public Lands went up to the Dawson Valley, he talked about the irrigation scheme being a national work and a proper charge on the general taxpayer. We are tending in the direction that everything is going to be put on to the taxpayer.

Mr. BUTCOCK: What do you think about making the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme a charge on the taxpayer?

Mr. MOORE: If the scheme cannot be self-supporting, I think that it should not be undertaken at all. We have already shouldered a burden of £170,000, which has been written off, in connection with the Inkerman irrigation scheme.

Mr. BUTCOCK: Your colleagues believe that the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme should be a charge on the general taxpayer.

Mr. MOORE: If public money is expended on an enterprise, it should show a prospect of becoming self-supporting.

Mr. BUTCOCK: What about the hon. member for Murilla?

Mr. MOORE: I think that the hon. member for Windsor supported the Minister, but I hold that the principle is wrong. If public money is expended on a large venture, it should be self-supporting, and should not become a burden on the taxpayers of the State. The position is exactly the same as the State enterprises, in connection with which the general taxpayer is supposed to carry the burden, and wild statements are made about the indirect benefit the taxpayer is receiving. The indirect benefits, so far as I can see, are illusory, and cannot be proved.

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They are only wild assertions, and the expenditure is not returning the value to the State that it should do. As the hon. member for Mirani said, a great amount of it is unproductive, and the limit of taxation has been reached. That condition of things should not be allowed to continue. The Treasurer should realise—and, judging from his public utterances, I think he has realised—that the limit of taxation has been reached. We are spending nearly £5,000,000 a year of loan money, and the hon. gentleman knows that at least 80 per cent. of the interest on that loan money is going to be a burden on the taxpayer. He must recognise that if loan money is going to be expended on works which will not return a sufficient amount to pay interest, taxation will have to be increased. He admits that taxation has reached its limit, and consequently there should be a curtailment and a change in regard to the rate and method of expenditure, so that we may be able to get a reasonable return from it, or else there should be a curtailment of expenditure altogether until conditions become more favourable for us to get a better return on the money expended. We are asked to vote about £25,000,000. It is a tremendous amount of money for a very slowly-increasing population to find. We know that it is against the policy of the Government to encourage immigration so that the burdens can be more evenly distributed. The returns show that land settlement is not increasing in the way it should do. I dare say the hon. member will remember reading in the Press a speech delivered by Archbishop Dubig at Chinchilla, when he pointed out that during the last ten years 83 settlers had left that district and come to town, and that there were forty more who were likely to do the same. That shows the position we have got into. The Government would be wise if they looked into the expenditure of the money which is being voted to see whether many of the leakages which are evident to ordinary individuals cannot be stopped, and whether it is not possible to curtail the expenditure of loan money in the way we are spending it, as we know that 80 per cent. of the interest burden will fall on the general taxpayer.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warrick): The Bill before the House indicates that we are travelling at a fairly rapid pace. The Estimates we have passed represent a huge sum of money, the total approximating £25,000,000—about £14,000,000 from revenue and nearly £11,000,000 from Loan and Trust Funds, in addition to which we have passed a vote of £2,500,000 on account of the services for the next financial year. It must be apparent to every thoughtful man in this House that there is room for a degree of hesitancy in passing such a huge sum of money, and I make that remark remembering that the purpose for which it is to be expended should win the confidence of this House.

The Government are connected with enterprises and businesses which in the aggregate show a loss of some £16,000,000. That fact is enough to lead the House to act, at any rate, with hesitation and a degree of thoughtfulness. Some hon. members may ask how I arrive at that amount of £16,000,000. The railways are responsible for pretty nearly £12,000,000 of the total, under the management of the present Minister and his predecessors, and the other enterprises of the Government show an



indebtedness to the Treasury of £4,000,000, and an accumulated loss of £2,000,000. It is due to the country that the Government should justify the expenditure of the huge sum for which they are now asking.

Mr. COLLINS: We lost about £4,000,000 on the war.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: For a country with a population of 827,000 the expenditure which has taken place not only in one direction but in a dozen directions has been foolish and altogether fruitless. The evidence of that is to be found in the many facts which have been presented to this House from time to time. Take the railway enterprise. Notwithstanding the big tornado of expressions we had from the Secretary for Railways, the figures—even the figures that he gave—are against the assertions he made. We have a great railway system of which we are proud, but it does not pay. As a matter of fact, it has been pointed out again and again that the tonnage of the goods carried on our railways is less to-day than in 1914-1915, in spite of the expenditure of many millions of money more in the meantime. The figures presented in the report of the Commissioner are either true or untrue. Here they are: In 1914-1915 the tonnage of goods and minerals carried on the railways was 4,400,651, whilst last year the tonnage was 3,809,727, or a decrease in spite of years of development.

That shows that there is a screw loose somewhere, and it is for this House to endeavour to find out where it is. One can only conclude that the administration of the Government is responsible to a very large extent for the state of things that rules to-day. That aspect of it would not be so bad if it were not for the attendant facts. The working expenses per train mile is 8s. 6½d. as against 4s. in 1914-15, and the percentage of working expenses to gross earnings has gone up from 86.97 per cent. in 1922-23 to 87.34 per cent. in 1923-24. One could give innumerable facts and figures presented by the Railway Department to show that something is wanting.

The fact is that development and settlement on the land has been retarded, and the land tenure among other things has helped to discourage land settlement. I believe that no end of settlement will take place under a properly considered scheme of agricultural development, as we understand it. We want to see it take place, and if it is not taking place there must be some reason for it. The facts are altogether against the Government. This House should require a very great deal more information than has been given by the Treasurer as to his hope that the money, when expended, is going to bear some fruit. Are we going to have a retrospect twelve months hence, when there will be made available to us facts concerning losses in connection with the business of the State? The time is now ripe for us to realise the position. It seems that we shall really arrive at a dead end—for which we seemingly were heading a few years ago—if very careful attention is not given to matters of this kind. We do not want to wait until the baillif is in possession before we commence to look around, and it is inevitable that something of that kind must take place, and will take place, unless there is a more prudent mode of dealing with the finances of the country.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I wish to direct my remarks to the discussion which has taken place between the Moggill Shire Council and the Main Roads Board. I had no knowledge that there was any contention between the council and the Main Roads Board until I read the report of the controversy that has taken place between them. I then investigated the matter to find out what grounds there were for the rumours that were spread concerning the operations of the Board, and I found that the Moggill Shire Council wanted the Main Roads Board to direct its attention to the construction of a main road through the Moggill Shire, and that the Main Roads Board wanted to construct a road into a district called Upper Brookfield, which road the council contended would not serve the interests of the district as well as the one leading to Ipswich. It was then suggested that influences were brought to bear on the Main Roads Board with a view to getting this road constructed to Upper Brookfield. I have raised this question in order that the Secretary for Public Lands may enlighten the House on the matter, as it is one which has caused friction between the Main Roads Board and the Moggill Shire Council. It has been contended that influence has tended to the building of this road into a dead end with the object of benefiting properties held by a Cabinet Minister.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is a serious charge.

Mr. FRY: If that is so, it deserves the greatest reprimand; but if it is not so, opportunity should be taken whilst this vote is going through to show that there was no influence at all used in the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you go and see the Minister?

Mr. FRY: I have not seen the Minister at all. I told the hon. gentleman how this matter came up. It is a question that is exercising the public mind. I understood when the Main Roads Board was first appointed that it was to do its duty to the best of its ability in the interests of all concerned. After inquiring a little further, I found that the Secretary for Agriculture owns many hundreds of acres of land in the locality.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you say many hundreds of acres?

Mr. FRY: I understand that the hon. member has many acres of land in the Upper Brookfield district, and that his relatives also have land there.

Mr. COSTELLO: What is it—freehold or leasehold?

Mr. FRY: The hon. gentleman owns freehold in the Upper Brookfield district.

Mr. CLAYTON: What? Freehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Who else owns land up there?

Mr. FRY: The Moggill Shire Council has pointed out that if the Main Roads Board constructs this road into the Upper Brookfield district, the property of the Minister will be enhanced in value by two or three thousand pounds. I am making no charge, and all I desire is to get at the truth of the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who is your authority?

Mr. Fry.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We know the truth.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. FRY: I want the Minister who is in charge of the department to give us information on the matter. A squabble exists between the Main Roads Board and the Moggill Shire Council, and if the assertions of the Moggill Shire Council are not well founded, the people ought to know.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did the Moggill Shire Council tell you that?

Mr. FRY: If the Main Roads Board is being influenced by Cabinet Ministers, it should be dissolved and reconstituted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a very unfair suggestion.

Mr. FRY: I also want to ask the Secretary for Public Works if the wharf labourers and miners who come under the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act have had their allowances raised up to the basic wage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are wrong.

Mr. FRY: Has the allowance been brought up to a living wage?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are quite wrong.

Mr. FRY: Is the Minister prepared to put all workers coming under the operations of this Act on the same basis as the wharf labourers and miners? There are men with wives and families in my electorate who consider that they are just as much in need of the increased allowance as the workers I have mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you suggest that the wharf labourer is getting any more than any other worker who is entitled to the allowance?

Mr. FRY: I am not cavilling at the money paid to the wharf labourers, but I want to know from the Government what their policy is in that regard.

Then there is another matter that I want to talk about—the question of the Chillagoe and other State mines. I want to know what it was that influenced the Government to depart from their set policy and to allow the Mount Isa field to go out of their hands? If it is their policy to take over such heavily debt-laden affairs as the Chillagoe, Mungana, and Mount Mulligan mines, they should have been consistent in their policy and taken over Mount Isa. I raise this question for the purpose of placing on record the fact that the shareholders of Mount Isa, or, at any rate, some of them, are strong supporters of the Government.

Mr. COSTELLO: Oh!

Mr. FRY: I shall refer to that later on when we go out on the hustings and the Government endeavour to mislead the people with regard to their mining policy.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you going to be appointed the scavenger of your party?

Mr. FRY: I do not say so, but, if I were so appointed, I would not pick up the Minister, because he would not fit into a dirt cart.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: If it is true that the Secretary for Agriculture has land in the Brookfield

[*Mr. Fry.*

area, there is some reason for questioning the action of the Main Roads Board.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is the third time I have had to call the hon. member to order for making—not direct statements of improper conduct, but innuendoes—and I hope the hon. member will discontinue. I understand the hon. member is seeking information, and he must do so in a proper manner.

Mr. FRY: I am speaking in the interests of the public who sent me here.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why not give the names of your informants?

Mr. FRY: I am here to use my own discrimination as to what I shall bring before the House. I do not wish to participate in anything of a foul order. I hope that, while I am here, the working man is going to have a friend on the Opposition side, even if the Government fail him. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite can laugh as much as they like, but that is true, and hon. members opposite know it is true. (Renewed laughter.) Whenever a working man goes to hon. members opposite and his requirements are distasteful to them, they are afraid to undertake the business. So long as I remain in this House I hope I shall be a champion of the wage-earner. (Government laughter.)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FRY: I am not going to see any wage-earner victimised by the Government, no matter what that Government may be. If the present Opposition were occupying the Treasury benches, I would take up the same attitude if that Government did what the present Government are doing. We have only a few short years to live, and every man should do his best to improve the welfare of his fellow-men. (Government interjections.)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: On the Bill before the House it is my duty to seek information. If I am asked to cast a vote, I shall cast that vote in the way I think proper. Before I cast my vote I would like to hear Ministers explain the two incidents I have brought up. If they remain silent, let them in future remain silent; but I assure hon. members on the other side that on the public hustings I shall again and again refer to the matter and let hon. members opposite disprove it. If I do not have the opportunity in this House, I shall have the opportunity in the public street where the public will be able to hear what I say.

[7 p.m.]

I regret to say that there is no provision made for a widows' fund. It is well known that a widow with one child receives no assistance from the State, while a widow with two, three, or four children is compelled to live upon the small amount of money paid in respect of State children or else she is compelled to go out to work. If she goes out to work, she is compelled to neglect her children. Sometimes they are put in a crèche or kindergarten for the time being, and when the mother goes home from work she again takes charge of her children. Some provision should be made for the payment of an allowance to widows with young



children. What the allowance should be I do not know at present, but I would suggest that these widows be given some Government assistance to enable them to look properly after their homes. Many of these widows are unable to secure employment, and their lot is indeed a very difficult one. They deserve very sympathetic consideration on the part of Parliament. As a contrast to this, we have the expenses of Ministers. According to the statement laid on the table by the Premier, Ministerial expenses for last year were—

	£	s.	d.
The Premier .....	224	15	11
The Secretary for Agriculture .....	357	14	6
The Secretary for Public Lands .....	422	12	9
The Secretary for Mines .....	370	16	10
The Attorney-General .....	466	6	5
The Secretary for Railways .....	279	9	11
Mr. Huxham (now in England) .....	531	9	7
The Secretary for Public Works .....	413	18	6
The Home Secretary .....	719	4	9
The Secretary for Public Instruction .....	872	8	9

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Money well spent.

MR. FRY: The Secretary for Public Instruction, in referring to his own expenses amounting to £372 8s. 9d., says it is money well spent. I want to tell him that, instead of paying it into pubs, it would be far better if it were paid into a widows' fund in order that the widows might get a little assistance. That is why I am drawing a contrast between the assistance received by widows from the State and ministerial travelling expenses. These are things that should be ventilated here and a comparison made. As other hon. members wish to speak, and the time available for discussion is drawing to a close, I shall not make any further references to the notes I have here. I want to say in conclusion that, whilst the small grazing farmer is crying out for land, the Government are not resuming the great pastoral holdings, and I venture to express the opinion that that is part of the price we have had to pay for the London agreement.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Buchan*): Some eminent philosopher has said that a small man's cry is generally "Give us something small—something we can understand." The hon. member for Kurilpa in dealing with the Bill before the House, involving as it does an expenditure of about £25,000,000, after spending much time in dealing with Ministers' travelling expenses, made an attack on my personal character.

MR. FRY: I did not.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member talked about the expenditure of money on a main road. He can understand a Minister spending £10 on a motor-car, but the wasting of millions of money on job railways in the past would not appeal to him at all. I want to say in regard to the charge made against me that my character is clean and above-board. The Sydney "Bulletin" on one occasion said that before a man entered politics he should be very careful about his selection of grandparents, and as far as I am concerned, he can go back to my grandparents.

MR. FRY: I did not cast any reflection on you.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member not only cast a reflection on me, but on the three gentlemen who happen to be members of the Main Roads Board for the time being. He suggested that I own many hundreds of acres of freehold in the Upper Brookfield district. As a matter of fact, the hundreds of acres he speaks about is a perpetual leasehold, but that does not matter to the hon. member. I was condemned because I took up freehold at one time, and now I am condemned because I have acquired a perpetual leasehold. It is the only perpetual leasehold in the whole district, and I am endeavouring to show what can be done with perpetual leasehold. I am not spending my money, like some people are. I am putting into my land every penny I have to invest. If the Main Roads Board build a road in that district, the people of Queensland will get the benefit of it, because in fifteen years the rent of this leasehold will be reappraised. That is the only area of perpetual leasehold in the whole district. That is lie direct No. 1 to the hon. member.

As to my exercising any influence on the Main Roads Board, I also give the hon. member the lie direct. I influenced no one whatever in regard to that road, and, after all, the road is largely for the benefit of returned soldiers. I would ask the hon. member for Enoggera—who probably will be called upon to defend the statement made by the hon. member for Kurilpa with regard to those returned soldiers at Brookfield who want a road—what he has to say about it. The hon. member for Kurilpa, before making this attack on me and before making these unfair reflections on the members of the Main Roads Board, waited until the Commonwealth Government had approved of the money being granted, for if he had made that statement before, it might have had some influence on the Commonwealth Government, and they would perhaps have withheld the £4,000 subsidy on the Upper Brookfield road. I exercised no influence at all on the Main Roads Board, and the statement made by the hon. member that the building of that road added thousands of pounds to the value of my property is untrue. I make him an offer that, if he will repay me the money I have spent on the land at Brookfield, I will hand it over to him for nothing if he will develop it. On a previous occasion I made a similar offer to the hon. member for Sandgate, who attacked me about land I owned at Beerburum. I told the hon. member, who was a returned soldier, that if he would go to live on the land at Beerburum that he accused me of wrongly acquiring, I would give it to him.

MR. EDWARDS: You must be a pretty good farmer.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The statement of the hon. member for Kurilpa that I will gain thousands of pounds in the added value of my land at Upper Brookfield by the building of a road is not true, and if he is prepared to accept my offer and pay me the money I have put into that land, I will give it to him to-morrow. It is most mean and contemptible for a member of the Queensland Parliament to try and injure the private reputation of an opponent. That appears

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to be the stock-in-trade of some hon. members opposite. I do not think there is one other hon. member opposite who would stoop to the mean and contemptible tactics adopted by the hon. member for Kurilpa. Not only did he make an attack on me, but he also suggested that some of my colleagues, because they exercised their rights under the law of the land at Mount Isa, did something wrong.

Mr. FRY: I said that they did not act up to their principles.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole position is that Labour men are condemned because it is said they have no stake in the country; but, if they take up a piece of mining or agricultural land, they are accused of being immoral and of using their position in a way they should not. I repeat that I exercised no influence over the Main Roads Board, and I say that it is mean and contemptible for the hon. member to shelter himself behind his parliamentary privilege to make an attack on three men who are certainly doing good work in this country. The hon. member threatened that, if the Secretary for Public Lands did not get up and explain the position with regard to my land, he would make an attack on me on the public platform. I say the hon. member is not game to repeat that statement on the public platform.

Mr. FRY: Still I say it. (Interruption.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Neither is he game to repeat the innuendoes and insinuations he has made against members of the Labour party with regard to Mount Isa. These are things we hear in this House behind the shelter of parliamentary privilege. The small mean mind of the hon. member for Kurilpa is indicated by the fact that he cannot deal with matters of a national character in a big way, but, instead, attempts to injure the character of a political opponent. I repeat that my name is too well known throughout the length and breadth of Australia for the hon. member to do me an injury by his mean insinuation. I say again, too, that the hon. member for Enoggera should get up and say whether he believes that the Main Roads Board are doing the right thing in providing a road for a number of settlers in the Brookfield district, a majority of whom are genuine returned soldiers. I am sure, if the hon. member will get up and make his position quite clear, that he will condemn the mean and contemptible action of the hon. member for Kurilpa.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. FRY (Kurilpa): I rise to a point of order. I wish to explain that I had no desire to cast any reflection upon the personal character of the Secretary for Agriculture. (Government interjections.)

Mr. MAXWELL (Toowoomba): The consideration of this Bill gives to hon. members an opportunity to discuss matters which it was impossible for them to ventilate on the Estimates owing to lack of time. I would like to bring under the notice of the House an instance of what I might term the extravagance of the Government, not only in State enterprises but also in other matters. I desire to draw the attention of hon. members to "Hansard" for 1923, page

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1337, where the hon. member for Wynnum is reported amongst other things to have said—

"First of all, I would refer to the Hamilton cold stores, to which the following reference was made in the report of the Department of Public Works in 1922:—

Estimated cost: Buildings, £125,000; refrigerating machinery, electric plant, expansion piping, conveyor, etc., £75,000; wharf, £34,000; railway siding, £21,500; total, £255,000.

The office block is nearing completion, and the cold storage and machinery buildings are in course of construction. All reinforced piles are driven, the reinforced concrete floor of the compressor house and the machine beds are cast, and a commencement has been made with pouring the flat-slab ground floor of the storage chambers and the walls of the compressor house.

The total expenditure to 30th June, 1923, was £211,097. I would like to ask the Minister if he anticipates getting the Hamilton cold stores completed for the estimated cost?

"The Secretary for Public Works: Yes."

On page 43 of his report for last financial year, the Auditor-General said—

"The original estimate of the cost in 1919 (including railway siding, £21,508) was £215,508. Since then the estimates have varied. In 1921 it was £225,500; in 1923, £238,194; while in 1924 it is £311,434."

I want to know how a mistake like that could have occurred in estimating the cost of the work. The Minister stated that the cost was not going to be increased beyond a certain amount. I also desire to enter a protest against the methods adopted by the Department of Public Works in giving orders direct to certain firms for the supply of machinery or anything else in connection with Government buildings or stores without giving to all those people who deal in that class of business an opportunity to submit prices. On 11th September the hon. member for Warwick asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. What amount has been expended to date in connection with the supply of refrigerating machinery for the Hamilton cold stores?

"2. What sum will still be required to be expended on this account?

"3. Were tenders called for the supply of such machinery?

"4. What tenders were received, showing the names of tenderers and amounts tendered, respectively?

"5. If a tender was accepted, what was the name of the successful tenderer and the amount of such tender?

"6. If no tenders were called for, from whom has the refrigerating machinery been purchased, and at what cost?"

The answers were—

"1. Refrigerating machines and motors—£22,239 15s.

"2. £570 5s.

"3. No.

"4. See answer to No. 3.

"5. See answer to No. 4.

"6. In the year 1919, and on the advice of this department's officers, after personal inspection, the machinery was purchased from Messrs. Wildridge and Sinclair, Limited, who acted for the New South Wales Government. The machines were built for the Homebush Abattoirs, but as the Government decided not to proceed further with the export department the machines were sold. Cost, £22,810."

On 25th September last I asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. What was the cost of installing the refrigerating plant in the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital?

"2. What firm or firms received the order to do the work?"

The hon. gentleman replied—

"1. £1,196 9s. 9d.

"2. Messrs. Wildridge and Sinclair, Limited."

The hon. member for Port Curtis had something to say in connection with a cooking and heating apparatus that was installed in the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital. I make no apology for saying that the course that should be adopted by the department is to give all those in this particular line of business in the city an opportunity of submitting estimates. I do not blame the firms concerned with the supply of material that I have referred to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Did the hon. gentleman say that the department was responsible for the acceptance of a tender for a cooking apparatus for the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not saying that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman did say it.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What did you say?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not going to allow hon. members opposite to put words into my mouth. I did not say that the department was responsible for the acceptance of that tender. I quoted the questions and answers, and I pointed out that the same firm supplied a heating and cooking apparatus to the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What firm are you supporting now?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not supporting any particular firm. The firm of Messrs. Wildridge and Sinclair, Limited, did that work. The Minister stated that the expenditure in connection with the Hamilton cold stores would not be increased beyond a certain amount, but you can see how the expenditure has soared. We are entitled to know something about that.

There is a feeling amongst some of the business men who supply that class of material that an opportunity should have been given them to submit estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Which firm are you referring to?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not advocating the claims of any firm in particular; there

are many. When you come to consider that these firms have to submit to the taxation that is levied on them, it is fair that they should be given an opportunity to submit estimates. I am not blaming Wildridge and Sinclair, Limited.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Whom do you blame?

Mr. MAXWELL: I blame the Government and the Minister as the head of the department.

The opportunity has arrived for me to deal with the travelling expenses of the Minister. If money is going to be squandered in this direction when, as has been pointed out by other hon. members, there is such a lot of unemployment about, it is time the Premier took some of his team in hand and pointed out that, whilst there is so much unemployment and starvation about, they should cut down their travelling expenses.

Mr. KERR: Poverty is creeping in, too.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Premier should try and curtail the desire of some of the Ministers to spend money in the way that they have been spending it. We find that the Secretary for Public Instruction, while he was Assistant Home Secretary, drew £168 as a daily allowance.

Mr. COSTELLO: He topped the score.

Mr. MAXWELL: He even topped the Premier. I venture to say that, if the expenses as disclosed by the return laid on the table of this House had been expended by any hon. member on this side and the Government members were in opposition, they would have made an attempt to keep this House sitting all day and all night as a protest. I am justified on behalf of the electorate I represent in entering a protest against those expenses. The hotel and sundry expenses of the hon. gentleman, whilst Secretary for Public Instruction, amounted to £480, and his car hire to £212, making a total of £872.

The Secretary for Mines had expenses totalling £870. He has already dealt with his expenses, and has said that he had business to do away out West, but I have yet to learn that the amount specified in the return is fair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What was your car hire when you were mayor of Brisbane? You had an allowance of £1,000.

Mr. MAXWELL: I will deal with that matter later on. I shall be glad of the opportunity; but neither my car hire, hotel expenses, or sundries were anything like those of the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Your car hire amounted to more than the whole of my expenses. You bad old man!

Mr. MAXWELL: I can defend myself, notwithstanding any charges hon. members opposite may hurl at me. I am glad that the hon. gentleman has mentioned my expenses while mayor of Brisbane, because the time has come for me to give the House the whole information.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: I suggest that, when the Premier in his important position can

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travel at a cost of only £224, he should control some of his Ministers who are spending the amount of money they are doing.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I want to touch on one or two matters before this resolution is passed. I have been greatly taken with the special pleading of the Opposition on behalf of the coalmine at Blair Athol belonging to private enterprise. One would think that their hearts were bowed down with sorrow because a few men at Blair Athol had been thrown out of work by the operations of the Styx River, Baralaba, and Bowen State coalmines. They think nothing of the £89,000 that has been saved to the State through our ceasing to use private coal and through our using a better coal from the State mines. When this Government came into power the Blair Athol Company—which I knew well and whose coal I knew well—was selling coal to the Government of that day and to our Railway Department at £1 a ton. You would think that, as the Company was receiving the best price, it would have supplied the best coal, but the reverse was the case. To the private merchants around Rockhampton and Mount Morgan it sent the very best coal. To the Railway Department it sent an inferior class of coal.

Mr. KEER: What is your authority for saying that?

Mr. HARTLEY: I had used their coal while with a private concern, and also I worked in the Railway Department. Apart from that, I have the authority of a good number of men who used the coal in the Railway Department. Now, when the Government have demonstrated that they stand in the interests of the people and are out to get the best class of coal for the railways at the cheapest rate, the Blair Athol Company suddenly adopts a change of tactics and offers to supply the coal for about 10s. a ton, which is cheaper than it is being supplied by the State mines. I am satisfied that, if the State mine went out of operation to-morrow, the Blair Athol Company would put the price a little higher. All this talk from the Opposition is sheer humbug, particularly so when it comes from the Leader of the Opposition, and the hon. member tries to get the miners of Blair Athol that the Opposition are at all concerned about their being thrown out of work through the Government mining operations. I undertake to say that, if the Styx and Baralaba mines were taken over by a private company to-morrow, and if the change meant that men would be thrown out of work at Blair Athol, even to the closing down of that mine, hon. members opposite would not trouble about them at all.

Mr. KEER: You offered to resign some time ago on account of the reduced wages in the Government service.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did. I went to the organisation responsible for my election and offered my resignation there and then, but at the end of the meeting my constituents passed a unanimous vote of confidence in me and left it to me to carry on in what I deemed their best interests. (Opposition laughter.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: I just wish to add one more word about private enterprise as it affects Blair Athol. Before the State mines

were developed, and before all this expenditure of money which hon. members opposite speak about had had time to take effect and while the Government were not able to produce coal, the Blair Athol Company was hard pressed to find a market for its coal. The Government realised that it was to the advantage of the State that men should be kept employed in the various localities whenever possible, and a number of the Central Queensland representatives waited on the Secretary for Railways and induced him to place with the Blair Athol Company an order for 30,000 tons of coal for the Northern Railways. That meant that some of the private mines around the metropolitan area went short of orders for a corresponding amount of coal. The delivery was to be made at so many tons a month. The Secretary for Railways went to a lot of trouble, provided loading facilities at the wharf at Broadmount, and, when everything was ready, the company had not a boat in which to carry the coal. In every case, or at any rate with few exceptions, it failed to deliver the amount of coal in the stipulated time, and at last the Secretary for Railways had to cancel the contract because the company was unable to carry it out. That is the way the Government treated the Blair Athol Company, and hon. members must admit it was very generously treated.

There is the other question of the expenses of Ministers, as criticised by the metropolitan Press. I shall specialise on the metropolitan Press, because, with the exception of a few small papers animated by political animosity, the remainder of the Press does not criticise the Government for these expenses. In the vindictive metropolitan

Press the criticism is of a carping [7.30 p.m.] and very poor nature. The criticism of hon. members opposite does not do them credit as legislators of this great State. They should encourage the Ministers to visit the electorates and go into the country as much as possible. Take the expenses of the Minister—the Hon. Mr. Brennan—who had charge last year of the administration of the Health Department, which amounted to £313. It may seem a big amount, but when you spread it over twelve months, it is a very small amount, and in many instances the expenditure of that Minister—the present Secretary for Public Instruction—would be lower for a month than the expenditure of some hon. members opposite was for one day in connection with a certain trip—I will give particulars of that later on—namely, £251 15s. 11d. As Minister administering the Health Department, and as the Minister charged with local authority affairs, the hon. member for Toowoomba made a trip North from Brisbane as far as Cairns, taking with him the member for the district and his staff. He visited Townsville, Ingham, Halifax, Cardwell, Innisfail, Bowen, South Johnstone, and Cairns. On the way back he stayed in Rockhampton and Bundaberg for some time to attend to matters at those places, the whole trip taking one month. I suppose his staff would include his private secretary, and perhaps the Under Secretary of the department. For a party of some five or six people paying their railway and car fares, hotel expenses, and any incidental expenses, the expense incurred is not a big amount. Although I have been a fitter, coming home as black as the proverbial

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sweep, very often clad in dungaree overalls, when I come to this Assembly as a workers' representative, I do not see that I am entitled to bring that atmosphere into my new sphere of duty. I do not see that I would be justified in appearing here in the greasy dungarees and heavy blucher boots which were suitable for the work I was doing then.

Mr. KING: Nobody expects you to do so.

Mr. HARTLEY: Hon. members opposite insinuate it by their criticism. They insinuate that these gentlemen should not spend the money of the State in keeping with the positions to which they have been appointed as His Majesty's Ministers in the Queensland Government. That is the tenor and sentiment underlying the criticism of hon. members opposite. (Opposition dissent.) Among other important matters the hon. gentleman had to visit Rockhampton, and subsequently had to go down to Lismore, in New South Wales. I do not know what the cost of that trip was, but it was not a very big amount. He visited Rockhampton to investigate a proposal to put in a sanitary dumping system in the town area, where a number of citizens were bitterly complaining. I take it that those people will not object to the investigations which he has made, as that system has not yet been put in. I think the hon. gentleman was thoroughly entitled to make the trip and investigations necessary to give him the information he wanted. At any rate, the people in the localities he visited think so, and certainly thank him for it.

Take another item—that of the expenses of the former Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr. Huxham—£531 9s. 7d. Is anybody going to tell me that a Secretary for Public Instruction, with many thousands of schools in the State and the thousands of calls he has to make, can legitimately keep much under that amount? He could if he did not carry out his duties attentively, but here is the funny part of the position in this case. I am quite sure that, if the particulars of these trips were given, it would be found that in nine cases out of ten they were to electorates of hon. members opposite. The late Minister was continually going into the electorates of hon. members on the other side at their urgent entreaty—and taking them with him, paying for motor-cars and all necessary expenses. Why are hon. members not fair? I have seen in the papers account after account of visits paid by that Minister to various places—to the Lockyer, Carnarvon, and Cunningham electorates—and I have seen eulogistic speeches made by the members concerned at various public functions thanking him for attending and investigating the needs of those constituencies. After all that has been done at their urgent entreaty and in the interests of the State and of the children of the State, why turn round and attempt—because it is only an attempt—to criticise the Government and condemn them? A small section of people in Brisbane may care twopence about this criticism of the expenses of Ministers, but outside the metropolitan area the people not only do not care twopence but they are thoroughly satisfied that the Ministers should incur this expenditure. It is only since the present Government have been in power that we have been able to get Ministers to go into the various districts and see their possibilities and visit the people. It is true that

just before an election the Ministers of the party opposite were always in a great hurry to go round and shake hands with the mayors and hospital committees in country districts. Members of this Government do it all the year round, and their visits have a very good effect on the districts and on Parliament itself. The reason for the objections of hon. members is that the Government have a wider vision than they, that they can see beyond the metropolitan area, and that their Ministers go out into the far distant parts of the State to learn what is required, and so come back here with a better knowledge and the capacity for a better administration. Let me say this soft, and sweet, and low, for it has been mentioned before and is on record in "Hansard." Hon. members opposite may be tired of hearing it, but a good thing cannot be said too often. As a late distinguished member of this House used to remark, "Say it over, and over, and over again." This matter was referred to on a previous occasion by the present Attorney-General. He pointed out that the Hon. J. Tolmie, when Secretary for Lands, in making one trip of one day's duration to Gatton College expended £194,000. (Loud laughter.) I mean to say that he expended £194. (Laughter.) I suppose that was for pocket money. The same Minister in making one trip to the wheatfields incurred an expenditure of £72. That was just to go and have a look at the wheat growing. He was Secretary for Public Lands, and had to encourage the farmers to grow wheat, and he went and had a look at it growing, and it cost the State £72—I suppose as pocket money for refreshments. I did not hear the friends of hon. members opposite objecting to that expenditure. On another jaunt when the same Minister went to Western Australia—I do not know why he went there—he incurred an expenditure of £408. Hon. members opposite grumble because the present Secretary for Public Instruction incurred an expenditure of £800 in one year, whereas this one trip by Mr. Tolmie cost £408. The Hon. J. Blair, who at one time was Attorney-General, took himself and his friends for a visit to the Gulf. I suppose the railways in those days were of no class, so they took a yacht and the cost to the State for that one trip was £765.

The TREASURER: Who was Treasurer in those days?

Mr. HARTLEY: The Hon. W. H. Barnes. (Government laughter.) I admit the hon. gentleman tried to set an example to his colleagues. He had only two jobs—Secretary for Public Works and Treasurer. He would dip his hand into first one fund for expenses and then the other hand into the other fund. I certainly commend the hon. gentleman for the example he endeavoured to set his colleagues. Let me now refer to a trip taken by the Hon. J. G. Appel to North Queensland.

Mr. KING: Do not forget that he had several other members with him.

Mr. HARTLEY: That trip cost the State £2,343. The grog bill alone—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: What?

Mr. HARTLEY: Perhaps I should not say "grog." Some bottles of benedictine and creme de menthe, etc.—whatever that is—(laughter) cost £155. That does not repre-

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sent the full amount. They were credited with £35 for the return—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Of empty bottles. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: And for something to warm them up in the morning, they took 10 gallons of rum. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Wynnum, when Secretary for Public Works in the year 1913-14, drew for personal expense alone—not counting expenditure for joy riding and invitations to afternoon tea and cake—no less a sum than £216. I notice that the hon. member corrected that statement a little later and said that the total amount of his expenses during his term of office was £446. Seeing that this amount was drawn for personal expenses it was not too bad. I would have liked to have had a bit of it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I only spent £758 in expenses during the whole term of my office from 1908 to 1915.

Mr. HARTLEY: I deprecate the criticism of the expenses of the Ministers. The Ministers have not been over-extravagant when it is considered that almost every hon. member on that side of the House and on this is anxious that the Ministers should visit their electorates. Nearly every local authority in the State, agricultural show committee, harbour board, school committee, and those in charge of the unveiling of memorials have asked one or other of the Ministers to visit their centres in connection with functions. They should not be condemned, therefore, for this expenditure. At any rate, when it is considered that this money is spent on genuine travelling and not on so many gallons of rum and bottles of benedictine, the public will not view such expenditure in any carping spirit.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): The ordinary person in the street has been rather astonished at the return tabled by the Premier showing the expenses of the various Ministers.

Mr. COLLINS: Is that the big question with the Opposition?

Mr. KERR: No, but it is a very big question with the people who are paying the taxes. I do not see why Ministers, in addition to being paid their expenses when travelling, should also draw £2 2s. a day for personal expenses.

Mr. POLLOCK: Ask the hon. member for Wynnum who drew it.

Mr. KERR: I am not responsible for the hon. member for Wynnum; he can speak for himself. The hon. member for Wynnum says that he did not draw that money, and I am quite prepared to accept his word in that regard.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear! (Interjections by Government members.)

Mr. KERR: No one is gainsaying the fact that Ministers should travel. I have asked Ministers to visit my electorate, although some of them have not seen fit to do so. If in the ordinary day's work a Minister is asked to go to Zillmere, Moggill, or some other easily accessible place and only takes a ride in a motor car, he should not, in addition to being paid his expenses, draw £2 2s. a day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He does not draw it in those cases.

Mr. KERR: I do not know how the expenses are made up if that is not the

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method adopted—the hon. gentleman can work it out. If such an allowance is received by Ministers, it should be cut out.

The TREASURER: The Denham Government established the system.

Mr. KERR: What was established nine years ago has got nothing to do with this House at the present time.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not correct.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member for Wynnum, an ex-Treasurer, says that is not correct. On account of the economy that is demanded by our finances, the Treasurer should send a letter to all his Ministers, telling them to cut down to the bone all unnecessary expenditure. I want to know if the hon. gentleman has instructed his Ministers to comply with such ideas?

The TREASURER: Ministers are allowed a certain amount as daily travelling expenses. The precedent was established by the Denham Government because some of the Ministers in Mr. Denham's time were over-expending the allowance.

Mr. KERR: Let me ask the Treasurer a direct question, as I have listened to his explanation. Is the hon. gentleman still in favour of that £2 2s. a day being paid?

The TREASURER: Undoubtedly.

Mr. KERR: Well, it is time that this House woke up to the fact and said that this £2 2s. a day should not be paid over and above expenses.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: If it were necessary for me to travel all over the country, even if I had the opportunity of becoming a Minister of this House, I would not over-expend in this fashion. (Government laughter.) Let me repeat—

Mr. PEDFORD: Your own crowd would assassinate you sooner than allow you to become a Minister.

Mr. KERR: If Carrington were after the hon. gentleman, he would not wait to talk so much. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman can break through a tent, and he would take some catching. (Renewed laughter.) According to the Treasurer's statement, he is still in favour of paying the Ministers of the Crown £2 2s. a day over and above expenses. So long as the hon. gentleman is in favour of that point, so long will the Ministers travel and draw that remuneration.

The TREASURER: They are simply drawing the allowance laid down by Mr. Denham.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not correct. The practice was not laid down by Mr. Denham. Ministers paid their own expenses out of that £2 2s.

The TREASURER: It is correct. Mr. Denham circularised each Minister of his day, and I have a copy of the circular.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member for Wynnum has pointed out that Ministers in his Government paid their own expenses out of the £2 2s. Instead of present Ministers doing that, they are loading up the country with their expenses. They are saving their own expenses, and drawing in addition a bonus of £2 2s. a day. Hon. members opposite cannot deny those facts. While hon. gentlemen are drawing this extra remuneration they expect their working supporters to live on a basic wage, which they reduced.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It is suggested that the Treasurer draws £3 3s. a day for his travelling expenses.

Mr. KERR: That may be so, but the Treasurer has given a lead to the Secretary for Public Instruction and his colleagues which has not been followed.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

Mr. KERR: One has only to look at the hon. gentleman to see that he does travel. (Laughter.)

There is one point that I desire to raise on this important Bill. The unforeseen expenditure of the Government to-day requires serious consideration. Since the Labour Government came into power in 1914-15, the unforeseen expenditure has been heavy, and that for last year was greater than any previous year. It amounted to £1,335,650, and was unauthorised.

THE TREASURER: Not unauthorised.

Mr. KERR: Well, it is authorised subsequently in a formal way by Parliament.

THE TREASURER: It is authorised before it is expended.

Mr. KERR: How can it be unforeseen expenditure, according to the Auditor-General, if it is previously authorised by Parliament? It is not included in the Estimates. That in itself is a serious thing for the Government to consider. I remember reading the result of a Royal Commission in New South Wales on the question of unforeseen expenditure. That Commission was demanded by Parliament. Since the present Government came into power they have expended over £8,000,000 as unforeseen expenditure.

Mr. COLLINS: What was the Opposition doing all the time?

Mr. KERR: The Opposition was doing its duty exactly in the way we are doing it to-day in protesting against such a state of affairs.

Mr. COLLINS: You are not worth your salt.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: In those days the unforeseen expenditure was nothing like it is to-day. There was a vast difference in those days in all respects to the position which obtains to-day. We can hardly realise the fact that, in round figures, the following unforeseen expenditure has taken place during the regime of this Government:—

	£
1914-1915	877,000
1915-1916	615,000
1916-1917	621,000
1917-1918	454,000
1918-1919	1,046,000
1919-1920	1,263,000
1920-1921	521,000
1921-1922	503,000
1922-1923	691,000
1923-1924	1,335,000

These amounts are specially noted by the Auditor-General in his report.

Mr. HARTLEY: Most of that was expended in soldier services.

Mr. KERR: Nothing of the kind. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about when he makes that statement. In dealing in detail with unforeseen expenditure, we find that the Trust Accounts have been called upon to the extent of £566,903 during the last financial year in connection with some of the State enterprises. Time and again I have pointed out that the Trust Funds to-day are being utilised for purposes for which they were never intended to be used. When you realise that money deposited by the insurance companies and the superannuation funds are being utilised for the purpose of State enterprises which are losing a considerable amount of money each year, it is time we look stock of what is happening under the jurisdiction of this Government.

Take the one item alone of the State sawmills and timber yards. Is the royalty on timber collected by the State going into the revenue account? It is not going there, but instead of that it is being handed back to the State sawmills to make them pay. That is something like what we were talking about in regard to the royalty on coal in connection with the State coalmines. What would the Minister say if the royalty from the mines was put back into the mines to make them pay? He tried to defend his position in regard to these State coalmines. The private sawmills in Queensland to-day are being stifled by the Government's action towards them. Why should the State demand from private sawmills contributions in the shape of income tax and other payments, none of which operate in connection with the State sawmills? We had one hon. member opposite talking about our secondary industries. Why are the Government continuing to carry on State enterprises with trust funds, when they are showing a debit of over £1,000,000 to-day? The State with unlimited capital behind it is wiping out private industries. On the one hand, we have hon. members opposite advocating the expansion of secondary industries, and at the same time the Government are crippling those industries through the expenditure on State enterprises of unlimited capital which is being taken from the money in the Trust Funds.

At 8 p.m.,

THE SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 30th July, I shall now proceed to put the question.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 8, the schedule, and the preamble agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

#### THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 8.5 p.m.

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