

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 1925

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ACCIDENTS, BREAKDOWNS, AND DERAILMENTS ON QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS, 1924-1925.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the total number of accidents, breakdowns, and derailments on the Queensland Railways from 30th June, 1924, to 30th June, 1925?

"2. What was the total cost to the State?

"3. Will he appoint an independent Commission of Experts, with a representative of the general public thereon, to thoroughly investigate the adequacy of the rolling-stock, both in regards to quantity and its state of repair, also the condition of the permanent ways?"

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

"1. Accidents, 24; breakdowns, 20; derailments (open lines), 31; (others reported to Commissioner's Office), 52.

"2 and 3. See answer given on 6th ultimo."

NUMBER AND REMUNERATION OF STATE EMPLOYEES, 1924-25.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Is he in a position to reply to the following question asked by me on 25th August, 1925:—

What is the total number of State employees (all grades) and their aggregate salaries and wages for the financial year ended 30th June, 1925—(a) Officers employed in Public Departments, under the control of the Public Service Commissioner; (b) Department of Public Works—construction and maintenance; (c) Prickly-pear Commission; (d) Mining operations; (e) Irrigation Commissioner (f) Main Roads Board; (g) Central Sugar Mills; (h) State Enterprises; (i) Railway employees—open lines; (j) Railway employees—construction; (k) others?"

The PREMIER (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eucham*) replied—

Total Number of Persons in Government Employment at 30th June, 1925, and Total Annual Salaries or Wages Paid.

	Number of Officers and Em- ployees.	Amount of Salaries or Wages per annum.
—		
Officers employed in Public Departments (<i>see Fifth Annual Report of Public Service Commissioner</i>)	11,855	£ 2,960,406
Department of Public Works —Construction and Main- tenance	554	163,473
Prickly-pear Land Commis- sion	81	25,243
Mining operations ..	1,081	311,946
Irrigation Commission ..	90	31,442
Main Roads Board ..	362	34,437
Central Sugar Mills ..	11	5,010
State Enterprises ..	1,108	207,995
Railway Employees—		
Revenue employees ..	15,973	3,817,000
Loan employees (other than Construction)	2,399	551,300
Construction employees ..	1,497	395,000
Total ..	35,011	£8,503,252

TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER, 1925.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

COST OF MURGON-PROSTON AND WINDERA BRANCH RAILWAYS.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Has he the answer to my question asked on 4th August last, relative to the estimated and actual cost of the Murgon-Proston and Windera Branch Railways?"

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

"Murgon-Proston: Estimated cost, £152,635; actual cost, £239,490.

"The increase over the estimate was due to wages and cost of rails and other materials being considerably increased after the estimate was framed and the reconditioning of the line owing to suspension of work. Estimate prepared in 1914 and line completed June, 1923.

"Windera Branch: Estimated cost, £55,082; actual cost, £117,000 (approximate).

"The increase over the estimate was due to wages, cost of rails, and other material being considerably increased after the estimate was framed. Estimate prepared in 1914 and line completed March, 1925."

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Marine Department for the year ended 30th June, 1925.

Report by Government Analyst and Chief Inspector of Explosives for the year ended 30th June, 1925.

Report of the Department of Public Works for the year ended 30th June, 1925.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

PRIMARY PRODUCTS POOLS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

TRUST ACCOUNTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) presented the tables relating to his Financial Statement for the year 1925-1926.

Ordered to be printed.

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1925-1926.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the Estimates of Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1926.

Ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move—

"That you do now leave the chair."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) (who was received with Opposition cheers) said: Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, we have a few grievances that we want ventilated.

The TREASURER: You are all grievances over there.

Mr. MAXWELL: We have grievances that we want to ventilate.

Mr. KING: The Government had their grievances last week.

Mr. BEDFORD: The real grievance of hon. members opposite is that they cannot get over here.

Mr. MOORE: There is one very vital and important fact that I would like to get some information upon from the Treasurer. In a newspaper the day before yesterday there appeared this statement—

"The New South Wales Ministry has decided to test the validity of the deportation sections of the Federal Immigration Act as from a constitutional aspect. It is understood that it is the intention to test the matter in the law courts. Telegrams were despatched by the Premier (Mr. Lang) to the various State Ministries asking whether they would be willing to join in the proposal. The Premier of Queensland (Mr. Gillies) replied by telegram that his Ministry would be agreeable to join in with the idea, but the Victorian Ministry replied that it would not be a party. The other Ministries have not yet replied."

Mr. COLLINS: They deported Irishmen to Jamaica in the old days, but that did not do any good.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about the deportations from Darwin by the Labour party?

Mr. MOORE: In a newspaper of yesterday this statement is to be found—

"The Premier of New South Wales (Mr. Lang) a few days ago addressed the following telegram to the Premiers of the other States:—'Will you collaborate in proceedings to test the constitutionality of the Deportation Act recently passed by the Federal Parliament? I can instruct counsel to appear for all the State Governments co-operating.'"

"The Premier of Queensland (Mr. Gillies) replied: 'We will co-operate with you as requested.'"

"The Premier of South Australia (Mr. Gunn) intimated that his Government was prepared to co-operate in the proceedings suggested."

"The reply of the Tasmanian Premier (Mr. Lyons) was: 'Regret we have no funds upon which we can draw to meet expense in regard to the proposal. We are prepared, however, to assist in other directions.'"

"Mr. Collier (Premier of Western Australia) replied as follows: 'We consider that testing the validity of the Commonwealth Act should be limited to statutes affecting State interests, and that responsibility for testing the Deportation Act devolves upon those directly affected.'"

"The Premier of Victoria (Mr. Allen) replied: 'We see no reason from the State point of view why Victoria should test the constitutionality of the Deportation Act. We do not intend in any way to assist in the defence of Mr. Walsh.'"

The point I want to get at is this: What right has the Treasurer of Queensland to spend public funds in fighting the Commonwealth Government over an Act of Parliament passed by that Government?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He has every right.

Mr. MOORE: That has nothing whatever to do with this State. The Act was brought in for the good government of the Commonwealth of Australia. What earthly right has the Treasurer of this State illegally to use public funds to fight the Commonwealth? The whole thing is done, not for the advantage of Queensland but for political purposes, to try and damage the Commonwealth anti-Socialist forces in the forthcoming election. Why should the people of this State be taxed to provide funds for humbug of this sort? I shall refer to a few remarks by Dr. Earle Page on this question which appear in to-day's paper:—

"It could not be that Mr. Lang was desirous of upholding the Australian principle of arbitration, which had done so much to build up the trade union movement in Australia, and secure justice for the worker, because the men on trial repeatedly said they had no time for the Arbitration Court, and actually allowed their own union to be removed from the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court. It could not be that Mr. Lang desired that the goods held up should be carried by boats whose crews were higher paid, because French, Dutch, German, and Norwegian boats, which were all paying lower wages than British boats, were unaffected. It could not be Mr. Lang's intention to help British shipping in its present difficulties, because the effect of his action was simply to give foreign shipping the freight British shipping would otherwise be carrying; nor could Mr. Lang's action be taken to assist the Australian producer, because his produce was deteriorating and becoming destroyed solely because it could not be shipped."

Those are very pertinent remarks. Dr. Earle Page is the Federal Treasurer, and the Federal Government have taken the responsibility for the good government of Australia and the carrying on of its industry, and they think it justifiable and necessary to pass such an Act. I fail to see the slightest justification for the public funds of Queensland being used in an endeavour—not to assist in the good government of Australia, but to put up a fight merely for political purposes. I have the very strongest condemnation to offer to that. I do not know whether the Auditor-General will allow public money to be expended in such a manner. The Government of Tasmania recognise that they have no funds upon which they can draw for the purpose of attacking the good government of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you believe in protecting the rights of the citizens of Queensland?

Mr. MOORE: I believe in protecting the rights of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Mr. CORSER: Hon. members opposite did not protect the rights and comforts of the people of Queensland last week.

Mr. MOORE: Surely it is the height of sarcasm for any member opposite to talk about protecting the rights of the citizens of Queensland.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You advocate the abolition of trial by jury.

Mr. MOORE: I do not. I am advocating that the Queensland Government have no right to expend public funds on attacking the Commonwealth Government. Our Commonwealth representatives are elected by the people, and they are competent to deal with the good government of the Commonwealth. It is not right that the Queensland Government should step in and waste public funds on this matter.

Mr. POLLOCK: They are spending money to protect the rights conferred by Magna Charta.

Mr. MOORE: Did the hon. member for Gregory assist the Queensland Government to protect the rights of the people of this State last week?

Mr. MAXWELL: That's a beauty.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Gregory is so keen on protecting the rights conferred by Magna Charta, but what about his attitude last week? The whole thing is absolute humbug, and I strongly object to funds raised in Queensland from our taxpayers being used for such purposes.

Another point to which I wish to draw attention is the ridiculous way in which questions are answered in this House by so-called responsible Ministers.

Mr. BEDFORD: The trouble is the ridiculous way in which they are asked.

Mr. MOORE: The answers to questions should at least be true. I object to misleading reports being given. On 18th August, pursuant to notice, the hon. member for Burnett, for the hon. member for Mirani, asked the Secretary for Railways:—

"1. Is he making any effort to ascertain who it was on Friday night (30th July) or early on Saturday morning (31st July) last, apparently in order to prevent H.M.A.S. 'Biloela' from completing her coaling, tipped about 9 tons of coal on the Gladstone Jetty branch line?

"2. If so, and he is successful in establishing grounds for a prosecution, is it his intention, with a view of preventing similar obstructions in the future, to prosecute?"

The Minister's answers were:—

"1. and 2. Careful inquiries were made, but unfortunately the culprits were not discovered. I may say that the Police report attaches no suspicion to railway employees or to waterside workers."

Then the hon. member for Wide Bay asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is it a fact, as reported in the 'Daily Standard' of 31st July, that employees of the Queensland Railway Department refused to haul coal intended for the naval supply ship 'Biloela' at

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Gladstone a few days ago, such coal having been declared 'black' by the Waterside Workers' and Seamen's Unions?

"2. Is he aware that in industrial circles this incident is regarded as the baptismal ceremony of the 'Queensland Transport Workers' Union'—a department of the 'One Big Union'?"

"3. What action has he taken in the matter?"

"4. Does he regard such alliances of these public employees with the unions mentioned as being in the interests of the primary producers, other producers, and the general public?"

The answer 1 to 4 was—

"About 1,100 tons of coal were loaded. The strike is now settled."

Now we come to the "Railway Advocate" of 10th August. In that issue there is a paragraph headed "'Biloela' Declared Black," and reading—

"The naval supply ship 'Biloela' at Gladstone was recently declared 'black' by the Seamen's Union, owing to the seamen having been displaced by naval ratings.

"Following on the refusal of the watersiders to load her with coal the naval men took on the job. Railway men at Gladstone were then called upon to assist, and did so by refusing to haul the coal to the jetty.

"A number of loaded trucks, however, which were put on the jetty line out of the yard were hauled to the ship's side by a private-owned motor-car, and were being loaded, when the electric crane-driver was called out.

"The next step was an attempt by the naval ratings to man the electric crane and so continue loading. However, under threat of plunging the town of Gladstone in darkness by cutting off the electric light supply, the local manager of the Electric Light Company took steps that prevented the crane being used.

"Eventually the ship left without the supply of coal she required.

"The workers of Gladstone are worthy of congratulation for their splendid display of solidarity; also those in other centres who assisted in the scrap."

Fancy in a State like Queensland people who are paid by the community congratulating men who hold up naval supplies, hold up a vessel belonging to the people of the Commonwealth, and endeavour to prevent it doing efficient work merely on account of a local dispute! When a question was asked of the Minister in regard to the matter, he said—

"Inquiries are being made. No delay attaches to the Railway Department."

Then we find the "Railway Advocate" coming out and congratulating the railway men for their solidarity in holding up the coal supplies. Surely things are getting into a sorry state of affairs when that sort of thing is allowed!

Mr. FARRELL: What was the reason for it?

Mr. MOORE: In no other part of the world would you find a naval ship owned by the people held up because of a private dispute. This naval boat belongs to Australia.

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It does not belong to any outside shipping organisation. It is endeavouring to carry out the work of the people of Australia; yet a small section of the people think it right to hold it up because there is a small shipping dispute.

Mr. FARRELL: They should have played the game.

Mr. MOORE: It is not for the hon. member to criticise whether the Commonwealth Government played the game or not. The Commonwealth Government were put in power by the people of Australia, and they have the right to govern, and I hope they will govern. Unfortunately we have a Government in power in Queensland who are prepared to hamper the Commonwealth Government in carrying out necessary duties, and a Government prepared to congratulate the men on the steps they took. It is a most extraordinary position.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The sailing of a commercial ship was more important.

Mr. MOORE: The work of a naval ship of Australia is of more importance than anything in the country. (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CORSER: Extremists and Bolsheviks!

The SPEAKER: Order!

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You would have had the navy in control of the railways if you had had your way.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member is prophesying about something of which he knows nothing. The Commonwealth Government should be in a position to carry out their business without any interference by the State Government. It should be the duty of every State Government of Australia to help the Commonwealth Government to carry out what they think is best in the interests of the good government of this country.

Another very serious matter that I want to refer to is in connection with the administration of the Lands Department. We had an amending measure brought in in 1924, which is having a most serious effect on the settlement of this State. There is no question that settlement is being hung up, financial arrangements are hampered, and all sorts of difficulties are being placed in the way of genuine settlers. Whether the department is doing it without the sanction of the Minister or not, I do not know; but I am of opinion that a department of the State should be there for the purpose of assisting the people in every way to carry out what they consider are their own best interests. If a man wants to take up a block of land, the department should assist him in every way and not place obstacles in his way, by which he is delayed for weeks and weeks before he can get on to a block. We also want to see finance available for efficiently stocking up and carrying out improvements so that the development of the State can be going on. I am not questioning the legality of the decision which was come to the other day; all that I am pointing out is that the country is making a great mistake and jeopardising the financial position.

I refer to selection No. 92, in the Boulia district. I am not questioning the decision—I know that the authorities are acting within their legal rights—but I question the wisdom of the department in instituting the proceedings and thereby frightening financial

institutions, so that it is going to make it exceedingly difficult for anybody who takes up land to secure financial assistance in stocking up their property.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am going to legislate this session to protect financial institutions dealing in a bona fide way.

Mr. MOORE: I am glad to hear that, because at the present time we are getting into a position in which financial institutions are not prepared to lend money for stocking-up purposes. When private individuals are not prepared to lend money to assist settlement in the development of the State because they feel insecure, the position is not what it should be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is because some of them have done something that is not legal.

Mr. MOORE: I do not object to the legal point of view, because I think that is perfectly right, but to the action which the department has taken in bringing this situation about. This appeal case was heard before Mr. Shannon in the Land Court. The report states—

"The subject selection comprises about 21,820 acres in the Boullia district. . . . It was applied for on the 18th October, 1921, by the appellant, who was the only applicant. License to occupy issued on 13th August, 1923, and personal residence became compulsory six months after that date, or on 13th February, 1924. The lease issued in November, 1923, and in the following month, was, with the Minister's consent, mortgaged to the Bank of New South Wales to secure the repayment of the sum of £1,000. In consequence of default in the payment of moneys secured by the mortgage the mortgagee bank entered into possession on 31st October, 1924, giving notice of such entry to the Minister on 27th November following.

"By notice dated 15th December, 1924, and published in the 'Government Gazette' of the 20th December, and in a local newspaper, the mortgagees, in pursuance of the provisions of section 159 of the Land Act of 1910, notified their intention to sell the holding at the expiration of thirty days from the date of publication.

"On 17th December, 1924, the Lands Department notified the mortgagees that the selector had been cited to show cause why the selection should not be declared forfeited for non-residence.

"On 18th December, 1924, the bank replied, mentioning the intended sale, and asking whether it was desired that the bank should abstain from action to realise its security.

"The department replied on 2nd January, 1925, asking the bank to abstain from action towards selling the selection until the matter of the citation of the lessee had been completed."

[11 a.m.]

"On 20th December, 1924, the Land Commissioner called upon the lessee to appear at the Commissioner's Court at Boullia on 13th March, 1925, and show cause why the selection should not be declared forfeited on the ground that there had been a failure by him to perform the condition of personal residence.

A copy of the notice to the lessee was sent to the Manager of the Winton branch of the Bank of New South Wales.

"The Commissioner's decision was in the following terms:—

'It has been proved to my satisfaction that the condition of personal residence has not been performed by the selector in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act.'

Consequently it was forfeited, but the part which seems so extraordinary to me is this—

"Mr. Cusack, who appeared for the appellant, stated that his real clients were the mortgagees. He contended that the Crown was estopped from proceeding further in the direction of forfeiture by reason of the fact that no action was taken by the Minister in regard to failure to perform the condition of personal residence until after the lessee had been dispossessed and the mortgagees had entered into possession. He claimed that after the Bank took possession it was not open to the Minister to initiate proceedings for an antecedent breach of the condition of personal residence."

I can quite see that the Crown had the power and that it was perhaps perfectly legal, but what I doubt is the wisdom of the Crown doing that sort of thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot allow a man who deliberately and openly flouts the law to make a profit out of the transaction, and that is what this man is going to do.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know whether the man is going to do it or not. Perhaps in this case the bank may be protected by the amount of improvements on the property, provided the Crown does not absorb too much of them for what is coming to the Crown. This is creating a very scared feeling amongst the financial institutions as to what rights they really have. If, after foreclosure, they are going to have the Crown taking action against a former tenant for a breach antecedent to the time when the bank took possession, then they lose the ordinary protection of a mortgagee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Department had not any knowledge antecedent to the bank's action. It was only as a result of the bank's action that the Department became aware of the non-fulfilment of the conditions.

Mr. MOORE: That may be so in this case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I recognise that there is a lot in what you say, and I am going to legislate so that those people who bona fide take ordinary precautions will return their security on the selection.

Mr. MOORE: We recognise, as I think the Minister does, that the success of land settlement depends to a large extent on the financing of people who wish to take up land but who have no money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On their being able to get money.

Mr. MOORE: On being able to get money, so that their property will be stocked; and, if cases like the one I have just quoted unfortunately crop up, it naturally creates fear amongst financial institutions to lend money

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if they feel that the security is not what they otherwise thought it would be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will protect the improvements and carry on the burden, so that they will be secured.

Mr. MOORE: I am very pleased to hear the Minister say that, because the situation is becoming very grave.

There is just one other point regarding the Lands Acts to which I wish to refer. A new regulation, No. 73, was issued by the Minister, I think on 11th July last—just after the last amending Bill received assent. The regulation refers to the transfer of selections. Where a man has a selection he has to get the permission of the Minister before a transfer can be registered. So far as I can see, in the old regulations everything was provided for. He was asked whether he held any leasehold land—that is, whether he had any pastoral property—but the new regulation goes still further and asks whether he holds any freehold land. I really cannot see what the fact that a man who is purchasing an agricultural farm has already freehold land has got to do with the question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It deals with agricultural land.

Mr. MOORE: We know dozens of cases where men are on small agricultural areas sufficiently large to enable them to live on it and make a bare living, but it must be remembered that they have families growing up. It is very hard on them when they have to split up their capital so as to start a boy or two boys on another block of land. It is their desire to obtain another piece of land to be worked by the whole family in conjunction with one another, but the Minister in taking the matter into consideration points out that the parent has a sufficient freehold area to enable him to make a living, and will not allow the family to take up the extra block.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those cases will be considered on their merits. The hon. member knows that there are persons holding freehold blocks let out on the share-farm system, and they are acquiring all the neighbouring blocks and aggregating them into big areas of first-class agricultural land. Is that a good thing?

Mr. MOORE: There may be such cases. Possibly the Act can counterbalance any harm that is being done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have not refused any reasonable transfer.

Mr. MOORE: I know of a case which occurred in the electorate of the hon. member for Nanango where a man desired to sell a portion of his holding so that a hundred acres of land could be cleared, but the Crown held the matter up for weeks and weeks and then refused to allow the transfer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He desired to sell a portion of a freehold?

Mr. MOORE: No, not freehold; it was an agricultural farm.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It must be freehold.

Mr. MOORE: The Government are only imposing harassing conditions on people whom we want to encourage. The whole object of the land policy of the Government should be to make it easy for people to acquire land, and not to make it difficult to acquire land and then make it difficult for them to obtain assistance to carry on.

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I think the Minister would be well advised to go into the whole question of the amending land legislature passed in 1924, and see whether it is not advisable, in the light of experience, to make it easier for people to carry on agricultural and pastoral pursuits rather than that they should be harassed in the way they are being harassed to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If a man is paying £1 an acre to the Crown and sells to another person for £10 an acre, why should he not freehold that land first?

Mr. MOORE: Why should not the other person be allowed to continue the payments? The Crown still has the same security.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And pay the former holder £10 an acre?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, if the improvements are there, it has nothing to do with the Crown.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Let him freehold it before selling.

Mr. MOORE: Why? The lessee enters into an agreement with the Crown to hold that land for a certain number of years and make certain definite payments, and why should he be compelled to freehold it when the Crown security is there all the time? The incoming tenant has the same liabilities as the outgoing tenant. Such obstacles should not be placed in the way of genuine settlers.

I want to refer to one or two matters in connection with a statement made by the Secretary for Railways on 18th August last. He was endeavouring to show that the condition of the railways was entirely satisfactory, that there was no shortage of rolling-stock, that the permanent way was satisfactory, and that in fact everything in the Railway Department was as it should be. The Minister in his speech stated—

“I would like to remind hon. members that a full building programme is not something that has suddenly dawned upon the Railway Department.”

He goes on to point out what rolling-stock has been built in the last three years, and points out that during that period 65 engines, 67 carriages and vans, and 1,723 wagons were constructed; and then, instead of giving a comparison of the number of engines, carriages, and wagons constructed for a three-year period up to 1915, he immediately switches off to a comparison of the amounts spent in that period. If we take into consideration the altered position with regard to the cost of living, the increased wages, and the increased cost of material, then his figures are absolutely useless as a basis of comparison. Had he been fair, he would have given this House the information that for the three years ended 1915 the engines constructed were 90, the number of carriages and vans 125, and the number of wagons 2,239, so that in the last three years there were constructed 25 fewer engines, 53 fewer carriages, and 515 fewer wagons.

He was so elated with this system of making comparisons that he indulged in comparisons extending over a ten-year period. He proceeded to give this House a comparison of the mileage of new lines opened to traffic, and the number of engines, carriages, and wagons constructed. He took for comparison the ten-year periods from 1905 to 1915 and from 1915 to 1925. The following

is a comparison of railway construction, permanent way, and rolling-stock:—

	Expenditure on Permanent Way.	Mileage of Single Line Oper.
	£	Miles.
1913-14	443,741	4,568
1914-15	416,035	4,982
Total, 2 years	859,776	9,550
Average	429,888	4,775
1922-23	698,080	6,074
1923-24	736,146	6,209
Total, 2 years	1,434,226	12,283
Average	717,113	6,141

The opening of the North Coast line necessitated a tremendously increased use of engines and wagons. The Minister himself told this House that rolling-stock could be conveyed to Toowoomba and back to Brisbane eighteen times while it was going to the far North and back to Brisbane. He knew perfectly well that this line was to be opened to traffic, and that it was not to be an act of God that it would suddenly be opened. The Government knew perfectly well what would happen, and what would be the result when that line was opened to traffic. They knew perfectly well that there would be an increased demand for wagons and rolling-stock. Instead of rising to the occasion and meeting the demands which they knew this line would inevitably make, they calmly sat down until a shortage of wagons and rolling-stock actually took place, and until people and their produce were being held up, and industries were being strangled owing to the inefficiency of the Railway Department.

We now find the Minister making the statement that he has given huge orders for rolling-stock this year. It was not a question of doing it this year. What we have always contended is that, instead of spending money in keeping up the efficiency of the department, the Government have been spending money in constructing railways to buy votes in certain electorates. The Government by that policy have not kept the rolling-stock in the condition that it ought to be in.

As showing that the argument of the Minister that the engines are now pulling bigger loads is fallacious, I wish to quote the following figures:—

	1914-15.	1923-24.
Number of engines	625	713
Passengers carried	24,257,552	29,535,981
Goods and livestock (tons)	4,970,873	4,273,926
The average per engine works out for the same periods:—		
	1914-15.	1923-24.
Passengers carried	38,812	41,425
Goods and livestock (tons)	7,953	8,000
Allowing 12 stone as the average weight of passengers carried, this gives the average load pulled per engine as follows:—		
	1914-15.	1923-24.
Passengers carried (tons)	2,910	3,108
Goods and livestock (tons)	7,953	6,000
Totals	10,863	9,108

That is, the average tonnage pulled per engine was 1,757 tons per annum less in 1923-24 than in 1914-15.

I want to point out that all the statements made about the extra cost do not make up for the deficiency, or for the bad condition into which the lines and rolling-stock have fallen.

Again, we have—

EXPENDITURE PER MILE OF SINGLE LINE PER ANNUM.	£
1913-15	90
1922-24	116

Converting the 1913-15 figures to its equivalent in 1922-24, the £1 in 1913 being equal to 34s. in 1924, we have the following result:—

	£
1913-15	153
1922-24	116

which shows a relative deficiency in 1922-24 of £37 per mile of single track per annum. Taking into consideration the relative values of money, the expenditure on maintenance and renewals of permanent way per mile of single line open was 24 per cent. less in the two years 1922-24 than in the two years 1913-15.

When we consider the definite statements that have been made by various railway officials and workers to the effect that the lines are dangerous and that the rolling-stock is dangerous, and add to that our knowledge that there is a considerable shortage of engines, trucks, and carriages of all sorts, it is useless for the Secretary for Railways to come here and claim that the Government are now spending more money on the railways than was spent on the railways in 1914-15. That is not the question. It is not a question of spending a lot of money, whether that expenditure is made stupidly or advisedly. The question is, "Is the condition of our railways what it should be? Is the track safe? Have we sufficient engines; and are the public getting the convenience they should get from a system of railways having ample funds behind it?" Assuredly the answer is "No."

It is useless for the Minister to come along and make all sorts of comparisons with previous years. That has nothing to do with it. The only question is whether the railways are as efficient to-day as they were in previous years, and anybody knowing anything about the matter knows they are not.

One of the greatest condemnatory statements in connection with our railways was made by Mr. J. Shearer, the chairman of a fertilising company working in conjunction with the sugar industry. In his remarks Mr. Shearer said—

"I have to refer to the most unpleasant and most unfavourable aspect of your business. We depend on our railways to handle traffic in every part of the State, and on a considerable scale, and, therefore, it is an important factor. Our company contributes, directly and indirectly, about £10,000 per annum in freight to the railways, yet the general inefficiency of that department in handling our traffic, the continual inaccuracy in computing the freight charges, errors in the ledger accounts, and the unfair incidence of the rates schedule which was introduced during August, 1924,

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constitute serious impediments to our business. In practice, the new freight schedule on fertiliser is equivalent to a preference of 7s. 1d. to Sydney firms over Brisbane firms for North Queensland trade, and a preference of 25s. per ton to Sydney firms over Townsville firms competing for North Queensland business."

It seems extraordinary that Southern firms should be given a preference over our Queensland firms in the matter of freights on fertilisers for the sugar-growers of the North. In face of that some very emphatic remarks were made by Mr. Victor H. Green, general manager of Australian Fertilisers, Limited, of Sydney, a large company having extensive business interests in both Queensland and New South Wales, and which consigns many thousands of tons annually over the lines of both States. Mr. Green considers that the Queensland railways compare favourably with those of other States and that they serve the needs of the country; that the man on the land has little need to complain; that the railways are not to be expected to pay. This is the director of the very firm that has a preference of 11s. 1d. for Brisbane and 25s. 2d. for Townsville, and naturally the gentleman finds no fault with the department, and he comes up here and boosts up the position, and says what a splendid position the department is in. It says very little for the wisdom of the Government when they penalise a firm carrying on business in Queensland and finding employment for our own people, and endeavouring as far as they can to meet the needs of the sugar-growers in the North who use fertilisers the most.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you think the rate ought to be raised?

Mr. MOORE: I think encouragement ought to be given to firms in Queensland who are out to find employment. If trucks are to be supplied, they should be supplied to Queensland firms. The Government should see that they get sufficient trucks to carry their stuff, but the hon. gentleman thinks they should be victimised in favour of a Southern firm. I want to see employment found for the people of Queensland. Instead of that, we find a definite statement made to the effect that a local firm that is doing its best for the people in Queensland who use fertilisers is being penalised for the benefit of New South Wales firms.

I do not think there is any argument required to prove that there is a shortage of rolling-stock. That is made perfectly plain in paragraphs in papers all over Queensland. Even in Brisbane one can see how acute the position is. One paragraph says:—

"As a result of the shortage of engines caused by so many being locked up at the Ipswich workshops, the engine of the Sydney mail had to be utilised to-night to haul a train to Ipswich. At the last moment the usual goods train from Brisbane to Toowoomba, which leaves at 6.20 p.m., was cancelled, owing, it is understood, to no engine being available. At least one other goods train was cancelled. The inability to secure engines for goods trains for both the northern and southern districts is already causing an accumulation of goods in the yard."

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

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Mr. Speaker, before you leave the chair, there are one or two matters I should like to draw attention to, and I do not think there is anything more important than the evil practice that has grown up under the present Administration of passing huge sums of public money without any opportunity being given for criticism in Parliament. If there is one right more than another that is insisted on by the people's representatives in the British Parliament, it is the right to say what the taxation shall be and the expenditure of that taxation. Last night I looked back over the figures for the last five years and calculated the huge sums that have been put through this House under Standing Order 307 without the slightest opportunity being given for criticism or discussion. The figures are:—

In 1920 over	£14,000,000.000.
In 1921 over	£9,000,000.
In 1922 over	£19,000,000.
In 1923 over	£6,000,000.
In 1924 over	£19,000,000.

I could give the items, but only intend to give the aggregate sums just now. They also include the £2,500,000 passed each session for the ensuing year. I will give the items at a later stage on the Estimates. I ask the Government in probably the last session that they are going to sit on the Treasury benches, how they can justify conduct of that kind. It may be urged that we have sixteen days for discussion of the Estimates. But, if sixteen days are found insufficient for the proper discussion of the Estimates, we should be given a longer period. Only last session the Opposition asked for three days longer—three days that are provided for under the Standing Order—and it was denied us by the then Treasurer, Mr. Theodore. One thing which is most noticeable is that, although the Estimates of various departments that have been overlooked one year have been brought up another year, they have not been fully discussed. For instance I notice that the railways—I do not propose to refer to railways to-day in view of the motion of which the leader of the Opposition has given notice for to-morrow—have only been discussed twice during the five years I have referred to. In connection with the Trust Funds which have been used for State enterprises, such as State stations, and which have been responsible for huge losses, and about which such grave suspicions prevail in regard to questionable practices, we have never been offered an opportunity to discuss matters for something like five years. That is a gross wrong for the people whose money is being spent under these votes.

Another matter I want to refer to is the influx of the Italians and Southern Europeans to the sugar industry in North Queensland. I quite recognise that these people make very valuable settlers, and that Queensland has ample room for people of that type—the better portion of them—but it is not a good thing that one industry should be monopolised by them. It is more desirable that these people should spread themselves out over the State and assist in various other industries. What is going to happen in regard to the sugar industry is that, if the time comes when they monopolise the industry, it will be very largely to our detriment in the South in

regard to anything in the shape of embargoes or preferential duties. I contend that I am speaking in the interests of those Italians who already own farms as much as in the interest of any other section of the community. Furthermore, constant irritation is going on. We know that during the present crushing season mill after mill has been hung up. The South Johnstone mill—which is a Government-controlled mill—was held up three weeks, and trouble has arisen from time to time in other sugar districts. In the district I represent on two or three occasions recently the sale of land has been held up, and mill hands have refused to crush cane coming from farms which have been under terms of sale to Italians.

MR. HYNES: You suggested that Italians should be excluded by this Government.

MR. SWAYNE: It is not a right thing that any body of employees should interfere with the progress of lawful business. At the same time I can quite realise the way these men look at the matter. If we had a Government in power worthy of their name, such a state of things would not prevail. I recently pointed out that, under the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, the Government had ample power to deal with these difficulties. Under that Act they have unrestricted power to apply the education test to everyone embarking in the industry—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You know they cannot apply that test.

MR. CORSE: If the Queensland Railway Union told you to do it, you would do it.

MR. SWAYNE: But they were so busy electorboozing at the expense of the Commonwealth Government that they were afraid to touch it. They have allowed all this trouble to arise, and have not used the power they have. I say that the Government have the power to apply the dictation test to anyone embarking in the sugar industry. I would not be in order if I referred to debates on other questions during this session; but, generally speaking, I may say that all sorts of opprobrious epithets were applied to me because of my action in exposing the weakness of the Government in this matter.

[11.30 a.m.] and the case for the other side was made to rest on a regulation under the Act which specifically excluded its application to the people. But we know that a regulation under an Act is the creation of the Government for the time being. A regulation may be made to-day and rescinded or amended to-morrow without the slightest reference to the Crown. We know that all that is referred to the Crown is the Act itself. In the Act to which I am referring there is a power to deal with these people or anybody else, and the Crown sanctioned that power being given to the Queensland Government. If the Government make regulations under that power, they can also, in their wisdom, abrogate what they have done, or they can give themselves a new power.

MR. HYNES: They cannot disregard treaty obligations.

MR. SWAYNE: It is no use for the hon. member for Townsville or any other hon. member therefore, trying to shield himself by the regulations, because the Government can alter them to-morrow if they like. It is all nonsense to drag the Restriction of Leases to Aliens Act into it. What has that got to do with cane-cutters? What have they got to do with freehold? Nothing whatever. It is

merely a red herring dragged across the trail to divert the attention of the people of Queensland from their own remissness and slackness in dealing with this question so vital to the North; and, since we are discussing grievances, it is only right and proper to bring the matter up and point out the trouble that is arising, and to point out to the people of Queensland that, if the Government were worthy of their name, they themselves would deal with it. At any rate, it is only right and just that the people of Queensland should be shown that the power exists in the hands of the Government if the necessity arises to use it.

Moreover, they have asserted in their argument that the Imperial Government would not allow any action on their part. Yet the very people who say that the Queensland Government are debarred from doing certain things claim that the Commonwealth Government should take much more drastic action! If the Imperial Government or treaty rights were likely to interfere with the Queensland Government in respect of any bona fide action they may take, how much more likely would they be to veto any more stringent or more drastic action on the part of the Commonwealth Government? The argument would apply with equal force in both cases. If the State Government would be prohibited from touching the matter, then most certainly the Commonwealth Government would be. Hon. members opposite must see how illogical they are. They excuse their own inaction on the ground of probable Imperial interference; yet, at the same time they say that the Commonwealth Government should go much further and take action of much greater scope.

MR. HYNES: You know that in that connection it is only the Commonwealth Government that can take action.

MR. SWAYNE: That is not so. The question of Imperial veto does not arise in connection with regulations that are within the scope of an Act that the Crown has assented to. I think nothing more need be said to show the absurdity of the attitude of hon. members opposite.

Whilst we are discussing grievances, I would like to refer to some of the broken promises of the Government.

This is the last session of this Parliament, and it is the last opportunity that hon. members opposite will have to redeem those promises. The ex-Premier has in the past over and over again promised the primary producers of Queensland a measure that will relieve them of the injustices under which they are suffering at the present time in connection with income taxation. We know the disastrous effect the present legislation has on the primary producers, who have to contend with good and bad seasons and fluctuating prices. That applies equally whether the producer is producing crops or live stock, and it is only right and just, especially under the present system of a graduated tax, that some averaging system should be established. I have investigated these anomalies, and I desire to illustrate the results of the present system. I will take the case of a business man, commercial man, or professional man whose taxable income amounts to £500 per annum, giving an aggregate taxable income of £2,500 over a period of five years. I will now take the case of an artisan or clerk whose taxable income for

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the same period is £250 per annum, making in all a taxable income of £1,250, or half that of the previous case. I will now take the case of a small producer or grazier who during that five-year period obtains £1,250, but, owing to the fluctuations which I have mentioned—a run of four bad seasons, which is likely to occur in our climate, and the rise and fall of prices—his actual income amounts to only £62 10s. a year—not sufficient to live on—for the period of four years, and then he has one good season yielding a big crop and returning a big price, and he receives £1,000. During that five-year period he has not received any more than the clerk or artisan in a settled regular position, and he has received only half the income received by the commercial man. While in the one case the business man received an aggregate of £2,500 and pays an income tax of £12 per annum, or an aggregate of £60 for the five-year period, and while the clerk or artisan is assured of £250 per annum for a period of five years and pays an income tax of £1 12s. 1d. at 6.372d. in the £1 per annum or an aggregate of £8 4s. 7d., the producer who during the four years has been existing on the starvation line will pay for that one good year income tax amounting to £50. He has to pay six times as much as the man in receipt of £250 per annum and has to pay nearly as much as the person in receipt of £500 per annum. His one year's income is taxed at the rate of 12d. in the £1, and he loses all the exemptions the other £1,250 man enjoys. That will illustrate the gross anomalies and the unjust incidence of taxation in this State. We on this side represent the country interests, and the case I have just quoted clearly exposes the fraudulent claims by hon. members opposite to represent the country interests. We have over and over again fought this matter out, and the Government in the past have promised to deal with it. They did deal with it. What they did was to average the income over a period of years to provide for the year in which the settler got no income at all. It was a case, though, of "Thank God for nothing." Once you get into the grasp of the Income Tax Department you do not get much relief from the present averaging system. If you have an income of only half-a-crown for the year, it debars the taxpayer from the benefits of the section that was passed to provide for averaging incomes. To carry out the Act in that way is simply a Theodoric evasion. It is characteristic of most of the acts of administration of the Government. If the Government have been consistent at all, they have been consistent in this matter. I ask now while we have a part of the session still to go that this matter affecting the primary producers should be dealt with. It is perfectly fair that I should bring it up, and we are entitled to consideration in this regard.

As we are about to consider the Estimates, I ask that the abuse of parliamentary usage of allowing huge sums to be voted without the slightest opportunity being afforded by the Government of discussing or criticising them should receive redress. This redress can very easily be made without extending the time allowed for the Estimates. Previous to the present Administration coming into office Mr. Denham, who was then Premier, allowed the Estimates one year to be taken from one end, and the next year allowed of their consideration from the other end. We always got through more than one-half of the Estimates by this method. It meant that at least

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every two years every vote was fully discussed. Although this Administration has been asked to follow that practice it has never been adopted. The Government last session would not even allow an extra three days' discussion on Estimates which involved several millions of pounds, although it is allowable under our Standing Orders. If ever there was a gross abuse of the power exercised in this House by the majority, it was on that occasion. If the Government want to redeem their character, and if they want to be able to take to themselves credit when they go to the electors of honest administration, it is up to them to allow this House a full discussion before every vote is passed.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Mr. Speaker, I would like to voice one or two grievances before you leave the chair. I particularly want to take exception to recent action by the Cabinet in vetoing a proposal in regard to something outside the jurisdiction of the Cabinet altogether. They have taken upon themselves to veto a proposal against the public interests, and against an authority which has been established by this Parliament. I refer to the Brisbane Tramway Trust, in which the Government have a financial interest only, and it can only be because of that reason that they have exercised the power I complain of. The action of the Cabinet in vetoing a proposal of the Brisbane Tramway Trust has no justification whatever. The intention of Parliament and the authority of the law has been departed from and entirely overlooked.

A great deal of dissatisfaction has occurred in regard to the action taken by the Government in this matter. If it is the intention of this House, by law, to perform a certain thing, then a smaller body of men not interested in the matter should not take away from the people the rights to which the people are entitled, and I am justified at all times in taking exception to such action. I shall put the question concisely. The Brisbane Tramway Trust recommended the construction of a certain extension in my electorate. The matter was dealt with by Cabinet, and the recommendation of the Tramway Trust was absolutely vetoed. The Government are not entitled in such circumstances to veto such a matter. On page 174 of "Hansard" for 1922, during the debate on the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill, these remarks will be found—

"Mr. Kerr: Who will decide the question of extensions?"

"THE HOME SECRETARY: That is a matter which I will deal with on the second reading. It will be better for me then to deal with the question fully and frankly from every point of view."

That was all right; but, when the second reading of the Bill came on, the ex-Premier, the hon. member for Chillagoe, dealt with the Bill at that stage, and, according to "Hansard," page 1529 of 1922, he had this to say—

"In policy matters the trust will have control."

Later, on the same page, the hon. gentleman said—

"The trust is charged with the duty of formulating the policy relating to future extensions of the tramway, and so on."

Such sentiments were supported by hon. members on both sides when the Bill went through. Under that Bill an advisory board

was referred to, and the ex-Premier stated, "Even this board has not overriding powers." Yet we have the Government, through Cabinet, overriding the legislation of the State and preventing this extension after it was recommended by the Brisbane Tramway Trust. It has been set out in various "Government Gazettes" that the Tramway Trust may apply by Order in Council for anything in the public interests, and such application will be granted. That has been done in this case, and the recommendation has been vetoed. This extension was for the public benefit, and the Government had no right whatever to turn it down. At a later stage I shall again ask the Government, through the Home Secretary—who is administering the Act—to grant that extension. Whenever the public is to benefit from a public utility the public interests must prevail. It is provided that facilities must be given to the people; they must be saved expense as far as possible, and saved trouble. This tramway extension which was recommended by the Brisbane Tramway Trust fulfils those three conditions. Yet the Government stepped in and vetoed the proposition. The public benefit was not considered by the Cabinet.

Mr. Theodore, who had charge of this Bill, as reported on page 1529 of "Hansard" for 1922, had this to say:

"They will have to employ their experts to manage the tramways, and they must give them free and untrammelled control of the tramways to ensure success."

Of course that is a principle that can again be supported by every member of this House. They should have the untrammelled control which it was expected would be given to them when the Bill was going through, and I want to know under what circumstances any Government have the right to veto a proposal which has on its side everything fair, everything honourable, and everything necessary. I am going to quote from correspondence in connection with this matter. First of all, I take the Commissioner for Railways. As soon, apparently, as the Commissioner for Railways heard that this extension was going to be built, he wrote to the Home Secretary:—

"That both routes were good lines, so far as settlement was concerned.

"That the competition with the Railway Department was not serious, as the bus fare was high, but if the tram fare is fixed at 3d. the present service would take a good deal of the railway's business."

We all know that the fare on all new extensions is 4d., and that argument should not prevail with the Government. The Commissioner, in another part of his letter, said:—

"That part of the district adjacent to Newmarket road and the first portion of the Kedron Brook road, is well served by the railway stations at Windsor and Wilston, which had seventeen trains per day to the city.

"He (the Commissioner) considered it unwise to allow one public utility to compete with another.

"Settlement in the neighbourhood of Grange road would best be served via King street, and this route would cater for a number of people who would not be affected by the Newmarket road proposal."

That was referred to the Tramway Trust, which placed before the Home Secretary an unanswerable argument as to why this particular extension should be proceeded with, and an Order in Council granted. The arguments placed by the trust before the Home Secretary are unanswerable, and what led the Home Secretary to get into the present position is more than I can understand. It is impossible to understand the attitude of the Home Secretary, who placed the matter before a very limited Cabinet and then vetoed the proposal which was backed up by the local progress association, backed up by the local authorities, and backed up by tramway needs in the locality itself, and also backed by the Tramway Trust. If there is any argument at all for the Government vetoing such a proposal, I am at a loss to understand it. The Tramway Trust had this to say:—

"The Commissioner's views were carefully considered and with Mr. Davidson the members of the trust again inspected. The trust, however, was still of the opinion that the tramline should be constructed via Newmarket road.

"The trust, while agreeing to the King street route, being 37 chains shorter from a construction point of view, the Kedron Brook road route to the city was 26 chains shorter—over half a mile for every trip—equal to 3200 miles per annum. This would be incurred at the same fare and would lengthen the time occupied in travelling.

"The trust enclosed a map showing the settlement and stated that it was obvious that the Newmarket road route would serve a greater population.

"The trust also pointed out that at present four buses served this area—three via Kedron Brook road and one via King street. These buses could scarcely cope with the traffic, irrespective of high fares. This the trust considered sufficient evidence that a large proportion of the residents are not satisfied with the train service and found it too inconvenient.

"The trust still considers the route via Newmarket road would be in the interests of the greater proportion of the residents."

I hope the Home Secretary will go back on what he has done when evidence is brought before him and give these additional facilities. The train service is not giving satisfaction, as there are not sufficient trains to meet the demand of the travelling public, who are suffering great injustice, and there is every possibility of that injustice increasing. Surely the Railway Department will not say that the railway accommodation is sufficient to meet the requirements of the public. I take the view that railways in a closely populated centre will never meet the requirements of the public. As time goes on and the population continues to increase, the railways in the metropolitan area will be quite inadequate to meet the needs of the travelling public, and the question of electrification should be considered by the Government. The benefit that has been derived from electrification of the metropolitan railway systems in other parts of Australia is shown particularly in Melbourne. The Government undoubtedly will have to take the matter of electrification of the metropolitan

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railways into consideration; but in the meantime the Government step in and say that additional services apart from the extension of the tramways cannot be allowed. Why do the Government not permit the Tramway Trust to make extensions to meet the requirements of the travelling public? It is said that the Cabinet will not revoke previous decisions. I hope that the Home Secretary will take into consideration what I have said, and definitely decide to do something in the matter.

I mentioned that in course of time the railways would not meet the requirements of traffic in the metropolitan area. The Clerk of the House has courteously handed me an extract from a work in which the then Secretary for Public Works is reported as having given utterance to the doctrine that the Government should never lend assistance to the construction of a railway where boat communication was available. This was in connection with the survey of the railway line from Brisbane to Ipswich. The Secretary for Public Works of that day said that we should not provide railway accommodation where there were water facilities. The present Government are taking up the stand that where we have a cumbersome Railway Department we should not give the Tramway Trust power to grant additional facilities to the travelling public. In conclusion, I say that primarily the ratepayers of this area accept the financial responsibility for their proposal. The ratepayers there have formed some of the strongest progress associations in Queensland, and under the circumstances I have mentioned they are entitled to consideration, but the Government in their wisdom have seen fit to veto the proposals of the Tramway Trust. They are responsible to the people, and they should do the will of the people. They should have regard to the intentions of Parliament when the Brisbane Tramway Trust

Act was going through. I hope [12 noon] that the Home Secretary will read what I have said this morning, and that, whenever the request is repeated, he will give it consideration. One member of the Government party, the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, presented a petition to the Government direct or to caucus. He is conversant with the requests of the petitioners, but there is no intention to do what has been asked for.

Mr. WRIGHT: How do you know?

Mr. KERR: I read it in the Press.

Mr. WRIGHT: How do you know there is no intention to do it?

Mr. KERR: The extension would have been made a long time ago had the Government not interfered.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is not a fair statement.

Mr. KERR: It is.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: It is a fair statement, because Alderman Jolly, who was then a member of the trust, attended a public meeting and told the people, "Your extension has been agreed to and is the first on the list to be commenced"; but since that day other extensions have been completed, and I say definitely now that probably if it had been intended to allow the extension it would have been completed by now. I hope that metropolitan members will see that the requests of the public, for which they are justified in asking, are granted.

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There is another matter of great importance to the State on which I wish to touch. I want to take the opportunity of pointing out certain anomalies, difficulties, and injustices which have occurred in regard to soldier settlements. Everything done for the soldier has been done with a very bad grace. After a long number of years some of the best settlers have been driven off their holdings because of a lack of sympathy on the part of the Government. From the very inception of these settlements the Government have never accepted the returned soldier at his true value. There is no question whatever about that, and I shall quote proof of what I have said. We must not forget that soldier settlement is a very important matter to the State financially.

On 30th June last the Commonwealth had advanced over £2,500,000 to the State for the purpose of assisting soldier settlement. The interest due on that amount runs into approximately £700,000 over a six-year period, so that, when we tackle the question, we are dealing with a charge against consolidated revenue in the vicinity of three-quarters of a million sterling. Hon. members will agree that that is a pretty big amount. The Commonwealth is helping soldier settlements and the State considerably. In the first place, the Commonwealth allows a rebate of about £282,000, or in the vicinity of 40 per cent., from the interest due by the State. That is a very fair thing for the Commonwealth to do; and, when we take into account the amount which has been paid in interest by the soldiers themselves—£153,000—we find over a period of, say, six years, that the State has had to provide only £270,000 in interest, or approximately £50,000 a year. Considering the liberal nature of the concession given by the Commonwealth, it was "up" to the State to do a great deal more than it has done in this regard. We must remember that all this loan money, which is a great asset to the State, was borrowed from the Commonwealth for five years at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., afterwards increasing. The Federal Government moreover, on 17th July last announced that they were going to write off £475,000 of the principal owing by the State and that the rate of interest was to be reduced to 5 per cent. after 31st December, 1930.

That proves conclusively that the Commonwealth Government have in a financial way given this State opportunities to do more for the returned men than this State ever contemplated doing. I repeat again that the soldier settlers have never been taken at their proper value. The Secretary for Public Lands last year stated—

"The position at Beerburum is due to poor soil over which I have no control, and the suggestion that selectors should be transferred to other areas and re-established there is a costly and doubtful undertaking."

It is very difficult to understand the hon. gentleman's reasoning in such a statement. He contends that the transfer of these settlers would be a costly undertaking, but I contend that it would be more costly to keep them where they are. It is more costly for this State to keep these settlers with two or three years' experience on barren land than place them on proper country. Where is there any support for the statement that it would be too costly to

remove these settlers from Beerburrum? Surely the Secretary for Public Lands must know that it is more costly to keep them there when they could be very well utilised in the same activity in another part of the State. He says that it would be a doubtful proposition. If he would tackle the matter in a proper way, he would find that it is not a doubtful proposition. In support of that statement I desire strongly to point out that, when these settlers were permitted to select their own land and carry out their own improvements of their own volition in their own way, there was an increase of 59 settlers between the years 1921 and 1924; but under the system of group settlement, where the Government had control and where certain barren land and salt marshes were purchased at £11 10s. per acre and the settlers debited with that amount, the number of settlers decreased by 575 in three years. Where the matter was under Government control the settlers left the place in disgust. At some of the railway sidings to-day one can see stacks of carts representing hundreds of pounds and farm implements representing thousands of pounds all depreciating, but no attempt made by the Government to make the loss as small as possible. I know that these salt marshes and barren sand lands have caused the settlers to lose heart in their undertaking. I know of one man who spent three and a-half years at Beerburrum on a farm in which he had invested the amount of his gratuity bond and his deferred pay. He was a very fine type of citizen and was a farmer before going on to that area. He had won the Military Cross, had two bars, the D.S.O., the Croix de Guerre, and the Royal Cross of St. George. He was a man with the right temperament and was absolutely physically fit, but his efforts were a complete "wash-out," and to-day he is working on construction work. He should never have been allowed to leave a farming occupation. That is only one case, but I know of dozens and dozens where the men were not wasters, but men of experience and of the best standing in the community. They have given of their all; yet the Minister says that it would be a costly undertaking to give them a fair chance.

There is one point I wish to make clear. In 1921, on page 1424 of "Hansard," the hon. member for Murrumbidgee asked for a Royal Commission to inquire into these matters. That was more than four years ago. When I first entered this House I visited the various soldier settlements, and as a result of my visit I also asked that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into them. The Government as yet have taken no action. What did they do? They appointed a useless and nebulous valuation board and sent the members of this board around the various settlements. They received an allowance of £1 5s. a day, and the cost to the State up to the 30th June last was £1,341. It was patent to everyone that the valuations of the board were only office valuations, and that their work could have been done in the office.

MR. WARREN: Hear, hear! Absolutely, it could.

MR. KERR: The Government have hesitated to appoint a Royal Commission in connection with this matter, and have been attempting to deceive the soldier settlers into the belief that something is being done for

them. Their policy of waiting has cost the State a great loss in man-power and money—a loss that in some instances cannot be overcome. When the valuation board brought in their report, what did they do? They gave concessions to those men who had made no attempt to meet their obligations with respect to the repayment of interest, and told the men who had met their obligations that they must keep on paying. The men who would not pay had their periods of payment extended in some instances to 1926 and 1927. I know of a settler in my electorate who was an inmate of the Stanthorpe Sanatorium, suffering from tuberculosis—one of the worst diseases of the war. He was compelled by the Government to pay his interest. He wrote a letter to the Government asking that the interest he paid should be deducted from his capital. That was a very reasonable request. He said, "Let the cash I have paid in be deducted from my account. Failing that, place it to my credit for the payment of interest in the ensuing years." He was too honourable a man to ask for his money back. He wrote this letter to the Secretary for Public Lands—

"Hon. W. McCormack,

"Minister for Lands.

"Dear Sir.—I enclose herewith letter received by me from the Agricultural Bank in regard to my request for consideration. So far as payments of interest by me is concerned, I am one of very few on Enoggera Settlement who paid their interest charges, and I am also a tuberculosis patient, and I appeal to you to give fair consideration to my request, which is only equitable, because men who refrained from paying their interest charges could have done so, and that discrimination is being made. I, for my honesty, am being made the butt of their ridicule.

"I remain,

"Yours truly,

"ROBERT DUFF."

The Secretary for Public Lands in reply stated—

"Department of Public Lands,

"Brisbane, 1st May, 1925.

"Ref. No. G.S.S. 36.

"Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant wherein you request that the concessions granted by the Government to borrowers under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Acts in respect of unpaid interest dues be extended to you.

"The contents thereof have been carefully noted, and in reply I would inform you that it is regretted your request cannot be acceded to as the concessions granted do not apply in your case, as has already been explained to you in a letter dated 16th ultimo from the Agricultural Bank.

"In reference to your further remarks it may be pointed out that wherever it is ascertained that a borrower has intentionally refrained from paying his dues, although able to do so, suitable action will be taken.

"Yours faithfully,

"W. MCCORMACK,

"Minister for Lands."

"Mr. Robert Duff,

"Soldiers' Settlement, Enoggera."

Mr. Kerr.]

Absolute camouflage. There is not one word of sincerity in that last paragraph. I know of no case throughout Queensland where any of those settlers have had consideration. This man put a very fair proposition to the Government. He was told by the supervisor out on his settlement that, if he did not pay this money, he would have to get off his holding. He was bullied and bludgeoned into paying this interest, and he paid it out of the pension that he received from the Commonwealth Government while in the Stanthorpe Sanatorium, suffering from "T.B." The fair and reasonable proposition which he put to this Government, through the Secretary for Lands, was turned down flat. These things are happening in our midst. Satisfaction has not been given to these men. Anomalies have been created. Where this interest has been paid, why could it not be wiped out and these men allowed to deduct it from their capital commitments? I ask the Minister to have this interest deducted from the capital, and I shall pester him to do so on every occasion I can find in this House. If that cannot be done, as an alternative I suggest that the payments be placed to his credit, and, as interest falls due, his indebtedness be reduced accordingly.

Mr. FARRELL: Does that apply to bankers also?

Mr. KERR: The private banks have not got all the loan money that the States have to-day. If they were getting some of the privileges the States are getting, it might apply. The present arrangement is not an equitable one, and the valuations on soldier settlements should be reconsidered. We know that men have not paid their interest and that some men are going scot-free, whereas the other man who has paid his interest is not granted any concession at all. Why not give these men credit for their payments and so give them encouragement? If it cannot be taken off the capital, it should be taken off their future payments of interest. That is fair and reasonable. We know that some have dodged payment.

Having dealt with those two matters there is just one other matter that I wish to refer to.

According to the latest statistics the passengers on the Queensland railways have paid in one year £1,728,000 out of a total revenue of £5,714,000. In other words, 30 per cent. of the revenue of the Queensland railways last year was paid by passengers travelling on those railways. The passengers carried have been increasing by a million per year, and I contend that the travelling public to-day is insufficiently catered for. At various hours of the day people are packed together more or less like cattle in trucks, and seeing that nearly £2,000,000 yearly are extracted in railway fares, it must be admitted that they are entitled to a good deal more consideration than they are getting to-day. I definitely say that the Enoggera branch line in my electorate can be called the Cinderella of the metropolitan railway service. We have never had a proper service. We have pressed for additional trains on several occasions, and I can quite understand why they have not been granted. The Commissioner for Railways makes no bones about it. He says that the tunnel will take no more trains; that that section of the line has a train on it all the time, and additional

accommodation cannot be provided. If that state of affairs exists, what is intended by it? Surely the Government have some policy! It has been stated that to quadruplicate the lines would cost well over £1,000,000.

Then there is the important scheme that I have mentioned in this House. If millions are required to be expended on our railways within a few miles of the metropolis, would it not be better to convert our metropolitan lines into electric lines? Increased accommodation is needed, and the travelling public are suffering as a result. It is one of the greatest problems that we have to deal with, and it rests with the Government to tackle this question as it should be tackled.

Mr. WRIGHT: You ought to know that this overcrowding at certain hours of the day occurs in every capital city of the world.

Mr. KERR: I know there is overcrowding. As everyone knows, the population in the metropolitan area is increasing to such an extent that there has been overcrowding for at least five years. The population is still increasing. What is going to be the result? If the tunnel will take no more trains—if that section will take no more trains—how is the problem going to be solved? Mr. Davidson puts the position in a nutshell, and it remains for the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to go into this question and see where we stand. I ask for the appointment of this Royal Commission. This matter requires deep thought, and it requires the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. Every member of the Government should give this matter the keenest consideration.

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

* The PREMIER (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) (who, on rising, was received with Government cheers) said: I have no intention whatever of wasting time replying to the so-called complaints or the idle words of those people who talk about settling farmers on the land, or about questions not being properly and orderly answered by members of the Ministry.

Mr. CLAYTON: You are not game.

The PREMIER: I have just as much moral and physical courage as the hon. member. Nor am I going to attempt to deal with the idle statements made by the hon. member for Enoggera about our treatment of the soldier settlers.

Mr. KERR: They are not idle; they are true.

The PREMIER: The late leader of the Opposition, Mr. Taylor—who compares more than favourably with that hon. member in every respect—has already given testimony which has been broadcast to the world as to our generous treatment of soldier settlers. A very honest and manly statement was made by the hon. member for Windsor.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: And they turned him out.

The PREMIER: They turned him out. He made a statement that this Government have treated these soldier settlers better than the Government of any other State. That is borne out not only by the statement of the hon. member for Windsor but by facts as they exist to-day.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It was done for a purpose. (Interruption.)

[Mr. Kerr.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: They talk about the welfare of the soldier, and they exploited the soldier by selling land to him at a high price. In Victoria they bought land from their friends at the prices asked, and made it available for the soldiers, and then said they were carrying out their definite promise to the soldier when he went away that nothing was too good for him. That is what the soldier got from the Liberal party.

I do not intend to waste any time in replying to the statements of hon. members opposite about settlement on the land. (Opposition interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I want to make my statement in my own way; I did not interject when the leader of the Opposition was speaking. Re this cry of land settlement, Harry Lawson, one of the most patriotic of Australian poets, in one of his compositions said that the greatest curse to the country to-day is the individual politicians and others who go about the country prating about settling people on the land. If there has been one crime more than another that the party opposite have to answer for, it is their policy of settling people on the land and destroying the first crop that the Almighty supplied to the people in the form of forests. That great forestry authority, Mr. Hutchins, when he came to Australia at the request of the West Australian Government, pointed out that in connection with the cost of land settlement in Australia that the greatest criminals were the Queensland Government—that was before the Labour Government came into power—because of the destruction of hardwood and softwood timbers, under the pretence of settling people on the land. He said that that was a crime that posterity would have to pay hundreds of millions of pounds for in the near future. Yet hon. members opposite prate about settling people on the land! Our Government have recognised that before we can settle people on the land we must do something to organise markets. We are the only Government in Australia who have endeavoured to organise markets, organise farmers, and secure for them a reasonable price for their produce.

Mr. CORSER: In what way have you improved the prices?

The PREMIER: I have always contended that the farmer takes two great risks. One risk is that which no Government can take away—that is, the risk of bad seasons, pests, cyclones, and droughts. Another risk is that after he produces a crop—if the seasons are favourable and he can produce a crop—there may be a slump in the market. The Government have endeavoured to secure a market for him at a reasonable price by the pooling system. The Queensland Government are the only Government who have attempted to do that. The other Australian Governments would not attempt to do so, because their friends and supporters are the middlemen. (Opposition interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to desist from interjections.

The PREMIER: In regard to the main charge made against us, and the only one I consider worth replying to—the questioning of the right of my Government to co-operate with the Government of New South

Wales and other States in contesting what we believe to be an unconstitutional Act of Parliament passed by the Commonwealth, which affects all the citizens of this State. I can well remember Mr. Denham when Premier in 1912 winning a referendum on the cry of "State Rights!" or "Home Rule for Queensland." I know that he used the term "Home Rule" in order to get votes from people who believed in Home Rule for Ireland. He went all over the State claiming that the Fisher Government were going to take away from Queensland its Home Rule and the right to govern itself in its own way. He was successful in defeating on that occasion the referendum in favour of granting the necessary power to the Commonwealth to amend the Federal Constitution. What is the position to-day? Under the guise of order and good government—a good old phrase that was used in England many years ago in order to influence the men there—the Commonwealth Government are now trying to shirk their responsibilities by taking power to appoint a suitable police magistrate as chairman of a special board, and by appointing their nominees to do certain work, which in my opinion, they have not got the constitutional power to do.

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. Piddington, K.C., recently expressed an opinion upon this matter, with which I agree; and it is because I agree with Mr. Piddington that I have consented to allow the State funds to be used to determine whether this law passed by the Commonwealth is not an infringement of State rights or is not in excess of the powers of the Commonwealth. Mr. Piddington says in an article in "Smith's Weekly"—

"Neither the Governor-General nor Ministers acting on the recommendations of an impromptu 'board' can exercise 'the judicial power of the Commonwealth.' This is vested in the High Court and other permanent and Federal Courts, composed of judges who cannot be removed unless both Houses find them guilty of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. The law is thus supreme above the Executive; the courts above party decision."

Of course, that would not suit the Commonwealth Government. If the question was left to the High Court, the High Court would publish its reasons for what it considered to be the necessity of its action. Mr. Piddington goes on to say—

"If it is constitutional, then the new law rests upon principles so strange to British communities that they ought to be voted on by the electors. One is that in industrial warfare the Ministry of the day can determine which side is in the right, and deport the adherents of the opposite section; a second is that the new power is deportation or nothing; a third is that the right of an Australian citizen to live in Australia is determinable outside the courts of law."

I submit that Mr. Piddington strikes the right note in his declaration, and, because of my knowledge of the position and because of the genesis of this Act of Parliament. I have decided to participate in testing it. Unquestionably there is a doubt as to its legality, and the question should be decided for all time. It is not fair to call upon private individuals to bear the burden of doing that. I

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say that it is for the State to look after State interests. The Senate—which was supposed to be the custodian of State rights—failed in its duty to throw out the measure, and I therefore think the Queensland Government are quite justified in co-operating with the Governments of New South Wales and South Australia in testing the validity of the law; and now is the time to do it.

I have no doubt that, if the leader of the Opposition were in power, one of his first steps would be to deport Mr. Rymer and Mr. Moroney. There is no doubt that that was in the mind of the hon. member this morning, although he did not have the courage to say so.

MR. SIZER: You would like to do it.

THE PREMIER: With regard to the extraordinary powers vested in the board which has been appointed by the Commonwealth Government I should like to say something. The powers under the Act are vested in a board constituted by the Minister in charge of the department concerned. The chairman must be a police, stipendiary, or special magistrate, and there are two other persons as members. There is no doubt that, just as in the old days the chairman of wages boards was appointed by the Government and was temperamentally fitted, so this board will be temperamentally fitted, and it will be simply a matter of form for it to make an inquiry, and for anybody obnoxious to the Commonwealth Government or the Prime Minister to be deported. There is no appeal. Once the recommendation of the board is made the Minister has power to put the person concerned into gaol until he is deported. That is a principle foreign to our ideas, and one for which this Government cannot stand. We believe that we can deal in our own way under our own laws with the people who break them, and we do not intend to allow the Commonwealth to exercise this power until we are satisfied that the Act is constitutionally sound; and for that reason we have decided to assist other States in testing the validity of this law which so gravely affects State rights.

I want to quote from a paper which is not a supporter of the Labour party, but is in fact anything but a Labour paper. I refer to the "Queensland Times." To-day in its leading article entitled, "The Deportation Act," it states—

"Mr. Gillies came to a wise decision when he decided to join with the New South Wales Government in testing the validity of what has become known as the Deportation Act. There will be those who will be very ready to say that Mr. Gillies is actuated by a desire to protect the forces of disorder which the Communists have persistently encouraged in the political and industrial spheres, but this criticism will be offered only by those sour and narrow-souled conservatives who have not the mind to appreciate nor the heart to feel the possible menace in the Deportation Act to principles which are the very life-blood of true democracy. We have no sympathy with Communists or any other fire-eater who has visions of a proletarian paradise built upon the ruins of democracy; but we do have a very strong faith in democracy, and it is for this reason we regard the Deportation Act with some misgiving. The men against whom the Act has been aimed may be

extremists of the worst kind, but, as we understand the liberty which we have inherited from the great struggles of the past, they also possess rights."

Further on it states—

"Deportation ought to be reserved as a weapon against aliens who decline our citizenship and work as enemies against us. Once citizenship has been granted it ought not to be taken away unless in very special cases, such as active support of a foreign power."

I agree with that statement in full. It emphasises and sets out my own ideas with regard to this particular matter. The genesis of this Act was the recent maritime trouble during which the Bruce Government came in for the same criticism as I have received during the last few days. It was stated in the Tory press that it was expected that Mr. Bruce would rise to the occasion and use brute force in dealing with the strikers. Of course, the only conclusion one can come to is that those who criticised the Government for not using brute force considered that brute force should have been used. The Labour party does not stand for brute force. Having quoted the opinion of Mr. Piddington, and having set out briefly the attitude of the Government, I want to state briefly in conclusion the case as I sum it up—

1. The Commonwealth Deportation Act is an Act vitally affecting the whole of the citizens of the Commonwealth.
2. It is of such a nature that it is reasonable to presuppose that its constitutionality should be proved
3. In testing the constitutionality of a Federal Act, action must, of course, be taken to have its validity tested in the High Court.
4. Such testing necessarily means the expenditure of a considerable amount of money.
5. As the Act is of so vital importance as it involves a definite question of State and Commonwealth rights, it is considered that the testing of such an Act is a matter of State concern.
6. It is therefore right that where the State and Federal powers are in question, the State should reasonably assist in the expenditure of money to enable the Act to be tested, and that a private citizen should not be put to the whole burden of the expenses.

That, in brief, is justification for my Cabinet in agreeing to assist in the testing of this important and far-reaching drastic piece of legislation by co-operating with the two other large States—New South Wales and South Australia. The Government of little Tasmania have expressed their sympathy with the action of Mr. Lang, but they have stated that they have not the money to fight the case.

MR. CORSER: They gave no expression at all.

THE PREMIER: I make no apology for what I have done in this matter. I would like to refer hon. members opposite to what their predecessors have done in the matter of deportation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We do not use batons.

MR. CORSER: You used rifles in the North

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The PREMIER: If there is one thing more than another that hon. members opposite ought to be ashamed of, it is the part that their predecessors both in this country and in Great Britain have played in the matter of deportation. Some of the best men in Great Britain were deported. I have an historic document in the Chief Secretary's Office showing a list of men deported sixty or seventy years ago. Many of them were deported for offences such as stealing a silk handkerchief, stealing a fowl, and other trivial offences of that kind. Some of these men had taken food to save themselves from starvation. I might refer particularly to the case of the "Six Men of Dorset." If there is one thing more than another that past Governments should be ashamed of, it is the matter of deportation. That being so this Government, being alive to the ill-treatment of men in days gone by for trivial offences—for which the men were deported—regard this question as a serious matter, and, therefore, we are prepared to test the validity of this Act in a constitutional way. (Opposition interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. KERR: You have that word "constitutional" on your brain.

The PREMIER: I would like to remind some of the hon. members opposite—because their memory is very short, and unfortunately the memory of other people is likewise short inasmuch as they forget the details—of the crime that men were guilty of in times gone by to justify their deportation, and to refer particularly to the "Six Men of Dorset." These law-abiding men, three of them Wesleyan local preachers, were deported from Great Britain less than one hundred years ago and sent out in chains to Van Diemen's land because they encouraged a meeting to protest against bread made of corn "tailings" spread with cooked turnips instead of butter, and combined to ask a rise in wages of 1s. a week. This was in February, 1834, less than a century ago. These "Six Men of Dorset" were hauled before a special magistrate to stand their trial and to answer the charge, and they were finally sent to Van Diemen's land in chains along with 200 other men, the majority of whom died on the way out.

Mr. KELSO: Is this a primary school? (Opposition interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: No, this is simply to remind the hon. members of something of which they should be reminded. These men were described as "honest, industrious, God-fearing working men." Their demand was for an extra shilling a week, which threw the landlords into a panic. The six men were arrested, and willingly walked 7 miles to court. They were brought before a magistrate, who was a landowner, and were charged under a law against mutiny framed for sailors only. The judge charged the jury that "if they did not find these men guilty, they would forfeit the opinion of the grand jury." They were found guilty and sentenced, as I said, to deportation to Van Diemen's land. After a number of years their case was taken up by the papers and workers. Demonstrations were held, and in one case a procession of 50,000 workmen, 7 miles in length, marched

to the residence of the Prime Minister and presented a large petition urging that these men should be allowed to return home. We do not want to see that state of affairs in Australia. That is our justification for raising our protest and in assisting to test this law, which we believe is unconstitutional.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. CLAYTON: You will have to get Theodore back.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): We have a Public Works Commission which runs the country into something like £2 000 a year in expenses, and which seems to be doing very little work. Nearly two years ago that Commission took evidence in connection with the proposed railway to Redcliffe. The Commission admit, and everybody who knows the district admits, the very great necessity for something being done to connect Redcliffe with Brisbane by rail. I waited on the previous Treasurer, and asked him to grant £500 to have soundings taken of Hayes's Inlet and the Pine River, preparatory to deciding upon bridge construction. That £500 was not granted, and all the work and trouble of the Commission is hung up for the sake of that £500. I ask whether it is a fair thing that an important work of this description should be hung up after the Commission went to all the trouble they did, and after the expenditure of a considerable amount of money, all for the sake of £500. We candidly admit that money is scarce, but surely the Government are not so bankrupt that they cannot find £500 to finalise this work?

Our Public Service Commission are continually inspecting different places, and the same sort of thing is happening all over the country. Is it possible that the Government cannot see that the money expended on this Commission is being absolutely wasted? A place like Redcliffe is being shut off from communication with the city through the meanness of the Government in not providing this £500. It is absolutely scandalous that nothing is done. The Commission are desirous of furnishing their report, but they cannot do anything until they know approximately what the cost of the bridge will be, and that information cannot be secured until they obtain this £500 to take the necessary soundings. The Commission recognise the necessity of such a railway, because some of the members of the Commission have expressed the opinion that there is urgent need of railway connection between Redcliffe and Brisbane. Redcliffe is languishing because it is without that railway connection, and I ask the Treasurer to consider this matter very seriously.

Another matter upon which I desire to speak is the Agricultural Bank. All country people are very seriously inconvenienced by the niggardly administration of the Agricultural Bank. I do not wish to convey such an idea; but if the management instructed its inspectors to undervalue land so that it would not be compelled to advance money, matters could not be in a worse position. The necessity for assisting farmers is one of the most urgent matters in connection with land settlement. If the Government do not liberalise this institution, a serious loss will take place. Not only is it hard to get money from the Agricultural Bank, but the advances are slow in coming. We know perfectly well that if the Government act in a liberal

Mr. Warren.]

manner with this Bank, there will be a certain amount of loss. I candidly admit that. There is no doubt that a bank of this description cannot be run without a certain amount of loss. Wherever a bank has been instituted to advance money to settlers, it has been made, not for commercial gain, but so that progress may take place in settling the country. In furthering the interests of settlers, it may be that there will be a loss. I have no doubt there is a certain amount of loss at the present time; but the small loss that has been incurred in encouraging settlement in Queensland proves conclusively that the bank is acting in a mean manner, and is not sufficiently liberal in its treatment of the man on the land. I am continually getting reports that the bank is trying to force people to pay up their interest on a threat of foreclosure. In some cases the land is so poor that it is impossible for the settlers to make a living, and the Secretary for Public Lands should seriously consider the question of a resurvey of farm lands. There are too many men in Queensland wasting their energy on land that is absolutely useless. That energy could be put to a better use. Not only does that apply to soldier settlers, but also to ordinary settlers. The Government would be doing a wise thing if they had a resurvey made of all farm lands. It has been said that it would be too expensive to remove these people to other land. That has been said particularly in regard to soldier settlements; but it would be far cheaper to remove these people to other land than to leave them where they are. If that were done, the energy that these people are wasting on unproductive land would be far better used on land that would produce something. The Government are making a serious mistake in not having a resurvey of farm lands. A resurvey of farm lands at one time was seriously advocated by all members of country constituencies, and it is about time the Government undertook this work. If the bank is to be of any use, it will have to be more liberal.

Mr. W. COOPER: What about the private banks?

Mr. WARREN: I am not dealing with the trading banks. The Government have created the Agricultural Bank to do something that the private banks cannot do.

Mr. W. COOPER: It is doing it.

Mr. WARREN: It is not doing it; it is absolutely tinkering with the matter. If the Government are going to increase settlement under modern conditions, they will have to advance a reasonable amount to settlers. I know that a certain amount of caution must be used.

Mr. W. COOPER: The Agricultural Bank is advancing money at a more reasonable rate than the ordinary private banks.

Mr. WARREN: No, it is not advancing any money, because it will not take over a mortgage held by a private bank. The hon. member wants to have his argument both ways. If a commercial institution has lent £300 on a piece of land, it will certainly be worth that amount; but in many cases in our coastal districts where a private bank has lent money the Government have refused to make a loan to liquidate the debt. Through their inspectors they say that the value is not there. I would point out the great loss a man suffers who has his land undervalued in that way. We

know that over-capitalised land is not good from a productive point of view, because the man who is working the land has to make so much more profit to make it pay. In the North Coast district there are places where land has gone up to over £100 an acre, and the interest on the capital involved is altogether too high to make it profitable unless it is extremely good land. We do not agree with the over-capitalisation of land: it is not a wise thing from the farmer's point of view, and one of our troubles to-day is that our farms are over-capitalised. Generally speaking, the land is put at too high a value; but the difference between the valuation of the Agricultural Bank and the normal value is too small altogether. I do not advocate over-valuation, but it is absolutely essential for the Agricultural Bank to give a fair valuation. We do not want the bank to advance money on poor country. We admit that there are people holding land along our coastline on which they can never make a living; the living they are making is not from the land. Where they are not able to get a living from the land we do not ask the Government, through the Agricultural Bank, to be liberal; but we say that the Government are not sufficiently liberal where the land is of good quality.

The hon. member for Enoggera referred to the failure of the soldier settlements, and it is regrettable that so much money has been thrown away and settlement hampered. These men have had their hearts' blood squeezed out of them through the mistake of the Department of Public Lands. I give the Minister credit for facing the situation as he is doing at the present time, and I hope he will succeed in putting these men on good land; but, as the hon. member for Enoggera asked, why was this not done before? Why are men allowed to eke out an existence on soil which will not produce sufficiently?

Mr. W. COOPER: The Commonwealth Land Settlement Committee thought it was splendid country.

Mr. WARREN: They might honestly have made a mistake, but we do not accept their decision, nor do the Government accept their decision, but they admit now that the land is absolutely useless. They are taking the men off this land and offering other land at Gympie and other places, which proves conclusively that not only were the Committee wrong and did not know what they were talking about, but that the Government have come to the conclusion that they did not know what they were talking about. They have now tried to rectify the evil, but are they taking sufficiently drastic action to remedy it? Should not these men who have been misled by the so-called experts and by the Department of Public Lands be compensated?

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango): There are many grievances which I have to charge to the administration of the present Government, but one of the most important is the ever-increasing taxation which is continually being imposed on those people who are expected to carry the heaviest burden in the

development of our State. Members of the Opposition from time to time have pointed out the foolishness of increasing taxation on the primary producers, who are also bearing the burden of increased prices and increased

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wages. As I have frequently pointed out, the burden of taxation on the man on the land, directly and indirectly, is becoming too great, in proof of which we have instances of people leaving the land and coming into the large centres of population. We have also the evidence given by hon. members this morning in regard to soldier settlement. These settlers were put on to the land at a heavy cost to the State, although most of the money was found by the Commonwealth, and I do not think there is an hon. gentleman on the front Government bench who would say that soldier settlement in Queensland has been a success. A large amount of money has been expended, yet to-day we find the settlers at Coominya and Beerburrum leaving the land to a man. Nevertheless the Premier gets up in his place and tells the people of Queensland that soldier settlement in Queensland has been a greater success than in any other part of the Commonwealth. One has not to go into details or figures to prove beyond doubt that it cannot be so; it is sufficient to mention these two important settlements, which the soldiers have entirely abandoned. Although large sums of money have been expended there, to-day the land has practically gone back to its wild state. Even many of the soldiers left on the land in other settlements are carrying too great a proportion of taxation. It is time the Secretary for Public Lands went into the question again to see whether it is not possible to reduce the rent which is demanded by the Government from soldiers who remain on the land. If we can possibly keep these settlers on the land under conditions tending to the full development of their holdings, then we shall be assisting the State materially by preserving not only the natural channels of revenue but also the channels through which we can obtain increased wealth. It must be clear to everyone who gives any study to the question at all that the primary producers of this State carry the burden of taxation to a very large extent. In proof of that let me quote business or manufacturing concerns. When any taxation by way of rent or rates is imposed on manufacturing concerns they naturally pass it on to the public; and, if the public is a wage-earning public, they with their right of access to the Arbitration Court approach that Court for an increase in wages based on the increased cost of living. In most cases they are successful in obtaining an increase in their wages. When the effect comes back to the primary producer the question then is to whom shall he pass it on. It has been proved beyond any doubt that the primary producers pay not only the direct taxes but many indirect taxes that are imposed. The increase in railway fares and freights imposed by this Government has hit the primary producers more than any other citizens in the Commonwealth.

Just recently the Premier made a speech in this House during which he stated that the primary producers of this State pay taxation only to the extent of something like £78,000 per annum. Whether the Premier intended to mislead this House or whether he had been misled I do not know, but the figures I have obtained prove conclusively that the primary producers pay no less than £700,000 per annum in taxation in this State. When the Premier was taken to task by the "Telegraph" he tried to extricate himself

by stating that he quoted the taxation paid by farmers and not the taxation paid by graziers and pastoralists, as he did not consider graziers and pastoralists were primary producers. Has anyone ever heard a more foolish statement? How can it be contended that the farmers are primary producers and that graziers and pastoralists are not primary producers? That was a statement made by the Premier, who holds the highest administrative office in Queensland, and because of that fact he should rise in his place in the House and apologise to the House for having made such a rash and loose statement.

An amending Bill was passed last session giving the Secretary for Public Lands additional powers in connection with the transfer of leases. Those powers were greatly in excess of those which any Minister possessed in the past. In fact, I am justified in saying that the Minister has the last word in the transfer or the extension of leasehold lands throughout the State. That power is too great to invest in any one man. There should be some board to which an appeal can be made. Cases have come under the notice of representatives of country electorates from time to time where holders of agricultural farm lands have to submit to the Minister an offer for the sale of a farm before a transfer can be granted. Instances have also come under my notice where the Minister has refused to sanction the transfer. I have known of instances where the father of growing boys, who have to some extent been squeezed off the holding, has wished to purchase a neighbour's property, and on submitting the transfer to the Minister for his sanction has had the sanction withheld. The Minister has said that if a farmer wishes to purchase a piece of land for his son, he should see the land is put in the son's name. It is a well-known fact that few men on the land to-day have the capital at their disposal to purchase a neighbour's farm, and in consequence have to resort to the financial institutions for help. That help would not be obtainable if the security was not produced. The settler has, therefore, been compelled to stand behind his son and furnish the necessary security until the son is in a position to carry on himself. When transfers of that description have been submitted to the Minister he has time and again turned them down. I maintain that the Minister by doing so is not only preventing the development of the State but is hindering capital being brought into the State, and we all are cognisant of the need of capital for the development of the primary producing areas. Cases have also been brought under my notice where difficulties of all sorts have been put in the way of men holding agricultural farms on perpetual lease, who desire to sell for health reasons. From time to time they have submitted the proposed transfer to the Secretary for Public Lands, and are put to much trouble and sometimes are refused, and have not been able to make a sale. Neither the Secretary for Public Lands nor the other members of the Cabinet have had practical experience in the working of the land, and consequently do not realise the seriousness of this question in connection with the development of the primary producing areas. It has this effect: If a person requires assistance from a financial institution on an agricultural farm, he cannot obtain it under the present Land Act. For this reason,

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when the matter comes before the Minister if those men fail, the chances are that the Government will forfeit the area and the security will be gone.

I shall now say a few words in connection with the running of late trains, and the way in which rolling-stock has been conducted in the primary producing areas for a number of years. It is well known that stockowners have applied to the Railway Department for trucks time after time in order that they might truck their cattle to the markets, and their applications have been turned down, the excuse being that rolling-stock was not available. In some cases primary producers have had to order their trucks two and three months ahead. Anyone knowing anything about the removal of stock knows what a hardship that is. In three months that stock may not be in a fit condition to truck. The people of Queensland must realise the conditions under which we are labouring to-day. Those conditions should not be in existence, because for many years advice has been tendered from the Opposition benches pointing out the difficulties and the methods by which those difficulties could be overcome, but no effort was made by the present Government to alter the conditions until we had the unfortunate accident at Traveston, which seemed to make the Government sit up and take notice.

We are now asked to pass something like £2,000,000 for the purpose of putting our rolling-stock into order and of attending to our defective railway system. Had the advice of the Opposition in days gone by been taken we would not have imposed such hardships on the primary producer in the first place, nor would we have our rolling-stock in the condition it is in to-day.

There is another matter which the Government should take seriously into consideration, and one which has been brought up time and again by hon. members on this side of the House. It is a question upon which it is said the Government are fooling the working class. Much has been said about the huge cost entailed in the building of homes for workers in country districts and other places in Queensland. It is a well-known fact that to-day the price of timber at the stump is greater than it was, sawn up, at the mill in 1914. Time after time the Government have put it up to the workers that they are doing everything in their power in the matter of housing those workers. The Government do not tell them from the platform that through their imposition of this excessive royalty on timber the workers are paying the extra cost and additional taxation when they require sufficient timber to build their homes. These things all have the one tendency in connection with the development of our State. First of all, if we do not give the primary producer the consideration that he should receive, the freedom and the confidence that is necessary to help him in the development of his holding, if we do not give every consideration and assistance to private capital to be expended freely within our State, we cannot possibly expect our secondary industries to be developed and a home market created for our primary products. We can safely say, as proved by statistics to-day, that our primary products have assisted to build up the other States of Australia. At the present time our hides and other pri-

mary products are sent from Queensland to the Southern States to be manufactured, and we have to pay an enormous cost to bring back the manufactured article to Queensland.

It has been noted from time to time that it is quite impossible for our North Coast Railway—particularly from Gympie down to Brisbane—to carry the traffic that is coming from the North since the line has been opened to Townsville. The suggestion has been made in this House over and over again by myself and other hon. members that a large amount of that traffic could be diverted from the North Coast line to the Brisbane Valley line if the link of 14 miles between Nanango and Yarraman Creek were constructed. That would help to prevent the confusion in connection with the working of the line from Gympie downwards, and would create greater safety for travellers and produce on that line. I hope the Government this session will take into consideration the advice given by members on this side of the House from time to time and also by the Public Works Commission in connection with the building of that link, and will see that greater facilities are given to the producers in that area and also along the North Coast Railway by constructing that link.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Premier rose to defend himself against the attacks of the Opposition.

Mr. DASH: No, he did not.

Mr. CORSER: He rose to defend himself and his party against the attacks of the Opposition.

Mr. DASH: No.

Mr. CORSER: I agree with the hon. member that he did not do it. The silence of members of the Government party indicates that the statements that have been made by members of the Opposition not only carry an amount of weight, but are true, and members of the Government know it. Hon. members opposite know that they are being hit very hard by the statements that have emanated from members of the Opposition. I want to say, and say very seriously, that the Premier's defence of his determination to find funds to defend Mr. Walsh's actions against the Federal authorities was certainly a very poor one. The Premier attempted to justify his determination to spend State funds to assist Mr. Walsh to defeat the laws of the Commonwealth and to prevent those laws from operating. If the Premier had half the backbone and half the interest in his country that the Premiers of Western Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria have, then we would find that the Premier of this State would be truthful in saying that the funds of Queensland belong to the people of Queensland, and that there are many directions in which they could be expended beneficially in this State. Every week in our country districts farmers are being driven from their homes because they cannot pay some little interest which they owe in connection with the mortgage on their farms. The policy of the Government is to drive all these people with their families from their farms and take from them the capital which they have gained, without caring what they may do afterwards. These people in our own State have been taxed to such an extent under a Labour Government that it is impossible for them to make good. They are not considered when State funds are being appropriated; they are not considered when funds are appropriated

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or misappropriated for purposes which are not just or legal. The Government or their supporters do not urge that these people should be supported from some fund in order to help them under such stress of circumstances; there is nothing to be done for them! But contrast the action of the Government towards imported and foreign enemies of Australia and the Empire—enemies of the system that we support—enemies of Christianity—people who openly boast that they are out against the capitalistic system—the system which we hold to be the only system under which a Christian nation can exist! These people come here and claim to be the dictators of the Commonwealth, and they would exploit every avenue in trying to subvert the things which are essential to the welfare of Australia. Whether they operate with the funds at their disposal, as they have done in connection with the Chinese revolution, or whether they hold up the shipping of the Empire and the trade of the Commonwealth of Australia, it matters not; they are just the same the enemies of the Empire, of Christianity, and of the system under which we live. The whole of that revolution to-day is centred behind a man who is known in this country as Walsh. Hon. members opposite know it. They know what these advanced socialistic revolutionaries say; and they know that they have to take action just because there is a popular cry that a poor individual is not able to look after himself. It is not a matter of Mr. Walsh being driven from the shores of Australia, but of being driven to his own home from a country to which he does not belong, and which does not want him. Those are the things which are hidden and not expressed by our weak-kneed Premier when he tells the Premier of New South Wales that he is prepared to help this poor individual and his second in charge. We know perfectly well that Walsh and Johansen have access to funds. Does the hon. member for Bowen stand for the same principles that Mr. Walsh does?

Mr. COLLINS: So long as he stands for right I stand behind him.

Mr. CORSER: Who is to say what right is? Do the British Trade Unions not know what is right and what is wrong? They claim that this man is wrong; yet we have the hon. member for Bowen, who essayed to be the leader of the House, saying to-day that he is standing in support of this man! We know that Mr. Havelock Wilson, the leader of the Seamen's Union of Great Britain, is a man who has done more to build up the cause of the workers in the Empire than any man who has ever graced this Chamber with his presence, and can show a life-long service in the interests of the class for whom he has worked and for the Empire. That gentleman knows whether it is a just and a right cause. He claims that the strike is illegal, and that Mr. Walsh has acted against the best interests of the British seamen.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why not try him in an Australian Court?

Mr. CORSER: Why not try him in an Australian Court? Listen to the Secretary for Public Works! Why do the Government not always try people in Australian Courts? Why did they, during the Townsville strike, promise the workers that they would secure a judge from New Zealand? (Opposition laughter.) Now they ask for trial in an Australian Court! They never accomplished what they promised to do then. They promised a New Zealand judge, but they could

not get one. They told the workers then that they were going to do certain things—and it was after they had brought [2.30 p.m.] out the guns that they were not able to fulfil them. Let the hon. gentleman pay attention to what I have to say without trying to draw me into paths where angels fear to tread. (Laughter.) The Premier quoted ancient history! He went away back to some regulations framed to prevent Canute the Dane from landing in Britain, and he tried to make the Opposition responsible for Canute's arrival. He perhaps did not go quite so far back as that, but his argument was just as sensible. He tried to make us responsible for something that somebody had told him and asked him to repeat to-day. It must be remembered—and if there is one true statement of the Premier it is this—that the people should decide what should be done with these men.

Mr. COLLINS: Poor old Tom Walsh!

Mr. CORSER: Poor old Tom Walsh!

Mr. COLLINS: He is a British subject.

Mr. CORSER: He would not admit that. We must remember that he is getting what the people are giving to him. He has to stand up now and take what is decided on for him by the people. We have a people's Government; we have democratic institutions; we have a Parliament which is elected by the people; and, if Parliament decides that a certain course shall be adopted and that a certain Act shall be passed, then the people are responsible—not a section of the people—as we had a section dictating to Ministers not so very long ago.

Mr. COLLINS: He is one man.

Mr. CORSER: One man can create very many revolutions. He can stir up a great amount of strife. He can appeal to the unthinking. He has power to prevent them from getting work. He can use this power as an instrument against justice, as this same individual has done on very many occasions. We are adopting the very same principle in taking money from our coffers to flout the laws of the Commonwealth. Would it be a good thing if on another occasion a Socialist-Bolshevik Government were in power in the Commonwealth and a Country-Progressive Government in power in this State and we here devoted the people's money to try to defeat the determination of the Socialistic Government in the Federal sphere? We would sooner achieve our ends by the will of the people than follow the precedent which is being established or will be established if the Premier gets his own way in this regard. How would it be if the Commonwealth interfered with the statutes of the laws of this State, which is supposed to be ruled by the Premier?

Mr. BRUCE: They did on the conscription issue. They interfered with this Government.

Mr. CORSER: This Government attempted to interfere with them in regard to the censorship. On that occasion the State Government flouted the law. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BRUCE: What about the Government Printing Office?

Mr. CORSER: Hon. members know perfectly well that the Commonwealth laws in regard to the matter operated throughout the Commonwealth. There was an attempt by

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this Government to flout the Commonwealth law. The Defence Act said that in the interests of Australia such and such should be done, and the Commonwealth had to take such action as was in accordance with the law.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Defence Act said nothing of the kind.

Mr. CORSER: In the defence of the Commonwealth the Commonwealth Government had to take certain action, and they acted wisely. That was done under the War Precautions Act. What would be the position if the Commonwealth Government were to attempt to do something against our statutes? We know that some of our own statutes are severer than the statutes of the Commonwealth, against which the Government are complaining at the present time. Certainly, sending a man from his home is not as bad as the death sentence or imprisonment for life.

Mr. BRUCE: Does the hon. member know that capital punishment has been abolished in Queensland?

Mr. CORSER: I said "or imprisonment for life."

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member said the death sentence.

Mr. CORSER: I said either the death sentence or imprisonment for life. The statute reads "death," but this Government abolished it for fear that some of its members might be executed. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did the hon. member say that this Government had abolished death?

Mr. CORSER: The Government averted their own death by giving way last week.

Mr. BRUCE: The only thing we have killed is the Legislative Council.

Mr. CORSER: And that was killed in spite of the fact that the people said it should remain in existence. The Premier of the day contended that the matter should be submitted to a referendum, and the people decided that the Legislative Council should remain.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I complain of the opinion of the people being ignored and the Council being abolished.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would the hon. member try to restore it?

Mr. CORSER: When it is our business to adjudicate on that matter we will let you know. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRUCE: Then we shall never know.

Mr. CORSER: You still have your Upper House on the top of the hill. Section 37 of the Criminal Code, under the heading of "Offences against Public Order, Treason, and other Offences against the Sovereign's Person and Authority" provides—

"Any person who . . . levies war against the Sovereign . . . ;

In order by force or constraint to compel the Sovereign to change her measures or counsels, or in order to put any force or constraint upon, or in order to intimidate or overawe, any House of Parliament or any of Her Majesty's Dominions . . .

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is guilty of a crime, which is called treason, and is liable to the punishment of death."

Mr. BRUCE: What Act are you quoting?

Mr. CORSER: I am quoting the Criminal Code, Part II.

Mr. BRUCE: Does "Her Majesty" refer to Queen Anne?

Mr. CORSER: It is the present law which is supposed to be administered by the present Government. If anything is unjust, that is quite as unjust as any Commonwealth enactment, according to the reasoning of hon. members opposite. I claim that it is far more severe. Just imagine the Commonwealth Government saying that certain people should be defended by Commonwealth money!

Mr. DASH: Why not try them under the Criminal Code?

Mr. CORSER: For the benefit of the hon. member, I want to inform him that the Criminal Code is a State law, and that the offence alleged is one against the Constitution of the Commonwealth, and it is possible for the offence to apply to more than one State.

Mr. BRUCE: It is class legislation.

Mr. CORSER: I do not think it is.

Mr. BRUCE: It is used for only one crowd.

Mr. CORSER: Is not the Criminal Code class legislation against a particular class—the criminal class?

The PREMIER: We do not say "criminal class"; we say "Tory class."

Mr. CORSER: Because that is the only thing on the hon. gentleman's mind.

Mr. COSTELLO: Tim Moroney was on his chest last week. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: The Premier classes everybody as "Tory" except those who vote for his party.

Mr. BRUCE: Including the Opposition.

Mr. CORSER: They do not often vote with the Government. The hon. member for Kennedy voted both ways when the strike was before his party last week.

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

Mr. CORSER: Any reasonable man must conclude that the Government, in providing funds to defend men like Walsh and others, are either associating with this extreme section or are afraid to resist it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: The policy of this extreme section is set out in the following words in "The International Socialist" of 2nd August last—

"There can be no peace until the capitalistic system of production is abolished, and there is one class—the working class—owning, controlling, and operating the fields, factories, and the workshops."

The Government are setting aside money to assist the heads of an organisation which is seeking to bring that policy into being. The money will be expended in support of such extreme movements as were indicated by the banners displayed in the procession in Brisbane on Labour Day. The Secretary for Public Works, the Secretary for Public Lands, the Secretary for Agriculture, and

the leader of the Federal Labour Party marched behind those banners. Their action showed one of two things—either they were afraid not to participate in the procession or they were part of the people taking part in it. That procession showed by the inscriptions on the banners that the Labour movement was being “white-anted” by dangerous extremists who live amongst us, and there is no more dangerous man than he who has been so frequently referred to to-day. The “Daily Mail” of 5th May last recorded that one of the banners bore the inscription “Long Live Soviet Russia!” (Government laughter.) The hon. member for Bowen may laugh, but he cannot dispel what is inmost in his mind. He may deceive some of the people some of the time, but he cannot deceive all the people all the time. “Spread the Way of Revolution” was another emblem in front of which the hon. gentlemen I just referred to marched. Another inscription on the banners was “Peaceful Revolution.” That is the securing of the property of the people by peaceful methods—the industries from the owners and the farms from the farmers. Those peaceful methods include the taxing of these people out of existence and making conditions so impossible for them to work under that their properties will revert back to the Crown. Another inscription was “Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have the world to gain.” The poor workers! And a Labour Government is in power!

Mr. BRUCE: That was their watch chains. “Unite to see that they were not pinched.”

Mr. CORSER: They took care to see that the hon. member was not there.

Mr. BRUCE: I was there.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CORSER: No doubt that is the reason why you do not wish to see criminals deported.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not make irrelevant remarks and so encourage disorderly interjections.

Mr. CORSER: I shall endeavour to obey your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but the interjection was disorderly and came first.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: Another banner bore this inscription, “Our immediate objective is six hours a day, five days a week.” We shall have another revolution before long. One hears people proclaim a 44-hour week, yet we find these people marching in the procession with a banner inscribed like that. Even the Premier did not pretend to explain the anomaly. The hon. gentleman will probably want his money to defend himself against those claims very shortly, yet he sends it along to defend Johannsen and Walsh. The hon. gentleman may need it for many others of his extreme wing who may get into trouble.

Another banner read, “The world’s greatest need is Socialism.” Yet we find in this State that any industry the Government have brought under the banner of Socialism has been a failure up to the present time! When the cotton people were being asked by the British-Australian Cotton Association to take over huge and unnecessary ginneries, the Premier and his Government did what they could to encourage the primary pro-

ducer to take over those ginneries; they did not suggest that they should socialise the ginneries. Oh, no! They were not going to nationalise the ginneries that were built! The Premier himself said at the delegation which he met in Sydney that there were to be no more State enterprises. When it was to the advantage of the farmer to have Government funds found to buy him something he was refused those funds. No more State enterprises; no money for him! The money had to be left there to defend Mr. Walsh and other breakers of British laws, and disturbers of the peace and freedom which the British flag gives us. Money would be found for them, but not for any beneficial purpose to aid the primary producer.

With all that we gather from this international-socialism propaganda, what does the future promise us if we have a Premier who is not prepared to take his stand as the leader of the people and the State against these far-advanced, extreme measures that are being worked up against us, that are being handed out to the people each day—measures that are out to destroy our system and to damage the future possibility of the development of our industries? The Premier cares not for the future so long as he is in office and is providing for himself and conserving the seats of his Ministers.

First of all we have our returned soldiers to think of, and we know that the soldier settlements throughout Queensland have been failures. The returned soldier settlers should have liberal and fair treatment. What did the Premier say to-day? He endeavoured to defend the action of the Government in their treatment of the returned soldiers, when we know that the treatment of our returned soldier settlers in this State is worse than that meted out to the returned soldier settlers in any other State of the Commonwealth. The hon. gentleman used the argument that the hon. member for Windsor had stated on one occasion that the policy of the Government was a generous one. The Premier used that to defend himself and his Government against the obstacles they have placed in the path of the returned soldier settlers in this State. The hon. member for Windsor has been criticised throughout Queensland by Labour members, who have told the people that the hon. member is one of the members of the Opposition who are out to do all they can against the farmer and his interests, and who would not allow the farmer to succeed if he had the chance to do so.

Mr. DASH: When did you tell them that?

Mr. CORSER: That is what you people tell the electors at election time.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to hon. members on the Government side as “you people.”

Mr. CORSER: The Government on all occasions preach that doctrine to the electors of the State; yet when they had to take one man from this side in 1916 or 1917 to place on the board appointed to select land for returned soldiers, they appointed the hon. member for Windsor and not a member of the Country party, and now, in defence of their actions, they use the statement made by the hon. member for Windsor in 1917, which we stated at the time was not correct. Although our statement has since been borne out by facts, they

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still use the statement by the hon. member for Windsor in defence of the rotten policy the soldiers have had to suffer under. Never mind what the hon. member for Windsor said, let us see what the soldiers themselves say! I have here a letter from the Committee of the Mutual Protection Association, Beerburum. It is signed by Mr. J. T. McDermott, hon. secretary, Beerburum, and is dated 13th February, 1925—not 1917—before they knew what it was to settle on land under a Labour Government with perpetual leases. This is what Mr. McDermott said—

“Out of 500 odd settlers taking up portions on Beerburum, Elimbah, and Glass House Mountains, at present only 175 or less remain. The majority of these, buoyed up by the hope that Mr. McCormack meant what he said when he became Minister for Lands, ‘that settlers on unsuitable areas would be transferred and would get a fair and just deal,’ are now, in plain English, down and out.”

Who is right? The statement of the hon. member for Windsor referred to by the Premier in defence of his policy, or the statement of Mr. McDermott, secretary of the Mutual Protection Association of Beerburum? What does he state in conclusion—

“If the Government admit, which they do, that the settler could not pay his interest in the past, then how will he be able to pay in the future, for even now the majority of the farms are going back, and very few farms—if any—do not suffer from various plant diseases. The whole fault of the calamity is the poor soil. Nothing will grow with prospects of commercial success.”

Mr. DASH: Are the Government responsible for the poor soil?

Mr. CORSER: Yes, because the Government kept from the soldiers suitable soil, and gave them the poor soils round the metropolis and in other areas—salt marshes that would grow only inferior crops, and land that had to be fertilised for the very first crop.

Mr. DASH: When we sent arsenic you said it was no good.

Mr. CORSER: It was no good to kill the pear—it might assist the pear to grow. Mr. McDermott further said—

“We humbly beg for your perusal the enclosed remedy and solicit your help in hoping to attain same.”

That is the statement of the soldiers themselves. That speaks louder than any platitudes that may be uttered by the Premier in defence of this rotten policy. The Government made poor land available for the soldier, and sent their unemployed to clear the land at a cost of £20 to £25 an acre. They cleared 4 acres of it, so that when the soldier got there he was indebted to the extent of £100. He had 4 acres of poor land that had been stumped, and was indebted to the extent of £100. He had to build a home and buy his timber at the very highest price from the State sawmill. He had to build his fences and find a place to keep a cow, because the land would not keep one. He had only 20 acres, and he could borrow £625, of which this Government did not find one penny. The Commonwealth found the lot. I raised this question

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in 1917. I said at the time that the soldier should not get less than an ordinary settler. The then Premier, Mr. Theodore, said they could secure the £1,200 as well. Beyond the £625 they have never secured one shilling, and I have letters from the Agricultural Bank which show that, when the £625 was exhausted, there were no further funds available from the Agricultural Bank or the State Advances Corporation to assist these soldiers.

Compare that with New South Wales! There they could secure the whole of the advance which was possible to an ordinary settler. They secured their £625, and through a committee in the district they could inspect any farm for sale up to £3,000. The local committee would be asked to report on it. Experts from the department would inspect the farm, and if a beautiful lucerne property, valued at £3,000, was considered worth the money by the two authorities, money would be advanced to the soldier to buy the farm on forty-year terms. That was under the New South Wales Liberal Administration. The soldier also secured the £625 made available by the Commonwealth. Our Labour Government did nothing for the soldier but give them poor land. They left the soldiers to starve on it, and refused to give them an advance from our own Trust Funds.

In our State the ordinary settler is having a bad time with regard to advances. In connection with workers' homes in the cities, 993 workers have secured loans amounting to £399,000 for the erection of homes, while 2,334 settlers throughout Queensland applied for advances, and secured loans amounting to £343,000. How can we expect our primary industries to develop under such conditions? We realise that farms can only be built up with the assistance of money, which is more than ever essential to-day when the cost of living is so much greater and our implements have gone up threefold in price owing to the protective duties which have been imposed in the interests of Australian industry. Is it not necessary to have considerably more money advanced to our producers than to city workers? I do not say one word against the policy which provides homes for city workers. The Workers' Dwellings Act was brought into existence before Labour came into power, and it was opposed by Labour. If £500 is essential to build a city worker's home, we need £600 or £800 to give a farmer a home in the country. You do not want to give him only one-third of what a home will cost in the city. Until we realise these things we are not going to get very far.

The Premier said the Opposition blamed the Government for having helped the farmer. The Government have not helped the farmer, and all the legislation on the statute-book is against his interests. I have here a copy of a resolution passed at a special meeting of the Gooburrum Local Producers' Association on 21st May, 1925. These associations are asked to make suggestions for the initiation of legislation, and told that their requests will be listened to. The resolution reads—

“That this meeting of the Gooburrum branch of the Local Producers' Association enters an emphatic protest against the present method of raising revenue for the upkeep of the hospitals, on the ground that its incidence is unfair to

the man on the land, and is in effect a class tax. This meeting suggests that the upkeep of the hospitals and the ambulances is a fair charge on the earnings of every individual in Queensland, and should be levied in the same manner as the income tax."

The Gooburrum Local Producers' Association is only one of many which have unanimously carried resolutions to the effect that all persons receiving the basic wage should contribute equally with the primary producers towards the upkeep of the hospitals. The

latter have to find the money to [3 p.m.] build homes and make their farms, yet they have to find all the money to pay this taxation to satisfy the fancies and whims of Labour members, who wish to tickle the ears of their supporters at election times.

In my district we are placing a number of settlers on the land, although probably not so many as we might. We find that in answer to a question by the leader of the Opposition on 23rd September, 1924, the Secretary for Public Lands stated that there were still 716 portions available for settlement. On 30th June last the Minister said in reply to another member of the Opposition that there were 644 portions available. That shows that during the period of nine months in the Upper Burnett, where £3,000,000 has been spent on railways under the Government's policy and administration, only 72 selections have been taken up. Why? Because of the unsympathetic administration of the Government, because of their want of knowledge of the requirements of the farmers, and because they did not yield those things which they were asked by members of the Opposition to include in their enactments when they were before the House. Are hon. members aware that in some places where I personally took the Secretary for Public Instruction over twelve months ago, there are twenty to forty children ready to attend school, and that the selectors in those districts have been waiting for two years for such conveniences? There are fourteen proposals about which, if I have made one representation to the Government, I have made forty. Although they have received the approval of the Department of Public Instruction, after months of battling, I am told that no money is available to build them.

Mr. MOORE interjected.

Mr. CORSER: They did worse than that. They asked them to build a temporary school—the Department would find the flooring and iron—and to send in a plan. They sent in a plan specifying round timber instead of sawn timber. There was no sawmill within 50 miles, but the Government said that they could not proceed with round timber because it would not be suitable when they wished to convert it into a classified school of a decent type.

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

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): Several hon. members opposite have had a lot to say about returned soldiers, and if theirs were an honest attempt to assist the returned soldiers, they would have a laudable objective; but so far as one can judge, the thing that counts with them is the desire to gain political kudos rather than improve the position of the

soldiers. Hon. members opposite forget that a large percentage of the British seamen who are on strike at the present time are returned sailors. Yet they are prepared to support a Deportation Act to deal with the men representing the case of these British sailors, many of whom are naval ratings who took their part in the war, and are getting a miserable pittance which is not fit for a human being to live on, and who live under conditions that no human being on the land would be asked to tolerate. (Opposition dissent.) Hon. members have only to go to the boats to see for themselves how true that is if they doubt what I say. These are the men who are on strike to-day because their wages have been reduced.

Despite the fact that British shipping enterprises have made tremendous profits and are continuing to make tremendous profits, they must have their pound of flesh out of these sailors—these returned sailors. Not one word has been said by the Opposition in favour of these returned sailors, although they had just as much to do—and probably more to do—with protecting the British Empire and winning the war as the returned soldiers had to do. To-day the shipowners are insisting upon their pound of flesh. One pound a month has been taken from the sailors' already paltry wages, and because they go on strike against this imposition by their employers we have a class-conscious Prime Minister introducing legislation to deport the representatives of this section of the working class.

Mr. COSTELLO: Bolsheviks!

Mr. BRUCE: If hon. members opposite are genuine in their support of the returned soldier and say that he should have £600 or £800 in order to establish himself again in our civic life, surely they must stand up for the returned sailor and say that he must have decent conditions of work and decent rates of pay so that he can re-establish himself in our civic life. No! They are always representing the capitalistic class. They represent the bloated shipowners who exploit these returned British sailors and introduce Indian lascars to take their place when they are on strike. "Boys of the bulldog breed!" Indian lascars are brought in to take their place on their boats when they dare to fight for decent conditions. Hon. members opposite have always stood for the capitalistic class, and have always been against the worker, no matter who he may be, and no matter what he has done for his country. During the war they sang the praise of the British seaman—the men who looked after the trawlers, and saw that the troops were carried safely from Great Britain to Europe. The Press was full of that day after day, and hon. members opposite were to be found on the platform belauding their actions, and saying what wonderful men they were. We heard them singing "Boys of the Bulldog Breed!" If the shipowners had their way, the "Boys of the Bulldog Breed" would be the miserable attenuated lascar, who is already physically destroyed under the capitalistic system. Here we have hon. members opposite right behind the Prime Minister, who has no Australian outlook and who is tinged and dyed first of all with capitalism, and secondly with the old Tory outlook—

Mr. MOORE: He was elected by the people of Australia.

Mr. Bruce.]

Mr. BRUCE: And by British capitalism, and is endeavouring to destroy the free and democratic institutions that have been established in Australia. He has established legislation for deportation, and has created a Commonwealth police force, the same as our friend William Morris Hughes created on another occasion. Hon. members opposite refer to "Soviet Russia," and to the fact that the unions will be using force if they are not watched. They refer to extremists, but there is never a time when they would hesitate for one second to use force when they find that the intelligence of the people is encroaching upon their preserves, and they do it to-day without the least hesitation. Every hon. member opposite, despite what he may say in this House, has at the back of his mind the old Tory ideas, and would do as the leader of the Opposition suggested just the other day—use machine guns against the workers.

Mr. MOORE: Who suggested that? I never suggested that.

Mr. BRUCE: You used batons against the workers when they dared to ask for an improvement in their conditions.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is attributing to me a statement that I did not make. The statement about machine guns was made by the hon. member for Townsville.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Kennedy must accept the denial of the hon. member for Aubigny.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Their own Government shot them down.

Mr. COLLINS: The Government of which the hon. member for Albert was a member used batons.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: You used batons.

Mr. COLLINS: No, I did not.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Your Government did.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am sorry that the hon. member for Kennedy concluded his speech so abruptly. He said something that was not true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Don't make an attack on him, Bill. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman must not make disorderly interjections.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DEACON: I want to say that the grievances of hon. members against the administration of this Government in general are nothing compared with those of the people I represent. A constitutional question has arisen, and the Government, in conjunction with other Governments, have consented to test the constitutionality of a law passed by the Federal Government. One of the grievances that I in common with other hon. members on this side have against the Government is that, when money is wanted to be thrown away on any project that is of a political nature, it can be easily found. The Government show no hesitancy in that case at all. They jump at the opportunity; but, if they are asked to provide money to carry on the necessary services of State or to keep any department up to date, then they adopt a cheese-paring policy. That is in contrast with their immediately assenting to a proposal to expend money to test the constitutionality of a law to deport men; and the

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reason is to be found in the fact that it pleases their crowd. The complaint is that the Commonwealth Government desire to deport two men. We have had a discussion as to who these two men are, and I do not see why I should not object to money being spent for the purpose. One has only to recognise what these men are after, and what they have always been after. The question to them is not so much one of decent conditions for Australian seamen, as those men have decent conditions. They have had their wages fixed high enough to please them. They do not claim more wages; yet the Australian seamen have gone out on strike time after time, not to secure improved conditions, but merely to assert the policy of job control!

Mr. COLLINS: Would you like to be a seaman?

Mr. DEACON: I would not; I believe in every man sticking to his own trade; but I would sooner be a seaman than sit behind the Government. When you see what the consequences of the actions of these men are, and see who have to pay for their strikes, then I, representing the people I do, have got a good grievance. The cost of all these disturbances—it does not matter whether the seamen or the owners win—has to be paid for by those who use the ships, and that is the producer, whether the ships be trading over-sea or on the Australian coast. It does not matter what purpose a strike is called for it has to be paid for by the producer.

Mr. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: Hear the producer from Albert interjecting!

Mr. APPEL: I have contributed to the production and development of this State.

Mr. COLLINS: What did you do for the production of this State?

Mr. DEACON: We find these men interfering with the rank and file of their own union for no reason whatever; and now they are asking the seamen on British ships, who are not under their control, to come out on strike simply to cause a disturbance. They know perfectly well that there is no hope of securing any benefits for the seamen from the disturbance. No partial strike can ever be successful, and the strike of British seamen in Australian ports is only of a local nature, as the seamen on British ships in other parts of the world are prepared to honour the agreement they entered into with the owners.

Mr. BRUCE: They are not keeping the agreement in South Africa.

Mr. DEACON: It does not matter if they are not; they made an agreement. The strike is only a small local effort, and the leaders of the seamen in England who were elected by the men themselves have advised the men to return to work. The seamen have chosen their representatives and made them responsible for looking after their interests; so why should these other men be permitted to throw greater burdens on those seamen and on the industry of the country, merely for the sake of creating a disturbance?

This Government is always willing to help in a row, whether it is right or wrong; but when it comes to doing something useful they are not there. Whatever they do is done to secure political kudos for themselves. Time after time we have asked them to help the agriculturist.

Mr. W. COOPER: Anyhow, you look well on it.

Mr. DEACON: If that is so, it is not through any assistance the Government have given me or my electors. If the primary producers in the hon. member's electorate had their way, he would not be in this House to-day.

Mr. W. COOPER: The agriculturists put me in.

Mr. KELSO: You are shivery on it to-day.

Mr. W. COOPER: I do not look as shivery as you do.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEACON: The Government have neglected the building of railways since they came into power, and have only gone on with the main lines that were under construction, if started, when they took office. They could have helped the agriculturists a great deal more by the construction of light railways. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of first-class land lying idle and used only for grazing; and there are men hungry for land who would like to use that idle land for agricultural purposes. The land is cheap enough, and they could buy it all right; but it would be useless to go there a long distance from the railway and hope to carry on agricultural pursuits successfully. If we are to prosper we must develop the country. Our present prosperity is not permanent, but is due to the high state of prosperity of one or two key industries. If anything happens to that artificial prosperity, the working man of this country will feel the pinch more than any other class.

Mr. W. COOPER: Because they are the most down-trodden.

Mr. DEACON: The working man can get only his share of what he earns. He is not the only one to consider.

The PREMIER: That is all he wants.

Mr. DEACON: He is getting that now. If our present flourishing products lessen in value, where is the working man going to get his share?

Mr. W. COOPER: Is he getting his share?

Mr. DEACON: I think he is. Everybody is quite willing to give him more if it can be done. I say good luck to him if he gets an increase when that increase is available; and every fair man will say the same thing. So far as we can, we should establish the general industries in this country on a permanent basis, so that we shall always be able to pay the working man a decent wage.

Mr. COLLINS: You would solve the problem by deporting one or two men.

Mr. DEACON: If these one or two men so interfere with the industries of the country that there is a general dislocation of trade, then all the people engaged in industry—both the working man and the capitalist—are going to suffer. The hon. member for Bowen cannot escape from it. The people in his electorate would suffer if there was a general dislocation of shipping.

Mr. COLLINS: They would not groan as much about it as you do.

Mr. DEACON: There are only two men standing in the way of a settlement of that dispute.

The Commonwealth Government have recently passed an Act to establish a Rural

Credits Bank in order to help the farming industry. It is much more to their credit than anything we have had from the Queensland Government.

Mr. W. COOPER: It took them a long time to do it.

Mr. DEACON: The bulk of the men who were established on farms before this Government took office are in a fairly prosperous state. There are some who are not so prosperous owing to circumstances beyond their control. It is almost impossible at the present time for progress to be made by anyone outside those already thoroughly established. It is impossible for a new man to come in. It is not that he cannot get cheap land, because he can get land for nearly nothing.

Mr. COLLINS: Tell us what is the cause.

Mr. DEACON: Simply because it costs too much to work the farm. It must be worked with machinery, and he is not in a position to purchase machinery. There is only one way of getting over the difficulty, and that is to finance these men. You can get machinery if you have got the money, and there is no way of getting that money except by borrowing. The ordinary banks do not take on that class of business; and the Agricultural Bank, which should do it, only lends on the same class of security as other banks.

Mr. W. COOPER: The Agricultural Bank is lending money to the farmers.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member for Rosewood knows that the Agricultural Bank does not lend very much. If the suggestions of the Opposition when the Government brought in an amending Bill had been carried out, more land would have been put under cultivation, and things generally in this country would have been better. It is hardly to be expected that the Government will do very much for the man on the land, and it is to be hoped that we shall soon see the end of this Government and have a new Government on the Treasury benches, as only then shall we make progress.

I want to point out the unfairness of the present distribution of electorates. I have been looking over some of the electoral rolls, and it ought to be admitted that a country electorate should not be required to have the same number of electors as a city electorate. We have an Act on the statute-book which fixes the quota, and it provides that the number of electors may be fixed at one-fifth more or one-fifth less than the quota. I will give some of the actual results in figures. Nanango has 6,600 electors on the roll. It is a widely scattered district, while the electorate of Brisbane, which does not contain 1 square mile, has only 5,720 electors on the roll.

Mr. CLAYTON: Chillagoe has only 3,000.

Mr. DEACON: Murrumba, another country electorate, has 6,617 electors on the roll; while Gympie, a city electorate, has only 4,911.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Rubbish!

Mr. DEACON: It is not rubbish. Wide Bay—another big country electorate—has 6,242 electors, while Maryborough—which is officially a city—has 6,135. Cunningham has 6,254; Cairns, 6,376; Fassifern, 6,346; Carnarvon, 6,237; Dalby, 6,103; Rockhampton,

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5,002; Burnett, 6,215; Bowen, 5,495; and Aubigny, 5,991; while Toowoomba, the largest city on the Downs, has only 7,127. Coorooora has 7,468; and Bremer—which is close to Ipswich—5,001. This anomaly obtains not only in electorates represented by hon. members on this side, but in electorates held by Labour. It is not a fair representation for the country districts, no matter to which side of the House hon. members are returned. We shall see how the position works out after the next redistribution of electorates takes place.

Mr. DASH: They might work out your seat. (Laughter.)

Mr. DEACON: My seat was not worked out previously, but two other seats were worked into it.

There are so many more grievances to ventilate that I do not know which to take. The main grievance is in connection with the way the Government have been piling up taxation. We have not a fair system of taxation in operation. Under a fair system, taxation ought not to press unduly on any class; and those industries which cause work in the country ought to be helped along, and not have to pay too great a share of taxation. Yet more than a fair proportion of taxation is placed on men who are engaged in farming. It is quite possible under the income tax law for a man who has had no taxable income for three years to be charged income tax. I know of a case in which that might have occurred, but I visited the Income Tax Department and put it before the Commissioner, and he adjusted it. It is quite true that no injustice was done in that particular case, but I quote it to show what might happen, and does happen, if the man paying the tax does not look in at the department.

This was a case of a man who [3.30 p.m.] had a certain amount of produce on hand at the end of the period when he sold. It is quite possible for a man to buy a place for, say, £3,000. To do that he might incur a debt of £1,500. He can go on year after year and make just enough to live on for three years, and then sell it. If at the time when he sells the property he has £500 worth of produce on hand, although he may lose £1,500 on the deal, still he will be taxed on the £500 worth of produce. It is not a fair thing that a man who goes into the farming industry, where there is always a possibility of his losing his capital through depreciation of the land, should be taxed on the value of produce, which may not be realised. I do object to taxation of produce which is not realised. I maintain that it was never a fair system. I say that no taxation of a farm should include an unknown quantity. The Commonwealth Government allow the averaging system, and under it a man does get a fair deal, and there is no reason why the State should not give him a fair deal in the same way as the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government are making a large amount available by means of rural credits, and this Government should be able to find a little through the Agricultural Bank to assist the man on the land, particularly as advances to new settlers, such as those who go to the Burnett. Although I am not hoping for much from this Government, I do hope that some day something will be done.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I would like to make a few references to our grievances against this Government. and I think that,

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if we went fully into them all, the debate would be rather protracted, and it would not be long before the "gag" was applied. We could bring forward a financial case that would condemn any Government. The Government have been in power for ten years, but they have simply squandered the money on wild-cat adventures and experimental legislation, all at the expense of the community, more especially the primary producers. Only recently the Government were compelled to write £800,000 off their State enterprises; but the State enterprises are still in a languishing position and competing unfairly with private enterprise. The sooner the Government realise that it is necessary to be rid of State enterprises the better it will be for the people of Queensland. If the Minister responsible were conscientious enough and courageous enough, he would admit that the Government were sorry they had ever entered on State enterprises.

Let me now deal with a very big State-controlled activity—the railways. The maladministration of the Railway Department is deplorable. I do not wish to refer to what has occurred during the last few weeks, but I do wish to make some comment on the rolling-stock and the running of the trains. It is a disgrace to Queensland that the present state of affairs should exist. On coming to Brisbane it is very seldom that we find trains running on time. On nearly every occasion there is a delay of between half an hour and forty minutes, and the late running of one train practically holds up all the other trains, thus causing tremendous expense to the Department. Then again, the deplorable condition of the rolling-stock makes it a risk to travel on some of the trains that the Government have on the rails to-day. I know persons who are afraid to travel at night since the disaster at Traveston. The sooner the rolling-stock and the lines generally are put in a proper state of repair the better it will be for Queensland generally.

The least one can expect, especially in connection with mail trains, is to have communication cords installed. I want to give an instance of where a mail train about six months ago travelled between Bundaberg and Maryborough with no communication cord in one of the first-class sleeping carriages. One of the back wheels of the front bogie came off the line near Torbanlea, and the carriage bumped badly. You could feel the carriage bumping over every sleeper, and all passengers left their berths not knowing what to do. On finding that there was no communication cord they realised that all they could do was to throw a note out on to the platform at Colton in the hope that the night officer would find it. Fortunately he did pick it up, and was instrumental in having the signals put against us at Croydon Junction. The passengers reached Croydon Junction in a state of panic; and, when the train was brought to a standstill, one of the wheels dropped off and the undergear fell to the rails.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was a very obliging wheel to remain on until you got there. (Laughter.)

Mr. CLAYTON: To move that coach part of the train had to be shunted on one line and part of it on another line, and the sleeping car coaches had to be left standing. That only shows the dangers travellers are subjected to. Had the Government caused the carriages to be brought

up to date with communication cords affixed in each carriage, what might have been a serious accident in this instance could have easily been prevented. That is not the only incident that has been smothered up by the department. The Government cannot be aware of the danger that persons travelling in that train were exposed to. Had the injury been to the front wheel of the bogie, a serious accident would probably have occurred. Fortunately it was one of the rear wheels, and it had bumped along the sleepers for 8 miles before the train was pulled up. I quote that illustration to show the condition of the rolling-stock.

There is no need for me to go into the Traveston disaster. When we go into the report of the Board of Inquiry we may get more information, although I am doubtful whether much more information will result from the inquiry than was known beforehand. It would be very interesting to have information as to what the inquiry cost, and as to what each individual connected with it got out of it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CLAYTON: I wish now to touch upon the congestion of traffic between Caboolture and Theebine.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was no congestion last week. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: Thanks to your Government.

Mr. CLAYTON: I do not think that the hon. gentleman appreciated facing the "Reds"; neither do I think that he appreciated doing what the "Reds" on the back Government benches forced the Government to do. Some of his supporters will not appreciate the position when they are defeated in their plebiscites. There is a single line between Caboolture and Theebine, and it is frequently in a state of congestion. Travelers on that line find out after a few trips how many staff stations will have to be established and realise the delay that is occasioned on almost every journey. Passenger trains are frequently delayed by goods trains, stock trains, and sugar trains. The sooner something is done either to construct a double line or to afford relief in some way the better, as I do not see how until then the Government will make a paying proposition of the railways. I trust that something will be done in this matter, even if it is only to save the time of those who have to use the railways in the course of their business.

Much has been said to-day with regard to soldier settlement and land settlement generally. I have instances in my electorate where returned soldiers in the early days were settled on land that was both inadequate in area and inferior in quality. I have repeatedly brought those facts before this House and the Secretary for Public Lands. I particularly refer to the Elambah Estate near Cinnabar. The land is what might be called good grazing land, and was cut up into blocks of 90 and 110 acres. The quantity of agricultural land in the estate was very small indeed. The men have not been able to make a living from the small areas, and they have been compelled to engage in shire council work and main roads work.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: And have been compelled to become members of the Australian Workers' Union.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is nothing to be ashamed of in that fact.

Mr. CLAYTON: The quality of the land on which these men were settled did not enable them to earn a living, and many of them have had to leave their homes in order to keep their wives and families. In some instances the department has increased the size of blocks to try and make them living areas. The men who are settled on those blocks are very keen on being relieved of their property, but the Minister cannot see his way to allow them to sell their holdings to private individuals, stipulating that they shall dispose of them to other soldier settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not make that stipulation. The law makes that stipulation.

Mr. CLAYTON: If the law is so unjust, the hon. gentleman should take the earliest opportunity of amending it so as to help those individuals. I trust the hon. gentleman will take that step.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If they can sell to a private person and a private person can earn a living, does that prove that the area is not big enough? I suggest that it is the man that is wrong—not the land.

Mr. CLAYTON: That is not fair; it is unjust. I know of one man who is one of the finest types of settlers you could get, but his land is inferior. If he had an area of about 1,200 acres on which he could engage in mixed farming, dairying, and agriculture, he might be able to come out all right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On every occasion when I could increase the area of a block I have done so.

Mr. CLAYTON: I could give an illustration where the Minister in charge of the department before the present Minister told me that this settler has what is defined as a living area and is not eligible as an applicant for other land that may be thrown open.

The PREMIER: What do you regard as a living area?

Mr. CLAYTON: I am glad the Premier asks that question. If I had anything to do with the Lands Department, I would suggest that a board of three practical men should be constituted in different districts to give advice as to what they consider a fair living area, having regard to climatic and other conditions. The Government should alter the Act in that way in the interests of the settlers. Now take the Burnett lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS interjected.

Mr. CLAYTON: I am making this speech—not you. If you had accepted the advice of the Opposition—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to refer to the Minister by his proper title; not address him as "You."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you really believe I designed the land? I did not design the land.

Mr. CLAYTON: No; but you are the head of the department, and it is you to whom I must go in these matters. (Laughter.) Regarding the settlement of the

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Burnett lands, had the Minister gone into the matter of selecting men with practical experience—men resident in the Burnett—to assist the Government and the settlers, and had taken their advice, the position would be different from that existing to-day. The idea of throwing open land in 300-acre blocks, 150 miles away from a railway, and holding the settler to the strict letter of the Act, makes it impossible for him to make a living. The Government should have done what we told them to do when opening up this land and made the areas much larger. We suggested that the areas should be 1,200 acres and more. We knew that the land was situated in a dry area, with a rainfall of about 29 inches in twelve months, and that not evenly distributed. Had the Government thrown open the Burnett area in blocks of 1,200 or 2,000 acres those areas would have been rushed, and it would have been one of the finest settlements in Queensland. But what have we there to-day? The hon. member for Burnett has shown that the settlement of that area has not been a success. All along since I have been in this House, when advice has been given by members of the Opposition to the Government, it has not been heeded; but we can turn back to the pages of "Hansard" now and see that the advice we gave on every occasion was sound. Had the Government legislated on the lines of that advice, it would have been much better for agriculturists and settlers in Queensland to-day.

I wish to say a few words now in regard to our State schools. I have a good deal to do with the Department of Public Instruction, because there is a large number of schools in my electorate, and the Department of Public Instruction has met me fairly so far as it is in its power to do so; but when it is a question of something under the control of the Department of Public Works, it is a different matter. That is where the stumbling-block is to be found. No doubt it is a question of shortage of funds, but if the Government are in the position to spend the large amount of money they are spending in city electorates and in the towns, a larger amount should be spent in the backblocks, because nothing is going to do more to open up Queensland or to get men to settle on the land than providing opportunities for them to educate their children. I am up against the Department of Public Works, because that department does not meet the Department of Public Instruction in a fair way in regard to matters that are deserving of consideration. At the present time schools that have been recommended are not being built. I am most persistent in going to the Department of Public Instruction, yet I have not been successful in getting these schools built owing to the Department of Public Works.

Then in regard to schools already in existence, I trust that this year something more will be done to preserve some of the school buildings, which are in a most shocking state. In many instances we are losing the value of these buildings because of the want of a little paint. If the Government give attention to those schools that need painting, it will be a saving in the long run, because it will mean the preservation of many of the school buildings which at present are cracking up and deteriorating. I could enumerate many other grievances, but I do not wish to take up too much of the time of hon. members.

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There is one other matter in connection with our timber areas that I would like to bring forward. The people around Gympie are suffering through having all the good agricultural land adjacent to existing railways reserved for reafforestation purposes. We have a large area of land that is not near a railway that could be used for that purpose, and a lot of the land around Gympie could be opened up for agricultural purposes, instead of being reserved for the production of timber. I have already placed this matter before the Secretary for Railways and the Secretary for Public Lands. I know that the Secretary for Public Lands went to Gympie recently, when he stated that he would throw open about 2,000 acres. A very good scheme was initiated there, under which the scrub could be cut down, bananas planted, and pine-trees grown amongst the bananas. I do not know how much has been done in that connection, but I think it is something which will have beneficial results. It will mean that we shall be able to utilise that land for the production of bananas for about five years, when it can be turned into forest again. I trust the Minister is moving in that direction, but I have not heard of any instance in which he has taken action.

A deputation waited on the hon. gentleman recently with regard to the Manumbar timber area. I have previously mentioned the huge Manumbar scrub on many occasions in this Chamber. I want to keep this matter prominently before the Minister, because we have one of the finest assets in the timber industry in that scrub. It contains about 120,000,000 superficial feet of matured pine. Owing to the Government not having done anything to connect the scrub with the Kingaroy line the timber is deteriorating. I have been informed that 80 per cent. of the matured pine would be classed as faulty at the present time. It is the duty of the Government, even if they have to sell a couple of State stations, to get the money to connect that scrub by tramline with the Kingaroy railway, and save the timber which is now going to waste. We have up-to-date sawmills in Maryborough and Bundaberg which are starving for soft woods. The head of one of the firms in Maryborough told me yesterday that he was suffering from a shortage of pine, and that it was nauseating to think there was such a large amount of timber in the scrub there while he could not keep his mill going full time. This is a matter which affects the workers, as in a short space of time those mills will only be able to work two or three days a week owing to the scarcity of timber. I trust that the Minister will give consideration to the matter of connecting the Manumbar scrub by tramline with the Kingaroy railway, and that before long we shall be able to keep the mills in Maryborough going with supplies of timber from it.

Another matter which is causing a lot of discontent in the country is the Hospitals Act. This is an iniquitous measure, and I am looking forward to the Government doing something to relieve the primary producer of the heavy burden he is asked to carry in this connection. I put a question to the Home Secretary this session, and the hon. gentleman told me most emphatically that it was his intention to amend the Act. Unless he takes steps in that direction the primary producers are going to be called upon to find 40 per cent. of the upkeep of the hospitals. That is a grievance which the farmers have

against the Government, and it is one which will be detrimental to the Government when they seek the votes of the primary producers in the future.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): Prior to the last election we had a notable instance of the then Premier, the hon. member for Chillagoe, enunciating his agricultural policy, and we also had the Emu Park Conference. After those two moves the Government who are at present in charge—I shall not say of

Queensland, but of the benches on [4 p.m.] the other side of this Chamber—were elected with a majority. On one of the first occasions after reassembling in Parliament I mentioned that there was a class of legislation which the Government were quite justified in introducing, since it had been enunciated before the election, and that that legislation was Mr. Theodore's agricultural proposals and the agricultural policy outlined at Emu Park. Since then a great deal of that legislation has been passed, and at the present time many things are being done throughout the State which to my mind are the natural sequence of the attempt to administer legislation carried at the dictation of various trade unions, who have gradually obtained greater and greater power until now they form a section which the Government find it very difficult to handle.

One of my special grievances against the Government during this Parliament is the outcome of the fact that, when the late Premier announced his agricultural policy, he led quite a number of us to believe that much good was to come out of it. The Government immediately set in train a large organisation, which most of the farming community thought must necessarily be of some use to them. That has been in working order for quite a long time, but, as the Council of Agricultural and its subsidiary councils are administered, I think the people who expected to get some benefit must have begun to think that it is but a whitened sepulchre for their hopes. Lately the Government have disclosed their belief that, although they have had the Council of Agriculture controlled in effect by the Minister as president, they cannot trust it sufficiently, and they have now taken steps to see that more men who are certain to work for the policy of the present Government are put on to it. They evidently want to make doubly sure that they know all that takes place on the Council, and that it will obey the behests of the Government. Perhaps they will not actually endeavour to dominate it by forcing the Council to do things; they may simply state that certain things will be welcome to the Government, and the Council will agree without being forced to vote. In that way they are endeavouring to convert it into a bureaucracy in order that they may continue to use it to mislead the farmers by keeping a great number of them throughout the State still hoping that some good may come out of it.

A great amount of money has been spent in extending relief in various ways, and a great amount of money has been spent in subsidising private companies, but none of this money is yielding any return to the Government. It all practically amounts to a gift on the part of the Government. It is not fair treatment to the farmers and men living in country towns to have extra taxation imposed on everything the farmer produces in order that the income derived can be used to maintain the Council of Agriculture. If the Council of Agriculture is

going to prove the benefit that many thousands living in the country anticipated, then it will have to function absolutely unfettered and free from any Governmental shackles. When one looks at the legislation setting up the Council of Agriculture and the legislation during the past year or two in connection with land settlement, one cannot help being struck with the fact that the Government are attempting to organise along lines that will ensure for them the absolute control of the farms and the farmers in the same way as they organised along industrial lines when they made a bid to secure political control through their unions.

Several previous speakers have referred to the fact that the present land legislation is acting detrimentally to the interests of those who desire to dispose of their farms, and of those who desire to further land settlement. It is quite a laudable thing for a farmer who owns freehold land to be able to purchase a grazing farm and work that in addition, especially if he has made sufficient money from the freehold land to enable him to do so. It is a very good thing if the owner of freehold land is able to sell out, because in doing so he usually endeavours to sell at a profit; and, if he is successful, he can use his increased capital in taking up further land there or further afield.

Mention has been made of the fact that there are certain obstacles in the way of a man holding freehold land who desires to give his boys a start. There are a number of farmers on the land who desire that their sons shall settle on the land in close proximity to them. A son may not be able to obtain the necessary money from any financial institution to enable him to take up land; but the father may be able to raise the money on his land, or he may have saved it. That man should be allowed to buy a farm on which to start his son, and he should even be allowed to buy a farm to start another man on it. By those methods we shall be able to bring about increased settlement in country districts. As the Land Act is being administered at the present time, that particular avenue of advancement is stultified. The success of settlement and development in the country largely depends upon the administration of the day.

My particular grievance in regard to the railway administration to-day is the fact that we have a system which only requires a few small connecting links to complete and improve it, and these connecting links would not entail the expenditure of a great deal of money. If we look at the present railway policy of the Government we find that there is well over £500,000 of railway works which were completed to a certain stage, then discontinued, and which are idle at the present time. The State is getting absolutely no benefit from that money, while depreciation, amounting to well over £50,000 per annum, is going on. We have also to consider the interest on the money that has been expended. We therefore have not only expended £500,000 but have, as a result, to meet an interest and depreciation bill of £75,000 per annum on that expenditure. This money has been uselessly sunk on uncompleted railway works. If some of that money had not been squandered, but had been used in linking up several lines in

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Queensland—particularly the Nanango-Yarraman Creek line—a great deal of improvement to the system would have been effected. An opportunity would thus have been afforded to remove the congestion on quite a number of lines. While the Government are either borrowing money or increasing taxation and obtaining revenue from all possible sources we find they are doing nothing to improve the railways. If this work was carried out and some of these uncompleted works proceeded with instead of some of the schemes, such as the Dawson Valley scheme, great benefit would result to Queensland generally. The farmers situated away from the centres of population would have increased facilities for forwarding their produce to Brisbane, and the railways would not be such a difficult system to work as it is at the present time. There is no need for me to speak on the condition of the rolling-stock and the permanent way, but something should be done immediately to make use of some of the uncompleted railway works.

Take, for instance, the Ipswich railway station. A tremendous amount of money has been sunk there. The heavy foundation work and a great amount of the cement work has been completed, yet the old station is still standing there. Travellers have to use a refreshment-room, and the kitchen attached to it would be a disgrace to a dago's shop. As the Government have spent £60,000 or £70,000 on the foundations I cannot understand why they do not complete that station. People arrive at the station after riding eight or nine hours in the train, and, if they are just a few minutes' late, the refreshment-room is closed and they cannot get anything in the way of refreshment. The Government should rectify that state of affairs.

The hon. member for Mirani rather amused me with a statement to the effect that he thought the Government should do all in their power to redeem their character.* From what I can see of recent events, their character is absolutely past redemption. When one takes into consideration the acts that have recently happened and goes back in his mind for quite a time, and when one looks at the manner in which the Government have endeavoured to conduct our various soldier settlements, one cannot help feeling ashamed of what has been done by the Government. Quite a lot has been said of Beerburum, Coominya, and other soldier settlements; and, when one looks at what has happened at those centres, one cannot help being struck with the absolute inefficiency of the Government. For some reason or other—why, I cannot find out—the Government seem to select absolutely the worst land they possibly can get on which to put these poor unfortunate soldiers. It would have been a good thing had the Government years ago been prepared to make their first loss their last loss and to give these men a chance before it was too late.

The Government cannot say they were not warned in regard to the quality of the land. They were warned. What I do not forgive the Government for in regard to their soldier settlements is this: I can understand their not taking any warning from this side of the House, but they had quite a number of experts in their own departments, and they could have obtained the advice of those experts on the quality and possibilities of

the soil upon which they proposed to settle our returned soldiers. Taking one soldier settlement that I know very well—the Coominya settlement—I found on making inquiries—in fact, it was not until after I had made some statements in this House and had exhibited some photographs that action was taken—that the Government made water available to the farmers on that land by the sinking of at least three bores in different places. That water was available, but, because of the lack of a pump, the unfortunate wives of those soldier settlers had to carry water 2 or 3 miles.

These people were told first of all that probably they were going to make a fortune out of grapes, and after being on the area for some three or four years they came to the conclusion that it was impossible to do that. Then it was going to be oranges, and, when oranges became a little doubtful, it was going to be cotton. After experimenting with these three crops, they decided that the land needed manuring. That was after the settlers had been on the land for four years. Had the Government had an analysis made of that soil four years previously I venture to say that not one soldier would have settled there, because the description of the land by the analytical chemist attached to the Department of Agriculture was that it was the poorest soil that he had yet examined in Queensland, and that it was impossible to grow one commercial crop on such land. It is shameful to think that any Government would settle soldiers or any other class of settler on land such as that and keep them on it for four years when they might have got that advice before putting one man on the land. It is not as though there was no good soil available in Queensland, because anyone who knows anything at all of Queensland knows that there are hundreds of thousands of acres of very good soil that could have been secured at a price no higher than that paid for that land.

Seeing that the Government are responsible for these things it is quite right that the leader of the Opposition should object to you, Mr. Speaker, leaving the chair, as we desire an opportunity of ventilating some of the grievances that we have against the Government before we allowed them to spend further huge sums of money, especially since they have proved during the last ten years in their administration of State enterprises their absolute incapacity to run anything. I am perfectly certain that the people of Queensland are waking up to this fact and know where we are heading. The people of Queensland, by their vote at the last election, asked for this legislation, but what we say now is "Thank God they have had enough of it."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I desire to take advantage of this opportunity to refer to two or three matters. One matter has reference to the State sawmills. Some few days ago I addressed a series of questions to the Secretary for Public Lands, who has charge of that activity, and he was good enough to give me a number of replies, and the deductions from those replies are what I wish to refer to now. Those in business circles in Brisbane know quite well that there have been many criticisms and suggestions in reference to the State sawmills and the conduct thereof. That institution, of course, has been subjected to many alterations

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since it was founded, and many managers have had charge of its destinies. Of late it has been the subject of very severe comment by the trade in Brisbane. The facts that were gleaned from the questions that I asked the Minister disclosed that for the year ending 30th June, 1924, which is the last for which complete figures are available, there was a sum of £2,275 written off as bad debts for that particular year. Asking a further question, as I did, as to what amount was still owing on 30th June, 1925, for trading for the year ended 30th June, 1924, I was informed that there was a sum of £6,817 also unpaid, which clearly shows that for trading for the year ended 30th June, 1924, there was approximately a sum of £10,000 on the books of the State sawmills still unpaid, which is either actually written off as a bad debt, or, having been owing for longer than twelve months, is therefore practically a loss. That clearly indicates that the trading of the State sawmills for some time past has been of a very questionable character; and what strikes me as calling for comment is that in an institution of this nature, where the losses have to be made up by the taxpayers with whom the State sawmills are competing, the very least they can expect is fair, clean, and honest trading, which does not seem to have been the case from the figures which have been disclosed by the answers to the questions I asked.

Another extraordinary point which was disclosed by my questions and the answers thereto was that the Commissioner in charge of the State sawmills sells timber at from 2½ per cent. to 14½ per cent. less than the price fixed by the Commissioner of Prices. Why is it necessary to quote such a big reduction on the figures of the Commissioner of Prices when there is a loss on the year's trading of over £6,000? Surely it is very much more honest trading to stick to the prices fixed by the Commissioner of Prices and trade at a profit, than to sell under cost and let the taxpayer bear the loss. That seems to me to be an ordinary business axiom which very few people could criticise.

Another point on which I questioned the Secretary for Public Lands was as to whether special allowances were given to those tenderers who included timber from the State sawmills in their tenders for workers' dwellings, and the answer which the Minister gave was "Yes; 12½ per cent." The inference was that all those tenderers for workers' dwellings who included State sawmill timber in their quotations were allowed a 12½ per cent. reduction off the list prices on that timber. The only conclusion one could draw from that would be that all these tenderers would be able to quote a cheaper price in a tender where timber from the State sawmills was utilised; but the extraordinary point is that that is not the case. For recent tenderers for workers' dwellings charge a higher price where timber from State sawmills is utilised. Although those tenderers get that timber for 12½ per cent. less than the price fixed by the Commissioner of Prices, they yet charge a higher price to the person who is having a workers' dwelling erected. That is a most extraordinary position, and what occasions it I am not able to explain; but the whole business of the State sawmills is such as to call for very careful scrutiny, and we can only anticipate and hope that the fact that the

Minister has altered the control of the State sawmills and will have the opportunity of watching more carefully what is happening in that connection.

Another point I want to refer to is in reference to schools in Queensland. I do not think that enough attention is given to this most important question. There is not a district in Queensland which is not crying out for more schools or larger accommodation in existing schools. I sympathise deeply with the Minister who has to meet successive deputations which wait on him urging that attention should be given to these very necessary matters. We pride ourselves on the freedom

we enjoy and the intelligence of [4.30 p.m.] the people who are born and bred amongst us; but if we stint them or starve them in this education service, in my judgment, we put a very severe handicap on the younger generation. Yet that is unquestionably done. I do not think that the electorates in and around Brisbane have so much cause for complaint as have others, because in my judgment most unreasonable requests are put forward, and arguments are frequently utilised in their behalf which no Minister could be expected to listen to; but I think that the starvation of the country districts in regard to educational facilities is a matter calling for closer attention, and I should not like to stand by and see these facilities given to Brisbane and other great centres when there are districts which are starved, and when children are made to go tremendous distances to get the small advantages which are offered. That any hon. member should stand by under those conditions calls for very serious complaint. Probably they reflect that no votes are attached to the erection of schools; nevertheless, it is a very, very serious matter, and, apart from party politics, each one of us wants to see every child get the ordinary opportunity to become equipped to take part in the battle of life. That is not the case at the present moment, and the school vote should be at least double to do justice to the department and the future that lies in the destiny of our Queensland people. I have never heard, nor myself advanced, an argument against any taxation or impost occasioned by the necessity to give education to our children, because, in my opinion, it is very much above party politics. It is too serious a matter to be dragged into the arena of party politics, and that is why I think that, if greater attention were given to this vote, no one would cavil at it. We are all interested in equipping our young people to deal with their future problem.

There is another matter to which I want to refer. Police protection is being very seriously starved. Students of the situation must appreciate the fact that an element of lawlessness is creeping into our midst which needs nipping in the bud. In the remarks which I make I do not intend to make any party capital, but there is an element of lawlessness which it seems to me ought to be curtailed so that our youths may have their energies directed into proper courses. The lack of police protection is becoming quite a serious question in and around Brisbane, and probably in other parts of Queensland, and just at present calls for very serious comment. I know very well that the hands of the Commissioner are very closely tied by the fact that, owing to the imposition of the 44-hour week, he has had to face an increased expenditure amounting to something like £30,000, which probably

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in other circumstances he would have utilised in augmenting the force. That, unfortunately, has been blocked, because the expenditure now is so much that he cannot ask for any greater appropriation. Nevertheless, an element of lawlessness is evident which, if left unchecked, will develop into something serious.

The general tendency in Queensland is to lose all pride in work. All the old idea of dignity in work, all the impulse in people to apply themselves to their jobs and do their jobs well and improve themselves in the meantime, that element is disappearing, and there is a lack of concern, a lack of stability, which calls for a greater police protection, because if a man is not properly occupied, and if he does not follow his natural bent and expend his energies in commerce or production, they naturally lead him into less virtuous channels, especially when he is young.

I do suggest that the question of police protection is one that should claim the very earnest attention of the Government, because, if it is allowed to drift, the task will be a difficult one to overtake; but, if taken in time, and this lawlessness is nipped in the bud, we shall make good citizens of many characters who to-day threaten to be otherwise.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I desire to take advantage of this opportunity to ventilate some grievances, more particularly concerning my own district. Quite recently I had occasion to draw the attention of the Secretary for Railways to the fact that there was a shortage of trucks, not only in the Lockyer district but throughout the rural districts of the State. Before the strike we did have some little consideration, but I am sorry to say that yesterday and to-day the same old difficulties have arisen. Last night as I boarded the train at Forest Hill I noticed quite a quantity of produce dumped on the ground in the railway yard, with no trucks available, and apparently no sheets to cover the produce. I recognise that the Commissioner and the general traffic manager have done their best to cope with the situation; but, unfortunately, up to date the Government have not seen fit to appropriate sufficient money to build the rolling-stock necessary to cope with the increasing amount of produce. We frequently see Government money being expended in directions that are not remunerative, and certainly not to the advantage of the primary producer, the business man, or the community as a whole. This money is being wasted, and, unfortunately, there is not a sufficient amount available to build the necessary rolling-stock to carry our goods over the lines to-day. The Government have entered into many State enterprises which have not been remunerative, and which could have been well carried out by private enterprise successfully. If the Government had not embarked on such enterprises, I venture to say that there would have been sufficient money available for the construction of the rolling-stock necessary to carry our produce to market.

Mr. W. COOPER interjected.

Mr. LOGAN: I give the hon. member for Rosewood credit for doing what he could to relieve the pressure in my electorate and other electorates, but he is quite well aware of the fact that at Forest Hill

and other heavy fodder-producing centres we are having considerable trouble in the direction I have indicated. The Government have failed in their duty in not having provided sufficient rolling-stock to meet the requirements of the State. I hope that now that one industrial trouble is past for at least a while the Government will endeavour to provide the rolling-stock so urgently needed in important centres like Forest Hill and other portions of the State.

I also want to draw attention to the fact that the Government have failed to provide the necessary railway lines in settled rural districts. They have embarked on an extensive programme of railway construction in centres where at present there is no settlement. Those lines probably may lead to settlement, but at the same time they have omitted to look after the interests of people already settled on the land and in urgent need of better communication to markets.

Mr. W. COOPER: Does that apply to this Government only?

Mr. LOGAN: The hon. member for Rosewood knows quite well that what I am saying is correct. The Rosevale-Lanefield railway line was promised thirty-six years ago, and was approved by the present Government.

Mr. W. COOPER: You are wrong there.

Mr. LOGAN: It was approved of by the Labour Government.

Mr. W. COOPER: No, no!

Mr. LOGAN: It was passed in the year 1915.

Mr. W. COOPER: It was not.

Mr. LOGAN: I beg to differ with the hon. member.

Mr. W. COOPER: And I beg to differ with you; it was not.

Mr. LOGAN: The ex-Premier, Mr. Theodore, when attending a picnic in that district at Warrill Creek when in Opposition, made the promise that, if the Labour party were returned to power, the line would be constructed. I want to know how far the Government have honoured that pledge. We have some of the most fertile land in Queensland in the Rosevale district. The land at Mount Mort and Mount Walker is particularly fertile and heavy producing country. The farmers are 16 miles from Harrisville and 20 miles from Lanefield. The line has been surveyed and promised, and I understand that money has been placed on the Estimates for its construction, although nothing has been done. By providing means of communication by rail for those already settled in the country districts the Government would be doing a greater service to the State and would make the present lines more payable than in undertaking the programme they have embarked on in the Burnett district. It is questionable whether a lot of the land in the Burnett district is going to be as prosperous and suitable for closer settlement as the Government think. In my opinion the areas are being cut up too small. I believe a considerable area of the Burnett would be more successfully settled if the areas had been three or four times larger.

Mr. CLAXTON: Quite right.

Mr. LOGAN: A considerable discussion has centred round soldier settlements. I

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recently asked a question regarding the Coominya soldier settlement, which has been a colossal failure. Men were settled on land there that was almost useless, and the people living in the locality knew it was. To-day, instead of that settlement being a prosperous community, the houses have been removed and sold at ridiculous prices. When it was intended to transfer the soldiers from this settlement, the manager was asked to endeavour to dispose of some of the houses on the settlement. He obtained offers as high as £130.

Mr. CLAYTON: Private offers?

Mr. LOGAN: Yes.

Mr. CLAYTON: Shocking!

Mr. LOGAN: An offer was subsequently received of £80 each for eight other houses, but they were afterwards advertised for sale in the newspapers and sold for £50 each. These houses cost over £200 to erect. They have only been on the settlement a year or two and should be in good order.

The question of additional police protection has been mentioned, and reference has been made to an element of lawlessness in various parts of the State. It was my privilege in the recess to take a trip to the North. I had the opportunity then of seeing conditions for myself, and they certainly were an eye-opener to me. I certainly agree with the hon. member for Oxley that more police protection is highly desirable, especially in portions of the North. I visited a little township called Giru, in the electorate of the hon. member for Kennedy. There are four little stores in the town, and each of them is, I am told, a sly grog shop. A person can go along with his cart to any of those stores and secure beer in broad daylight. I want to know how far the liquor laws are being enforced, and why the Home Secretary does not attend to his business. This matter was brought under my notice, and the same thing was going on at the refreshment-room, but the Government would not grant a license. I understand that between the storekeepers and the man in charge of the refreshment-room in that centre a considerable amount of beer is disposed of. On one occasion an inspector got wind that a consignment of beer had gone out there, but, when he went along, of course, he could find no owner. There were fifty or sixty men working in the district on telegraph and other work along the railway line, but the inspector was unable to extract information as to who owned the beer, and, in the absence of an owner, the men naturally helped themselves. I am not inferring that the police are not doing their duty, but the law is evaded to such an extent that the police in endeavouring to do their duty at such places have very little chance.

I shall now refer to a complaint on behalf of the Laidley General Hospital in connection with the lackadaisical way in which affairs have been carried on by the Government administering the financial affairs of the hospitals. Some three years ago the hospital committee obtained the right to run an art union in connection with the hospital, and they raised about £2,700, which amount has not yet been subsidised. They have been agitating ever since they raised that money to have nurses' quarters erected at the hospital, but up to date have not been able to accomplish that. On numerous occasions, on behalf of the committee, I have offered to use

the whole of our money necessary for the erection of nurses' quarters, provided that we have an assurance from the Home Secretary or the Secretary for Public Works that, when money is available for the purpose of subsidising such work, the money expended by the committee would be forthcoming. Although that offer has been made on many occasions it was only within the last week or two, since we have had a new Secretary for Public Works, that I was able to get anything definite at all. As soon as I put the matter before the present Minister the hon. gentleman did the best he could for me, and we are now able to go ahead with the work. Just imagine, under a Labour Government professing to have the interests of the workers at heart, being unable to secure accommodation for nurses at a general hospital! That state of affairs has existed for years. The hospital was removed from its previous site, and since its removal it is more convenient and has become very popular; consequently it is always full of patients, and the nurses have had to take any rooms that were available after the patients had been dismissed. The hospital committee had this large sum of money to their credit in the bank, but owing to the fact that the Government would not subsidise any money for building purposes they were unable to build quarters, and the nurses had to dig in wherever they possibly could. It is most regrettable when a Government who claim to be the friends of the people, and who should also be the friends of the working nurses, fail to provide accommodation for those nurses.

I want now to refer to the inadequate accommodation provided in our country schools in the matter of shelter sheds. Every country member can back me up in this argument—that when we endeavour to get shelter sheds for the children attending the country schools we are told there is no money available for that purpose. The country schools do not seem to count very much with the Government. You must have a school with an attendance of 200 or 300 children before you get any consideration. I must say that I have been very successful in working some of the members of the Government, especially those connected with the Department of Public Works, in getting new schools. My electorate is fairly well supplied so far as schools are concerned. The only objection I have at the present time is that we cannot get shelter sheds. Many of our country schools are taxed to their fullest capacity, and in some cases the teachers object to the children going on to the school veranda or into the school with their lunches, as they drop crumbs on the floor. They send the children into the open, and these children should have some shelter from the sun. I have never yet been able to get one playshed built for the children attending schools in my electorate, without the committee has had to stand more than half the cost. The Works Department will perhaps provide the iron for roofing.

So far as education generally is concerned, I just want to say that the department should consider, even more than it does, the needs of the children in the country districts. Let us remember that many of these children are isolated from the bigger towns, and have to work harder than most of the children in the cities. In addition to their lessons, they have to do

various jobs about the farm, and they, as well as the town children, need the best education we can possibly give them. In the country, where the air is fresher, there is a possibility of some of the country children's minds being more fertile than is the case with the children in the city, and with a reasonable opportunity of getting education these country children will show the city people what they can do. In some of the smaller centres in my district there are children who give promise that some day they will take a very prominent position, perhaps, in our Legislature and in other institutions in the State. I hope the Government will consider their claims, and give these children the same opportunities that the city children are getting. There are many schools in the country districts where one teacher has control of forty odd children, and has no assistance whatever. It means that that teacher has six or seven classes to look after, and it is an utter impossibility to give that attention to each class that is required. As against that, in the city you have one teacher teaching one class of thirty or forty children, which is nothing like the task of the country teacher who has six or seven classes to look after. I hope every assistance will be given to these country children, so that they can take their rightful place in the State, and will have an opportunity of climbing to the top of the ladder.

I hope that the vexed questions that I have raised will receive consideration by the Government. I have not referred to them in any fault-finding spirit. I think members of this House have a right to ventilate their grievances. They have a right to point out where things can be remedied to the advantage of the public, and it must not be taken that they do so in a wrong spirit.

I desire to refer briefly to the foundation of the railway station at Laidley. Some years ago foundation work was put in there at a cost of £3,080. That seemed to be in the good old days, and things still remain as they were then. The present station is now in a dilapidated condition. I would remind the House that the Laidley station building is an iron structure which was brought from another district where it had done service some sixty years ago, and I understand was originally brought from England. I hope that the construction of a new station will be proceeded with by the Government, as it is only fitting that a town like Laidley should have better railway station accommodation than there is at the present time.

I wish to refer to the accident which took place at Helidon station some time ago, when a young man lost his life. There is heavy traffic continuously passing in and out of the station on account of its being a refreshment-room, and the platform is about 13 inches below the level of the floor of the carriages. The platform should be raised to the level of the floor of the railway carriages to obviate any accidents. I am not insinuating that the Railway Department was responsible for the accident which occurred, but it would be advisable to have the alteration made to obviate accidents in the future.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that on 10th August, 1922, the House passed a resolu-

tion which the Government have not seen fit to give any attention to. I think that it is the duty of the Government to inform the House why they have neglected to carry out the instructions of Parliament. The resolution I refer to will be found in "Hansard" for 1922, page 536. The then hon. member for Drayton moved—

"That, in order to increase the manufacture of our raw material into saleable goods and enable industrious workers to own shares in the means of wealth production, it is the opinion of this House that the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act of 1914 be extended to secondary industries."

I seconded that motion, which was carried; consequently, I take it that it was an instruction to the Government to take the question into consideration. Motions such as this, which occupy perhaps a half-day in discussion in this Assembly, should not be put into the waste-paper basket; but, apparently, that is what has happened. The object of this motion was to encourage production and bring about the expansion of our secondary industries, thereby creating a market for our primary products and providing facilities for the employment of the industrious men and women in the State who are now unemployed. We want to create opportunities

for work, instead of importing [5 p.m.] from the other States of the Commonwealth and from overseas the articles which we use in our everyday life. When I say "We," I mean the individual members of the Government, the individual members of this House, and the individual citizens of the State. We are using articles which should be manufactured here by our own people, but which are being imported from outside the State.

Mr. COLLINS: Why do you not condemn your own side in the Federal Parliament?

Mr. FRY: Does the hon. member consider it a fair thing to send to England for railway bridges—pieces of iron bolted together which can be made in any foundry in the State? Why does he ask me to condemn the Government in the Federal Parliament when I am speaking face to face with him, who supports a Government which have done that? Is it not a fact that the Government sent away orders for three railway bridges which could have been made over in South Brisbane or in any plant in the State? That is the fitting answer to any interjection from the Government or any other Government who accuse our party of sending orders out of Australia. I say that the principle involved is the same whether it be for a pound or a penny, £100 or £100,000. If the Government adopt a principle and depart from it, they are to be condemned just as much as any other Government are to be condemned for doing the same thing. Because some other Government send orders out of Australia are we to applaud the present Government for doing likewise? Can our engineering firms afford to turn orders away? They are waiting for orders, canvassing for orders; yet the Government of this State who refer me to the Commonwealth Government are guilty of the very same act with which they charge other Governments. Then again, it occurs to my mind that this Government sent an order into the Southern States for railway

[Mr. Logan.

locomotives, but, because the firm concerned could not execute it, the order was given to local firms. The principle is the same. I hope to be fair to this Government and every other Government, but, above all, to the people I represent.

Let us go into statistics with regard to our manufactures. I am going to quote now statistics which were quoted by the Premier himself some time ago, that is, figures from the "Commonwealth Year Book." The Premier said that he quoted those figures which suited himself. I am not going to quote the figures which suit myself. I am going to quote the actual figures as they appear in the "Commonwealth Year Book," from which we find that Queensland is lagging far behind in manufacturing industries. It is running a very good last, or very near to it. Let us take the—

NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN FACTORIES PER 10,000 OF THE MEAN POPULATION.

—	1909.	1914.	1923.
Victoria ..	772	832	960
New South Wales ..	574	626	701
South Australia ..	656	611	676
Tasmania ..	503	450	481
Western Australia ..	487	545	562
Queensland ..	518	641	556

These figures show the increase for nine-year periods:—

—	Nine years to 1914. Liberal Administration.	Nine years to 1923. Labour Administration.
Victoria ..	80	128
New South Wales ..	52	75
South Australia ..	45	65
Tasmania ..	53	31
Western Australia ..	58	17
Queensland ..	123	*75

* Decrease.

Up to 1914 Queensland had shown the greatest advance. In 1915 this Government assumed the reins of office, and since they have been in control Queensland is the only State that has shown a decrease in factory employment in proportion to the population. Since 1923 there has been no improvement. On looking round the State one cannot notice the activity in secondary industries that one should see. We see large buildings being erected in Queen street and elsewhere, and occupied by agents for manufacturing firms in Southern States. We find hon. members opposite referring to these buildings as a sign of prosperity; but is it a sign of prosperity when people invest their money in buildings to be occupied by agents for foreign or southern manufacturers? It is not a sign of prosperity, but shows a decline in our factory activity and an increase in factory activities in other States. When we moved the motion in 1922 to which I have referred, we had in mind the encouragement and expansion of our secondary industries so that those industries could hold their own with industries in any other part of Australia. We wanted to be able to compete successfully on our local market; but at the present time we are at the mercy of New South Wales and Vic-

toria in particular in connection with many articles in common use. As a result of such circumstances the primary producers—the men who toil from early morning to late at night, day after day—have a limited market on which to operate, whereas the Southern States have markets at their very back door. Instead of having an increase in factory figures, what do we find? We find on reference to the statistics that the unemployed relief amounted to about £500 per day. We also find that the amount distributed in relief in 1914 was £4,092. That in itself indicates there was employment for the people at that time. In 1922 we find that the amount distributed in relief was £177,019, which speaks for itself and shows that the employment was not here. If the employment was offering in Queensland, there would have been no necessity for distributing such an amount in relief. On 21st January last employment was offering for 200 men to start operations on the South Brisbane-Kyogle railway, and no less than 2,000 men applied. What did that indicate? It meant that the men who went down to the Labour Bureau to register for employment on that occasion were drawn from all walks in life. They were not all navvies. There were men in that number who could have been absorbed by our secondary industries if they had been in a flourishing condition: but these men were reduced to such a condition that they were prepared to take on pick and shovel work—the heavy work of navvying—in order to sustain their wives, families, and selves in food and clothing. That is the condition of affairs which the motion in 1922 sought to relieve. We desired then to create a position whereby employment would be offering in Queensland for them. The improvement we anticipated then would take place has not shown itself. What is the position? The Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act, which we supported, and which I am very pleased to see has been of benefit to many people out of work, has had paid into it £363,108, out of which £337,120 has been disbursed in sustenance.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the question be now put."

(Opposition interjections.)

Mr. FRY: I object, Mr. Speaker, to such a motion being moved when I am dealing with the question of secondary industries, which is so important to Queensland.

Question—That the question be now put (*Mr. Gillies's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 36.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
„ Bedford	„ Larcombe
„ Bruce	„ Llewellyn
„ Bulcock	„ Lloyd
„ Carter	„ McCormack
„ Collins	„ McLachlan
„ Cooper, W.	„ Mullan
„ Dash	„ Payne
„ Dunstan	„ Pollock
„ Farrell	„ Riordan
„ Ferriicks	„ Ryan
„ Foley	„ Smith
„ Gilday	„ Stopford
„ Gillies	„ Weir
„ Gledson	„ Wellington
„ Hanson	„ Wilson
„ Hynes	„ Winstanley
„ Jones	„ Wright

Tellers: Mr. Dash and Mr. Farrell.

Mr Fry.]

NOES, 25.

Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Logan
" Bell	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Moore
" Clayton	" Morgan
" Corser	" Nott
" Costello	" Petrie
" Deacon	" Roberts
" Edwards	" Sizer
" Elphinstone	" Swayne
" Fry	" Taylor
" Kelso	" Vowles
" Kerr	" Warren
" King	

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Sizer.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Conroy	Mr. Appel
" Hartley	" Peterson
" Pease	" Walker
" Theodore	" Barnes, G. P.

Resolved in the affirmative.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The Financial Statement, the Estimates, and the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement having been circulated since 10 o'clock this morning—

Mr. CORSER: And published.

The TREASURER: And published. I propose to follow the example of at least one Southern Parliament, and ask that they be taken as read and published in "Hansard."

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the Financial Statement be taken as read and published in "Hansard"?

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to say one word before that question is put.

I do not think it is courteous to hon. members that the Financial Statement should be handed to the Press before it is given to this House.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There can be no debate on the question—"That the Statement be taken as read and published in 'Hansard.'" Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the Financial Statement be taken as read and published in "Hansard"?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

OPPOSITION cries of "No!"

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): Mr. Pollock.—In presenting this my first Financial Statement, it gives me much pleasure to be able to say that the progress of this great State has been well maintained. My predecessor anticipated a surplus of £9,350 for the year just ended, whereas the actual amount was £16,967.

YEAR 1924-1925.

Last year's estimates and results were as follows:—

	Estimated.	Actual.
Revenue	£14,147,000	£14,897,256
Expenditure	£14,137,150	£14,880,289
Surplus	£9,850	£16,967

Advantage was taken of the great buoyancy of the revenue to set aside the amount of £350,000 towards making provision for the accumulated deficits, and also £60,000, the State's share of the losses on the guarantee in connection with the cotton crops of 1923 and 1924

The following tables disclose the increases and decreases of revenue and expenditure as compared with the Estimates laid before Parliament last year:—

REVENUE, 1924-1925.

Head of Revenue.	Estimated.	Actual.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£	£
Commonwealth	1,034,000	1,034,933	933	..
Taxation	3,769,000	3,914,161	145,161	..
Land	1,375,000	1,436,484	61,484	..
Mining	21,000	32,257	1,257	..
Railways	6,434,000	7,052,310	618,310	..
Other Receipts	1,504,000	1,427,111	..	76,889
Totals	14,147,000	14,897,256	827,145	76,889
Increase	£750,256		£750,256	

EXPENDITURE, 1924-1925.

	Appropriation.	Expended.	Saving.	Excess.
	£	£	£	£
Schedules	610,746	603,523	7,223	..
Interest on the Public Debt ..	4,219,913	4,246,533	..	26,620
Executive and Legislative ..	26,322	24,767	1,555	..
Premier and Chief Secretary ..	111,706	108,935	2,771	..
Home Secretary	1,363,774	1,383,242	..	19,468
Public Works	233,565	248,255	..	14,690
Justice	157,237	158,422	..	1,185
Treasurer	374,371	726,298	..	351,927
Public Lands	284,555	270,971	13,584	..
Agriculture and Stock	155,096	215,241	..	60,145
Public Instruction	1,369,196	1,404,466	..	35,270
Mines	70,283	66,357	3,926	..
Railways	5,160,386	5,423,279	..	262,893
Totals	14,137,150	14,880,289	29,059	772,198
Net Excess	£743,139		£743,139	

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

The anticipated revenue from income tax was largely exceeded, and was £209,869 more than the collections of the previous year.

Land revenue showed an increase of £61,464 over the estimate.

The railway returns were the outstanding feature of the year's revenue, the receipts being £618,310 in excess of the Budget estimate. The net revenue of £1,627,143 exceeded the 1923-1924 figures by £933,239, and represents a return of almost 23 per cent. on the total capital invested, as against £1 6s. 2d. last year.

"Other receipts" were under the estimate by £77,000, the deficiency being mainly accounted for in interest from the public balances.

Turning to the expenditure, we find that the total of the estimate was exceeded by £743,000, but of this excess £410,000 was accounted for by expenditure which was not provided for in the Estimates. After allowing for the latter sum, the excess expenditure over and above the Budget estimate is reduced to £333,000, and of this amount interest on the public debt and railway expenditure account for £289,000. Honourable members will, I am sure, appreciate the difficulty in estimating the interest which will be payable on loans to be raised during the financial year for which the Treasurer is budgeting, as the rate of interest and date the loan is issued are governing factors. The increase in the railway expenditure was brought about by the abnormal volume of traffic handled (which is reflected in the receipts) and repairing the heavy flood damages which occurred during the early months of 1925.

TRUST FUNDS.

The financing of the many Trust Accounts is a matter of some magnitude, as the requirements naturally increase with the growth of the business, although in some cases the assistance required is only temporary. The total expenditure in 1924-1925 from these funds was £6,413,122 and the receipts £6,320,066, leaving a net deficiency in the Cash Account of about £93,000. In many of the accounts there was an excess of receipts over expenditure, whilst others showed a reverse position. The Central Sugar Mills expended more than was received, and so did the Cotton Account. These two items show a total excess of expenditure of £243,900. However, the excess is only temporary, and will be adjusted when the proceeds of the sugar and cotton are brought to account.

Generally the Trust Funds are in a sound financial position, the one exception being the Stock Diseases Fund, and legislation will be introduced with a view of putting this on an improved basis.

LOAN FUND.

During the financial year just ended provision had to be made for loans aggregating £12,056,000, which fell due on the 1st January, 1st April, and 1st July, 1925. Of the total sum, £11,728,800 was redeemable in London,

and a Conversion Loan was issued at a price of £99 per cent., with interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, the loan being repayable on the 1st October, 1960, with a Government option of redemption at any time after 1st October, 1940. This, like the previous big Conversion Loan, was an unqualified success, and was referred to in very flattering terms by the London "Times" and other leading London papers. Cash applications amounted to £45,552,500, and the Conversion applications £7,950,000, making a total of £53,502,500. This loan was originally raised in 1875-1882, and matured in 1915, when a Conversion Loan was arranged by the Denham Government for a period of ten years, the loan again falling due on the 1st April, 1925. The net proceeds of the loan work out at £96 7s. 9d. per cent., the interest only on the net proceeds being £5 3s. 9d., and the interest cost including redemption £5 4s. 4½d., the return to the investor if the loan be redeemed at the later date being £5 1s. 2½d. Representations were made to the Bank of England for special concessions in its charges for this issue, and the bank agreed to considerably reduce the rates for management, etc., as set out in the agreement between the bank and the Government, such concessions resulting in a saving to the State of £11,611.

Of the maturing loans repayable in the Commonwealth, namely, £327,200, we redeemed by a cash payment £204,300, the Sinking Fund Trustees handed to the Treasurer for cancellation £27,700, and the balance, £95,200, which was held by the trustees, will probably be renewed at an interest rate of 5½ per cent.

Last year the Australian Loan Council agreed that the Commonwealth Government should be the central borrowing authority for the loan requirements in Australia of the Commonwealth and all the States. We also agreed, in common with the other States, to restrict our borrowings overseas to an amount sufficient to meet our overseas interest and other payments, and any further amounts for the redemption of maturing loans. This action on the part of the Commonwealth and the States materially assisted towards reducing heavy exchange rates. Under the agreement the Commonwealth raised a loan in Australia of £10,428,270 for the combined requirements of the Commonwealth and States, and of this sum Queensland's share was £1,374,950. The loan was issued at an interest rate of 6 per cent. and a price of £98 10s., repayable in 1930 or 1935, the effective rate of interest working out at £6 10s. 5d. for the shorter period and £6 6s. 8d. for the longer.

Queensland raised a loan in London for new money of £4,000,000, at a rate of 5 per cent., with the price of issue £97 10s., maturing in 1960, with a Government option to redeem it any time after 1st October, 1940. The loan was oversubscribed and closed a day earlier than was originally intended, the amount offered being £5,751,500. The net proceeds of this loan realised £94 12s. 4½d. per cent., the interest only on the net proceeds working out at £5 5s. 8½d. and the interest cost, including redemption, £5 6s. 8½d.

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

The transactions of the Loan Account for last year are summarised in the following table:—

LOAN FUND.		
<i>Transactions of Loan Fund for Year 1924-1925.</i>		
Cash balance at 1st July, 1924	£ ..	£ 2,672,325
Receipts during the year—		
Repayments by local authorities, etc. .. .. .	.. ..	390,974
Receipts under Land Sales Proceeds Act .. .. .	.. ..	1,602
Proceeds of issues for conversion of loans matured—		
5½ per cent. (London)	12,703,734	
Less discounts and charges	330,099	
		12,373,635
5 per cent. (London)	11,728,800	
Less discounts and charges	423,725	
		11,305,075
6 per cent. (local) .. .. .	.. ..	55,100
		23,733,810
Instalment stock issued to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia on account of matured holdings .. .. .	.. ..	250,000
Proceeds of new loan issues—		
5 per cent. (London)	4,000,000	
Less discounts and charges	215,232	
		3,784,768
6 per cent. (local)	565,571	
5½ per cent. (local)	30,000	
		595,571
Less charges	155	
		595,416
6 per cent. (State's proportion of issue by Commonwealth Government)	1,374,980	
Less discounts and charges	32,101	
		1,342,879
		5,723,063
Loan from Commonwealth Bank of Australia under Clause 10 of the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920 on account of increase in Savings Bank depositors' balances .. .. .	.. ..	682,000
Cash deposits by insurance companies under the Insurance Act of 1923 .. .. .	.. ..	49,950
Loan from Commonwealth Government on account of soldier settlement .. .. .	.. ..	29,890
		£33,533,614
Expenditure during the year—		
Expenditure as per Budget Table E2 .. .. .	.. ..	4,081,741
Amount paid to Sinking Fund in terms of agreement with the Commonwealth Government on account of loans advanced for local authorities .. .. .	.. ..	4,000
Refund of deposit under the Insurance Act of 1923 .. .. .	.. ..	5,000
Redemption of debentures and inscribed stock issued under Government Loan Acts—		
Loan Act of 1884	11,419,000	
Loan Act of 1889	1,554,834	
Loan Act of 1914	11,728,800	
Loan Act of 1918	56,500	
		24,759,134
		28,849,875
		4,683,739
Add—		
Amount of outstanding advances on account of co-operative agricultural production transferred to Trust Funds—Agricultural Bank .. .. .	.. ..	45,494
		4,729,233
Deduct—		
Capital expenditure, etc., transferred from Trust Funds on account of—		
Chillagoe State smelters .. .. .	.. ..	281,822
State enterprises .. .. .	.. ..	1,080,200
State sawmills .. .. .	.. ..	8,192
		1,370,214
Cash balance at 30th June, 1925 .. .. .	.. ..	£3,359,019

STATE ENTERPRISES.

Full information in respect to the financial position of the various enterprises for the year just ended and the balance-sheets and report dealing with the operations will be made available to honourable members at an early date.

The committee appointed under the State Enterprises Act, after a careful and exhaustive examination into the financial position of each enterprise, determined and declared

that the capital should be written down as follows:—

	£
State stations	674,789
State cannery	89,959
State fish supply	44,080

£808,828

These amounts have, therefore, been written off the loan indebtedness of the above enterprises in the books of the Treasury.

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.

SAVINGS BANK.

Under the transfer agreement the State has a call upon 70 per cent. of the increase in depositors' accounts as a loan for a term of twenty-five years. We have on all occasions taken advantage of this provision, and for the period 1st October, 1920, when the agreement became operative, to the 30th June last, the amount made available to the State was £2,088,665 at an interest rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. We are also partners in the combined Savings Bank business of the Commonwealth Bank in Queensland, and share equally with the bank any profit or loss. During the operation of the agreement we have received £29,472 net as our share of the total profits to 31st December, 1924, and I am confident that there will be a further amount paid to the State on account of the profits for the half-year ended 30th June, 1925. In addition to the call which the State has upon 70 per cent. of the increased deposits, which by the way include interest credited, we have the right to renew for a further term of twenty-five years any maturing Queensland Government securities held by the Savings Bank Branch of the Commonwealth Bank. During the financial year just ended debentures amounting to £250,000

held by the bank, and which were originally issued in June, 1885, fell due, and we exercised our right of renewing them at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest for a further period of twenty-five years.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Up to the 30th June, 1925, the losses to the State on account of interest and principal written off soldier settlement accounts together with the administrative costs amounted to £743,389, to which must be added £371,223, the interest paid to the Commonwealth in excess of that charged the soldier settlers, making the gross cost to the State £1,114,617. If we deduct from this latter sum the interest rebate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. allowed by the Commonwealth, amounting to £297,994, we get a net cost to the State to 30th June last of £816,623.

The Commonwealth has submitted an agreement which provides inter alia for certain interest concessions and also for the writing off of £475,000 of the capital debt of the State on account of soldier settlement loans received from the Commonwealth. We have notified the Prime Minister of our acceptance of the agreement, and when finalised full particulars will be made available.

ESTIMATES, 1925-1926.

REVENUE FUND.

Receipts.

My estimate of revenue for the current financial year is as follows:—For the purpose of comparison I have given the amounts received last year.

	Received. 1924-1925. £	Estimated for 1925-1926. £
Amount from Commonwealth	1,034,933	1,067,000
Taxation	3,914,161	4,030,000
Land revenue	1,436,484	1,465,000
Mining receipts	32,257	33,000
Railways	7,052,310	7,550,000
Other receipts	1,427,111	1,465,000
Total	£14,897,256	£15,610,000

It will be seen that the total anticipated receipts for 1925-1926 show an increase over 1924-1925 of £712,744.

Taxation is estimated to produce £4,030,000 as against £3,914,161 received last year—an increase of £115,839, of which income tax is responsible for £90,000.

From land revenue I expect to receive this year an additional £28,500.

Railway revenue is estimated at £497,690 more than was received in 1924-1925. The increase in freights and fares operated last year from about the middle of August only, and this fact, taken in conjunction with the additional returns from the linking up of

the Townsville and Cairns railway systems, should insure that the estimate abovementioned will be realised. Further, the season for sugar and agricultural products promises very heavy traffic for the railways, and an improvement in the movement of live stock is looked for.

“Other receipts” are estimated to return about £38,000 more than last year, the greater portion of this being on account of interest from loans to local bodies.

Expenditure.

The estimated expenditure for the current year and the actual for last year are given in the table which follows:—

	Expended, 1924-1925. £	Estimated for 1925-1926. £
Schedules	603,523	528,173
Interest on the public debt	4,246,533	4,617,830
Executive and Legislative	24,767	26,986
Premier and Chief Secretary	108,935	144,585
Home Secretary	1,383,242	1,503,748
Department of Public Works	248,255	275,686
Department of Justice	158,422	194,610
The Treasurer	726,298	386,919
Department of Public Lands	270,971	303,401
Department of Agriculture and Stock	215,241	176,185
Department of Public Instruction	1,404,466	1,520,923
Department of Mines	68,357	82,092
Department of Railways	5,423,279	5,837,473
Total expenditure	£14,880,289	£15,598,611

The total for 1925-1926 is an increase over the 1924-1925 figures of £718,322.

Interest on the public debt accounts for an additional £371,000.

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The Chief Secretary's Department shows an excess over last year of £35,000, which includes £27,000 for expenditure on the radio service. The service will be revenue producing, and as £20,000 of the expenditure is for plant it will be non-recurring.

The Home Department shows a large anticipated increase over last year of £120,500, which is accounted for by the increased provision for hospitals, police, and generally for increases under awards and the putting into operation of the 44-hour week.

The provision for the various services of the Works Department has been increased over last year's expenditure to the extent of £27,000, the greater portion of this increase being on account of additions and repairs to school and other buildings.

The amount proposed for the Justice Department shows an increase over last year's expenditure of £36,000, and of this amount £20,000 is to provide for the expenses of the general election.

The Treasury shows a decrease of £339,000 over last year's disbursements, but after allowing for the item of £350,000 set aside for the reduction of the accumulated deficits and previously referred to, we get an increase of £11,000, of which £10,000 is for new machinery for the printing office.

The Lands Department's votes are £32,000 more than expended last year, about £10,000 additional being provided for district offices and forestry, respectively, and £4,000 for Survey Office.

In Agriculture and Stock the vote is less by £39,000 than was expended last year, but as the latter included an item of £60,000 for cotton losses there is an increase of £21,000 in the comparable expenditure. The excess is mainly accounted for by an additional amount for the development of agricultural, horticultural, and dairying industries.

The total sum required for Public Instruction exceeds the expenditure for the previous year by £116,000. New awards for teachers and others have materially increased the remunerations of these officers; and, further, considerable additions have been made to staffs. The provision for State schools has been increased by £73,000, secondary education by £9,000, and technical education by £15,000.

For the Mines Department a sum of £16,000 in excess of last year's disbursements is asked for, the increase being accounted for mainly under the votes in aid of mining.

In Railways there is an increase over last year of £414,000. This sum includes provision for the 44-hour week, and necessary expenditure to handle the anticipated additional volume of business.

Summarised, the result for the year 1925-1926 upon the foregoing Estimates will be—

Total revenue	...	£ 15,610,000
Total expenditure	...	15,598,611
Surplus	...	£11,389

TRUST FUNDS.

The proposed expenditure from these funds totals the large sum of £7,585,902 as compared with £6,413,122 expended last year—an increase of £1,172,780. As previously mentioned, the Trust Accounts generally are in a sound position, and the

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additional expenditure is on account of increased activities of the services catered for by these accounts. For Agricultural Bank advances £600,000 is allotted, as against £236,548 expended last year. For advances for construction of Workers' Dwellings and Workers' Homes and purchase of land for same, £725,000 is being provided, compared with £428,528 expended last year. For Central Sugar Mill an expenditure of £1,600,000 is anticipated, which is £77,000 more than last year. For the State Insurance Office £721,435 is provided, as against £655,719 expended last year. The Main Roads Board estimate expending £639,000 this year, which is about £232,000 more than last year. Generally additional expenditure from Trust Accounts means additional receipts, which are credited to the relative accounts.

LOAN FUND.

The Commonwealth and States, New South Wales excepted, have agreed that the Australian Loan Council should continue to function during the current financial year. The loan programme for 1925-1926 was discussed and a mutual agreement arrived at in respect to Australian and London loan arrangements.

Queensland's loan programme for this year entails an expenditure of £5,579,557, which will be raised partly in Australia and partly overseas.

Last year the expenditure totalled £4,081,741, which was about £300,000 less than the amount budgeted for. It will be seen that we propose expending this year £1,498,000 more than last year, of which railways will absorb £952,000, loans to local authorities £57,000, loans to Hospital Boards £89,000, land resumptions £236,000, land settlement £39,000, forestry £23,000, irrigation activities £143,000, and Main Roads Board £156,000. Some of the services show decreases. The amount allotted to railways for the year—viz., £2,728,000—includes £1,000,000 for rolling-stock, the expenditure upon which last year was £651,000.

The decision of the Government to increase the basic wage will involve an expenditure of approximately £240,000. When the amount has been definitely ascertained, Supplementary Estimates will be introduced covering the appropriation, and I will then indicate how it is proposed to provide for the additional amount. It necessarily follows that the Estimates presented to Parliament to-day will need to be increased in consequence of the Government's decision.

Mr. Pollock, I move—

“That there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1925-1926, the sum of £300 to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

The TREASURER: Mr. Pollock, I beg to move—

“That you do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.”

Question stated.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr. Pollock, to the fact that the motion—

“That £300 be granted for ‘Aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor’”—has not been put to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is—

“That I do now leave the chair,
report progress, and ask leave to sit
again.”

OPPOSITION cries of “No. no!”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You
are cutting your political throats.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

The House adjourned at 5.22 p.m.