

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 3 AUGUST 1926

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TUESDAY, 3 AUGUST, 1926.

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

MEMBERS SWORN.

Hon. J. Stopford and Messrs. A. C. Elphinstone and J. C. Peterson, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took their seats as members for the electoral districts of Mount Morgan, Oxley, and Normanby, respectively.

QUESTIONS.

ACCIDENTS ON QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.

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

“1. What number of accidents or mishaps have occurred on the Queensland State railways during the years ended 30th June, 1925 and 1926, respectively?”

“2. What was the total cost of the damage resulting from such accidents or mishaps to rolling-stock, locomotives, and permanent way?”

“3. What was the total loss of life resulting from such accidents?”

“4. What number of persons were injured?”

“5. What amount of compensation was paid on account of loss of life or injury?”

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

“1 to 5. The information is being collated.”

TENDERS FOR STEAM HOPPER BARGES.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Treasurer—

“1. Has the Government recently called tenders for two steam hopper barges?”

“2. If so, when?”

“3. How many tenderers submitted estimates?”

(a) Their names and country?

(b) The amount of each estimate?

“4. Was any tender accepted?”

“5. If so, whose?”

The TREASURER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. Date of receipt of tenders, 31st March, 1926.

“3. Eighteen. I lay on the table a list containing the desired particulars—

LIST OF TENDERS RECEIVED ON THE 31ST MARCH, 1926, FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO BARGES FOR THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT.

| Name. | Amount. | Country. |
|--|-----------|---------------------|
| | £ | |
| N. N. Scheepsbouwwerf en Machinefabriek “De Klop” | 51,960 | Holland |
| Burntisland Shipbuilding Company, Limited | 55,500 | Scotland (informal) |
| Fleming and Ferguson, Limited | 57,000 | ditto |
| Ferguson Brothers, Limited | 58,000 | ditto |
| Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Company, Limited | 58,075 | England |
| N. V. Internationale Scheepshouwij “De Maas” | 60,100 | Holland (informal) |
| Henry Robb, Limited | 60,890 | Scotland |
| Lobnitz and Company | 62,800 | ditto |
| Bow, McLachlan, and Company, Limited | 62,800 | ditto |
| I. J. Abdela and Mitchell, Limited | 63,800 | England |
| Grangemouth Dockyard Company, Limited | 64,000 | ditto |
| J. S. White and Company, Limited | 68,950 | ditto |
| William Simons and Company, Limited | 73,000 | Scotland |
| Verschure and Company | 74,220 | Holland |
| Werf Gusto | 76,800 | ditto |
| Poole and Steel, Limited | 93,000 | Adelaide, S.A. |
| | (approx.) | |
| Morts Dock and Engineering Company, Limited | 119,000 | Sydney, N.S.W. |
| Government Dockyard | 134,800 | Newcastle, N.S.W. |

“4. Yes.

“5. Messrs. Ferguson Brothers, Limited, Newark Works, Port Glasgow, Scotland.”

TENDERS FOR RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Has the Railway Department recently called tenders for the construction of twenty-five locomotives?”

“2. If so, when?”

“3. How many tenderers submitted estimates?”

(a) Their names and country?

(b) The amount of each estimate?

“4. Was any tender accepted?”

“5. If so, whose?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. In June last.

“3. Fourteen. (a) and (b)—This information can be obtained at the office of the Commissioner for Railways.

“4. Yes.

“5. Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co., Ltd., Newcastle-on-Tyne, England.”

ELECTRIFICATION OF METROPOLITAN TRAIN SERVICE.

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

“Before any definite action is taken to expend money on costly resumptions in increasing the metropolitan train

service, will he cause a more comprehensive and independent investigation to be made into the question of electrification of such services?"

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

"The question of electrifying the Brisbane suburban railway service has been considered, but the cost of altering the service from steam to electricity would involve such a large capital cost as to make it prohibitive at the present time."

BOOKMAKERS, BETTING TAX, AND TOTALISATOR TAX.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. What is the total number of bookmakers in Queensland, as disclosed by the purchase of betting tickets, taking a period of twelve months to 30th June, 1926?"

"2. What is the average betting tax for the said period paid per bookmaker in Queensland? Also, the minimum and maximum amount of any one bookmaker?"

"3. What is the total amount that has passed through the totalisators during twelve months to June, 1926?"

"4. What was the amount of totalisator tax for the period?"

"5. What is the total deduction made from totalisator investments?"

"6. How is this allocated?"

"7. What is the amount of the fractions retained by the Government during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1926?"

"8. What is the amount of unclaimed dividends during the same period?"

"9. How many regulations have been gazetted for the control of totalisators?"

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

"1. Total number of bookmakers—550.

"2. Average betting tax paid per bookmaker—£48. (This does not include license fees.) Minimum and maximum amount of any one bookmaker:—Owing to the fact that the Stamp Duties Branch Offices at Rockhampton and Townsville, and every clerk of petty sessions office in Queensland sells betting tickets to bookmakers, it is not possible to state accurately the minimum or maximum purchased by any one bookmaker. From the 1st July last a record is being kept by the Stamp Duties Office, by means of a card system for each bookmaker, which it is hoped will be the means of furnishing the information desired accurately.

"3. £1,025,680.

"4. £51,234.

"5. 13½ per cent. within 20 miles from General Post Office, Brisbane; 15 per cent. elsewhere in the State.

"6. 5 per cent. to Government; balance to racing clubs in each instance.

"7. £17,660.

"8. £1,781.

"9. 24."

INVESTIGATION INTO CAUSES OF OUTBREAKS OF INFLUENZA.

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

"1. Has any investigation been made by the health authorities as to the cause

of the continued outbreaks of influenza? If so, with what result?"

"2. How many deaths have occurred during the last two years, known to be from such cause?"

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

"1. No investigations have been made in Queensland as research laboratories all over the world have failed to find the exact organism causing the disease.

"2. Deaths recorded by the Registrar-General, Queensland:—1924: Males, 61; females, 35—total, 96. 1925: Males, 45; females, 37—total, 82."

COMPLETION OF MANY PEAKS-MONTO AND EIDSVOLD-MONTO RAILWAYS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. As the slow rate of construction of Upper Burnett railways is causing hardship and unnecessary expense to settlers in that area, will he make ample provision in the year's appropriation for the early completion of the Many Peaks-Monto Railway, and also the Eidsvold-Monto Railway?"

"2. As some relief will be occasioned by the opening for traffic of sections as completed, will he intimate when the sections will be opened for the conveyance of goods and produce?"

(a) From Ceratodus to Abercorn?

(b) From Many Peaks to Dawes Range?"

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

"1. Good progress has been made in the construction of the Upper Burnett railways. The section from Mundubbera to Monto has been opened to Ceratodus (31 miles 14 chains), and it is proposed to open to Mulgeldie (57¼ miles) in March next. The line from Rannes to Monto has been opened to Thangool (42 miles 49 chains), and it is proposed to open a section of the Many Peaks-Monto line to Dawes Range (about 15 miles) during the current month.

"2. (a) Produce and goods are being carried by the resident engineer's ballast train to Abercorn until the line is opened to Mulgeldie in March next. (b) Some time this month."

INCREASE IN RAILWAY FARES AND FREIGHTS.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*), for Mr. Edwards (*Nanango*), asked the Chief Secretary—

"In view of—(a) the fact that the excessive fares and freights on the Queensland Railways are already at a dangerous and uneconomic level, as evidenced by the successful competition of motor transport in the carriage of both passengers and goods; and (b) the fact that the proposed further increase of 10 per cent. will impose a heavy burden on primary producers who, in many cases, are quite unable to withstand any further imposition; and (c) his repeated promises during the recent election campaign that fares and freights would not be raised if the Labour Government were returned to power—will he take action to cancel or, at least lessen, the increases now proposed?"

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns) replied—

“The propositions stated in paragraphs (a) and (b), as well as being misleading, contain self-contradictory assertions of assumed facts. The statement contained in paragraph (c) is entirely incorrect, for neither in my policy speech nor elsewhere did I make any such promise.”

COST OF ADDITION TO TREASURY BUILDING.

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

“1. What has been the cost to date of the addition to the Treasury block?”

“2. What is the estimated cost?”

“3. When does he anticipate it will be ready for occupation?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) replied—

“1. £117,113 13s. 9d.

“2. £230,000.

“3. The basement and first floors are occupied, and it is anticipated that the remaining floors will be ready for occupation at the end of 1925.”

COST OF MINISTERIAL TRIP TO STATE CATTLE STATIONS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

“1. What was the cost of his recent trip to the North in connection with State stations business?”

“2. What members accompanied him on this trip, and were their expenses paid out of public funds?”

HON. D. A. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) replied—

“1. This information will be obtained for submission to the House in the usual way.

“2. The members for Merthyr, Bulimba, and Buranda. The usual procedure in regard to expenses was followed.”

CATTLE ON NORTHERN STATE STATIONS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

“Is it a fact that the number of cattle on the Northern stations are considerably overestimated?”

HON. D. A. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) replied—

“I was unable during my recent visit to the Northern stations to complete a full muster to determine the number of cattle on the stations.”

APPLICATIONS UNDER WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT AND WORKERS' HOMES ACT.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. How many applications were made during the year 1925-1926 for workers' dwellings?”

“2. How many of the applications were approved?”

“3. What was the estimated cost of the homes approved?”

“4. How many applications for workers' dwellings were refused?”

“5. How many applications were made during the year 1925-1926 for residences under the Workers' Homes Act?”

“6. How many applications made under the Workers' Homes Act were approved?”

“7. What was the estimated cost of the homes approved under the Workers' Homes Act?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) replied—

“1. 1,140.

“2. Applications totalling 1,209 were approved, including 209 which were in various stages of progress at 30th June, 1925.

“3. £684,294.

“4. Eight.

“5. 512.

“6. Applications totalling 460 were approved, including 65 which were in various stages of progress at 30th June, 1925.

“7. £242,420.”

COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. What was the cost of the construction of the following schools:—Bell's Bridge, Kia Ora, Munna Creek?”

“2. What are the dimensions of the schools mentioned?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) replied—

“1. Bell's Bridge, £649 6s. 3d.; Kia Ora, £642 5s. 11d.; Munna Creek (to date), £609 15s. 1d.

“2. 21 feet by 18 feet in each case.”

ORE SUPPLIED TO CHILLAGOE SMELTERS BY MUNGANA MINES.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“What quantity of ore was supplied to the Chillagoe smelters by the Mungana mines (Girofla and Lady Jane) during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1926?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

“Girofla, 12,387 tons; Lady Jane, 4,256 tons; total, 16,643 tons.”

SALARY AND TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES OF LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Chief Secretary—

“What is the present rate of remuneration—(a) salary and allowances, exclusive of travelling allowances; and (b) travelling allowances of the Lieutenant-Governor?”

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns) replied—

“(a) £2,000 per annum; (b) actual expenses.”

RESCISSON OF ORDER FOR PRINTING OF PAPERS.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): I beg to move—

“That the Order for printing made on 28th July, of the following Papers—

Order in Council under the Inspection of Machinery Acts, 1915-1925;

Orders in Council, Regulations, and Rules of Court under the Industrial Arbitration Acts, 1916-1925;

Orders in Council under the Electrical Workers Act of 1923;

Orders in Council and Regulations under the Weights and Measures Act of 1924;

Amended Regulation under the Factories and Shops Acts, 1900-1922;

Additional Regulations under the Workers' Homes Acts, 1919 to 1925;

Regulation under the Apprenticeship Act of 1924;

Regulations and Rules under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act of 1922

—be rescinded.”

Question put and passed.

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF MINISTERS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move—

“That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing the amount expended by each Minister and Assistant Minister in travelling expenses during the financial year ended 30th June, 1926.”

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FIRST ALLOTTED DAY.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), who was received with Opposition cheers, said: I must first congratulate the mover and seconder on their utterances, not necessarily on those things they wished to imply, but upon possessing the necessary qualifications of a good Labour member in that they are fluent. (Opposition laughter.) I trust that, if their term here is going to be a long one, their political outlook will be broadened in the interests of the State.

Now that I am in the humour to extend congratulations, I might possibly extend my congratulations to the Government on establishing a couple of records. We find that they have secured a record revenue from the people, and notwithstanding that record extraction by means of taxation, they have established a record deficit. The Government have also established, in connection with the railways, a record not only for the State but for Australia. They have secured from the people by way of rates and fares a record revenue for the railways during the year, while during the same period they have also established a record deficit on our railways. Although the members of the Government party did not like the expression, our railways have been known as “the Gone a Million Railways”; but they are now gone nearly two millions to the bad. Probably before very long it will be proved that the railways during the period when this wonderful revenue was extracted from the people have lost no less than £1,900,000.

During the recent election campaign the Government made wonderful promises to the people, but it cannot be said that the Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor revealed any policy calculated to fulfil those promises. It is really a contradiction of the things that were promised by the Government, and is proof that the action of the Government during the election was really that of a conjuror—they promised something, but after the election those promises are not to be fulfilled, and we heard the Premier in replying to a question to-day claim that he did not make certain promises during the election campaign.

[*Mr. Corser.*

The Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor omits any reference whatever to State enterprises, and is a contrast to the Speeches of previous years. I must make some reference to statements that have been made in the past, but before doing so I would like to contrast the Speech with statements made by the Premier, the members sitting on the Government benches, and their associates during the recent election. They will prove that, compared with their statements then, the Speech and their actions now are undeniable evidence of political sleight of hand work. During the elections the people were told by them that, if the Opposition were returned as a Government, the Chillagoe mines and smelters would be closed down. Those statements were deliberately made, and we find that immediately the Government are returned to office, after securing the votes of those gullible people who supported them in the past, and who will support them in the future until our educational system is sufficiently advanced to enable them to see that they are being taken down and that it is not in the interests of themselves or the people at large to continue voting as they have done, that they did the very thing that they stated the Opposition would do. Not only did they gull the people in that regard, but they told them that if the Opposition were returned the contributions from the Agricultural Council would be wiped out. No sooner did the Labour party secure the votes of the gullible amongst the primary producers than they pushed aside the Act, and denied to those people the advance which the Act declares is theirs—doing the very thing that they claimed the Opposition would do if returned. Hon. members opposite and the Premier also told the people—despite the denial of the Premier to the hon. member for Nanango—that they would not increase railway freights and fares. The Premier states that he did not make such a statement, and possibly it is another of his conjuring tricks; but it certainly was implied that freights and fares would not be increased. According to the “Daily Standard” of 5th May, 1926, the Premier, speaking at the Astor Theatre, New Farm, said—

“There are only two ways in which the railways can be made to pay. First by increasing fares and freights, or second by reducing the wages or increasing the hours of employees. The Labour Government is opposed to increasing charges. We have adopted the policy of making the wealthy income tax payers—most of them living in the city in luxury—bear the burden of the railway deficit.”

Is that not implying that the Railway Department would not increase freights and fares?

Mr. HYNES: To the extent of wiping off the whole of the deficit.

Mr. CORSER: It only proves that the Government had established a feat in gerrymandering, in gulling the people, and in putting over acts of sleight of hand. The people saw those things at election time, and now they do not see them at all. They also told the people that if the Opposition were returned—and they would not allow us the right to speak for ourselves—they had to speak for themselves and for us—the workers would be denied work, which would be sent to contractors on the other side of the world.

No sooner were the Labour party returned than they arranged for twenty-five railway engines to be built in Great Britain, and engineering works here will be denied that work! That is just the opposite of what they claimed. They gulled the people into believing statements made by Labour aspirants in their own interests at election time, to the detriment of the Opposition—statements which were not true. It is now shown that the confidence placed in the Government was misplaced, that once again the people had their legs pulled; and it is certain that the same thing will occur again, and that the Labour party will promise the people anything to get back to office. The old story that wages would be reduced if the Opposition were returned to power was again brought up, and that the Opposition were against unionism. Myself and other members of the Opposition support unionism. We want to increase the benefits gained by the workers under unionism, and let me remind hon. members opposite that it is owing to a Government other than Labour that unionism first came into existence in Australia; and a Government other than Labour gave to the workers in Queensland a piece of freehold land in this city of Brisbane for the building of a Trades Hall; and the present Government, as showing the value of freehold, gave to them another piece of freehold land—the only people who could get freehold—for another Trades Hall. The generous gift by a previous Government of the freehold of a piece of land could not be exceeded by the present Government, who could only do the same and grant the workers another piece of freehold land. The success of the Government at the last elections was due to the unfortunate using of industrial organisations for political purposes. That is the trouble that exists in Queensland to-day, and that is the unfortunate position that too many of our industrial leaders are allowing themselves to be forced into. I say emphatically that we on this side believe in unionism. We believe in assisting the unions, and we want the workers to secure further benefits from unionism in the interests of the workers themselves. The Labour Socialists to-day are exploiting the industrial organisations for party political purposes. That is the unfortunate position we have got into, and we must get out of it, not in the interests of any political party but in the interests of the workers themselves.

The most successful unions in the world to-day are those in America, and the policy of the Opposition, which is to give to the workers greater control of their industry, has been proved in America to be the soundest policy. There we find the workers, through their unions, securing shares in the railroads on which they work and establishing labour banks that have the respect and support of the commercial banking interests in the United States of America, so that the worker is receiving his full wage, and also, by paying careful attention to his duties and to the interests of his country, he is not only earning a revenue for his State, but is earning an increased profit in the interests of himself and his family.

The dividends from the companies in which these Labour banks have placed their funds are increasing, but the Queensland Labour Government fears that if the worker, through his union, secures assistance by these means he will, like the Labour politicians, too soon become a capitalist. That is the

reason why the Labour party despises the capitalist. We on our side wish to secure the fullest return to the workers, and we trust that through their organisations they will take an interest in industry, place their funds in industry, and assist to build up that industry throughout the State.

Compare the actions of men in this country with the actions of the leaders of Labour in other parts of the world.

If we compare the statements of our friends opposite with those of the late Mr. Samuel Gompers in the United States, we shall find that there is a great difference [11 a.m.] between their views, while on the other hand there is a similarity between the ideals of that great Labour leader and those of members of the Opposition. This is an extract from a speech of Mr. Gompers, in which he annihilated the arguments of the Socialists after they had been for two or three days airing their theories. I want to apply the statements of Mr. Gompers to hon. members opposite, who claim to represent Labour here. He said—

“I want to tell you Socialists that I have studied your philosophy; read your works on economics, and not the meanest of them; studied your standard works, both in English and German—have not only read but studied them. I have heard your orators and watched the work of your movement the world over. I have kept close watch upon your doctrines for thirty years; have been closely associated with many of you and know how you think and what you propose. I know, too, what you have up your sleeve. And I want to say that I am entirely at variance with your philosophy. I declare it to you, I am not only at variance with your doctrines, but with your philosophy. Economically you are unsound; socially you are wrong; industrially you are an impossibility.”

That might be said of the Labour party here also. The Premier states that he did not make promises at the last election to the people that there would not be an increase of railway fares.

We find also in “The Producer” dated 21st April, 1926, an awful illustration of the Government’s leg-pulling tactics during the election. The hon. member for Brisbane may laugh. Unfortunately the Government have this time gulled the majority of the electorates of the State. Here we have an undeniable exhibition of what the Government will do. Here in their own paper, sent to every home in Queensland, we have a full-page advertisement, headed

“TOILERS, BEWARE OF THE TORY PLOT TO INCREASE RAILWAY FREIGHTS!” set out in big letters; and in the same article they claim that—

“The Tories are constantly harping on the railway losses. They say that if the Tory party is returned to office they will make the railways pay by increasing fares and freights.”

We further have this illustration—

“It would be little short of criminal to thrust the whole burden of the cost of the railways on country residents. That is what increased freights would amount to. Why should not the wealthy taxpayers who live in the cities contribute towards the upkeep of our railways?”

Mr. Corser.]

The Labour policy of keeping down freight rates is demonstrated by the following table'—

which is a conglomeration of untruths that nobody can understand. Here is their own political paper asking and appealing for the votes of the unfortunate primary producers who had not the opportunity of hearing a member of the Opposition—

“Don't let the Tories reduce the taxation of the wealthy city merchants and private co-operations and make up the revenue by increasing railway freights. That is what they will do if they get into office.”

The Government ought to resign and go back to the country and admit their failure and acknowledge that they have deceived the people. This is deceiving the people. Who signed this? Their own “Campaign Secretary”—

“Authorised by Lewis McDonald, 236-238 Elizabeth street, Brisbane.”

As I said, the statements in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech are in great contrast to the statements in regard to the Government's policy made at previous openings of Parliament. I have compared some of the previous Speeches with the present Speech. The Opening Speech this session is an illustration of the fact that the Government will say anything, and I will also prove that we cannot rely on the statements they make. I always try to live up to the statements that I make. (Government laughter.)

As an illustration of what the Government want to do, let us contrast the statements in the present Speech with the statements in previous Speeches. In 1920 their Governor's Speech contained this statement, dealing with State enterprises, on which the Speech this year is very silent—

“The State cattle stations have proved to be a splendid investment, and are making handsome profits.”

(Opposition laughter.) This year, after having written off a large sum and allowing for interest, the loss is £678,000! Another statement was—

“The large cannery which the Government erected at Bulimba to deal with the products from the soldiers' pineapple settlements at Beerburrum is being equipped with additional modern machinery and will shortly be a paying proposition.”

Alas for their fond hopes, so far the loss, with interest, is no less than £99,781. Here is another statement—

“Last year again the State Produce Agency finished with a credit balance, enabling the Government, notwithstanding keen competition with private enterprise, to declare a bonus of 2½ per cent. on the proceeds of all sales. This amount is now being distributed amongst farmers who do business with the agency.”

This year we find there has been a loss of £35,000, so that there is no bonus. I repeat that we have to analyse the results of the Government's undertakings in the light of these statements, if we are to be able to say how much of their present statements are to be believed. In 1920 the Governor's Speech said—

“The State Fish Department did not make a profit, but until the trawler has

[*Mr. Corser.*

completed the exploratory work in which she is at present engaged better returns cannot be expected.”

(Opposition laughter.) I do not know whether it is suggested by the returns from the State Fish Shops that that position has been reached, but the trawler has vanished, and we have lost £35,000 over it. Again, in 1920 the Governor was made to say—

“It is intended to introduce as early as convenient a Bill to provide for a superannuation scheme for railway workers.”

Where is it? No need to say any more! (Opposition laughter.) In 1920 the Governor's Speech said—

“It is intended to . . . build lines into the Upper Burnett lands and other fertile areas . . . also that the Northern Burnett and Callide Valley areas would settle 15,888 settlers.”

They have only been successful, under their policy, in settling up to the present time 885 settlers, and those railways are still being built. The Government are spending money on unremunerative works, while the promises to settlers of railways, schools, and Agricultural Bank assistance is being delayed.

Mr. HYNES: Do you object to the expenditure on railways?

Mr. CORSER: The railway revenue has nothing to do with loan expenditure in the construction of railways—that is just for the information of the hon. member. Getting back to 1920, we find the statement, dealing with railway finances, that—

“Happily, the position is improving.” Has it improved? We have lost £10,575,000 since that time, and this year it has improved to such an extent that we have lost £1,900,000. Now, you will agree that the Government should at least be prepared for criticism by those people who have seen their acts, and that they should be judged by their accomplishments. Can we congratulate them on anything? The only thing on which I can congratulate them is the wonderful record they have established to the detriment of the people; yet they have received a majority of the votes of the electors and a majority of votes in this House.

Mr. WEIR: That is the acid test.

Mr. CORSER: The people are getting the acid now—they were getting the sugar at election time—and it will hasten the return to fair government—a people's Government—which can only come from this side.

Mr. HYNES: You have been saying that for ten years.

Mr. CORSER: Then I have been consistent.

Mr. HYNES: You will be saying it for the next ten years.

Mr. CORSER: It was stated in the Governor's Speech in 1920 that it was essential that a rural bank be established. That has been asserted time and again, but the Speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor on this occasion contains the statement that it is hoped that financial institutions will see that it is to their advantage to assist those connected with primary production. In 1920 it was stated—

“My advisers strongly emphasise the necessity for the establishment of a State steamship service.”

I do not know whether the purchase of the two vessels "Bar-ca-mul" and "Douglas Mawson" constituted the establishment of a steamship service, but we know that the dredge was sold and the "Douglas Mawson" lost, and that that enterprise cost us £65,000. We are still without this State steamship service which was then deemed so essential. The Opposition have not been able to discover any State steamship service, but probably the Government know of its existence. I believe that the "Barrel of Mud" or rather the "Bar-*ea*-mul"—the trawler—got so low down that she had to stop to whistle. (Laughter.) The Opposition have been told that they must not do anything to defame the good name of the State. Again in the Governor's Speech in 1920 it was stated—

"Notwithstanding the succession of droughts which have been experienced under the present regime . . ."

Then again, in the same wonderful speech, it is stated—

"The prospects to the graziers, thanks to Queensland's wonderful rains, are exceptionally encouraging."

The PREMIER: Which Governor's Speech are you dealing with?

Mr. CORSER: The Governor's Speech for 1920. I am comparing it with the Speech delivered at the opening of the present Parliament, and I am dealing with it too effectively for the hon. gentleman. We were told in 1920 that there were disastrous droughts to be contended with, and again in the Speech of 1926 we read "a disastrous drought has made itself felt, and we have a deficit of £554,000." The curious part about it is that the greatest amount of railway and other revenue was secured during the last six months of the drought, when the unfortunate people in the country were compelled to use the railways for long haulage of produce and sheep and for other purposes. The Government secured the greatest amount of revenue during the period of the drought.

Mr. WEIR: You are a genius right enough.

Mr. CORSER: I cannot return the compliment. (Laughter.) The other day I returned from the upper part of the Callide very hungry after travelling a couple of hundred miles, and I rushed into a hotel at Eidsvold at 6 o'clock and found everybody so busy that we could not get anything to eat. I inquired the reason for so much bustle, and was informed that the train was up to time and there was nothing cooked. (Laughter.) That does not occur only in electorates represented by the Opposition. We had an illustration in Townsville where a function was being held and people were all excited on this gala day, which was celebrating the arrival of the mail train on time. When the function was half way through those attending were informed that it was of no use—that it was the train of the day before that had arrived. (Laughter.) That is the way the railways have gone down.

Unfortunately, the management and working of the railways were more appropriate than to those of some South American republic than to what was supposed to be a British State in Australia. The railways are in an unfortunate position. The carriages are dilapidated, the engines are so out of repair that breakdowns are more frequent than usual, and there is now a rush to build

engines in order to try and carry starving stock to pastures. They all trusted that the rains would come before the engines were constructed.

Mr. PEASE: Still, you stop in such a State.

Mr. CORSER: We believe in and have every confidence in Queensland, and her resources are so great that she has not even gone down and out under the maladministration of the Labour Government. The development of the natural resources of Queensland has been opposed by the policy of the Government. All attempts by the people to make Queensland prosperous and make her "gang forward" have at every step been opposed by the administration of the Government. That opposition has come from a gang of political Labour men, who for their own selfish ends told the people anything in order that the Government should be returned to power. Nothing bad enough could be said of the Opposition.

Mr. PEASE: You are a poor lot.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I trust that the hon. member for Herbert will restrain himself.

Mr. CORSER: The Governor's Speech in 1920 contained the following:—

"The activities of Chillagoe (now State owned) have also added very considerably to the revenue-producing capability of the Chillagoe and Etheridge railways which likewise now belong to the State."

We find that the actual loss was £403,000, and, including interest on the Chillagoe undertaking and railways, the loss amounts to £759,953. Those works are now closed until the next election, when the Government will require some more votes. We have £1,500,000 capital tied up in the Chillagoe works and the railways connected therewith. Those are matters dealt with in the Speech as inflicting one or two more burdens on the Government.

I also desire to refer to one or two more statements appearing in the Governor's Speech of 1920. With regard to the State iron and steel works, it was stated—

"With regard to the State iron and steel works, much preparatory work has been done, the site selected and the plans and lay-out of an up-to-date plant has been made—which will rank unique in utility and enterprise as a State undertaking."

It was a unique piece of sleight of hand work at those elections, but since that time we have lost £49,000 in this connection, and all we own is Yampi Sound, and it is a moot question whether we shall be able to find that asset or not. It was "sound" at election time, but is not too "sound" in practice. Those works were promised to the electors at election time, but those gullible electors would probably be told now that some delegation which went home stopped the Government from getting the money.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: So they did.

Mr. CORSER: I was looking for that interjection. The hon. member took both the sinker and the hook. That is a contradiction of what was subsequently stated by the then Premier, Hon. E. G. Theodore. Mr. Theodore, speaking at Bowen on 4th October, 1920—and it must be true, as it

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was reported in the "Daily Standard," said—

"There was nothing about which the Government was more in earnest than the establishment of the Bowen iron and steel works."

That was a good election stunt, but we do not want any such stunts in politics. As another illustration in proof of my statement, let me quote somebody who is never wrong—the Secretary for Mines, the Hon. A. J. Jones. According to the "Daily Standard" of the 10th September, 1920, that gentleman stated:—

"It is an indication that we are going back to power that we will be able to finance and go on with the iron and steel works at Bowen."

Mr. DASH: Why don't you get something new?

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

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I beg to move—

"That the hon. member for Burnett be granted an extension of time."

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member for Normanby know that he will be deprived of his right to speak if the extension is granted?

Mr. PETERSON: Yes. I have a bad cold and will be unable to speak.

Question put and passed.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The statement continues—

"The State iron and steel works are now developing."

And now they are closed down—only six years later. In 1920, we had a Water for Settlers Bill. In 1925 we had a Water for Settlers Bill, and in 1926 a Water Bill. In 1920 we had a Widows and Orphans' Pensions Fund Bill, and in 1926 we are promised provision for widows' pensions. This little peep into the past and the comparison of their statements in the past with those contained in subsequent Governor's Speeches and with their subsequent actions, must illustrate to any reasonable thinking person that the Government have not fulfilled their promises, and that they should not have the confidence of the people although they might have the confidence of the majority of the electors by reason of their promises.

During the reign of this Government they have failed to fulfil the promises made to the settlers in the Upper Burnett district. The delay in railway construction has meant a big financial loss to the settlers in that area. The "snail like" progress in railway construction has added a big burden to the settlers throughout that district, and has caused them to pay £4 a ton for the carriage of their products to and from the railway centre. The schooling provision is a disgrace to any civilised community. Schools promised in Mr. Huxham's time have not yet been built. Hessian schools have been provided, and the settlers have provided the building. The cattle ate the hessian on one occasion, and, when the settlers asked for new walls, the Government sent more hessian. I suppose that is in process of being eaten. School sites spoken of in 1920 are not yet definitely settled, and in one instance forty children have been waiting for the last

two years for school provision. In one instance we wanted a fence to enable the children to come to school.

Mr. BRUCE: You wanted a fence for the children to come to school on?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member cannot misconstrue what I have to say. The children have to ride to school, and they must have a fence round the school to hold the horses. Hon. members may laugh, but these children cannot possibly attend the school unless there is some means of keeping the horses and ponies at the school. Twelve pounds was denied them—"No money this financial year." Land values have been too high, Agricultural Bank advances too low, and the Government have not fulfilled their promises.

The Government should be guided by information that has been gathered in the past in the matter of inducing settlers from Britain to come here. I want particularly to call the Premier's attention to statements that have appeared in the London "Daily Telegraph," of 15th July, 1925, in connection with Australian agricultural training colleges. I am not going to transgress by reading the lot, but this statement says—

"The guiding principles of the Australian Farms Training College scheme are—

Practical training of young men, after leaving universities, colleges, and public schools, in the work of farming and stock-raising as carried on in Queensland.

"Settlement of the students, who graduate through the training college and experimental farms, upon the fertile lands of the Upper Burnett and Callide regions of Queensland. After his training in England every settler is expected to provide a capital of £250, and upon doing so receives a grant of £750 from the Government of Queensland, together with loans on easy terms when necessary."

Do the Government propose to make a grant of £750 to each of these students? If so, surely our own people are also entitled to such a grant. If the Government are not prepared to grant them £750, they should not allow this official statement to appear in the London "Daily Telegraph" without a denial from them. We know that Lyndford Hall has recently been purchased. We know that students are being trained there, and from the illustrations that have been sent out we find that most palatial accommodation is provided at Lyndford Hall, and that one of the most wonderful gates in Great Britain is provided at the entrance. We find this mansion is for the training of young Englishmen to come out and settle on the Upper Burnett, who are to receive £750 when they get there, and we are told that it will be a life of excitement for young men. It will be a life of excitement in chasing the Agricultural Bank. This statement continues—

"Lyndford Hall students will enjoy, besides a thorough practical training and hard work, some of the advantages of a country gentleman's life. The future Queensland settler will find in the magnificent grounds of Lyndford Hall facilities for outdoor recreation, including cricket, football, golf, tennis, boating, and swimming. When the students reach

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Queensland trained and ready to take up their own life they will find a complete organisation awaiting to receive them."

Probably a Labour organisation. They might get hold of the £250 each settler is expected to bring with him.

The PREMIER: Is that the stuff you used at election time?

Mr. CORSER: I never produced this statement before. I waited to bring the matter before the Premier himself.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are abusing the privileges of the House.

Mr. CORSER: I am safeguarding the intended settler. This statement further says—

"The settlement area is within reach of seaports and towns served by railways and new railways are being built. There are Government demonstration farms in the neighbourhood at which free advice and assistance are given to settlers."

The PREMIER: That was written by your ex-schoolmaster.

Mr. CORSER: No.

The PREMIER: He taught you. No wonder you are what you are.

Mr. CORSER: The gentleman the Premier refers to is Mr. Potts, late Principal of the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, who never taught me. This statement is signed by Mr. MacKenzie, and has been distributed throughout Great Britain, and is in the hands of the Government, too, and is not denied. In fairness to these people, if the statements are not true, it is the duty of the Government to see that information of this nature is not published, and to see that young men are not influenced by such promises and brought out here under false pretences. If they are true, let the Government fulfil their promise of establishing demonstration farms and make these young men a grant of £750. Let them play the game when the young fellows do come out. Those are my reasons for bringing the matter up in this House, and my reasons for not referring to it at election time.

I want to make a congratulatory reference to the Prickly-pear Commission in regard to its control of the operations to check the spread of prickly-pear. The Commission's work has been very satisfactory, [11.30 a.m.] and the experiments made should be a guide in the future to the members of the Government. No less than 4,000,000 acres of land have been saved to the State owing to the activities of the Commission. I think that the conditions of many of the settlers who have been affected by the Commission should be brought up again for revision, and that, benefiting by the experience gained, an essential extension of tenure should be given. We should give the extended facilities which are necessary to enable us to solve our troubles and save our lands from prickly-pear infestation, and not wait till the country gets into a worse state. The drought period we have experienced has been a great drawback, and I hope that in connection with grazing selections and agricultural farms the Commission will not be above reviewing the matter and extending facilities even further.

I will not transgress any further. I thank the House very much for the extension given to me.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns), who was received with Government cheers, said: Many people inquire as to why the Opposition make so little progress in the country at election time. The speech just delivered is an ample reply to the query of those people—a speech delivered by one of the leading members on the Opposition benches, which was so flippant.

Mr. CORSER: You did not like it.

The PREMIER: There was no serious consideration of anything in it.

Mr. KING: Too serious.

The PREMIER: A quotation of some high-faluting statement appearing in a London paper, which has been denied.

Mr. CORSER: Produce your denial.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition, or at least some of the newspapers, complained because the leader of the Opposition was not given an opportunity of extending his speech.

Mr. MOORE: I did not complain.

The PREMIER: I will admit that there was no complaint from the hon. gentleman himself. I was going to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that, as under the Standing Orders it is impossible to give an extension of a speech without some hon. member losing his opportunity of speaking to the Address in Reply, it might be advisable for you to ask the pleasure of the House in regard to any hon. member continuing his speech.

Mr. MOORE: It was offered, and I declined it.

The PREMIER: If you do so, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that you use your discretion as to whether the speech which is being delivered is worth continuing. (Laughter.)

The leader of the Opposition touched on many things in his speech, most of them now historical, but he made no reference to the future, and his speech mainly consisted of a wail because he had not succeeded at the general election. One only has to read that speech to conclude that the hon. gentleman is still suffering as the result of the defeat which his party received at the hands of the electors.

Mr. KING: So is Queensland.

The PREMIER: That remains to be seen. At least I am not going to live in the past; it is the future that matters. In regard to many hon. members opposite, their future is behind them. (Laughter.) One can understand a little bit of feeling when the leader of the Opposition was so confident that he was going to win nearly all the seats including my own; one can understand that the result was not in accordance with his anticipation, and to that extent I sympathise with him. It is a bad thing to prophesy. I do very little of it myself, because I know from experience that it is most difficult to gauge the public mind, and I depended upon good wholehearted work to convince the people of the right of my side.

In the time at my disposal I want to touch upon one or two matters mentioned by the leader of the Opposition in his speech on Thursday. The first thing he touched upon was the closing of the Chillagoe State smelters, and all his trouble was that we had not told anybody. Surely the hon.

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member is not going to suggest that, as leader of this Government during the next three years, I am bound to tell everybody what we propose to do in every difficult situation which arises, or that we are not to do anything because somebody did not mention our intention at the election! With regard to Chillagoe, the Government came to the conclusion that we could not continue to lose public money in that venture, and that the position which was created by the shortage of ore and the necessity of spending a large amount of capital in sinking and getting new reserves of ore, the value of which when developed would not pay to smelt, was carefully considered by us. We faced that situation—as we shall face every other difficult situation which comes before us—on its merits, and the hon. member is not going to deter me from doing what I think is right, simply because he says that we did not go out—in order to please him during his campaign—and do the foolish things that he did.

Mr. MOORE: Did you not say you were going to keep them open?

The PREMIER: The hon. member also referred to Bowen, and made assertions that we were not carrying out the law. He showed a complete ignorance of the law and no idea of the situation. He adduced no argument; he simply made the statement that the law was not being carried out. As a matter of fact, the law was carried out at Bowen to the utmost letter, and there is no need for me to be afraid of half a dozen "red ragers" who happen to live in Bowen. The situation was difficult.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It has held up the farmers' produce, all the same.

The PREMIER: These difficult situations are not settled merely by making newspaper statements, and I have refrained from making them.

Mr. MOORE: They are not settled by doing nothing, either.

The PREMIER: The idea that the Government can make men remain at work exists only in the mind of the hon. member.

Mr. MOORE: No; that is not what I said.

The PREMIER: The whole trend of the hon. member's case was that we should make men remain at work or present themselves for work. The only way to settle the Bowen trouble, according to the hon. member's statement, was to enforce the law. What does that mean? If there had been a breach of the law, the only way to enforce it would have been to punish the offenders—to put them in gaol.

Mr. MOORE: No—you can give protection to other people.

The PREMIER: That protection always exists.

Mr. MOORE: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: The Government to which the hon. member is proposing to hand over certain powers in a few weeks' time had a strike in New South Wales against their award. New South Wales unions struck against their 48-hour week, and remained obdurate for quite a long time. Did we find this great champion, Mr. Bruce, compelling these men to obey the law? He could not. Why could he not? For the same reason that I could not make the Bowen waterside workers attend at the meeting place to be picked up.

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Mr. MORGAN: You could protect others.

The PREMIER: Why could not Mr. Bruce protect others? Did he do anything of the kind?

I do not desire to waste the whole of my time on this matter, but let me quote another historical example. What are the British Government doing to-day with the British coalminers? The British Government have all the political power necessary. They passed a law increasing the hours to be worked in coalmines. They used all the power that the Government had at their disposal in Great Britain, which power I suppose is greatly in excess of what we have here. What is the result? There are very few miners working in coalmines in Great Britain.

Mr. MOORE: There are 6,000 working.

The PREMIER: Out of 2,000,000. I mention this, not because I want to score off the leader of the Opposition, but because I know that the most difficult problem facing Governments throughout the world to-day is the industrial problem, and it is not to be settled by putting men in gaol. It is not to be settled by doing the things which the leader of the Opposition thinks the Government should do.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: And it is not to be settled by misleading the people at election times.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman does as much misleading at election times and at any other time as any hon. member.

The leader of the Opposition complained of the literature published during the elections.

Mr. KING: "Give the child a chance."

The PREMIER: Is that any different from publishing the photograph of the hon. gentleman's good lady? Is there any ground for contending that, because any hon. gentleman in this House has a good-looking wife, electors should vote for him? (Laughter.) What I mean to convey is that electioneering is not profound.

Mr. MAXWELL: It is very low down.

The PREMIER: Not so low down as the tactics resorted to by the party opposite. The two speakers who have spoken from the other side lived in the past and quoted electioneering pamphlets. In effect, the Opposition were dealing with the gallops that take place on a racecourse after the race has been run. (Laughter.) The challenge with regard to literature comes with very bad grace from a party that allowed scurrilous literature to be circulated without the printer's name upon it.

Mr. BRAND: "The Mungana egg"?

The PREMIER: It is an extraordinary thing that someone having no interest in the elections should pay for the printing with no hope of gain. Who is going to believe that? Who is going to believe that this printing was not paid for? Who is going to believe but that it was paid for by people who were concerned with the defeat of members on this side and not members on the other side? That being the case, who paid for it? The people who stand behind the hon. gentleman opposite. The printers were hauled before the court and fined for publishing scurrilous literature against the Labour party. Now we have the hon. gentleman complaining about the pamphlets.

Mr. KING: What are you referring to?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You know.

The PREMIER: Ignorance has never been allowed as an excuse. The hon. gentleman is in the political business, and he should be au fait with political affairs.

Mr. KING: You are making the charge. Give the information.

The PREMIER: You know better.

Mr. KING: I tell you that I do not know.

The PREMIER: You ought to know. If you do not know, then you are not in the confidence of the managers of your party.

Mr. MORGAN: It shows that the managers of our party know nothing about it.

The PREMIER: For the last eleven years, ever since Labour first occupied the Treasury benches, we have listened to speech after speech based on pamphlets issued during election time.

Mr. CORSER: Why go back to the past?

The PREMIER: We did not do so. Hon. members opposite have no power of constructive criticism. They come along into this House and read "No. 6 Pamphlet," or the green or the red pamphlet, session after session, and then wonder why the people have no confidence in them.

Mr. MOORE: Chillagoe, Bowen, and Mackay are not in the past.

The PREMIER: That is electioneering material. Hon. members opposite would not be able to make any speeches if they did not employ those methods; and, if it does not do any other good, it certainly enables this House to get some amusement from the quotations taken from pamphlets right back as far as 1916 and quoted year after year.

Mr. CORSER: Not from pamphlets, but from your own speeches.

The PREMIER: It is not necessary for me to deal further with that matter. The Government party and its policy and platform are well known.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The Opposition, their newspapers, and their artists try to make them appear as something which they are not. The platform of the Labour party upon which the past election was won, and which is the main basis of our existence, is known to everybody.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You will not put it into operation.

The PREMIER: The consequence is that, when this party goes before the electors as a Labour party, it has no need to mislead anybody.

Mr. BRAND: What about stuffing the rolls?

The PREMIER: The issue at election time is not affected by the pamphlets that the Opposition issue.

A lot has been made about so-called promises. I must really apologise to the House for using its time to reply to the question, but hon. members should be familiar with questions in which information is sought. The leader of the Opposition spoke of promises and broken promises. We have been in office only a month or two since the election.

Mr. MORGAN: The policy of your party is one continuous policy.

The PREMIER: The charge has been made that I said at election time that there would be no increase in railway rates and fares. That is not true.

Mr. CORSER: Then the "Standard" must be discredited.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: The charge was made against us that we could not make the railways pay, and I said plainly and without equivocation, that there were two ways of making the railways pay—one by increasing the rates and fares, and the other by reducing the wages of those men employed in the railway service.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There is the other alternative.

The PREMIER: If that is by increased production, then I doubt whether that would make them pay.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Run them on business lines.

The PREMIER: I disagree with the idea that a business man knows everything.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He is not given a chance.

The PREMIER: The business man generally knows his own particular business, but outside that he knows very little. That is my experience. No one knows that better than the hon. member.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I disagree with you entirely.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition said that the Government stated they would make the railways pay. We never said anything of the kind.

Mr. MOORE: Who said so?

The PREMIER: You did.

Mr. MOORE: No, no.

The PREMIER: You said you would make the railways pay. (Opposition dissent.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: The Labour Government have never stated that they would make the railways pay. They have not been made to pay.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The losses are a result of your methods.

The PREMIER: To make the railways pay would mean piling up too heavy a load upon the people who use them.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: One method of making them pay is by taking the control out of the unions' hands.

The PREMIER: The hon. member would do a terrible lot to the unions if he had the chance. He knows very well from his knowledge of his own business what he could do.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is just what I am doing.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member was on these benches as Minister, he would discover, as the leader of the Opposition would also discover, that he could not make men remain at work if they did not want to do so.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is a shocking admission.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot do it in his own business.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Can't he.

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The PREMIER: This charge that I made a promise that increased freights and fares would not take place is not true.

Mr. KELSO: Were you not reported as having said it at New Farm?

The PREMIER: I did not say it, and there is no report making me say it. I put before the Opposition the problem of making the railways pay, and I say that, owing to the increased charges in the railway service—and I shall have something to say on this later on—it was necessary to make someone pay some of the deficit; not all of the deficit, as proposed by the hon. member.

Mr. BRAND: Did you not say that you did not believe in balance-sheets?

The PREMIER: During his speech the leader of the Opposition talked of broken promises. He set out against the 44-hour week, and during the campaign he tried to prove—

Mr. CORSER: He did not set out against it.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition tried to prove that he was in earnest when he moved that amendment in this Chamber to bring in the 44-hour week immediately.

Mr. MOORE: So he was.

The PREMIER: Did the hon. member gull one elector by that statement?

Mr. MOORE: I did not intend to. I wanted to tell them the truth.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! Hon. members are entitled to be heard without interruption. I have called "Order!" dozens of times this morning, and I want to take this opportunity of saying that I will insist on my call to order being obeyed. I hope hon. members will allow the Premier to be heard. Hon. members on my left have had an opportunity of speaking, and a similar opportunity must be given to hon. members on my right.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition endeavoured to make the people believe his statement that he was in favour of the 44-hour week. I am not complaining about his saying that he was in favour of the 44-hour week, but no one in the country believes that that was his idea when that amendment was before the House. The intention of the hon. member was to put the Government in a difficult position by forcing them to bring in the 44-hour week immediately. In addition the hon. member said he believed in the basic wage. The hon. member voted against it in this House. But he started to drop his high and mighty attitude as the election campaign progressed, and one at a time he threw overboard those stands which he took early in the campaign. I am complaining of the misleading attitude taken up by the hon. member through the campaign and the dropping of his planks one at a time when he found they were unpopular.

Mr. CORSER: He did not drop one.

Mr. BRAND: These are only statements of yours.

The PREMIER: They were put in the press. The leader of the Opposition and his party were prepared to abuse the Union Jack in an endeavour to defeat this party. I went to Toowoomba, and there I found on the window of the rooms of the National Country party the Union Jack and a revolu-

tionary flag, and the people were asked under which flag they wanted to live.

Mr. MAXWELL: Didn't you march down Queen street behind a red flag?

The PREMIER: I stated to a Toowoomba audience that it was a very fine illustration of the intelligence of our opponents when they asked the Toowoomba people under which flag they were going to live, when the leader of the Opposition was standing on the same platform as a man who was interned during the war for the safety of our country. That is the illogical position hon. members find themselves in when they abuse the national emblem. No party has any monopoly of loyalty.

Mr. KING: You wanted peace at any price.

The PREMIER: Well, you want German votes at any price.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You people wanted Italian votes.

The PREMIER: I do not know Mr. Ruhno personally at all. He may be quite as good a citizen as I, and I would never have mentioned his name in the campaign if hon. members opposite had not suggested that the Labour party was disloyal. If any political party claims a monopoly of loyalty or a right to abuse the national emblem for political purposes, then I say that political party deserves the annihilation that came the way of the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Justified retribution.

The PREMIER: Yes, justified retribution. I am not blaming the hon. gentleman for these things—I am sympathising with him because the people who managed the election probably forced him into the position.

Mr. KING: Are you going through the same experience yourself?

The PREMIER: No, I am not. My sympathy is simply for the individual, not for the politician. I have no sympathy for Mr. Moore as a politician, but I have great sympathy with him as an individual in finding one member of his party using the Union Jack for political purposes, and he himself appearing on a platform with a man who was interned by his own party for the safety of this country. It is a very interesting position.

I want to say a word in regard to the question raised by the hon. gentleman dealing with Italians at Mackay.

Mr. KING: Bill Cooper will have a bad time next election.

The PREMIER: No German in the Rosewood district was gulled into believing his vote could be secured by running a German candidate. He wanted politics and not nationality; and only on politics should elections be decided and not on nationality. You have your answer from the German people themselves.

The leader of the Opposition raised the question that is exercising our minds over the Mackay district and the members of Labour organisations refusing to handle the cane from those farms. I want to say right at the outset that my attitude and the attitude of the Government towards the A.W.U. members has been that they have no right to do what they are doing. They have been ordered to

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desist, as all citizens—British-born as well as naturalised British subjects—are equal in the eyes of the law, and no section of the community has a right to take action which is unjust and unfair to some other citizen. That, so far, is the attitude of the Government on the question.

It would be well to trace the history of this case, as it is rather interesting.

The original cause was the purchase some time ago of Tandy's farm by an Italian at Sarina, and the refusal of the locomotive drivers to pull the cane on that [12 noon.] farm to the mill and of the mill workers to crush the cane when it arrived in the mill yard. To get a proper view of this case I want to inform the House through you, Mr. Speaker, and the people outside—because it is a very important matter—that the issue is not one only concerning the workers. I find upon investigation that the whole of the people in Mackay are against the Italian invasion, as they call it. That opposition is not confined to one class of the community, but extends to every class of the community; and one only has to read the remarks of the hon. member for Mirani to realise his attitude in the matter. The Mackay District Canegrowers' Association made an appeal to the Secretary for Agriculture to misuse power given under an Act of Parliament in order to prevent the purchase of farms by Italians. This appeal was made by the Farmers' Association executive without any reference to the Australian Workers' Union. I will read their resolution—

"That, seeing it is generally admitted that the price and conditions under which Southern Europeans are acquiring cane farms render it impossible for them to produce profitably without evasion of industrial awards, the Minister for Agriculture be requested to recommend to, and co-operate with, the Central Cane Prices Board, in the refusal of any further transfer of assignments to such Southern Europeans."

You see a suggestion to interfere with our tribunals coming from a farmers' organisation. The Secretary for Agriculture replied—

"I am in receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, together with the enclosed copy of a resolution passed by the Mackay District Cane Growers' Executive.

"In connection with this matter I have to inform you that the Central Cane Prices Board are a body with statutory and judicial functions, consequently it would be highly improper for me to approach the Board in the manner suggested, and I might add that I have never done so in the past. However, the general principle underlying the resolution is a matter to which the consideration of the Government is being given."

That I think will convince the public that the feeling is not one which is agitating the minds of the workers only.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What is the date of that letter?

THE PREMIER: The resolution was forwarded to the Secretary for Agriculture on 19th May last. The members of the Australian Workers' Union gave their objections to the Italian invasion, but I do not want to

read the whole of it. I will read the two paragraphs outlined by the Australian Workers' Union before Mr. Gallagher, the industrial magistrate, which I think epitomises the objection of the members of that union to the acquirement of property by Italians—

"That conditions under which many of the sales to Southern Europeans were effected are such that the farms can never become the property of the purchasers, but were merely devices by which the Southern European secured employment under conditions that would return him less than if employed at award rates, and which gave to the owner of the farm a larger income than he could get out of the land by employing labour at award rates and conditions."

MR. PETERSON: Would that difficulty be overcome, provided the Italian paid cash for the farm?

THE PREMIER:—

"That the Southern Europeans occupying farms under those conditions are compelled by economic pressure, resulting from such conditions of sale, to exploit the ignorance of their compatriots, and work them without payment of wages, and with little or no regard for industrial laws, and that in such cases employer and employee invariably connive together to mislead union officials and others charged with the policing of awards."

MR. ROBERTS: That happens in Queen street, too.

THE PREMIER: I give those two sides of the case to show the public that, while the members of the Australian Workers' Union have the economic power to hold up the mills, the farming community and the people at Mackay stand four-square behind any action which will prevent any Italian acquiring farms in the Mackay district. That is the general public opinion; it is not confined to one class. I want to impress the people with that point of view. Now, what are the conditions under which these farms are purchased? I just want to give the House an idea of how farms are bought by these Italians, and I shall deal with the industrial side of the question later on.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Do not forget, when you deal with it, to place before us the Government's responsibility.

THE PREMIER: I have done that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, you have not. Don't sidetrack it.

THE PREMIER: The hon. gentleman should not talk about sidetracking, because there is no better sidetracker in this House than he. A system of sales to Italians has come into vogue. Those Italians are in a very difficult position, since they are not able to get work in any industry other than the sugar industry, and a system has grown up which means placing upon their shoulders a heavy burden, and forces them into buying at any price, economic or otherwise. That system destroys the whole basic work of our industrial life, and those Italians, moreover, are often deceived by their own people, who act as agents. Let me take the case of a sale from John D. Temple to Italians named Guiseppe Corsaro, Salvatore Corsaro, Orazio Corsaro, Giovanni Corsaro, Orazio Locastro,

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and Antonio Messina, of a farm, the consideration for the sale being the price of £6,500 and interest.

Mr. MORGAN: How many acres?

The PREMIER: One hundred and fifty acres. The particulars I have here give the numbers of the portions, but I do not want to deal with those details. Here are the conditions:—£50 deposit, a sum equal to the whole proceeds of the 1925 crop—the vendors to take the whole of the proceeds of the first crop—and 40 per cent. of the proceeds of each succeeding crop harvested from the said land from year to year until the whole of the purchase money and interest money have been paid. Another transaction is a sale from James Harcourt to the brothers Comin for £3,000, with interest—£5 deposit, £45 on 31st December, 1925, then sums equal to 90 per cent. of the 1925 crop, and 40 per cent. of each succeeding crop until the whole of the purchase price and interest are paid. Another sale was of a farm from Hans P. Petersen for £2,300—£5 deposit, and conditions such as I have already read out. Here is another—£5,000, £25 deposit. Another, £3,000, £5 deposit. The point I want to make is this—that nobody would sell under those conditions unless he was getting much above the market rate for his farm. It is well known that in North Queensland tremendous prices have been obtained by accepting a deposit of £25 or £30, with the result that a group of Italians take on the farm and for years are mere slaves of the owners.

In one instance in Mackay a seller of a farm considered that, if he had obtained only half the price that he received from the Italian, he would have been receiving a fair price. It is freely admitted that, when the owner of a farm desires to sell to an Italian, he doubles the price that he would be prepared to accept from anyone else. He takes advantage of the fact that the Italians are out of work, that there is a group of Italians with no chance of getting a livelihood, and that they will sign any terms and conditions in order to get on to the farm and obtain sufficient to enable them to live.

Mr. KING: Then all these would-be purchasers are fit subjects for a lunatic asylum.

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman were to find himself in a strange country, ignorant of the language, with everyone's hand against him and no opportunity of getting work anywhere, he would sign anything to get food for himself and those dependent upon him. The over-influx of Italians into this district is the cause of the whole trouble. No one in North Queensland in the earlier days took exception to Italians arriving in small numbers. To-day at Babinda we find 150 Italians who cannot speak a word of English, out of work, and with not a ghost of a chance of getting employment.

Mr. BRAND: They are not the people who are buying the farms.

The PREMIER: No; that is the difficulty. They are the people who will be used to work the farms. The Italian who has been here a year or two and has become naturalised buys the farm, and exploits these unfortunates by getting them to work for nothing.

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Mr. BRAND: You know that most of these sales took place before the influx.

The PREMIER: They did not; they are all recent in Mackay. The hon. member for Mirani has been one of the chief fomenters of this trouble. I have told him so in my office. He has actually been agitating for the Government to put into operation the Sugar Cultivation Act. In effect, he has asked that we refuse to allow naturalised British subjects to cultivate sugar-cane. Then we have the hon. gentleman and his colleagues sitting on the same bench complaining that the Government were doing nothing. If anything will get us into difficulty, it will be telling Italians who have become British subjects and sworn allegiance to this country that they cannot engage in a particular industry in this country.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. T. Dunstan, *Gympie*): I beg to move—

“That the Premier be granted an extension of time.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I thank the House for granting me the extension of time; I had hoped to complete my speech within the time allowed. The hon. member for Mirani has been urging the Government to prohibit Italians from engaging in the sugar industry. He has asked the Government to repudiate the naturalisation granted by the Australian Government. He has said that we have the full power to compel an Italian resident in Queensland, who has sworn allegiance to Australia and the British Empire, to pass a dictation test, and that we should dictate to the Italian a sentence in Gaelic, and if he cannot write it, he should not be allowed to work in the sugar industry. The Sugar Cultivation Act does not give us the power to do that. The hon. gentleman wrote to the Prime Minister on this matter, and in a letter to me he quotes from Mr. Bruce's letter. I would want to see the whole of the letter from the Prime Minister before I would agree that they were Mr. Bruce's intentions or desires.

Mr. MORGAN: That is a serious thing to say.

The PREMIER: It is a very serious thing for a part and not the whole of the Prime Minister's letter to be quoted. Knowing Mr. Bruce, I believe that he realises the difficulties and the dangers of this situation as well as we do, and that he is not likely to give an expression of opinion to the hon. gentleman without some reservation.

The hon. member for Mirani published the following as coming from the Prime Minister:—

“In reply to my inquiry on the subject in a letter dated 23rd March (I may say I have fully explained the position), he makes the following statement:—‘If any action is to be taken to prevent the concentration of individuals of any nationality in any particular area in the State of Queensland, it is really a matter for the Queensland Government.’”

I would like to see the whole of the letter from the Prime Minister, and the letter the hon. member for Mirani sent to him. However, I believe I am only wasting my time dealing with it, because I know that the Prime Minister would make no such assertion. They must be treated in the eyes of the law the same as any other citizen. To say, on the advice of the Prime Minister, that, because a few Italians bought farms in the Mackay district, this Government should prevent the concentration of one nationality in any particular place, was no way of dealing with it at all. The Queensland Government have told the Italian Consul-General that we have no dispute with Italians, and that we will give Italy's nationals who are here the protection of the law. Whoever become British subjects are entitled to all the privileges of citizenship. We have also told him that it is very difficult to make any man work against his will. We do not agree that the members of the Australian Workers' Union have any right to take up the position that they have taken up. They have no justification for so doing even though they feel that their industrial conditions are being endangered. They are using the only method and weapon that they know of to try and prevent it. It is a wrong method and a wrong weapon. I say that as head of the Government it cannot be permitted to be used, and as for the leader of the Opposition, who stated that I should be able to make these men go to work—

Mr. MOORE: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: Of course you did.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, he did not.

The PREMIER: The difficulty is made greater by reason of the fact that the whole of the people in the Mackay district are behind the attitude of the members of the Australian Workers' Union. It is a difficult and delicate matter to deal with. I suggested that one of the members of the Board of Trade should go to Mackay to deal with the question, and I have made every effort to get over the difficulty. I know the dangers and the difficulties, and I know the prejudices in the minds of the people of Mackay. After all, this is not the only country that has got into difficulties because of some unfair treatment of the nationals of another country. That is a most prolific cause of dispute between countries. It has happened in almost every country in the world where migration has taken place from one country to another. To attempt to make political capital out of it will get us nowhere. The Consul-General for Italy in Australia will be here to-morrow, and will discuss the matter with me. The public and Parliament can be assured that the situation will be handled carefully. There is no desire to treat unfairly or unjustly any national of any other country resident in Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is not in the mind of either the Labour party or the Government. It is foreign to the policy of Labour.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The annual convention of the Australian Workers' Union, which was held at Coolangatta in January last, turned down a proposal directed against Italians. The Italian, if he is allowed in

here, is provided with the protection of the law. We must be fair to him, and we cannot allow any section of the community to embroil us in a national difficulty.

If one looks at the matter only from the point of view of the worker, one readily recognises the danger to the conditions of labour that are involved in this invasion of Italians. We all admit that, and sympathise with the worker and the farmer in the Mackay district, who see a danger to them if the whole of this industry gets into the hands of Southern Europeans. There is also an economic menace to them in this invasion, and in dealing with this question, which is a delicate one, we must have some consideration for the feelings of these people and at the same time maintain the basic principles of elemental justice towards every nationality having domicile within our borders.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): It has been said, "Language is given to us to enable us to conceal our thoughts," and I am sure that on this occasion the Government have successfully concealed their thoughts with the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. The Speech itself contains a lot of chaff and very little wheat. The real information as to the intentions of the Government is contained in the last pages of the Speech, where we are given a list of Bills which it is proposed to introduce during the session. Some years ago it was the custom for the Government—which was not a Labour Government—to do the House the courtesy of explaining in some detail their intention in relation to proposed Bills. On this occasion, as on other occasions, we have the Government briefly announcing the titles of certain Bills, yet this House is asked to consider the Speech, and to consider Bills as to the contents of which we have not the slightest conception. It seems irony to ask hon. members to meet here and consider the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech under those conditions. Bit by bit as hon. members opposite give us some information we find from that information the intention of the Government in relation to certain Bills.

There is one thing which I find is not in the Speech—a Bill which this country, or at least justice, demands. I refer to a Redistribution of Seats Bill. It has been said by hon. members opposite that they have come back to power representing the people of Queensland.

Mr. WRIGHT: In 1922 your organisation was satisfied with the redistribution.

Mr. KELSO: That is not so. On this occasion Labour has come back representing about 50 per cent. of the people. They were returned only by gerrymandering electorates such as Rosewood, where, figuratively speaking, they put their finger round a good bit of the Ipswich electorate in order to get an industrial vote to secure the return of the hon. member for Rosewood. The return of the Labour party has been secured by stuffing the electorates with men, introducing labour at the expense of loan money, and by gerrymandering the rolls. By these devious means at election after election, the Government manage to get back, and claim that they represent the people. The same thing happened in 1920 and in 1923, and I would ask the Government whether they are prepared to do the only equitable thing, if they claim

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to be a democratic Government—which they are not—I ask whether they are prepared to consider the question of a redistribution?

The Premier has denied the report in the press that he said he would not increase the fares on the railway. The hon. member for Burnett quoted from a report in the "Standard" of 5th May, exactly what the Premier said when he was speaking at the Astor Theatre, at New Farm. As the Premier has denied the statement that he promised that there would be no increase in freights and fares, it is only fair to read once more what the hon. gentleman did say. Surely he cannot get over what he said when it is reported in the "Standard"—the Labour party's Bible. He said—

"There are only two ways by which the railways can be made to pay. One, by increasing fares and freights; and two, by reducing wages or increasing the hours of employment."

The Premier does not deny that. He said so this morning. What else did he say—

"The Labour party is opposed to increasing charges."

In the face of that, how the Premier can deny time after time that he ever said the Government would not increase railway charges is beyond my comprehension—

"We have adopted the policy of making the wealthy taxpayers, most of them living in the city in luxury, bear the burden of the railway deficit."

During the election campaign what did he tell the people up North? We are told this morning by him that he never expected the railways to pay. He told the farmers up North that any increase in freights and fares was so distributed that it would not press too hardly on the man on the land. He told the electors in the North that—

"Since 1915 Queensland had increased freights by 25 per cent. and fares by 25 per cent. New South Wales had increased freights by 52 per cent. and fares by 66 per cent. Victoria had increased freights by 39 per cent. and fares by 48 per cent. South Australia had increased freights by 48 per cent. and fares by 33 per cent. Western Australia had increased freights by 29 per cent. and fares by 30 per cent."

He would like the electors of the North, to whom he addressed these remarks, to think that the Southern States were absolutely the worst offenders in this connection, whereas the Railway Commissioner, in his report, puts a different aspect on it altogether. He gives us these figures—

| | 1914-15. | | 1924-25. | | Increase. |
|---|----------|----|----------|----|-----------|
| | s. | d. | s. | d. | |
| Average freight per ton was (agricultural produce) | 6 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 51.4 |
| Average freight per ton on all goods and live stock | 10 | 0 | 17 | 7 | 75.8 |
| Average earning per train mile run | 6 | 4½ | 11 | 9 | 83.7 |

Yet the Premier has the temerity to tell this House that, instead of increasing the freights and fares, he was placing the burden of the

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railway deficit on the rich man in the city, who owns a motor-car, and not on the man on the land. The Premier told us that during the elections gross misrepresentations were made by members on this side.

Mr. DASH: That is so.

Mr. KELSO: I can hardly follow the hon. member in that. That was said before the election. What happened immediately after the election? A 10 per cent. increase in freights and fares—not on the rich man, but on every person in the community who uses the railways. We find a general resentment all over the State at the [12.30 p.m.] idea of a Premier going before the country distinctly stating that he would not increase the charges, and then immediately after the election increasing them by 10 per cent. If that is keeping a promise, then I do not know what a promise is. We are told by the Premier that there are only two ways of making the railways pay. What a barren imagination a man must have who can only suggest two ways of making the railways pay, as the Premier did.

Mr. CARTER: How would you do it?

Mr. KELSO: That is the usual interjection of hon. members opposite. They issued thousands of pamphlets printed at the Government Printing Office, but we do not know who subscribed and paid for them. We have not found out where the money came from, but we have a very shrewd suspicion as to whence it came.

Mr. HYNES: Your funds came from the National Union.

Mr. KELSO: It is no use going back to the dark ages. The Premier objected this morning to going back to ancient history. The hon. member should know that the National Union ceased to exist long before the elections. The Premier twitted the deputy leader of the Opposition because he had not seen a certain publication which as a public man he ought to have seen, and the hon. member for Townsville is trying to make out that the National Union is still in existence. He is away back in the dark ages. We suggested to the electors that we would give agricultural farms to men who settled along the railway lines so as to increase production, because during the years when that form of land settlement was in operation Queensland was never more prosperous. Since we adopted the system of leasehold occupation slowly but surely land settlement has decreased. Here are a few figures to show exactly what the decrease is, and it is worthy of note that the decrease synchronises with the misrule of hon. members opposite—

| Year. | No. of Selectors. | Area Selected. |
|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | | Acres. |
| 1914 | 23,954 | 12,609,402 |
| 1924 | 12,437 | 5,930,732 |

There was a decrease in ten years of 6,678,670 acres, yet year after year with these figures facing us hon. members opposite still stick to their fetish of leasehold, still dig their heads in the sand and tell the people of the State that there is no need for the railways to pay, and that there are only two ways available—that we must either increase fares and freights or decrease the wages of the worker. Those are the only remedies they

can suggest. What a poor, barren imagination they have got! The Premier this morning talked about the business men in a sneering sort of way. What are hon. members opposite? What has brought the country to the condition it is in? It has been the absolute lack of business ability shown in the government of the country since the Labour party came into power. We have had men in office who had no experience of business, and they have been going on in the same slipshod style all the time, increasing deficits and borrowing money for unprofitable State undertakings. At last there is a little glimmer of sense coming to them, and much against their will they are shutting up a few of the State enterprises.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: We cannot return the compliment.

Mr. KELSO: The Opposition have always tried to instruct the Government in the way that they should go, and hon. members opposite must be a very poor lot if they do not get a glimmering of sense at the end of ten years. We say that it is our criticism of the Government that has had that effect, and that the Government are now seeing that their policy and their programme are absolutely impossible and that they cannot carry them out—an admission of the failure of "Socialism in our time."

The Premier, in his speech, took no notice whatever of finance. Deficits were nothing to him. All he was concerned about during the election was to make any old promise to win that election. So he told us about childhood endowment, and he made a great boast of this humanitarian legislation which hon. members opposite talk about, and to which the leader of the Opposition very pointedly referred when he said—

"It is all very well to promise humanitarian legislation, but when you cannot get the money it is all hot air."

When the Premier was in the North, he told the people there, "If the Federal Government do not do it, I will do it," notwithstanding the fact that he knew perfectly well that economically it was an unsound proposition. I shall quote what the hon. gentleman said at Wynnum—

"He had a good deal to say about the shelved State scheme for child endowment. His investigation, as one of the Committee of the Queensland Cabinet which had inquired into child endowment, led him to form the conclusion that child endowment was not a matter for the State, but was entirely the concern of the central Government. The disturbance in economic conditions that would result from one State adopting child endowment, and the other States not doing so, would operate very unfairly against the manufacturing industries in the State where the scheme was established. The only successful method of establishing child endowment was through the central Government, and its application should be made general throughout all the States of the Commonwealth."

What has been the effect even already of the 44-hour week in New South Wales and Queensland? Only a little while ago I saw that a contract for £100,000 worth of work had been lost to New South Wales and had been given to a Victorian tenderer because the latter could compete successfully

owing to the longer hours he could work. In this particular matter it is proposed that a big burden shall be laid on industry in Queensland—a couple of million pounds, perhaps. I believe that the manufacturers of Queensland will be placed in a very bad position. Only the other day I had the pleasure of listening to the Secretary for Mines, who went as a substitute for the Premier to the opening of the additions to the premises of the Queensland Trustees Limited. Our friend made a very nice speech. As I listened to him I had to take off my glasses and clean them. I had to have another look to see whether that Mr. Jones was the same A. J. Jones whom I had heard fulminating in this Chamber against the capitalist. Yes, there he was, just as good as the rest of us! He complimented the company on its progress, and talked about immigration and the interests of the State and the introduction of capital. As a matter of fact, for the time being the hon. member was a capitalist—he was in his element.

Mr. ROBERTS: He delivered that speech in Toowoomba.

Mr. KELSO: Well, it was a good speech—a splendid speech—and I believe for the time being the hon. gentleman actually believed what he was saying. He said that immigration would be a good thing because the people who came into the State would encourage our industries. He said that there would be plenty of work, and that capital would be employed. It was all "capital." The hon. gentleman was in a super-optimistic mood. He is generally optimistic in mining matters, but he excelled himself that day. What hypocrisy—I use the word in its political sense—what political hypocrisy for him to stand there and make that statement, when he and other hon. members on that side of the Chamber have been heard often enough explaining that their platform will be carried out. It is true that during the election we did not hear a single word about the socialisation of industry. Yet that is the king-pin of their programme.

Mr. HYNES: That is all balderdash.

Mr. KELSO: It is not all balderdash. It is absolutely the principal plank in their platform. That is the key to the whole situation. Hon. members opposite are successful at election after election solely because they deceive the people. This morning the Premier told us that they had a definite policy, but hon. members opposite are afraid to tell the people what their policy is. At the election they said never a word about the socialisation of industry. We had all this nauseating, wearisome tripe about humanitarian legislation as though they were going down on their knees and saying, "Please will you vote for us again! Look at our wonderful humanitarian legislation!"

Mr. KERR: Sob stuff.

Mr. KELSO: Let me quote from this "Pamphlet, No. 17," on "Socialisation—What it means."

"The critics of the Labour party discuss the objective as though it were a legislative proposal, to be brought in like an Act of Parliament for the purpose of abolishing private property, and confiscating land, savings, and business undertakings. Of course, such misconstruction is usually arant humbug or the outcome of sheer ignorance. There

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has never been any pretence by the Labour party that the objective can be reached and its purpose fulfilled except by the most gradual of evolutionary processes."

Instead of making the position easier for a man that is just a nice way of choking him. The pamphlet continues:—

"Capitalism cannot survive because, measured by its effect upon human happiness, it does not fulfil even the most elementary requirements of a modern world. . . ."

I had those remarks in mind when the Secretary for Mines, the gentleman with two mental outlooks, spoke at the gathering to which I referred. Let me quote the pamphlet again:—

"Capitalism cannot survive because, measured by its effect upon human happiness, it does not fulfil even the most elementary requirements of a modern world. On the positive side it is chiefly responsible for nearly every evil which leads to social unrest and turmoil, unrequited labour, poverty, destitution, unemployment, disease, bad housing, slums, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, and the growth of a privileged class. Capitalism in one or other of its manifestations is responsible for race-hatred, war, greed, and class antagonism; in short, for all the worst qualities in men, and the most criminal actions of nations.

"Labour aims to establish a new and better order of society, by taking the control of industry from the plutocrats and placing it in the hands of the producers."

Yet the Secretary for Mines congratulated a capitalistic company on its prosperity as evidenced by the fact that it was providing more office accommodation, and he hoped that it would grow in the future as it had grown in the past. That is an example of the hypocrisy which is indulged in by every hon. member opposite when he is on the hustings. What are we to think about all this talk in connection with the socialisation of industry? Do they mean it? Not a bit of it. They camouflaged their platform during the last elections. During the elections the Premier said that some of the schemes which he had suggested, such as child endowment, and widows and orphans' pensions, would be costly matters, but he had no doubt that the money could be easily obtained to finance them. If we borrow money, then we must pay interest for the use of that money.

The Premier, who was then Secretary for Public Lands, made a most excellent speech in this House on 7th August, 1924. Most, if not all, hon. members on this side of the House were present that afternoon. It was a speech that might very well have been made by any member of the Opposition. I know that, although the hon. gentleman was not liked by his party for making that speech, he was nevertheless speaking the truth.

Mr. DASH: The party made him Premier.

Mr. KELSO: The Premier was speaking on the subject of the 44-hour week. He told us that he was against its introduction, and was quite frank about it. He said—

"Employment will suffer or, at least, I think it will. The hon. member for Fitzroy may be right. I am giving my opinion. I think that, if taxation gets

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to a certain stage—and it is fairly high in Queensland—it is 10s. in the £1 in some instances—it is the danger zone for employment."

Since those remarks were uttered in 1924 how much financial loan money has run under the bridge? The hon. gentleman believed what he said at the time, but since has built up our indebtedness until, as he said, we are on the verge of a financial collapse.

There is another matter I wish to touch on, and that is the question of Chillagoe and Mungana. I wish to discuss the subject because the Premier during the election was asked to reply to a letter which I wrote to the "Telegraph." I made certain statements in that letter.

Mr. WEIR: That is not why you are discussing it. You are discussing it because, as usual, you do not understand it.

Mr. KELSO: What poor mentality the hon. member has! He does not even wait to hear what I have to say. He is prejudging me. The Premier, when asked a question about the letter which I wrote giving certain information, absolutely refused to reply to it. I propose this morning to fill in some missing links. I will first deal with the closure of Chillagoe, and I am afraid in doing so that I shall have to quote the Secretary for Mines.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Chillagoe is not shut up.

Mr. KELSO: Well, Mungana.

Mr. WEIR: That is better. I told you you did not know what you were talking about.

Mr. KELSO: It was just a slip of the tongue. The Mungana mine was forfeited in April, 1917. We find that a man named Frederick Reid applied for the lease of that mine on 11th September, 1917. Chillagoe was purchased by the Government on 5th November, 1917. It is a well-known fact that negotiations for the purchase had been carried on for at least a couple of years, and it is a fair thing to query the justification of selling to this man the lease of Mungana, which the Government thought was a very valuable proposition. At that particular time it was said on the authority of one of the geologists that the mine was no good.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: What geologist?

Mr. KELSO: I think it was a man named Smith. On the strength of that statement the Mungana lease was sold to Mr. Reid by the Government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. KELSO: Well, the Mungana lease was forfeited, and Mr. Reid took it up. It was well known at the time that Mungana was necessary to keep Chillagoe working. After Mr. Reid bought it—

Mr. DASH: Bought it from whom?

Mr. KELSO: Bought it from the Government. (Government dissent). It was given to him; anyway, he got it for a mere song.

Mr. DASH: He took it up.

Mr. KELSO: Money was then advanced by the Government in order that the mine could be developed, and we then have the peculiar spectacle, in face of all that was done, of ore being found in the mine again. The mine was previously said to have been

worthless. I would like to know why it was that the Government saw fit to advance money to dewater and explore the mineral wealth of a mine that had just previously been declared worthless. That sounds rather fishy. Dr. Jensen is reported by the press on 3rd March, 1926, as having said, when commenting on the Oralla reservation—

“The case is not analogous to the Mungana mine, as in that instance the Government was entering on a vast expenditure and should have reserved the Mungana mine.”

Mr. O'KEEFE: He contradicted that afterwards.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member may produce that contradiction; I am not aware of it. This statement appeared in print, and I am not prepared to accept any oral contradiction from an hon. member opposite.

Mr. MOORE: He did not contradict it.

Mr. KELSO: These facts cannot be controverted. This mine was taken up by Mr. Reid. It was given to him by the Government. The Government parted with a valuable property, which had supplied Chillagoe with plenty of ore, and was likely still to supply Chillagoe with more ore. In throwing away such an asset of the country the Government deserve grave censure. It was said that a certain syndicate got together, and from information given to me from a reliable source I understand a syndicate was actually formed. The syndicate originated with four persons, and I can give three out of the four names. The first was Frederick Reid, next E. G. Theodore, and then William McCormack. I do not know the fourth.

The Premier, in interjection the other day, accused me of saying in public during the elections that he was not honest in this matter. That was because I took the trouble to follow this matter through the records of the Supreme Court—very fragmentary records—and found that a certain William McCormack was a holder of shares in the Mungana Company, Limited. The syndicate was floated into a company, and one can perfectly understand the reason, because it would not look well if the syndicate of four constituted the company, and the good old Companies Act allows a certain number of people in excess of that number to carry on as a limited liability company. The company was constituted of 20,000 shares, 10,000 of which were allotted to Reid. According to the records, there have never been any more than those 10,000 shares registered. There are twenty-nine shareholders, and the total number of shares issued is exactly 10,000.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You have only three names out of the twenty-nine.

Mr. KELSO: Necessarily there are a number of dummies. If the hon. member knows anything about companies, he knows that one man and six dummies can form a company under the Companies Act. The other names represent a number of people not very well known, and who were merely put in to camouflage the thing when the venture was formed into a company, and Mr. William McCormack, the Premier of Queensland, was a shareholder. During the Premier's Northern tour, instead of debating the matter and answering questions—and people were incensed about a public man being mixed up with the business—the hon. gentleman evaded the issue. I did not say

at any time that the hon. gentleman was dishonest. I said, “Does he not think it to be a breach of his duty to the country?” I never said the Premier was dishonest. By “dishonest” I mean “dishonest according to the law,” but there have been breaches of duty. There is a legal dishonesty, and there is a moral dishonesty; and what I said then I say again—I believe it was a breach of the hon. gentleman's duty to the country to be connected with this company when his interests in the company might conflict with his duty as a Minister of the Crown. The Premier has denied that he was a Minister of the Crown at the time of this transaction. The Hon. Mr. Jones, Secretary for Mines, stated distinctly that this proposition was referred to Mr. Theodore and to Mr. McCormack, who was then Home Secretary. Yet the Premier has denied that. He would lead you to believe this: “The inference might be drawn from it that it looks pretty fishy, but I was not a Minister, and I never had anything to do with it.” I say, unhesitatingly, that Mr. McCormack was a Minister of the Crown at the time this thing went through, and that makes it more reprehensible, because the people of this State expect from a Minister of the State a higher order of morality than from an ordinary citizen.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in inferring that the Premier was guilty of improper conduct.

Mr. KELSO: I was speaking generally of Ministers of the Crown.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELSO: However, I will not pursue that matter any further.

There is one very notable omission from the Speech. That is, there is no particular mention of the very disastrous drought which is devastating the country at the present time. Roughly speaking, one-third of the sheep in the State are dead. I am also informed by those who know that, unfortunately, there is practically no lambing this year. The Premier and his colleagues at the time they went to the country knew perfectly well that a drought was raging, yet they camouflaged the position all along. They never told the country that at the end of the year things might be very bad; that, with one-third of the flocks dead, and recognising that wool is responsible for two-thirds of our exports, the natural corollary was that in twelve months at the very latest things were going to be in a very bad way. It was the duty of the man occupying the position of Premier to issue a note of warning to the people of the State, and not to full sail ahead as though nothing was going to happen, when he knew perfectly well that a parlous time was ahead. I am speaking now as if we were all one party. It is the duty of the captain of the ship to give a note of warning as to what is likely to happen within the next few months. He ought not to go ahead at full sail and bring forward propositions involving the expenditure of millions of pounds just as though the fair blue skies that we see at the present time were going to continue. I do not want to be a pessimist, but I think that in twelve months' time the conditions in this State will be very bad indeed, and, unfortunately, those conditions will react most harshly on the worker in the long run. Hon. members know that.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You are not worrying about that.

Mr. KELSO: We have more regard for the workers than hon. members on the other side. Their financial record is such that I believe that before long the workers, to use a vulgarism, are going to "get it in the neck."

The hon. member for Warrego spoke the other day, and in his remarks on immigration he, with his usual courtesy, said that if I were coming into the Commonwealth, I would be kept out because of [2 p.m.] lack of mentality. All I can say is that if the hon. member for Warrego were applying for admission, if a gentleman named Carrington was at the head of the Immigration Department, he also would be kept out.

The hon. member advanced the theory that in the far Western areas railways were necessary, but should be built by those who were interested, or, at any rate, they should find the money at low rates of interest or at no interest at all. If the hon. member is sincere in what he says, why did he not advocate that particular plan when the Mount Isa Railway was under consideration? We know that the Mount Isa Railway is a very costly affair. It is a railway which may or may not be a success, but it has to be a charge on the consolidated revenue of the State.

Mr. FARRELL: Did not the company give some guarantee?

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It might "go bung."

Mr. KELSO: After all, as my friend says, it might "go bung."

Mr. PEASE: They have to put up the guarantee in solid cash.

Mr. KELSO: That is not so; the hon. member is drawing a red herring across the track. I am talking about the principle of the thing. It is colossal check on the part of the hon. member for Warrego to come to this House, an avowed enemy of the "beef barons" and the graziers, and tell us that the railways are necessary, but, as they will be for the aggrandisement of the "beef barons" and the sheep-breeders out West, those people ought to lend the money.

Mr. HYNES: What do you call them?

Mr. KELSO: They have been called "beef barons" by hon. members opposite, who allow these terms to roll on their tongues until they become part of the national language to them. The hon. member for Warrego advocated that those who are particularly interested should find the money at low rates of interest or no interest at all, but in the case of Mount Isa, in which the hon. member admitted he was very largely interested, the boot is on the other foot.

I congratulate the hon. member for Chillagoe on his first speech in this House, in which he was a very candid critic of the Government. He said very frankly that in mining matters the Government should have taken up quite a different position from what they have done, and that it was possible for the State mining enterprises to be run at a profit, and he also told us frankly that other enterprises run by private persons were run at a profit.

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

Mr. C. J. RYAN (*Eacham*): After following the hon. member for Nundah in his [Mr. Kelso.

remarks, I feel a little diffident in proceeding with some of the subjects on which I intended to speak. It would appear to me that members of the Opposition take pride in looking at matters through a magnifying glass; or, in other words, through no glass at all, if I can be excused for using the term. I listened with much attention to the hon. member for Nundah in regard to the Mungana leases. If there was one thing more than another which appealed to me, it was the fact that the hon. member displayed the utmost ignorance of the subject which he dealt with.

The PREMIER: No more than he does on general matters.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: He fails to recognise that there is a Mining Act in Queensland, and that every citizen has the right to go to a mining registrar's office to get a miner's right and take out a lease in a mining area if he so desires.

Mr. KELSO: The Government could have kept that lease if they had wanted to do so.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: He first set out to claim that the Government sold the lease to Mr. Reid, and then he proceeded to explain that Mr. Reid sold it to the Government. This is the only point I wish to mention—that he showed the utmost ignorance of the mining laws of this State in his idea as to how any individual may take up mining arca.

I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the electors of Eacham for my return, and also the Opposition for the assistance which they gave me. (Government laughter.) At the by-election held last January the statement was made, and it was often quoted, that everything was leading to the defeat of the Labour candidate; but the arrival of the leader of the Opposition with his staff completely spoiled the issue for my opponent. I believe that, if the members of the Opposition had not gone into the Eacham electorate, possibly we might have lost the seat by their distortion of facts. By stretching things in general, the rotary hold-up, and the railway strike, the press were responsible for creating an atmosphere against this party, for, of course, the Labour party were blamed for the whole thing; but the arrival of the leader of the Opposition created a different atmosphere altogether. When they stated their case, which up till then the people of the Eacham and Chillagoe electorates had been reading in the newspapers, inspired by certain gentlemen, the very people who were responsible for the statements criticising the Labour party and the Government and the Labour movement as a whole were the men who defeated the Opposition candidate. It may be said that I am rather harsh.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You speak more in sorrow than in anger.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: As the Minister says, I speak more in sorrow than in anger. These individuals were so astonished to see North Queensland, which hitherto they had known nothing about, although they criticised the Government which have done so much for that portion of the State, that they had to mention the fact that they had not previously visited it. Had it not been that the Government had opened a railway to the North within the last two years, they would never have visited it yet. I mention this in passing, because in spite of all the criticism which was levelled at the Government and at the Labour party, the Opposition, when

they were defeated, relied on the same old cry about stacking the rolls. I have heard nothing else since I came into this House, and that is the reason they always give as to why the Opposition have not been returned to power. If they could hit upon something new and were not at all times guilty of repetition such as we have heard here this morning, and such as we have heard ever since 1916—

Mr. KELSO: You cannot repeat the truth too often.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Let me tell the hon. member that, if they do not get something new, the present generation will regard them as a set of troglodytes, and will not take any notice of them. They have fallen back on the old cry of stacking the rolls, and I mention the matter because I have not had an opportunity of replying to their allegations before. I tried to get something into the press during January last and also in May, after the count in the Eacham electorate at the general election was partially completed.

The Northern press, inspired by the Opposition, were not prepared to accept a true statement of the position. The Northern press sought to tell the people that a large number of voters had drifted into the Eacham electorate, thereby swelling the number on the roll. We find that there was no such great increase after all. On the 13th May last I wrote the returning officer at Atherton asking him what increase had taken place in the Eacham roll, how many names had been struck off the roll, and the number of absent votes recorded to date. At that time I was leading at the poll, and continued that lead till the final count. This is the reply I received:—

“ Court House,

“ Atherton, 13th May, 1926.

“ C. J. Ryan, Esq., M.L.A.,

“ Atherton.

“ Dear Mr. Ryan,—In reply to your queries of the 12th instant I have to advise you as follows:—

“(1) During the period from 1st January to the 9th April, 1926, the under-mentioned numbers of names were added to the official Eacham roll used in connection with the poll on the 8th idem:—

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Atherton Division | ... | ... | 636 |
| Cairns Division | ... | ... | 285 |
| Innisfail Division | ... | ... | 28 |

Total 949

“(2) During the same period there were expunged from such roll:—

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Atherton Division | ... | ... | 460 |
| Cairns Division | ... | ... | 231 |
| Innisfail Division | ... | ... | 59 |

Total 750

“(3) Up to the present the votes allowed under section 69 have been cast in the following electorates:—

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Cairns | ... | ... | ... | 190 |
| Chillagoe | ... | ... | ... | 73 |
| Cook | ... | ... | ... | 13 |
| Herbert | ... | ... | ... | 62 |
| Mundingburra | ... | ... | ... | 4 |

Total 342

“ Yours faithfully,

“ M. DWYER,

“ Returning Officer for Eacham.”

The press stated that a large number of people came into the Eacham electorate. They inferred that some mythical individuals entered the electorate and recorded their votes. I want to tell the Opposition for their information that the Eacham electorate is one of the richest and most fertile spots in Queensland. Its resources and potentialities are perhaps greater than those in most parts of Australia, and the population will increase very considerably—perhaps to a greater extent in proportion than any other part of Queensland. That is something, of which members of the Opposition were not aware.

Mr. KELSO: That is only an assumption.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: It is not an assumption; I am stating facts. Hon. members opposite also stated that the return of the Labour party was due to the influence of the nomadic voters. Let me inform those hon. members opposite that, if there were not 190 votes from Eacham polled in the Cairns electorate on election day or any day in the year if an election was held, Cairns would not be in its present prosperous position, since it is the natural outlet for the Eacham electorate, and trains run daily from all parts of the electorate both on the coastal side and on the Tableland. Are hon. members opposite prepared to say that the nomadic worker is not entitled to exercise the franchise in Queensland? If they are, then let them come out in the open and say so. I know that they contemplate in the back of their minds foisting such a set of conditions upon the people of Queensland if they are ever returned to power. They are continually harping upon the nomadic worker and the influence of the nomadic vote. After all, what is the nomadic vote? The right to vote is something that we should maintain. It is the common basis of all citizenship.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Queensland is a country of seasonal industries. The most prosperous industries in the State are seasonal. Our primary industries are seasonal. Are we going to say to the people engaged in those industries that no provision will be made for them to have a vote in our elections, as now obtains under the Commonwealth electoral law? Under the latter law workers engaged in seasonal industries in Queensland are disfranchised, and well do they know it. Are the Opposition prepared to say to the people of Queensland engaged in those industries that they no longer shall have the right to exercise the franchise because they are not engaged in permanent employment?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They cannot “ Bulcock ” the rolls to-day; that is what is wrong.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: The Opposition have made the statement that large numbers of men are put on public works at election time. The only reply that I can give to that statement is that prior to the advent of the present Government men were dismissed from public works several months before an election to prevent them exercising the franchise.

Mr. KELSO: You are romancing.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I listened with interest to the members of the Opposition discussing the land question. I have been waiting for a number of years to grasp something which would be of use to the people on the land and to the man who is opening up and developing it in certain portions of this

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great State. The opponents of Labour in regard to our land policy adopt the role of carping critics and armchair philosophers. They make no statement which can be construed as being something of a constructive nature. They continually hold that the leasehold policy of the Labour party is destroying land settlement.

Mr. BRAND: Is not that the truth?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: There is nothing in that statement, and well they know it. They know that wrapped up in the question of land development is the question of finance, but the question of finance is not going to get over it. If that is not so, then we must turn to other parts of the world in which my friends opposite are deeply interested, and, in fact, have invested a large amount of money in a Crown colony which has adopted the principle of leasehold tenure contained in our Land Act, the principal exception being that reappraisal is made every thirty years instead of fifteen years. I now refer to the Crown colony of Kenya. Some members of the Opposition are deeply interested in that colony, and have invested their money there. I refer to the Victorian Nyanza Sugar Company, which is exploiting nigger labour. I have a list of the shareholders of that company, and among these are the hon. members for Burnett, Stanley, and Burrum. They are interested to the extent of several thousands of pounds in that concern. They tell us here that we are making no real progress in land settlement. I am prepared to admit that all is not well with the man on the land. I have had some knowledge of land settlement in different parts of Australia. In fact, I am interested in the question.

Mr. BRAND: What is your tenure—freehold or leasehold?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I am not so fortunate as the hon. member. I am supposed to have freehold tenure, but it will take me many, many years to pay it off.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRAND: Why didn't you turn it into leasehold?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: For the simple reason that I am not in a position to turn it into leasehold. I have to pay private enterprise for my land, and to pay enhanced values that no Government should allow to become established. All is not well with the man on the land, but it is not a question of land tenure.

If the Opposition want to assist land settlement in Australia, it would be helpful if they realised that it is simply a matter of finance. When the Commonwealth Bank was established the founders of that bank had it in their minds that the bank would be standing behind land settlement in Australia. Later the policy of the bank was influenced by financiers, and that made it impossible for the bank to function as its originators desired. Had the Commonwealth Bank functioned in the direction originally intended, it would now be standing behind the man on the land in Australia, and probably the present burden would not be placed on the backs of our agriculturists, particularly in Queensland. I am against the policy of advancing a man money and then losing all interest in the venture. I believe a system of finance should be established, and I hope that it will come in time, whereby a man will have the opportunity to get an addi-

tional advance after money is advanced to him by a bank—whether it be the Agricultural Bank or the Commonwealth Bank—and although the bank may have said, "Go on; that is enough for you to put your property in a profitable position." Time is the essence of the contract with the farmer, the same as with any other man, and when he suddenly wakes up and realises that a certain additional sum is necessary—contingencies may have arisen over which he has no control—it should be the duty of the bank to see that he gets that money. That makes provision for interest and redemption. The additional few hundred pounds may make the difference between success and failure. The lack of finance is the reason why many men fail on the land. It is hypocritical for the Opposition to say that if that man were given freehold tenure his troubles would end, and he would be in a position to raise the money. They fought the elections on the same issue in New Zealand, and tenures were changed from leasehold to freehold, with the result that to-day many of the men who sold the freeholds are now leasing them from private enterprise, and the man who originally was on leasehold lands has drifted back to them. So far as our Land Acts are concerned, with the many amendments that have taken place, the position is somewhat complicated. I believe it might be possible so to reconstruct them that the people of Queensland would understand them readily, and would not have to go to other people to have them interpreted. I would support a commission of inquiry into the Land Acts and land settlement in this State and in other parts of the world. It is a question that this House will have seriously to consider sooner or later. No country on the face of the earth has yet solved the land problem, and as a member of the Labour party I am prepared to admit that we do not know all there is to know about land settlement. If a commission of inquiry were appointed with full powers to inquire into all phases of the land question and report to this House, it would be of much use in later years. That would be a good thing, as it would remove many of the false impressions created by the opponents of Labour, as well as being an education to both sides of the House. We would in future, perhaps, be guided by the evidence obtained, and much good would accrue. The true value of land can only be gauged by what it produces. Yet we find members of the Opposition continually telling the people that with a return to freehold they would have a better chance of financing their undertakings. I know land enhances in value, and by nature we are all speculators; but any Government are to be commended who make an attempt to protect the national resources of this State, and keep them out of the hands of the big speculators.

The Government are to be congratulated upon the very satisfactory and practical results they have achieved in the way of stabilising the agricultural industry. As a Northern member I am prepared to say that much good has been achieved by the pooling system, and I believe that greater results will be achieved in the future. The harvest of the Tableland is now being gathered, and they have a record crop of somewhere near 24,000 tons of maize. I compiled some figures up to the 20th of last month. Deliveries of maize at the silo had commenced at that date, and approximately 4,000 tons had been received, and there were 8,000 tons on order.

[Mr. C. J. Ryan.]

This maize is available, and every effort is being made to supply sufficient rolling-stock for carrying the maize. I wish to commend the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner on their attempt to relieve the position in the North. The Atherton maize-grower in the past has not been in so good a position as other sections of the community. The board has gained considerable experience during the last two years, and the treatment of the maize in the silo has proved to be satisfactory. The board is now in a position to state that the price of Atherton maize on the Tableland is—

For Cairns, £16 10s. per ton = 8s. 3d. per bushel.

For Townsville, £14 15s. per ton = 7s. 4½d. per bushel.

For Mackay, £13 5s. per ton = 6s. 7½d. per bushel.

For Rockhampton, £12 10s. per ton = 6s. 3d. per bushel.

The board has met with competition from South African maize. This again is where many of our critics condemn the maize pool, and say that we should not protect local industry against South African maize. Great patriots!

Mr. BRAND: Who says that?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: The hon. member for one.

Mr. BRAND: Don't be silly.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Many people this year bought Atherton maize in preference to the South African product. This is due to the satisfactory treatment that our maize is now receiving on the Tableland. It is equal to, if not much better than, any South African maize that is coming into Australia.

Mr. CLAYTON interjected.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I understand that the hon. member in delivering a speech during the by-election in Atherton told a crowd of farmers that, whilst land on the Atherton Tableland was much better than the land at

Nanango, the maize grown at [2.30 p.m.] Nanango was superior. One of the farmers went home and brought a tin of maize back and put it out at the hon. member's feet to give a practical illustration. (Laughter.) In my opinion it is unfortunate that the Southern maize people did not fall into line with the Northern maize-growers and form a Queensland pool. I notice that many of the Opposition members are opposed to that.

Mr. CLAYTON: Mention the name of a member of the Opposition who is opposed to the pool.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: You did not support it.

Mr. CLAYTON: I did support it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Eacham must address the Chair.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I am not making wild statements. An examination of Brisbane prices show that Southern Queensland producers have apparently not been receiving the full reward of their labours; and on taking out the figures for five years with respect to the prices on the Sydney market the following average prices are shown:—

| | Per bushel. |
|---------|-------------|
| | s. d. |
| 1919-20 | 8 11 |
| 1920-21 | 6 6 |
| 1921-22 | 5 2 |
| 1922-23 | 6 1 |
| 1923-24 | 5 1 |

Those are the prices that were paid in the Sydney market for southern-grown maize. The Queensland producers of maize did not realise this price.

There is another factor which obtains in the situation in which they are selling their maize. Figures which have been taken out show that in the period between January and October, 1925, 223,870 bushels of maize were exported from Australia, but from the very next month of November, 1925, to February, 1926, 144,256 bushels of maize were imported into Australia from South Africa, which is a somewhat paradoxical position. Could anything be more absurd than that? Not even hon. members opposite! (Government laughter.) The price of maize during the period has frequently been down as low as 3s. a bushel, yet it has been sold at the prices quoted by me during those years, or at a minimum of 5s. 1d. I ask the people in South Queensland why they have not received that profit? Evidently there has been someone in between who has been exploiting the Southern maize-growers. If we had established a Queensland maize pool the Southern growers would have been protected. I hope that the Southern maize-growers will eventually come into the pool and assist the Northern maize-growers to get a price which will allow them to make a living.

I also wish to compliment the Government on the efforts they have made in regard to the dairying industry. Some result has been achieved already by their attempt to stabilise the industry, and more will be achieved. The position the industry is in is rather unfortunate, and I may agree with many members of the Opposition who say that the dairy farmer is not in a very good position, and is perhaps not getting a fair return for the labour he puts into the industry; but by the efforts of the Government to stabilise it—

Mr. CLAYTON: Which Government?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: The Labour Government, who have initiated most of the progressive legislation which is protecting the man on the land. I have here some interesting figures which will be of benefit to hon. members opposite. Some sections of the public complain about the prices which farmers are receiving. They feel that the man on the land sometimes gets too much for his produce; but for the benefit of all concerned, and particularly of the farming section of the community, who view every movement which the Labour party makes from a hostile standpoint, they should remember that if they want the benefit of price-fixing, they must not lower the standard of living or of wages in any industry. Some people are continually harping on the question of high wages, and to the farmer I want to say that if he wants a good price for his product, he can only get it by having in his own, as well as in other industries, a well-paid worker. It is easy to bring about a system wherein the purchasing community is not able to pay for the commodities which some other section produces. I quite agree with many people that the prices of commodities may be raised too high, but on the other hand, unless the industrial worker and the consumer generally have sufficient purchasing power, it is no use talking about increased prices of butter or any other commodity. I have met many farmers who disagree with this view, but the more intelligent accept the principle as quite correct.

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It would be easy to bring about in Queensland a set of conditions similar to those which existed twenty to thirty years ago and more in different parts of Australia, where I have seen many farmers adjacont to large industrial centres carrying butter in their baskets into the towns and selling it at 6d. and 7d. per lb., and perhaps finding themselves unable to do even that. That result was due to the fact that there was not sufficient money in the pockets of the industrial workers to pay for the butter, with the result that their wives and families had to go without and substitute something else.

Mr. WALKER: Where was this?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I could give you many places, but I shall merely quote one of the largest industrial centres in Australia—Lithgow.

Mr. WALKER: How long ago?

Mr. C. J. RYAN: This was over twenty years ago. (Opposition laughter.) I have been there, and I was one of the men that carried it. The workers were paid so little that their wives and families had to do without some of the necessities of life. That could happen in Queensland. The man on the basic wage in Queensland at present is perhaps not able to purchase as much in the way of butter and other necessaries of life for his wife and family as he would like to purchase. The point I desire to make is that, if the farmer is not receiving sufficient for his work and is not obtaining at least an amount equivalent to the basic wage from his industry, then it is his duty to co-operate and organise so that he can obtain sufficient to return him at least the equivalent of the basic wage, plus an amount necessary to pay interest and redemption.

Mr. NOTT: And work a 44-hour week.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Perhaps he is entitled to work a 44-hour week, as the hon. gentleman says. The hon. gentleman does not work sixteen hours. These figures show clearly the return to the Queensland cream supplier:—

| <i>Local Market.</i> | | <i>s. d.</i> |
|---|------|--------------|
| One-third of Queensland's production, at 20s. 4d. per cwt. | | 1 10 |
| Deduct— | | |
| Paterson stabilisation levy ... | 1½d. | |
| Cost of manufacture and distribution (local market) (a favourably situated factory) | 2¾d. | 0 4¼ |
| Net | | 1 5¾ |
| <i>Overseas Market.</i> | | |
| Two-thirds of Queensland's production, 170s. per cwt. | | 1 6 |
| Deduct— | | |
| Paterson stabilisation levy ... | 1½d. | |
| Cost of manufacture and distribution (overseas market) (a favourably situated factory) | 4¼d. | 5¾d. |
| Deduct— | | |
| Paterson stabilisation bonus ... | 3d. | 0 2¾ |
| Net | | 1 ¾ |
| One pound of butter sold on the local market at 1s. 5¾d. net to the supplier and 2 lb. | | |

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sold on the oversea market at 1s. 3¼d. net to the supplier show the return to the cream supplier of 1s. 4d. per lb.

Mr. WALKER: Your figures are very reckless.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: They are not reckless. That is all the cream supplier is getting out of the industry. It all comes back to the question of over-production. If we are to make our railways pay, we must give serious thought to our problem of production. The opponents of Labour are continually crying, "Produce, produce!" Yet we find that on every ton of sugar produced beyond Australian requirements and every pound of butter produced beyond Australian requirements there is a distinct loss to the producers.

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

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): If the usual courtesy of the House had not been extended to a new member, many of the statements made by the hon. member for Eacham would not have passed unchallenged. I would commend to the hon. gentleman for his close study the publication entitled "Queensland Politics During Sixty Years," by Charles Arrowsmith Bernays. I would specially request the hon. member to read closely the history of "one adult one vote." He dealt at some length with the attitude of this party in connection with elections, and I want to remind the hon. member emphatically that there is no connection whatever between the present Labour Government and the principle of "one adult one vote." That was introduced first of all by the Commonwealth Government before the present State Government were thought of, and it was brought into operation in Queensland by the Morgan Administration, which was not Labour.

I also wish to take the opportunity of dealing for a little time with an Act which hon. members opposite have dealt with frequently. I have no hesitation in stating that the Government are notorious for breaking the laws of this State. They have broken more in regard to elections than possibly with respect to any other matter. They know perfectly well that the Electoral Districts Act has been flagrantly broken, and, as a result, some twenty-six members are holding their seats because of this fact. What we in Queensland to-day require more than anything else is an honest method of representation in this House. I shall proceed to show how the Act has been infringed. The Act of 1910 was introduced with the object of equalising the value of votes. We know that it is impossible to allocate the same number of electors to each electorate, therefore the Act allowed a margin of one-fifth, more or less. The quota for the last election was 5,641, leaving a margin either way of 1,323. I desire to make this definite statement—that I am one of those hon. members who have been elected on a system by which the law has not been obeyed. Instead of having a margin of 1,323, I had a margin on the high side—a margin of over 3,000 votes. That is a sufficient indication to show that some rectification of the law is required. I emphatically say that the basic principle of representation in Parliament has been thwarted, that public opinion at the last election was disregarded, and that party interests prevailed where they never should have prevailed. Let us examine the position a little closer. There are

twenty members of the Opposition and eighteen members on the Government benches with quotas above that allowed by this Act. There would be nothing to cavil at if that were the only complaint, but we find that below the statutory limit of 20 per cent. the Opposition are represented by nine seats, and the Government by twenty-five. The Government representation is very strong in those electorates where the number of votes is below that allowed under the Act.

Mr. DASH: You may say that.

Mr. KERR: I do say so emphatically. The hon. member knows that, when the redistribution of seats took place, the polling booths which gave a majority for Labour were collected together and made safe seats for the Government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: What rot!

Mr. KERR: I can quote my own electorate. The Kelvin Grove electorate was made a safe Labour seat by taking from Enoggera and placing within it all polling booths that gave a majority for Labour candidates.

Mr. LLOYD: You could not have kept your old seat in the 1923 election.

Mr. KERR: I kept it before its boundaries were altered. Every centre that gave me a majority increased that majority at the last election, and there is nothing to indicate that this would not have been so if the boundaries had remained unaltered.

Mr. LLOYD: Nothing excepting the actual figures.

Mr. KERR: I have had no difficulty in successfully contesting the electorate. I want to emphasise the fact that the representation in this Parliament to-day is not on a democratic and sound basis. The polling booths that gave Labour majorities were collected together on the redistribution, and constituted a Labour seat. Where they had a chance of winning they were fortified by other polling booths giving them a chance, so consolidating the position. The Government have no right to depart from the legislation of this country. Why should some twenty-six members of this House be entitled to their seats if the law of the country is not being carried out? An independent, unbiassed redistribution of the electorates is required, so that the principle of one vote one value will hold good throughout the State.

Mr. PEASE: As they have in Victoria?

Mr. KERR: I am not now in Victoria. The Government should have an independent tribunal to adjudicate on this matter at this stage. No hon. member can say that the last redistribution was unbiassed. It was biassed in every way. I can take hon. members to maps of electorates looking like archipelagoes, specially designed to make them Labour strongholds.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You are thinking of the 1910 redistribution.

Mr. KERR: I am talking of the last redistribution.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I hope the hon. member will accept my assurance that I am dealing with the last redistribution.

There is another point I desire to deal with which concerns about a quarter of a million people in the Greater Brisbane area. I want

to draw attention to the zig-zag tactics of the Government in connection with their attitude towards the Water and Sewerage Board. If there is anything more deplorable than that attitude, I want to know what it is. To-day a Minister gives a certain decision, and to-morrow he does not know where he stands. It is time we had a definite policy, so that a Minister will be able to say exactly where he stands. I have never known anything so scandalous as the attitude of the Secretary for Public Works in connection with the Water and Sewerage Board. The outstanding feature is that there is a lack of decision on the part of the Minister which has cost the ratepayers quite a considerable amount of money. I want it understood that I am not referring at this stage to the veto of the Government. The Government can please themselves, and I consider it right to have legislation to give the Government a power of veto when necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have used those powers.

Mr. KERR: I will not say that I agree with the methods of the appraisal on unimproved values, but Ministers are creating a hopeless muddle in connection with the Water and Sewerage Board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Absolute nonsense.

Mr. KERR: I have not yet started. The hon. gentleman is anticipating me. No hon. member can deny that the Water and Sewerage Board, costing nearly £7,000,000, is to-day in a chaotic condition. I say again that the Government are responsible to a large extent. In regard to an undertaking such as that, the board should not be appointed on the adult franchise of the people. It should be under the control of experts or an expert. There is no question about that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are opposed to the people having a vote.

Mr. KERR: I am absolutely in connection with the Water and Sewerage Board. The hon. gentleman might just as well apply the principle to the Main Roads Board. I am sorry that the Secretary for Public Works is not in his place just now, because this is a most important matter. On 28th June the Minister said—

"Any alteration in the present basis of taxation would involve an amendment of the Act before it could be made effective."

On 30th July last year the hon. gentleman had a different opinion altogether. He entirely misled Parliament in this matter, and on the strength of his opinion as expressed on 30th July, 1925, in reply to a question asked by me, the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board went to the trouble of accepting a contract and involving the ratepayers in the expenditure of a lot of money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The board does not take any notice of your questions.

Mr. KERR: I happen to know that they did take notice of my question. This is the question that I asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Was it at his instigation or with his approval that the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board secured information in regard to the rental value of properties?"

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"2. To bring about an alteration of the present system of computation would the Act require amendment?"

"The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) replied—

1. The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is empowered under section 97 (2) of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Acts, 1909-1923, to collect information regarding the rental value of properties.

2. No. The board under Part VIII., sections 88 and 90, of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Acts, 1909-1923, shall define by by-laws the basis upon which water and sewerage rates shall be assessed."

There we have a Minister of the Crown saying that it would not involve an amendment. A few days afterwards the Minister had a different opinion. A few days later—on 2nd July—the Minister had another opinion and he said he—

"found that under clause 38 of Schedule II. of the Act the board had conferred upon it the necessary power to alter, if it deemed necessary, the basis of rating."

Surely, the hon. gentleman has enough knowledge of his department to know what he is speaking about. Why should the ratepayers be up in the air and be put in such a position that they do not know where they are? They have been told frankly that they have been messed about in this matter, and the position is a deplorable one. The Minister went so far as to say that "if the Act did not provide it he would go so far as to validate the board's action should it be required." The Minister, after misleading the board for months and months and making them put the ratepayers to great expense, comes along and vetoes what has been done. The Government stepped over the Minister, and said the Minister was entirely wrong, and they vetoed the whole proposal.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know perfectly well that you are not stating the case fairly. The Government's right of veto did not apply until the board asked us to gazette their by-laws making the change.

Mr. KERR: In drawing that fine line of demarcation, the Minister is only quibbling.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are not stating the position correctly.

Mr. KERR: I am stating the position as correctly as I know how. In answer to a question I asked in the House [3 p.m.] the representative of the Government said that the board had ample power, and that, if they had not got the power, the Minister in charge of the department would take the necessary action to obtain it. What more do you want than that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are misrepresenting the position.

Mr. KERR: I am not. The hon. gentleman says the board have never applied for it, but under the by-laws there was no necessity to ask for it. The hon. gentleman has nothing to say in that regard. The time is opportune for the Government to give deep and serious consideration to the position of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. There seems to be no desire on the part of the Greater Brisbane Council to take over this great department. The

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gentlemen sitting round the table in the board office are in a hopeless position, and are turning to the Government to capitalise their undertaking. I was at a deputation and heard these gentlemen speak on the question. They said that the ratepayers were at their wits' end and that the limit had been reached, and they did not know which way to turn to get rates. If that is the position the board is in, the Government should recognise that to save the people expense the time is ripe to do away with the board.

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you know it is right?

Mr. KERR: The rates will go up in 1930 by £275,000 on the present basis. The rates levied in 1925 amounted to £491,000. That shows that the rates will have to go up nearly 50 per cent. The water rates to-day are very oppressive, and they are hitting the small householders in the metropolitan area, the people in which constitute more than a quarter of the population of Queensland.

Mr. HARTLEY: I will bet you that there are not 5 per cent. of the householders growling.

Mr. KERR: I can assure the hon. member that his information is wrong.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not.

Mr. KERR: There are growls every day.

Mr. HARTLEY: Not from the householders.

Mr. KERR: I have filled in dozens of complaints. What we want on the board is an expert or experts to deal with the whole thing.

Mr. FERRICKS: There a few experts on the present board.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member is quite right. There are a few experts on the present board, but the hon. member fails to understand that these gentlemen are paid £1 ls. or £2 2s. for a couple of hours a week, and this is an undertaking involving an expenditure of £7,000,000. It will pay the ratepayers to give a man £10,000 a year to devote his whole time to the subject and get good results. The members of the board do not know how much the scheme is going to cost or when it is going to be completed. Hon. members opposite may think they will lose a certain amount of propaganda matter if they take away the adult franchise from the people in connection with the control of the board. The people are calling for a reform of the board.

Mr. HARTLEY: What about you taking it on?

Mr. KERR: The hon. member knows perfectly well that I am not competent, and I return the compliment by saying that he is entirely incompetent.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will cease replying to interjections.

Mr. KERR: We have had a great deal of discussion on the important matter of the increase in railway fares and freights. While I want at this stage to deal with the railways, it is just as well to ask who is to blame in regard to the increased fares on the Brisbane tramways. Who is responsible for it? The Brisbane Tramway Trust and the Greater Brisbane Council have made a very great success of the tramway undertaking, so far as I can judge. The position of the tramway undertaking is that, if you add together the dividends paid by Mr. Badger in one year

and the loss made last year, the total will not be as much as the interest now being paid by the Brisbane City Council on the undertaking—showing that, if the same conditions in regard to finance obtained now as when Mr. Badger was there, it would be showing a profit. Who is to blame for the position? Is it not a well-known fact that, when Mr. Theodore went to the old country, he made very large concessions in regard to the conversion loan? Do we not know that he was to blame for purchasing the undertaking at the fabulous price which was paid for it? Is it not a fact that he had to make concessions to get the conversion loan money, and that the tramway dispute was settled at the same time?

Mr. FARRELL: Take Mr. Macrossan's view.

Mr. KERR: It may be his opinion, but that does not interest me at all. I am interested in this fact—that we have reliable men on the City Council, and that Alderman Watson said that £611,000 of the plant would have to be scrapped, so that the system was obsolete. We know that no valuation was made of the system before it was taken over. Had it been taken over at a reasonable valuation, the tramway system would have been paying its way, and there would have been no increase in the fares on the trams in Brisbane to-day. You cannot get away from the fact that there has been a good deal of controversy in the press, but my desire is not to answer the point which has been raised in regard to depreciation and so on. My desire is to show that, if the Government had taken up the question in a proper way and even spent a few thousand pounds on a proper valuation and handled the matter as it should have been handled, the people would not be called upon to pay high taxation, as they are called upon to do to-day.

Mr. HARTLEY: You know very well they did get a proper valuation.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member is talking through his hat. About the only thing valued in the tramway undertaking was the chimney stack in Countess street. They started on the shop, and they put a few documents into a tin, and there the documents remain. Mr. Theodore went to England and bought the undertaking at a fabulous price, and now the people have to pay interest on that fabulous price. If the hon. member cannot see that the people are paying interest on a fabulous price, he has not brains to call his own. That is the sort of financial arrangement we may expect from this Government—the tramway undertaking having to increase its fares; the Water and Sewerage Board muddled, and likely to be more muddled in the future than before owing to the action of the Secretary for Works; the public debt soaring, and a huge deficit. In every instance where the Government have handled finance they have shown no regard for their obligations to the people. Money has rolled into the Government coffers, but they have never hesitated to spend it in an extravagant way, and the result is reacting on the whole of the community.

Mr. FARRELL: Will you tell us what the basis of the tramway valuation was?

Mr. KERR: There was no basis of valuation.

Mr. FARRELL: How then could they come to a decision?

Mr. KERR: There was no proper valuation at all. Now let me deal with another

important matter, which is mentioned in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. If one studies it in its entirety, one will find that it indicates a financial session. The financial statements in the Speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor are based on entirely wrong deductions. There has been considerable controversy in which I have taken a part in connection with the withdrawal of the capitation payments by the Commonwealth Government. I am strongly opposed to the Commonwealth withdrawing its per capita payments and permitting the whole field of income taxation to be exploited by the States. The Grants Bill has been withheld from the Federal House, but notwithstanding that the State Government by their statements, per medium of the Speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor, are quite satisfied to acquiesce in the action of the Commonwealth Government in withholding the per capita payments. According to the Speech delivered at the opening of Parliament, the Government propose to legislate in the direction of introducing an entertainment tax, an amendment of the land tax, and an amendment of the income tax. Why? They are doing that merely to conform to the new position created by the Federal Government's proposals. No Government in any circumstances should have made provision for anything of the kind. The very fact that the Queensland Government are prepared to introduce such legislation only encourages the Federal Government to push their policy more vigorously.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is an extraordinary argument.

Mr. KERR: There is no question about the soundness of the argument. The whole of the Government's foreshadowed proposals in connection with land tax, income tax, succession and probate duties, and an entertainment tax, are based on entirely wrong premises.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have not seen them. You do not know what is contained in them.

Mr. KERR: I have not seen them, but I know perfectly well that the proposals are intended to meet the contemplated action of the Commonwealth Government. If that is not so, then the people will be delighted to know that they are to become the victims of an additional entertainment tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Thank heaven they do not take much notice of what you say.

Mr. CLAYTON: You will not take any responsibility, but rely on the Premier every time.

Mr. KERR: Thank goodness they do not take much notice of the Minister's recent statements. The question of the per capita payments is one of the most important financial matters that we have ever had to face. In 1921 time and again I raised the question in this House. I had obtained certain information to show that the withdrawal of the per capita payments was foreshadowed by the Commonwealth Government, but the Queensland Government at no time would give Parliament an opportunity to discuss this important matter. When the Commonwealth Government did take action Queensland was practically the only State in Australia unprepared to meet the situation. The Governments of Western and South Australia had given the matter every consideration, and had set aside special days and

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appointed select committees to discuss what action they would take in the event of such developments. There is one thing Queensland has to remember in connection with the per capita payments. Prior to federation Queensland obtained £1,600,000 from customs and excise duty. That was taken over by the Commonwealth Government, and we were left with all our charitable institutions, gaols, etc., and the responsibility of providing educational facilities. The very first thing that we had to do in 1902 was to introduce an income tax to obtain money to meet these expenses. It was never intended by the framers of the Federal Constitution that we were not to obtain our share of the customs and excise duty. There was no justification for taking £1,600,000 in customs and excise duty from Queensland and giving nothing in its place. We know that there was the Braddon clause, which gave the Commonwealth Government the right to retain 25 per cent. of the customs and excise duty, and provided for the distribution of the remaining 75 per cent. amongst the States. After 1910 the book-keeping system then in operation was found to be impossible, and something equivalent was introduced.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why was it found to be impossible?

Mr. KERR: Because it was worked on a consumption basis, and it was found impossible, with the abolition of the border tax, to say how much was consumed in the various States of Australia. The difficulty in book-keeping to get the exact imports into not only our State but every State of Australia can be realised. The Commonwealth Government, being unable to do the book-keeping in this regard, resolved, as an equivalent, to pay to the States a per capita payment of £1 5s. per head of population. That payment has been continued until now, when it is proposed to wipe it out altogether, and in its place make concessions in taxation which has been introduced since 1910. Those concessions are not an equivalent at all, and the Federal Treasurer, Dr. Earle Page, is not justified in asserting that the concessions counterbalance the per capita payments, and that the States will thereby be the gainers. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. HARTLEY: Is this a preliminary gallop against the referenda proposals?

Mr. KERR: No; the hon. member, like the rest of his colleagues, is mixing up the per capita payments with the referenda proposals. He ought to know, if he does not already do so, that the per capita payments have nothing to do with the referenda proposals. The proposed equivalent is not a fair thing. In 1910 the revenue derived from the tariff was £13,000,000, while in 1925 it was £37,000,000, and in 1935 it will be possibly another £10,000,000. Are the States at that time to be deprived of their share of customs and excise duties? It would have been a better policy for the Commonwealth Government gradually to decrease the taxation which it proposes to transfer to the States until it is no longer required. That taxation was enacted by the Commonwealth in a case of special emergency. It was the Labour party which imposed the land tax in the Federal sphere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They imposed that tax to build the Australian fleet out of it.

Mr. KERR: The Government of the day introduced that tax with the object of break-

ing up large estates, and everyone will acknowledge that the object has failed, the same as the land tax and super tax in our own State have failed.

I regret exceedingly that the Government propose this session to take action to prepare for an alteration provided for in the Federal Constitution. This Parliament should have a special day or days set aside for the consideration of this matter. A select committee, with the assistance of leading officials of the Treasury and other officials of the Government who could give assistance, should be appointed to prepare a case for Queensland to see if we cannot get justice in this regard. It is impossible to close our eyes to the fact—irrespective of the losses on the State enterprises—that we are in a hopeless financial position. The position will become more apparent as time goes by, and it will be difficult to keep Queensland financially solvent. Taxation has now reached its limit in Queensland. That has been acknowledged by the late Premier, the Hon. E. G. Theodore, and the present Premier—men who have had finance under their control. Expenditure in connection with non-revenue producing institutions, such as our charities, gaols, and education, is increasing. Education is now costing £1,500,000 per annum, and the present policy of the Government is to construct schools out of borrowed money—a thing which previous Administrations never thought of.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not correct. Your party built schools out of borrowed money, too.

Mr. KERR: The only recourse we have got to meet this increased expenditure is to tax the pockets of the people. We should have been, as the framers of the Federal Constitution intended, receiving more and more money from the customs and excise. It is coming to this point—and some think favourably of it—that a Loan Council for Australia will be set up to take over and control finance, and give the States a sufficient amount of money to carry on. It is the greatest step towards unification that I know of.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is what Earle Page is aiming at.

Mr. KERR: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is right or wrong, but I do know it only aggravates the position more and more. We should help the position by making these things pay. We have the maintenance of the humanitarian legislation which was never brought in by this Government at all, although hon. members opposite contend that it was. I heard the hon. member for Ithaca talking about the magnificent edifice of education that has been built up by the Labour Government. I venture to say that to-day a boy in the fifth class, the highest class at present in our State schools, is receiving no better education than a boy was receiving years ago in the sixth class.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Nonsense.

Mr. KERR: I admit that a large number to-day are getting greater opportunities, but the present fifth class is no better than the sixth class in 1910. I do not make that statement without investigating the matter. I have been able to obtain a syllabus of the subjects taught in the sixth class of the State schools of 1910 and also one containing

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the subjects taught in the fifth class to-day. I took those syllabuses to three of the leading schoolmasters of Brisbane, and in each case they confirmed the statement I have just made. Certainly greater numbers are provided with educational facilities, but this is not the only State where that obtains. That also obtains in other States where Labour Governments have not been in power. If hon. members will study the Commonwealth "Year Book," they will find that Victoria, governed by what they term a Tory Government, has at all times led the way.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): I had the opportunity of listening to the leader of the Opposition speaking on the Address in Reply, and, like the Premier, I was very much surprised at his weak attack upon the Government. The hon. gentleman contented himself mostly with complaining, and one of his chief complaints was in connection with the literature circulated during the recent election campaign. The hon. member should be pleased with that literature. Some of it received in North Queensland was of a particularly high-class nature, especially that dealing with "Gimme Moore." It placed the hon. member on a very high pedestal in the North. The pamphlet about which the hon. member chiefly complained was that linking him up with the National Union. It was not necessary for that pamphlet to link up the hon. gentleman with the funds of the National Union, because friends of the Opposition had already done that. As the hon. member for Townsville pointed out, Mr. Smout, a man behind the scenes and a supporter of the Opposition, wrote to the press complaining, and the "Brisbane Courier," the "Daily Mail," and the "Telegraph," all supporters of the Opposition, also complained that the leader of the Opposition and his party allowed themselves to be linked up with the National Union. I was absolutely astounded that that was the chief thing about which the leader of the Opposition complained. Like the hon. gentleman, I took part in the Eacham by-election, when the hon. gentleman for the first time in his parliamentary career visited North Queensland. He took an army of Opposition members with him, and they definitely linked him up with the National Union in that campaign. He also took with him as his personal attendant, Mr. McGill, who was the head of the National Union in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is not stating the truth in saying that Mr. McGill was the head of the National Union of Queensland. He is not the leader of the National Union, and never had anything to do with it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. PEASE: During the Eacham by-election the Premier dealt with Mr. McGill, and stated that he was handing out National Union funds, and neither the leader of the Opposition nor any member of the party attempted to correct that statement. Not only did Mr. McGill leave his flourishing practice in Brisbane, and lose thousands of pounds to go through the same by-election in North Queensland; Mr. Bradley also went with them. During the whole of my electioneering experience Mr. Bradley has definitely stood for the National Union. This Mr. Bradley gets £1,500 a year and expenses and £250 for every seat he wins in the North

from Labour. The leader of the Opposition took him from Townsville and placed him in Atherton, the headquarters in the Eacham by-election. He also handed out National Union funds. They handed them out in thousands. In all my experience of electioneering I never saw so much money spent by the National Union on battlers for the Opposition as was spent in that campaign. Why, we are not told; but we know very well that money was expended and that by-election was contested more than any by-election in the history of Queensland since Labour has been in power. It was to be the stage setting for the general election. Previously Mr. Bradley has always stood behind the scenes. In other election campaigns in which I have taken part I never saw Mr. Bradley personally, but this time Mr. Bradley came out in the open, went to Atherton, and engaged armies of whisperers. Whisperers were everywhere. National Union money was spent liberally all over the North to make the stage right for the general election. No matter where you travelled north of Townsville during that by-election, you could not help falling over Opposition politicians. The people of North Queensland wondered what it was all about. They thought it was a Bolshevik invasion, and they began to make inquiries. The Opposition thought they had a good case to win the seat from Labour, and after the Federal election they decided this was to be the stage setting for the general election; and, like the hon. member for Eacham, I say that his return here was largely due to the efforts of the leader of the Opposition and his satellites. They did more to establish the prestige of Labour in North Queensland than anything that has been done in my political career. The Premier and the Secretary for Agriculture had spoken in Eacham. We had canvassed the district for votes for Mr. Ryan, and certain leading citizens told us that they were not Labour supporters. They said they had been personal supporters of Mr. Gillies, but they had not made up their minds whom they were going to vote for in the by-election until they heard the leader of the Opposition and other members of the Opposition. On our return from further north we again called in at Atherton and met these individuals, and they said, "Yes, we have made up our minds all right. We heard the leader of the Opposition and two of their members, and we are quite satisfied that any man who would vote to hand over Queensland to a party like that ought to be put in Goodna." (Laughter.) That is absolutely true.

Mr. KELSO: You would make a good writer of fiction.

Mr. PEASE: The leader of the Opposition, in his usual manner, made a speech at the opening of the Pine River Show, and he cast a slur on this party by stating that we were novices in politics. If we are novices in politics, how on earth is it that the Government keep on holding the reins of power in Queensland? The people of the South have the opportunity of always judging the Opposition, but the people of the North only had the opportunity when the leader of the Opposition and his army went North; and, as I say, not only in the Eacham by-election, but in the recent general election, from Mackay North Labour received the greatest majority

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of votes it ever received in an election campaign. As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Mirani very nearly lost his seat, and had he lost his seat, he could only have blamed the Opposition for it. I consider it is like the cheek of the leader of the Opposition to talk about the Government of the day as novices and his own party as business men. They may be business men; but the Government is composed of members who are statesmen. (Opposition laughter.) Ever since I have been in this House the Opposition party has been looking out for a leader. They have never been satisfied with the leaders over there, and have always been looking for somebody else to lead them. They wanted Major-General Glasgow at one time, Mr. H. D. Macrossan at another, and then Mr. A. D. McGill, who was defeated at South Brisbane.

Those people have the arrogance to talk about us as not being entitled to an increased allowance as members. I am not going to "make any bones" about my attitude on the matter. I am satisfied that we are entitled to a greater allowance than we have at present. If any member of Parliament is expected to keep up two homes as we in the North have to do on the present allowance, the people of Queensland are not doing the proper thing. We are not subsidised in any way. We have to go outside and earn something to pay our way. There is no National Union behind us to subsidise us; we have nothing except what we get here.

Some years ago I attended a debate in the Upper House before Labour was in power. There was an all-night sitting of the Legislative Council. I said to one gentleman there whom I knew very well, "I am surprised to see you wasting your time here and putting all night in for nothing." He said, "For nothing! Why, there is a company outside paying me £1,000 a year for attending the Upper House." We get no £1,000 a year as members of the Labour party, whose sole earnings are what we get here, and we are perfectly justified in asking Queensland to pay us a greater allowance than we are getting at present. We should not be depending on other people to give us our living. The leader of the Opposition said that we are not experienced politicians, but what has he to say about his own party, who are very glad to pick up every discarded Labour politician? Did he ever hear of a man called William Morris Hughes? When Labour discarded him, what happened to him? The other side wanted to get hold of him and to make him their leader. Did the hon. gentleman ever hear, when Labour discarded Mr. Holman, the Premier of New South Wales, how glad the friends of hon. members opposite were to take him over? Did he ever hear of a man called Peterson, who left the Labour party? Where is he to-day? He has joined the ranks of the Opposition, and is recognised as one of their leading men. What about the position in this House a session or two ago in regard to Mr. Theodore? Did the Opposition never read about what happened when the party leaders outside tried to make an offer to Mr. Theodore? Did they never hear of the Brennan bribery case? Do they think we are all children? The leader of the Opposition goes outside and says that Labour members are not efficient, yet during the crisis at that time, when we had a majority of one, the Opposition would have taken over any member of this party, and probably have

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given him the position of leader of the Opposition.

The Opposition have twitted the Premier with what he said in his campaign literature and with not putting into the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech the measures which were promised in his speeches to the people. Everyone realises, as the Premier pointed out to-day, that we are only just starting business, and we have brought forward in our Lieutenant-Governor's Speech measures which the Premier contemplates will be dealt with this session. What about their own party? I have here a pamphlet headed, "Vote for the Bruce-Page candidate" at the Federal general election in October last year, and there is this at the end of it—

"The Bruce-Page Government has for months past had a commission of experts on social insurance, and it will put social insurance into operation so soon as it is given legislative power."

Well, they have had one session, they are into another, and there has not been one word of social insurance. Yet they have had legislative power to do what they said they would do for two sessions. Why do not hon. members opposite say something about that?

Mr. WARREN: Of course it is a big question. (Government laughter.)

Mr. PEASE: The member for Nundah and some other hon. members of the Opposition for months past have been making lying innuendoes about the Premier and the Mungana mines. The member for Toowong has been prominent in it, and so has every hon. member on that side of the House. I know all about Mungana myself, and I am going to deal principally with what the hon. member for Nundah said to-day. He said that on 11th September, 1917, the Government forfeited the leases and Mr. Reid took them up. He also said that Chillagoe was purchased by this Government on 6th November, 1917, and he charged the Government with having parted with a valuable property. As the Premier pointed out when the hon. member for Nundah was speaking—that hon. member gets up here and makes all sorts of wild statements—Chillagoe was not purchased in 1917; it was purchased in 1918. Anyone can go into the library and read the debate on the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Bill. At that time Queensland had an Upper House, and it was not a Labour House. The late Hon. T. J. Ryan did a good thing for the workers of Queensland in purchasing that railway, and at that time it was a more profitable venture than it would be to-day. He introduced the Bill in this House, and it went through all its stages here. The other House turned it down. They deferred it and moved a motion that it be read six months hence, and eventually they appointed a select committee to deal with it. The Premier had a perfect right to complain at this pamphlet issued by the other side, authorised by Mr. H. G. Bradley, of Townsville, the paid organiser of the National Union and the vested interests behind the Opposition, in which this statement appeared—

"WHO SOLD MUNGANA MINES?"

"The Government paid over £700,000 for Chillagoe. Although the Mungana mines were a necessary adjunct to Chillagoe, the Government did not reopen them."

If the hon. member for Toowong, the hon. member for Nundah, the hon. the leader of the Opposition, and all those who say by innuendo that the Premier is discredited in this matter would only read the Bill itself, they would know why the Mungana mines were not taken over. The Select Committee of the Upper House went to Chillagoe. I happened to be a member of the Cairns Harbour Board at the time they passed through, and I know that all hands in the North were in favour of the Government taking over the undertaking, and we did all we possibly could to bring evidence before the members of the committee to induce them to report in its favour. The Opposition in the other Chamber waited for a year, and on the 23rd October, 1918—not 1917 at all—they presented the report of the committee to the Upper House. The Government agreed to purchase the Chillagoe Company's assets, but the committee recommended that a clause be inserted in the Bill interdicting the Government from operating any of the mines except the Einasleigh mine.

A new clause was inserted in the Bill, reading—

“The Government shall not carry on mining in connection with any of the mines acquired under this Act excepting the Einasleigh mine.”

Before this was passed Mr. Reid had already taken up the Mungana lease; it was not sold at all. This man Bradley is used to selling, and using the word “sold.” He is a man behind bribery cases and all such things. This lease was taken up by Mr. Fred Reid. He was manager of the Mungana company, and, when the interests of that company overseas realised the position of mining in that part of the district, they informed their manager that they were not prepared to go any further with their operations, and the mine naturally reverted to the Crown. Mr. Reid knew that the ore-bodies were there, and he lodged an application for a lease, and secured the mine because there was no other applicant. The Secretary for Mines of the day and all the Government supporters in the Upper House protested strongly against the absurdity of this clause going into the Bill, stressing the fact that the Einasleigh mine did not contain all the fluxes necessary to keep the Chillagoe smelters working profitably. They urged that it was absolutely necessary to obtain ore from other centres to blend with the ore from Einasleigh. That is on record in “Hansard,” and it is on record that they pointed out that the ore-bodies at Mungana were specially necessary to keep the smelters at Chillagoe operating profitably, and that it would be a terrible shame if the Government were compelled to allow the right to the Mungana mines to pass. In spite of that, the Upper House, which controlled the situation to the detriment of the Government and the State, emasculated the Bill of the Labour Government, and said, “You shall not work the Mungana mines.” Now in their pamphlets they ask, “Who sold the Mungana mines?” The party responsible for the Mungana mines passing out of the control of the people of Queensland was the Opposition party in the Upper House. It was their hirelings who controlled the situation and prevented the Labour Government of the day from acquiring the Mungana mines at no cost to the people of Queensland. Mr. Reid took over the mine, and I

met him in Cairns a few days after he had lodged his application with the department. He tried to induce the Cairns business people to back him up in carrying on these mines. I was one to whom he mentioned the prospects, but I refused to accept any interest whatever in the mines. Mr. Reid was prepared to grant considerable concessions to anyone who would assist him. He had not much capital himself, and he could not obtain capital from the banks. The banks told him that, if he could obtain the signatures of certain reputable business men to a bank guarantee for a certain sum of money—and a very considerable sum of money—they were prepared to consider the matter. They gave him a list of business men in Cairns and the surrounding district whom he was to interview and ask to sign the deed. In the beginning there was not one person whom the bank had named who was game to put his signature to the deed. Mr. Reid and his syndicate worked this mine from the very moment that he took it over. He had to conform to the Mining Act of Queensland, and he and his party took very great financial risks. I know of a time when they were responsible for £3,000 for wages. They were not able to realise on the ore they had produced, but they were able to obtain an advance from the people in the Southern States who purchased their ore, otherwise, Mr. Reid and his company would have had to go out of existence. The advance enabled him to tide over his difficulty, and eventually the people of Queensland gave this Government such power that the Upper House was removed, and the Government were given the power to deal with the assets of Chillagoe as they desired. At that time Mr. Reid had the mine. That is how the mine passed from the people of Queensland. The party opposite prevented the Government from retaining those mines for the people of Queensland. Then the manager of Chillagoe at that time reported to the Secretary for Mines that it was absolutely necessary that he should get control of the Mungana mines in order that he should carry on Chillagoe profitably. The Secretary for Mines was not satisfied, and sent to the Southern States for an expert to make an independent report on the mine. The cost to the Government of the purchase of Mungana was £22,500. Since its purchase the Government have mined, raised, and sent from Mungana to the smelters at Chillagoe ore of the value of £395,000. Was that not a good deal for Queensland?

Mr. MOORE: What did it cost to get that ore out?

Mr. PEASE: It does not matter what it cost to get that ore out. As a matter of fact, had Mungana not been purchased by the Government the smelters at Chillagoe would have been compelled to close down long ago. The hon. member for Nundah spoke of how the people of Queensland were aggrieved at the rumour that the Premier and others were supposed to be interested in Mungana. The people in Cairns showed how aggrieved they were by returning the Premier at the last general election by the greatest majority by which he has ever been returned.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

At 3.45 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Pollock, Gregory) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

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Mr. PEASE: Not only did the hon. member for Chillagoe receive a record majority, but the majorities for the Labour candidates from Mackay northwards were the greatest in the history of the party.

Mr. KELSO: You hoodwinked the electors right through. You did nothing but make promises.

Mr. PEASE: The people of North Queensland happen to be intelligent. They are quite prepared to take their politics seriously. The trouble in the metropolitan area is that probably 60 per cent. of the electors cast their votes without so much as hearing an election speech. The electors in the metropolitan area do not go to hear election speeches. The Opposition control the situation here, and the speeches are so lukewarm that the people will not go out at night to hear them. Therefore, they must take their politics from the newspapers. Labour has only the "Daily Standard" to espouse its cause against the whole of the metropolitan newspapers. In North Queensland—and I speak of the country from Mackay northwards—it does not matter what political side a candidate may represent, over 60 per cent. of the people of North Queensland attend to listen to the political speeches of representatives of both sides of the House. That is why we receive such a majority in North Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PEASE: What happened in Eacham has happened right throughout the North. The Opposition talk about business men. I associate with business men in the North, and I can assure hon. members opposite that 80 per cent. of the business men of the North vote for the candidates represented in the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Mirani admitted that.

Mr. PEASE: That is so, and he nearly lost his seat. The leader of the Opposition professed a good deal of concern about the primary producers. What I want to know is, what protection did his party give to the primary producers when they sat on this side of the House? For many years the leader of the Opposition sat on this side of the House.

Mr. MOORE: I have never sat on that side of the House.

Mr. PEASE: The party which the hon. member represents did so, and the hon. members for Wynnum and Albert were members of the Government. What did they do to put into operation legislation for the wellbeing of the primary producers?

Mr. MOORE: They enacted one of the best co-operative Acts that exists in any State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. PEASE: There are people who are fairer than the leader of the Opposition. Does the leader of the Opposition ever read the newspapers? Not so long ago a conference attended by the Secretaries for Agriculture in the various States of the Commonwealth sat in Brisbane. Hon. members can turn up the files of the newspapers, and see that every Secretary for Agriculture present recognised the fact that Queensland had the best legislation of any State in Australia to protect agriculturists. The Ministers themselves were prepared to admit that this Government had introduced better legislation. Even the Victorian Minister admitted

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that this Government was the only Government in Australia that had placed proper legislation on the statute-book to protect the man on the land. The reason why the other States have not done so is because they have Upper Houses, and because vested interests and the Upper Houses would not allow them to pass such legislation.

Some hon. member opposite interjected to the effect that the Commonwealth Government legislation protected our dairy farmers. Some time ago, when the Dairy Pool Board was brought into operation, representatives from all the States met to elect a chairman, and a Queenslander was elected. The reason given was that the State of Queensland was the only State in Australia to put legislation on the statute-book which properly protects the dairy farmer.

I shall prove by figures—which really are the main thing—how much better is Labour's agricultural policy than that of the Opposition. I shall ask anybody to disprove it if he can. Only this week I received from political opponents in my own electorate letters asking me to convey to the Secretary for Agriculture their thanks for his having sent along experts in connection with bananas, other fruits, and the dairying industry. Dealing with the increased production of agricultural crops which has taken place under Labour rule as against Opposition rule, comparing 1914 with 1924, and quoting from the "ABC of Queensland and Australian Statistics," I find this—

Average yield per acre of principal crops, Queensland.

| | 1914. | 1924. |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Per cent. | Per cent. |
| Wheat | 4-43 | 14-70 |
| Malting Barley | 4-83 | 20-36 |
| Maize | 13-68 | 31-99 |
| English Potatoes | 1-28 | 2-14 |
| Sweet Potatoes | 3-61 | 4-14 |
| Sugar Cane | 12-20 | 18-92 |

In 1915 the sugar production of Queensland was 159,681 tons and in 1925, under Labour's régime and due to the good work of our experts and to our legislation, the production was 522,344 tons. In 1916 the total amount of the wool exported overseas was 68,889,129 lb., valued at £3,921,930, while in 1925 the total export was 100,649,965 lb., valued at £11,992,952.

Mr. KELSO: Did Labour increase that value?

Mr. PEASE: It was due to Labour legislation and to the work of Labour experts assisting to increase the production. Again, we have these figures—

| | 1915. | 1925. |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Imports | 7,000,931 | 12,833,375 |
| Exports | 8,105,930 | 24,441,600 |

Taking the exports of butter from the Commonwealth for the year ended 30th June,

1925, Queensland comes first with 661,940 boxes; Victoria second with 597,310 boxes; New South Wales third with 457,712 boxes; showing that our legislation in connection with the dairying industry has resulted in increased production by such a terrific amount.

The leader of the Opposition had something to say about the way we were going to impose further taxation on the primary producer, and that we were going to increase railway fares and freights by 10 per cent.; but he was not fair enough to give us credit for any exemptions we have given the people. The Commissioner of Taxes in his report of last year made a special point in regard to the tremendous amount allowed as concessions under the Land Tax Act of 1924-1925. In the amended Act of 1922 a special exemption was granted to farmers and graziers; and 11,238 farmers benefited by these concessions, the total amount of reduction being £23,262 for that year alone. Then he goes on to elaborate, and says that the exemption has had the following effect:—

“Totally exempted—8,850 farmers, who formerly paid £14,264.

“Partially exempted—759 farmers, and reduced tax by £4,468.

“Totally exempted farming land—1,386 farmers, and reduced tax by £3,392.

“Partially exempted farming land—243 farmers, and reduced tax by £1,138.

“Total benefited—11,238 farmers; total amount of reduction, £23,262.”

That is recurring each year. The leader of the Opposition is not fair enough to get up and say, “Well, you have done something to relieve the ordinary farmer from ordinary taxation.” As a matter of fact, the Government are the only Government who have emancipated the producers of the State. We are the only Government who have considered them. I am astonished to find that the leader of the Opposition does not give us credit, like the “Producers’ Review” and other papers do, for some of this legislation. If we make a small impost of 10 per cent. on the fares and freights, how is it going to affect the man on the land? The railrage on the produce of the man on the land to-day is lower in Queensland than in any other State in Australia. They talk about increased trains and increased amount of haulage now the drought is on, and say that the Government should make more money out of it. As everybody knows, all that increased freight at the present time is carried at a loss. In my own district the more trains that are run, the more the Government loses. Take Atherton and those districts around there. There are three trains a week. Not one of these trains pay, because the rates on agricultural produce are below the cost of haulage. The people of Yungaburra asked me whether the Government could not make the railways pay. I said we could make them pay by reducing those three trains a week and making the people in that district send all their goods and passengers once a week. Do the Opposition wish us to do that? We have to consider the man who lives on the land, and that is why the railway policy of the Government has been to do everything to foster primary production. As the representative of one of the big sugar centres, I say that the legislation of this Government has done more to help the proper farmer—not the

cheque-book farmer, but the man who farms his own land—than anything done by previous Governments. As a matter of fact, the concession in the State land tax was the outcome of a deputation which waited on Mr. Theodore in the North when he was Premier. It was pointed out that many of the small farmers were paying a fair amount of money in land taxation, and that is why the concession was granted.

There is only one other matter that I would like to refer to, and that is the question of making the railways pay. The hon. member for Nundah said he [4 p.m.] would make them pay by increasing settlement along the lines of railway. I have a list here of sections which neither paid working expenses nor interest in 1925. I would challenge any member of the Opposition to show how this Government can place more people on the land along these railways—

Some sections which neither paid working expenses nor interest, 1925—

Southern—

| | Loss. |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Northgate Junction to Sandgate... | 24.896 |
| Eagle Junction to Pinkenba ... | 20.821 |
| Roma to Injune ... | 23.303 |
| Oakey to Cooyar ... | 11.580 |
| Oakey to Cecil Plains ... | 12.162 |
| Miles to Juandah ... | 14.734 |
| Manly to Cleveland ... | 20.285 |
| Mayne Junction to Dayboro ... | 27.282 |
| Wulkuraka to Yarraman ... | 37.682 |
| Dalby to Tara ... | 11.423 |

They are all total losses for last year, and I challenge hon. members opposite to show how we can place more settlers along those particular lines. That is where the loss on the railways takes place. Then, again, those losses have taken place on sections not built by this Government. The redeeming feature in connection with the railways to-day is the North Coast line, which was completed by this Government, although the Opposition, when they were in power, could have built that railway without having to pay the heavy interest we are paying. They could have built it before the war, when money was available at a low rate of interest, but they did not do so. If anyone examines the railway figures for last year, he will find that the whole loss on railways in Queensland is on lines which the Opposition built when in power, and we have to bear the burden and be responsible for the loss.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL (*Toombul*): I have listened with interest to the exposition of the Government's case, but I am sorry that the speakers on the other side have failed to give us any indication of what they intend doing during the session. I was particularly interested in listening to the Premier. I thought that he might have got away from abusing this side, and given us some exposition of the policy Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, but he wasted the time of the House in replying to very frivolous points. (Government laughter.) That may be the practice in this House; I confess that I am a new man.

The PREMIER: I replied to your leader—that is my job.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I was hoping that hon. members opposite would have mentioned some of the leading features of the policy speech and given us an indication of their intentions. It leaves the Opposition in the

Mr. H. M. Russell.]

position that we have to hazard a guess as to what the Government will do in the coming session. The Premier said he would not live in the past, and that he was looking to the future. We can only imagine what the future of the Government will be by judging them by their past record—by their past deeds or misdeeds.

At 4.4 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Being a new member, I cannot say very much as to past happenings, still as a member of the general public I have formed an opinion as to the general attitude of the present party in power. I am afraid that, if we are to base our conclusions as to what will occur in the future on what has taken place in the past, we shall be landed in a very calamitous position.

The hon. member for Herbert, who has just spoken, has delivered a good speech from his point of view—I suppose for the purpose of inserting in "Hansard" some statements which he regards it as good tactics to have appearing there; but I cannot understand him when he says that the Government emancipated the farmer. I have yet to learn that the farmer needs any emancipation. I think that the farmer is able to emancipate himself, and that in many cases he has done so. It is entirely due to his own actions—by his co-operation long before the Government thought of establishing pools or going in for any of the other measures which I assume the hon. member has in mind when he talks about the emancipation of the farmer. He has been a long time successfully organised in co-operative business, and no one can imagine that the present Government are able to emancipate the farmer. They will, no doubt, endeavour to gull the farmer into the belief that they are responsible for his success, and there is no doubt that during the past year or so they have been successful in getting some amount of support from the primary producer; but I think that the farmer will live to rue the day when he supported this Government.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: There is every reason for saying that the increased fares and freights on the railways will be collected at the expense mainly of the man on the land. The increase in railway taxation this year of £700,000 we may safely assume particularly hits the farmer. I was hoping that the Premier, as Treasurer, might have dealt to some extent with the financial policy of the Government.

Mr. RIORDAN: Give us something about the financial policy of the tramways.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: If the Government conducted their affairs as well as the Tramway Trust did, the affairs of the State would not be in such a deplorable mess as they are to-day.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: It is true that last year the tramways showed a loss of £26,000, but they paid £15,000 to sinking fund and £14,000 to amortisation, so that practically speaking they made a profit of £3,000. That was done, moreover, on an enhanced capitalisation, and Government affairs cannot bear comparison with that result.

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I was saying that the Premier might have given us something about the financial policy of the Government. Finance is dealt with very fairly in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, which, whilst admitting that there has been a deficit of over £500,000, puts it down to the loss in the railway revenue. The inference is that, if the drought had not occurred in the last few months in Western Queensland, particularly in the Central-West, the Government would have squared the ledger, and the loss in railway revenue would not have been so great as has been the case. But I find that the estimated railway revenue for the period was £150,000 more than the amount actually realised, so that the deficit was therefore really not to a very great extent due to the deficiency in the amount realised, and the shortage of £150,000 cannot be put down to the drought, because, even if there had been no drought, the revenue would have been short of the estimate. On the other hand, we find that the railway expenditure was £620,000 more than the estimate, which increased the deficit on the railways up to nearly the £2,000,000 mark. The deficit on the railways is caused by the excess of expenditure, and not by the decrease in the revenue. The figures show that the Government are dragging out of the taxpayers an enormous amount of money by way of excessive taxation to cover up the deficits on the railways, the State enterprises, and their wild-cat schemes. During the past year the State has derived the largest amount of revenue and has expended the largest amount of money in the history of Queensland. The Government have drawn from the taxpayers over £15,000,000, which constitutes a record. It shows that the State must be fairly prosperous, and that the drought, of which mention has been made, has had very little effect on the buoyancy of the revenue.

It seems to me that the Government will have to guard against the enormous deficit that will occur during the current year. The full effect of the drought will not be felt for some months yet, and it seems that the Government will be faced with a very heavy deficit at the end of the present financial year. It is time the Government paused to consider where we are drifting. Our expenditure is leaping up year by year, and no real effort has been made to check it. It is all very well for the Government to say that they cannot sack men, and that they cannot reduce them. Nobody desires that; but we do say that the condition of the finances is so serious that some special investigation should be made to find out if we cannot make some adjustment, bearing in mind that during the past year we had the largest amount of revenue in the history of Queensland, and that during the coming year it seems fairly certain the revenue will fall short of that received in the past year, and that the Government will be in a pretty big financial mess at the end of the current year. We are the highest-taxed State in the Commonwealth. That is not a very enviable position to be in. Admitting that Queensland is a costly State to administer, surely there is some way of cutting down the present rate of expenditure. We cannot go on taxing the same people year after year, especially as our taxable incomes are decreasing and will decrease this year. The Government must look at the matter seriously, and I am surprised that no reference has been made to the subject to show the

House that the Government are in earnest and desire to curtail expenditure, and desire in some way to reduce this terrible burden of taxation, which bears so heavily on the sparse population of this State.

Mr. HYNES: Tell us how you would do it.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: If I were a member of the Government I could do it. We have so many financial geniuses on the other side that I am surprised that they have not found a remedy.

Further taxation measures are foreshadowed in the Speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor. I suppose they are in anticipation of the loss of revenue which will occur by the withdrawal by the Federal Government of the per capita payments. We must all sympathise with the Treasurer in this regard. There is no doubt that the withdrawal of the per capita payments will make very serious inroads into the already depleted Treasury of Queensland. Personally, I do not approve of the withdrawal of the per capita payments by the Commonwealth Government. In order to make up the deficiency in revenue, which will amount to at least £238,000, the Government will have to inflict very heavy taxation measures on the community. I submit that we cannot stand any further taxation, and therefore every effort should be made to prevail upon the Commonwealth Government to defer putting into operation their threat to withdraw the per capita payments. I do not intend to go into the merits or demerits of the matter, but will simply content myself in saying that, as a matter of business, we should insist on the per capita payment being retained for the reason that we cannot inflict a further £250,000 taxation on the taxpayers of Queensland. I trust that the Government will be successful in their attempt at persuading the Commonwealth Government to drop this measure. It has been mooted already that the matter has been deferred in the Commonwealth Parliament and will not come on for consideration again until the summer session. That should give the Treasurers of the various States an opportunity to get together in order to solve this question. While from a theoretical point of view it might be desirable to separate State and Federal finance, nevertheless, as a State which is dependent on these payments we cannot afford, as a matter of business, to let those payments go. I am on this occasion, therefore, quite in accord with the Premier, and hope that it will not be necessary for him to inflict further taxation.

The PREMIER: You are a business man. Make some suggestion as to how I can reduce expenditure, and I will listen to you.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I suggest that the Premier should appoint a small commission composed of members from both sides of the House to confer with him. It should not be a party question. This matter is a serious one. Questions of finance the world over are dealt with by special committees who go into the matter of estimates, and there is no reason why we should not get together and formulate some scheme to drag Queensland out of the financial morass that she has got into.

The PREMIER: I can save interest by the stoppage of railway construction in the whole of the State, but, if I did so, I would have every member of the Government and Opposi-

sition parties waiting on me at my office and making representations for their continuance.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The Premier has always been given the credit for being a man of backbone. Let him show that backbone now and reduce expenditure, and we will support him.

The Speech deals casually with railway administration. While we all deplore the present situation, I do not think any hon. member will say that it is possible to run the railways at a large profit. Still, there should be some way of reducing the enormous gap between revenue and expenditure. It seems to me that we should remove the administration of the railways from political control.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: There is something radically wrong with our railways when we find that, despite the fact that our population in the last ten years has increased by 23 per cent., the railways are only carrying an increased tonnage of 2 per cent. That shows conclusively that production in Queensland is gradually diminishing. We have figures to show that land settlement is on the wane, that development is decreasing, and our railways, instead of carrying more tonnage relative to the increased population, are practically stagnating. The question is: How can we get more revenue from the railways? The only remedy is more production. The railways must be run to their full capacity to enable them to pay. The question that arises is: What shall we do with our surplus production? The Commonwealth Government are devising a scheme to market our surplus production in the various markets of the world. I hope that this matter will come up for discussion before very long, because it is the bounden duty of the Commonwealth Government to find markets for our surplus production. The State Government might also take into consideration the question of solving the problem of marketing our surplus production. The point remains that without increased tonnage there is not the slightest hope of our railways paying.

We have to encourage in every possible degree the development of our agricultural and pastoral lands. The duty, therefore, falls upon us of finding markets for their products. Figures show that land occupation is on the decrease. That is a position which must be retrieved.

We find to-day that, owing to the stagnation of our country industries, there is a continuous drift to the cities of men looking for work, and it is a travesty on our wealth and prosperity to find thousands of men out of work in all the large centres of Queensland. In view of the new migration agreement, whereby Queensland will be absorbing a considerable number of men monthly, an endeavour should be made to develop our country industries and to find a market for their products. I give the present Government credit for endeavouring to encourage settlement, but they have not been very successful. We must use every effort to place these men on the land, and, having done that, we should not be satisfied merely to let them stay there, but should render them every assistance to get markets for their surplus productions. I strongly advise the Government to get rid of their State enterprises, and, rather than amend the Constitution to provide for an additional Minister,

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they might do away with the portfolio of Minister of State Enterprises. It seems to me that those enterprises are a source of leakage, and are costing the Government fabulous sums of money, so the sooner the Government dispense with them the better it will be for the community and the Government themselves, and it will not then be necessary to appoint another Minister. I do not say that in a personal way, because the present Assistant Minister is a personal friend of mine, and a man whom I highly regard.

I would like to say a word in favour of the returned soldiers who are settled on our various outside areas. I see no reference to the matter in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. In many cases those men have been dumped on land entirely unsuited to the purposes for which they were placed on the land. The losses have been enormous. The Government have lost money, and the men have done no good, and are now seeking employment elsewhere, and, generally speaking, are in a very miserable plight. I hope something will be done to ameliorate the lot of those unfortunate men, who deserve the very best at our hands.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I see no reference to that matter in the policy outlined for the year by the Government. Evidently they are not sympathetic. A lot could be done. Where men are endeavouring to eke out an existence on hungry, unsuitable land they should be transferred to better country and given a decent chance to make a living. We all know that the land at the Beerburum Soldiers' Settlement is quite unsuitable, that it is hungry, and hardly fit to pasture one handi-coot to the acre. Those men should be transferred to more suitable country.

The fact struck me when I first entered this Chamber that hon. members opposite appeared as though they had returned from a victorious campaign, very self-satisfied, and appearing in the guise of conquerors who had routed the enemy, and that we on the Opposition benches appeared as very small fry. We recognise that we are very helpless, although we do claim to have the major portion of the brains of the House. When one looks round and observes the complacent countenances of our friends on the other side, one rather wonders whether they really believe that they represent the people. Since I have been here I have heard a lot about them representing the people, and that they were returned by a majority; but when you analyse the figures you will find that members on this side of the House represent just as many electors as they do, yet we are in a hopeless minority so far as members are concerned. We have twenty-nine members on this side of the House, as against their forty-three, yet we represent an equal number of electors. There is something radically wrong with our electoral system, and it is about time the electoral laws of this State were revised, and we had a periodic redistribution of seats somewhat on similar lines to the system followed in regard to the Commonwealth electorates. It is many years since there was a redistribution of seats in this State, and in justice to the community, and in order to prove that we are a democratic community, the electorates should be resubdivided. Many years ago the party opposite fought very hard for the principle of one

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man one vote. That privilege was granted, I think, under the Morgan-Kidston Government. Having granted the privilege, we should go a step further and see that one vote has one value, which is the natural corollary to the principle of one man one vote. To-day we find such anomalies as this—that the electorate of Flinders, with under 3,000 electors, returns one member to Parliament, and therefore has the same representation as the electorate of Logan, which has 10,000 electors. The position is absurd, and something should be done to provide for greater equality of representation. In country areas the people are entitled to slightly greater representation than those in the thickly-settled town centres, and most of us agree that the quota for country electorates should be slightly lower than the quota for city electorates. I feel quite satisfied that if the electorates were resubdivided in the proper way, the present disparity of members in Parliament would not be what it is. We would have an Opposition of greater strength and better able to keep the Government up to the mark, and one that would not allow the Government to ride rough-shod over members on this side. One member pointed out a while ago that when the last resubdivision was taking place, in order to make certain seats safe for Labour, huge tentacles were spread out from certain centres to grab Labour pockets and include them in safe Labour seats, and also to include anti-Labour pockets in safe anti-Labour seats. One has only to look at Rosewood and the Herbert to understand what I refer to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You have a very nice pocket borough.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I have a total of over 8,000 electors, yet I have only the same voting power as one hon. member from the North, who represents only 3,000 electors. That position should be rectified, and I hope the Government will have the decency this session to bring in a new Electoral Districts Bill, which will provide for a periodic readjustment of the boundaries of the various electorates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you want a redistribution?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I suggest that the electorates should be resubdivided on the Federal basis. The Government should appoint a commission consisting of the Chief Electoral Officer and other officials quite free from the dominance of the present party in power. All we want is a fair deal. We will not get that from the Government, I am afraid.

The PREMIER: We want your definition of what "a fair deal" means.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I hope, during the session, that the Government will make some serious effort to deal with the matter of reafforestation. Last year the net revenue derived by the Forestry Department, exclusive of sawmills, was £202,000, and little or nothing has been done so far to grapple with this problem seriously. While the Forestry Department is doing its best with the limited funds at its disposal it cannot be expected to put reafforestation on a proper basis unless extra money is granted. The

Director of Forests has stated that [4.30 p.m.] he will want at least £100,000 per annum in order to deal effectively with reafforestation. We have had the prediction that in ten years the whole of the

soft woods of Queensland will have been cut out, but no provision is being made for future supplies. Unless a start is made in the matter of the reforestation of some of our lands, Queensland will be in a very sad plight in a few years. As a matter of fact, the market here is flooded with importations of Oregon pine from America. Every boat which comes in from the west coast of America brings a cargo of Oregon pine to Queensland. The result is that the value of pine will gradually drop, and the Government will have to reduce the royalties and stumpage on timber, as they will not be able to extort such enormous royalties as they are doing to-day. The effect of these high royalties—and the Government have got every copper out of the business—has been to increase the price of building to such an extent that it is practically impossible for a man of moderate means to build his own house. It would not be so bad if the money had been earmarked to provide for reforestation or to be applied towards the reduction of our public debt, instead of the money probably having gone into the consolidated revenue. The Government have been selling the furniture to pay the rent—selling their assets. That system should be stopped, and all the money derived from the Forestry Department should be earmarked, firstly, for reforestation, and any surplus derived from the sale of the asset should be applied towards the reduction of our public debt, and not put into consolidated revenue. I hope that the Government will see their way clear to take this matter up seriously this session.

The proposed amendment of the Constitution, I take it, refers to the appointment of another Minister of the Crown. I may be wrong in my surmise, because, so far, no member of the Government has explained the matter to the House. In view of the statements of hon. members that it is the intention of the Government to provide an extra salaried Minister, we should protest against this unnecessary expenditure. I cannot see that it is necessary to have ten fully-paid Ministers conducting the affairs of this State. There is no reason why some of the portfolios should not be amalgamated. Personally I have no objection to Ministers drawing more salary. If we have a competent man looking after a department he is worth his money, but I can see no necessity for the appointment of an extra Minister; the departments should be amalgamated. Prior to federation we had eight Ministers of the Crown in Queensland, one in the Upper House, and, in addition to the present departments now administered, they had then also the Post and Telegraph, Customs, and Defence Departments. Those departments have been jettisoned, and we have fewer departments to be administered to-day, so that the appointment of an extra Minister is absolutely unnecessary. I do not see why the affairs of this State cannot be managed with the present number of Ministers, and I think the Opposition will object to the amendment of the Constitution in that direction. I shall also vote against the retention of the State enterprises.

I wish to say in conclusion that the Government have offered us no indication that they propose to end the extravagance which is going on to-day. Safe in the security of a majority of fourteen, they think that they are doing the right thing in allowing things to drift on as they are doing.

The PREMIER: Will you give us a concrete proposal?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: We are not the Government. It is up to the Government to find the remedy, and the Opposition are prepared to help them in every proposal put before the House which will have a good effect. But this programme will not do it. The bulk of it deals with extra taxation of the people, and makes no mention of a reduction of public expenditure.

It has been mooted that it is the intention of the Government to increase the salaries of members of Parliament. I see no justification for that. While the State is in such a deplorable condition, we should hesitate long before we embark on any fresh expenditure in that respect, and I for one strongly object to it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I have listened with interest to the criticism of the hon. member for Toombul of the Labour party's policy. We looked to hear something from the new member for Toombul, who is hailed as a "White Hope" by the Opposition. Dealing with the Government policy in regard to the increase of 10 per cent. in railway freights and fares, the hon. member forgot to mention anything of his own management of matters connected with the Brisbane Tramway Trust or under the Greater Brisbane Council. Now, members of the Opposition, amongst them the hon. member for Toombul, say that this Government should set about making the railways pay. The Premier this morning pointed out that there were two ways in which this party could make the railways pay—either by an increase in fares and freights or by a reduction in wages—and that the Government were not prepared to adopt either of the methods, but had set out to try to reduce the deficit by increasing fares and freights by 10 per cent. The Greater Brisbane Council—which has an area of only about 10 square miles to attend to—(Opposition laughter)—told the people in one area that they were going to reduce their rates to 9d. in the £, but they increased the valuations by 100 per cent. That is the method of camouflage adopted by those who are opposed to Labour. This party, since it has been in office, has had to depend on officials brought up in the environment of old conservative government—officials who die hard, and who found it difficult to adopt and carry out Labour's policy.

The Labour party has placed some very fine pieces of legislation on the statute-book of Queensland, but that is not the end-all of this party. We are not going to live on what we have already accomplished, but we now set out before we again go to the country to put into operation the policy outlined by the Premier at Cairns. The people of Queensland realise that this party has been honest ever since its return to power in Queensland. Can the Opposition point to any one matter of importance mentioned in the previous Premier's policy speech and say that the matters mentioned therein have not been placed on the statute-book? On my return from the Burke electorate and residing in the electorate of Toombul, I became aware that, owing to the opposition by this party becoming pretty keen against the return of the hon. member for Toombul, the Greater Brisbane Council decided to make certain improvements down

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on the Hamilton flats in order to gull the people. They spent public money on that work up to the day of the poll, and on the Monday morning the work was stopped. That is what they called political honesty. If that is the class of political honesty that the people of Queensland will receive from that clique over there, then God save the people of Queensland from political honesty!

Mr. KELSO: What about Willowburn?

Mr. RIORDAN: There is a lot of you gentlemen over there who ought to be up in Willowburn. (Laughter.) Hon. members opposite say that the Government have not felt the effects of the drought up to date. It shows how little they know about the drought. During the recent election campaign I visited my electorate, travelling overland from Brisbane to the Gulf. I will undertake to track a grasshopper from Julia Creek down to the Leichhardt River, the country is so bare.

Let me give an illustration of a person brought up in the environment of an office, trained by passing examination after examination, living here continually administering Acts of Parliament, and having no practical knowledge of outside business. These people who say that the drought so far has not affected Queensland do not know what they are talking about. Take the visit of the Under Secretary for Public Lands, a man who should know his business and should have a better practical knowledge of the department that he is administering. He says that he paid a visit to what was called the drought-stricken areas of Queensland and that things were not too bad there. If things are not too bad there, and Mr. Melville and other people say that the drought is not affecting Queensland yet, will they please explain to me the reasons why the people around the Central-West and North-West are removing what stock they can to agistment country, and paying so much a thousand for the agistment of sheep? The rolling-stock on the railways is taxed to its fullest carrying capacity to carry fodder for the starving stock. Notwithstanding all these things, we have people attempting to prove that there is no drought on! If hon. members opposite would move away from the city during the recess, and make themselves conversant with the conditions obtaining in Queensland, they would then be in a position to speak here of the needs of the country from first-hand information. I visited the Eacham electorate in January last during the by-election. The leader of the Opposition and many of his followers also visited that electorate to assist the Opposition candidate, Mr. Heale. The members of that party had their eyes opened. They were visiting North Queensland for the first time, and were not aware that such a prosperous area opened for exploitation by the Government existed. They must have realised that nature had not planted the crops there, nor had nature done the work that they saw. They must also have realised that the policy of the Government in developing areas outside of the various cities was responsible for the development they saw taking place not only in North Queensland but right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, despite all that the "Jeremiahs" over there might say.

The closure of the Mungana mines is regrettable on all hands, but it must be recognised that the Government cannot place metal in the ground, and that when the

metal has petered out in a mine, then the mine itself is of no further use to the community. That is so with all mining towns. It has happened previously on the Palmer and at Croydon. Croydon, that was once a prosperous town, carrying a population of 13,000 people, has to-day a population of a couple of hundred people. Labour was not in power in Queensland when Croydon closed down, yet the party in power at the time could not keep Croydon going. They could not produce gold from the ground if gold did not exist, any more than this Government can produce silver and lead from the Chillagoe mines if they do not exist there. When the Government spoke of purchasing silver and lead mines, I did not think that they would recover from them sufficient silver and lead to make a dozen half-crowns, but the discovery of a new lode in the Mungana mines enabled the Chillagoe smelters to be worked for from two to three years. The closing down of these mines will mean that the prospector, if he gets the assistance he should get—and he has been receiving it from the present sympathetic Mines Department—will branch out, and new discoveries will possibly be found which will keep Chillagoe going. Although the Government have closed down the mines at Mungana, there is no suggestion that they purpose closing down the Chillagoe smelters. If sufficient ore is produced, the smelters will be kept going to treat that ore. In 1915, when the present Government were returned to power, the then Chillagoe company had a short time previously approached the Denham Government for a loan of £30,000 to enable them to carry on operations at Chillagoe. Contrast the treatment of North Queensland by the present Government to the treatment received from the crowd on the Opposition benches! At the time there was a war on, Chillagoe, which produced principally copper, was dependent on the smelters to keep the population there, but the Government of the day allowed the town to languish for the sake of a loan of £30,000.

Had the Denham Government then been sympathetic towards North Queensland, the Chillagoe enterprise would have enjoyed the price of £112 per ton which was paid for copper during the whole period of the war. As soon as the war ceased, the bottom fell out of the metal market. When we had abolished the Upper House we were successful in getting Chillagoe going again, and the Government have kept the field going ever since. I hope some new discoveries will be made that will keep Chillagoe going for a long time. I am fairly optimistic in this regard, because, knowing the miner, and being sure that the Department of Mines will carry out a systematic prospecting scheme, I am fairly confident that new discoveries will be made in and around the Etheridge, Robertson, Percyville, and very likely the Chillagoe districts, which will enable the smelters to carry on for years to come. Owing to the crudeness of the plant at Chillagoe, most of the by-products have been lost, and perhaps the Government have been too timid in listening to the criticism of the metropolitan press, metropolitan members, and people with stunted visions. Had the Government started out and brought the Chillagoe plant up to date, so saving the by-products, probably Chillagoe would be holding its own to-day.

The Opposition speak of the Government's failures in State enterprises, but take the

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undertaking of three or four companies at Cloncurry, conducted on good old private enterprise lines. There is now no market for the ore produced in the Cloncurry district, and those operating there cannot produce at the price offered. The leader of the Opposition on his Northern tour stated that he was prepared to continue Chillagoe and to hand the mines and the smelters over to the men there. At that time Chillagoe was losing somewhere from £30,000 to £40,000 a year. That is what the hon. gentleman and his party were prepared to do for Chillagoe!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They made no provision for financing the mines.

Mr. RIORDAN: Oh, no; that was a secondary consideration. They would have kept that money concealed in and around the metropolitan area to do what the Greater Brisbane Council did during the late State elections—stand by their mate when the opposition got a bit strong, do a bit of work to tide him over the elections, and then leave the work unfinished, thus wasting public money. Inspect the operations of the council and see what they have done.

To-day the Government are proceeding with the Mount Isa mines, and a little work is being carried out at Lawn Hills. Members of the Opposition voiced a protest against the construction of the Mount Isa Railway because it was going outside the city boundary. I consider that Mount Isa will soon give a big boost to the mining industry of this State, and I hope that in the very near future mining will be carried out on a large scale at Lawn Hills and in the Burke district.

Returning from the Gulf after nomination day, I was surprised to see a number of sheep making for the Gulf country for agistment. Since I have been in this House I have repeatedly brought before the Department of Public Lands the necessity, when throwing open land for closer settlement, of giving the incoming selector a chance to get on his feet, and I have pointed out that for the first period the Government should not fix a high rental, which is a bad policy in regard to land settlement. Let the first period be reduced to five years, if they are not prepared to grant a low rental for the full period of ten years; but allow the small selector to get settled on the land before charging him a high rental for his land. That would give him an opportunity to get his land fenced in and to erect his home, and it would assist to keep him out of the hands of men like the hon. member for Nundah, who generally get hold of him and charge him a high rate of interest, with the result that the selector is struggling for years paying interest and paying a high rental, and is not able to pay income tax, whereas, if he got the first term at a low rental, he would become an income tax payer in a very short time. The small man is one of the best producers, because he makes the land pay the State its full economic value. He is the best class of settler because he takes his wife and family there, and he works his place with two or three men, whereas the big holding, on which you could settle ten or fifteen families, is to-day employing a couple of white men and twenty or thirty blacks. The Closer Settlement Act is a very good one for development. Droughts will come and go no matter what Government may be in office, but in the Gulf country they have never experi-

enced a drought. There are large quantities of grass down there at present, but there is a difficulty in getting sheep there, as the stock routes are closed owing to no water being available along the routes.

I was very pleased to see in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that we are to have a Water Bill, which is badly needed in Western Queensland. I hope the Irrigation and Water Supply Department will see that provision is made for water along the stock routes so that stock may be able to travel at all periods. If that were done, without the expense of building a railway a man would be able to travel his stock to grass country. Take the Barkly Tableland. To-day there is plenty of grass on the Tableland and plenty of grass in the Gulf country towards Camooweal, and there is plenty of water in the Gregory River and other magnificent streams flowing up there. We have been fortunate in regard to our land settlement policy. It is only human nature, whether you be a large or small holder, to get the most out of it, and it is a pity that no provision has been made to compel settlers to make some provision for a time like the present.

In connection with the dairying industry, the settlers have silos erected on their farms, where they store the food to be used to feed their stock in drought periods. I think that the grasses in the Gulf and

[5 p.m.] Western districts could be stored in silos constructed on the selections. We could well have silos constructed on each selection so as to make provision for feed when seasons are bad. This would tide the small selector over a dry period. If we do not get rain by September, it will be good-bye to the pastoral industry in North-western and Central Queensland. Hon. members who have visited those parts will agree with me that there is about as much grass in this Chamber as there is along the stock routes and off the stock routes in that part of the country. The position is a serious one. Several requests have been made that the Secretary for Public Lands should pay a visit to the drought-stricken area. Personally, I do not think that the visit of the Minister to the drought-stricken areas would improve the position or make a blade of grass more grow there. The drought is on us, and the Secretary for Public Lands must realise the position, despite the report which has emanated from the Under Secretary, Mr. Melville. Mr. Melville's report will not hold water, as I pointed out previously. The effect of building a railway to shift starving stock, without making some provision for settlement along the railway, is not going to get the people who have starving stock anywhere, because the traffic from starving stock alone would not pay for axle grease. The money required for a railway to make provision for removing stock when a drought takes place, say, once in ten or fifteen years, would be better spent in constructing pit silos and making provision for the storage of food to feed stock without having to remove them during the dry period.

The Railway Department has come in for a good deal of criticism in regard to the moving of stock, and I suppose I have given my share of criticism both of the Minister and the Commissioner; but there is also their side of the question to be considered. They have been shifting large numbers of sheep and carrying a huge quantity of feed, and

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no man on the land shifts his stock until he is absolutely compelled to do so. In drought areas, when one owner is compelled to shift stock, then practically the whole of the stockowners are compelled to shift it, with the result that they rush their orders into the Railway Department, everyone expecting to get a train on the same day, and making no allowance for the exceptional circumstances and the heavy traffic which is being carried by the Railway Department. Personally, I think the department has handled the position remarkably well.

I know that when representations were made by the Western pastoral members in regard to the removal of starving stock and the carriage of fodder, the Commissioner immediately sent three new engines from here and five engines from Chillagoe, and also sent up a man from Brisbane to Townsville to relieve the position. We get wires at times from our electors in regard to missing fodder which has been sent along for starving stock. Some people have complained that consignments have been on the road for a month. I brought a case of that kind to the Commissioner, and it was found that the fodder had been railed from Townsville and delivered and signed for practically 300 miles from Townsville three days afterwards. There could be nothing much faster than that unless you ran an express train for that individual, neglecting everybody else. We all magnify our own grievance, but I know that a majority of the fair-thinking selectors in Western Queensland realise that the Government have been doing the best for them; and even when the increase in fares and freights was brought about, the Government did not stick it on to those who had the misfortune to be facing drought. In spite of what members opposite say of the Government's hostility to the pastoral industry, out of twenty-one pastoral seats won at the last election, five pastoral members were returned unopposed, and no great industries were being carried on in those districts at the time. The shearing industry was practically closed down. Hon. members opposite had the ball at their toes, but they were not game to kick it because they knew they would get their reply from men who have gone on to selections in Western Queensland.

MR. CLAYTON: What do you think about increases in parliamentary salaries?

MR. RIORDAN: Any increase which is passed by this Government has my whole-hearted support, and I would not be as big a hypocrite as some gentlemen on the opposite side whose grasping claws I now see stretching out to take anything coming from the Government, and whose inconsistency will allow them to take it. If they had any principle, they would refuse it. That is the attitude of the "scab" on the job. I have always stood for high wages, and when an increase is going I am not going to be one to "scab" on my mates. (Laughter.) Anyhow, if some of the members on the other side are worth £500 a year, I am worth £5,000. (Renewed laughter.) If they believe in equal pay for equal work, why should members in New South Wales get £875 a year, and members of the Federal House of Representatives and Senate £1,000 a year, when in some other States they get only £400 or £500? No uniformity! Why not have a uniform parliamentary wage?

Then take the position with regard to my own electorate. What does it cost me to visit

the people living at Burketown, Lawn Hills, and Normanton? Have they not just as much right to see me as often as members in metropolitan areas have to see their constituents? Am I going to dive into my pocket and be in debt year after year because I desire to visit my constituents and give them a fair go? I have been honest in my job. I have visited my electorate every year, and I will take any member along, if he is prepared to pay my expenses or half of them—(laughter)—so that he can see what it will cost for transport. Where you have to take a motor-car off the rank you will find the railway pass is absolutely no good to you. The only thing that will get you through there is 2s. a mile car hire. If you consider 270 miles from Cloncurry to Normanton, 160 miles from Normanton to Burketown, and 220 miles back from Burketown to Dobbyn, you realise what the cost of travelling means. If an Under Secretary responsible to this Parliament is worth £1,000 a year, with automatic increases, a liberal allowance of 30s. a day and all expenses while travelling, then are not members of Parliament entitled to some consideration? Should I be put to the expense of paying my own expenses? In and around the metropolis there are a greater number of calls, but hon. members in those parts do not have the same amount of travelling expenses. The railway pass is no good on the trams unless you are a member of the Greater Brisbane Council. The pass cannot be used on the trams by a politician, although it can be used in Sydney. The increase in salary cannot come too soon for me, and I have sufficient confidence in my electors to know that, when I go before them again, they will say that we did not go far enough and should have gone also for a travelling allowance.

Coming back to the question of the construction of railways, this morning I heard the ill-fated "Douglas Mawson" mentioned, and I listened to criticism levelled against the Government in losing £33,000 in that matter. The action of the Opposition is consistent with their action of the past. The "Douglas Mawson" was purchased at a time when it was necessary to relieve the position in the Gulf country, because a shipping company had taken off their boat without giving any notice whatever. The Government came to the rescue, and saved the people of the Gulf from starving. The Government purchased the boat for £16,000, and lost somewhere about £7,000 to £8,000 a year on it in their efforts to maintain a handful of people in that country. If the policy of the Opposition had been put into operation, the Gulf would have been practically deserted to-day. As soon as we found that a company was prepared to do the job cheaper, we paid a subsidy of £5,000 a year. That was paid to the Burke Shipping Company for carrying on that business. Mr. Burke said he would approach the Federal Government to see if they were prepared to extend a subsidy on Commonwealth mail, and he intimated that whatever he received from the Federal Government would be deducted from the subsidy paid by the State Government, but his limit was £5,000 subsidy for eleven trips a year to the Gulf. The service has been a good one, carried out faithfully by the company. Immediately the Commonwealth Government got the opportunity, they cut out the £1,000 a year subsidy on mail to the Gulf, thus reducing the subsidy to the shipping company to £4,000,

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and to whom this Government had promised a subsidy of £5,000. That is the sympathetic consideration that the development of all outside centres receives from either National or so-called Progressive parties. All that those parties can see in regard to those centres is their own narrow environment, and the methods by which they can reach out to benefit themselves mercenarily. That is the reason why hon. members opposite continue to occupy the Opposition benches. The policy of this party has not been interfered with by any section of the community to the same extent as interference has come to the party opposite. We all remember the time when the state of the parties was fairly balanced, and agents of the party opposite were running about with money in order to buy over an hon. member of the Government party. They went into their place, and as a result will remain in that place for a long while, until they will eventually disappear altogether. The people of Queensland have had a wide experience of Nationalism. By some miracle at the last Federal election they received a majority in Queensland, but that majority will be only a short-lived one. To-day they are trying to raise a catch cry against this Government on the big national question that was raised by the hon. member for Nundah.

Mr. KELSO: The Federal elections were not gerrymandered.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member is a Jeremiah: I do not know about gerrymandering. (Laughter.)

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

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 5.17 p.m.