

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 19 AUGUST 1926

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

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. William John Wellington, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Charters Towers.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAY STATISTICS IN RE CARRIAGE OF STARVING STOCK AND FODDER FOR STARVING STOCK.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*), for Mr. Bedford (*Warrego*), asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What are the figures of starving stock and fodder for starving stock carried on the State railways from 1st January to 30th June, 1926?”

“2. What is the estimate of figures under the same headings for July, 1926?”

“3. What concessions on normal rates do the rates charged represent?”

“4. Will the Minister supply a schedule of mileage over which starving stock were carried?”

“5. During the period, January to June, what was the train mileage?”

“6. What was the train mileage for July?”

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

“1 to 6. During the seven months ended July, 1926, 2,011,620 sheep, 17,998 cattle, and 220 horses (approximately) were carried to relief country. Seventy-three thousand two hundred and seventy-five tons of fodder were conveyed to starving stock. The rebate is now 27.27 per cent. on ordinary rates. I submit details of mileages, which show that starving stock have been carried 1,336 miles from station to station. The train mileage for the six months (1st January, 1926, to 30th June, 1926) was 6,311,791, and for July, 1,214,741 (approximate).

Mileages Starving Sheep have been Conveyed.

	Number of	
	Miles.	Sheep.
Julia Creek-Brooklands	1,192	5,612
Whitewood-Proston	1,077	2,800
Whitewood-Wallangarra	1,336	2,956
Glenstuart-Stanthorpe	990	3,356
Darr-Dalveen	1,027	2,256
Longreach-Gore	1,027	6,500
Yalleroi-Dirranbandi	1,159	7,310
Ifracombe-Charleville	1,290	8,666
Aramac-Karara	994	7,110
Longreach-Dirranbandi	1,239	26,800
Ifracombe-Dirranbandi	1,222	17,330
Dartmouth-Dalby	946	3,556
Morella-Muckadilla	1,208	2,156
Darr-Gore	1,046	3,000
Aramac-Goondiwindi	1,085	8,620
Longreach-Stanthorpe	1,021	7,910
Longreach-Jondaryan	952	5,390
Morella-Dirranbandi	1,279	6,310
Emerald-Dirranbandi	978	8,320
Aramac-Dirranbandi	1,215	3,000
Longreach-Goondiwindi	1,108	2,160
Morella-Wallangarra	1,087	4,160

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES RECEIVING NO BENEFIT UNDER BASIC WAGE ACT OF 1925.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Premier—

“How many male and female Government employees, respectively, on salaries between the basic wage and £500 per annum are receiving no benefit under the Basic Wage Act of 1925, the basic wage increases granted in pursuance of that Act being merged in automatic increases which were due under the existing salary scales prior to the operation of that Act?”

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

“The information is being obtained.”

SELECTION OF SCHOOL SITE, BILALLA TOWN (CALLIDE).

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

“Will he intervene in the apparent deadlock existing between his department and the Department of Public Instruction in the matter of providing a suitable school site at Bilalla town (Callide), where the site offered is considered by the Education Department as unsuitable, have enumerated reasons and appealed for another site in April last?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. T. Dunstan, *Gympie*) replied—

“There is no deadlock; negotiations between the two departments are proceeding.”

PICKETING ARRANGEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THREATENED TRAMWAY STRIKE.

Mr. KING (*Logan*), for Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*), asked the Premier—

“1. As in connection with the threatened strike of tramway employees, it is reported by the press that a system of picketing has been arranged for, has he taken steps to prevent interference with anyone pursuing lawful occupations or travelling on public thoroughfares?”

“2. It is most prejudicial to the public that there should be any hindrance of those who are working in accordance with the conditions of an industrial award?”

“3. Is he prepared to protect from insult or injury those who are?”

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

“1, 2, and 3. I am not prepared to answer questions based on a set of supposititious circumstances; nor would it help in the settlement of an industrial dispute by conciliatory methods for me to indicate at this stage what steps the Government would take to deal with a position of affairs and breaches of the law which exist only in the mind of the hon. member.”

REPORT BY PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION ON INGLEWOOD-TEXAS AND MILMERRAN-KOOROONGARRA RAILWAYS.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. In view of the announcement that the Public Works Commission will be

reporting on the proposed Inglewood-Texas Railway, about what date will the Commission visit this district in connection with this matter?

"2. Will the Government also instruct the Commission during their visit to that part of the State to report on the proposed Milmerran-Kooroongarra Railway?"

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

- "1. The matter is under consideration.
- "2. The suggestion will be considered."

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN RECEIPT OF SPECIAL TRAVELLING EXPENSES DURING RAILWAY STRIKE IN 1925.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*) asked the Premier—

"What members of Parliament were paid special expenses or allowances with respect to travelling during the railway strike in 1925, and the amount in each case?"

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

"Mr. D. Weir, £21; Mr. E. J. Llewelyn, £2 10s.—Total, £23 10s."

DELAY IN APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Premier—

"1. What is the usual procedure when a vacancy occurs in the Governorship of Queensland?"

"2. When did the late Governor's leave of absence expire?"

"3. What is the cause of the delay in filling the position?"

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

"1. The appointment is made by His Majesty the King. Prior to the issue of the Commission of Appointment, the name of the proposed appointee is communicated to this Government.

"2. 26th March, 1926.

"3. Cable advice in to-day's newspapers would indicate that official circles in Great Britain hold the view that there has been no undue delay in making such appointment; if there has been any undue delay this Government is totally unaware of the cause."

NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED AND INJURED ON QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS, 1923-1924.

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

"1. What number of people were killed and injured during the year ended 30th June, 1924?"

"2. Why was this information not available for publication in the official year book of the Commonwealth of Australia?"

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

"1 and 2. Fifteen killed. Number of injured not supplied for 1924 because of absence of uniform basis. See explanation I gave last year as reported in 'Hansard.' Figures were supplied for 1924-1925 on uniform basis."

CATTLE FREIGHTS ON QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*), without notice, asked the hon. member for Murilla—

"Is the Minister for Railways correct in stating that 'Cattle freights in Queensland are the lowest in the Commonwealth?'"

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) replied—

"No, as usual he is wrong. (Laughter.) The following figures obtained from the Railway Department, Queensland, and the Western Australian Government Railways goods rates book, dated 1st December, 1925, disclose that for 100 miles Queensland's charge for an eight-wheeled truck is £7 15s. 6d., Western Australia £7 10s. For 200 miles, Queensland, £13 11s. 3d.; Western Australia, £12 10s. For 500 miles, Queensland, £17 18s. 5d.; Western Australia, £17 10s.

"In Western Australia a rebate of 12½ per cent. is allowed from the above quotations on store cattle and sheep for fattening purposes and 25 per cent. if forwarded in trucks that would otherwise run empty. Consignors of all cattle consisting of ten or more trucks are allowed 10 per cent. rebate.

"These concessions are not obtainable in Queensland."

The SPEAKER: Order! It is a breach of privilege to ask a question of an hon. member for the purpose of enabling that hon. member to make a speech.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I desire to take advantage of Standing Order 150 and raise a question of privilege. Before I state my case I would like to quote from "May," at page 304.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: My case is that yesterday I asked a question of the Home Secretary, and I now desire to state that the Home Secretary deliberately evaded the question which I asked.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: The question of privilege is that the question that I asked has been evaded in this House, and I have facts to prove it.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not true.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I quite realise—

The SPEAKER: Order! No question of privilege is involved. I should like to point out to the hon. member for Enoggera that, whilst I have some control over the form in which questions are asked, I have no control over the replies which Ministers may make to them.

Mr. KERR: It is lowering the dignity of the House.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member has a grievance, he will have the opportunity of ventilating it on some other occasion.

Mr. KERR: It is impossible to get proper information from the Government in reply to questions.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): The most remarkable phenomenon I know in recent years is the picture of the Premier before and since the last election. Before the election in May last he toured Queensland assuring everyone that everything was "O.K.," that Queensland was on her best behaviour, and that the only thing that required to be done was the introduction of some more humanitarian legislation, and that otherwise he was delighted with everything. Queensland took him at his word and returned his party to power. We have now an extraordinary change. We see the hon. gentleman turning round and telling Queenslanders how they are misusing their powers, that they have to turn over a new leaf and make many and varied changes in their methods of conducting their businesses or otherwise he is going to deal with them. It rather reminds one of the gentleman who is courting a lady. He assures her that she is the most wonderful being and that everything she does is perfect, but immediately he has wed her the bridegroom hangs up his trousers and assures the bride that in future those trousers are the symbol of authority. (Laughter.) I am not going to accuse the Premier of having gone through that procedure—(renewed laughter)—but his actions then and now certainly remind one of it.

Speaking for myself, I would like to say that I entirely endorse the words of wisdom which the Premier is now doling out to Queensland. We have to strike out absolutely what he has said before and take him as the new-born Premier who realises his responsibilities and the responsibilities of Queensland. I am prepared to take him at that valuation. The Opposition will be only too delighted to assist him to exercise that control which we all consider is so highly essential. The Opposition will be prepared to assist him in his endeavour to bring about a satisfactory settlement in Queensland.

Since the opening of this session the Premier has made various statements, and I propose to express certain views in regard to them. He stated that certain people took more money out of commerce and industry than they were entitled to. That is perfectly true. The hon. gentleman must admit that for years past we have argued from this side of the House that that sort of thing exists, and that, while it exists, the economic situation of Queensland must be adversely affected. That is why we have advanced repeatedly the argument that we cannot get back to a sound economic footing until we adopt a system of payment by results whereby a man actually receives into his pocket the cash representing the relative amount of production that he is responsible for. The Premier agreed with that view in an abstract sense, and the inference is that every person in Queensland, including every employer, should be paid strictly in accordance with the result he produces. If, as the Premier suggests, every individual who does his whack should receive his full due, then it will be all the better for Queensland, and the State will quickly rid itself of the economic pressure that is making itself felt at the present time.

The hon. gentleman also stated that there was an excessive ostentatious display of

luxury on the part of those who regard themselves as the intelligentsia. I do not wish to be unkind, but it is remarkable that those who have reached financial affluence as a result of climbing on the backs of labour are those who show more ostentation of luxury than those who have been bred and born in so-called luxury. I do not know that there are so many of them in Queensland. It is those people to whom the Labour party have given fat salaries and good positions who are acting in the direction suggested by the Premier. I agree with him that it is not proper, it is not fit, and it is not indicative of intelligence for people to carry their bank balances on their backs, or in their pastime or sport. I remember the hon. member for Bowen referring to what took place in connection with dance nights and other things in the hotel opposite. Those things jarred on my nerves just as much as on the hon. member's. Such things impose a tremendous expense on the part of those who ought to know better, and it makes the task of Queensland a more difficult one. In that regard I am sure the Opposition welcome the remarks of the Premier, and will do all we can to support him in his desire.

He also said that Parliament only did what the people desired it to do. I think that is absolutely wrong. Parliament should do for the people what in its bigger and better intelligence is for their welfare, and not what the people want it to do.

The PREMIER: You say they should do it, but does Parliament do it?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No; that is where the whole trouble has been. Queensland has arrived at a stage to-day when it must tell the people what has to be done, and since the Premier has assumed the reins of power he has risen to the occasion. He is recognising that there is something bigger than party in Queensland, and, instead of doing what the people desire him to do, he is doing something which the people do not desire, but which they will eventually relish as being for their welfare. It might as well be said that the better parent is the one who does what the children ask him to do. We all know perfectly well that that is incorrect. Sometimes you have to do to your child or children things which may seem harsh at the moment, but we all realise in our mature years that certain actions of our parents were for our benefit. So it is here. We are assumed to be the replica or examples of the intelligence and commercial activities in Queensland. Let us live up to that, and instead of doing what the uninitiated and those more ignorant than ourselves would do, let us do what we think is for their benefit. If we do we shall get out of the mire we are in.

Mr. PEASE: You complained when we abolished the Upper House.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member said I complained; I did not.

Mr. PEASE: You are speaking for your party.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am speaking for myself, and not for the hon. member, as I would not care to associate myself with some of the remarks he has made in this House.

Mr. PEASE: Ditto, ditto.

Mr. Elphinstone.]

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Another statement that the Premier made was that, if the chairman and managers of companies put their feet on the office table, the office boy would soon be doing the same thing. There is a good deal in that, and I would remind him that, if a Premier uses a screen to hide a person while he is taking notes of an interview with an unsuspecting person in his office, other people will do the same thing. If the Government sink to the things that their predecessors have done in regard to the control of Queensland, then the Premier cannot complain if other people are doing the same thing. I make bold to say that much of the apathy and criminal neglect which is apparent in Queensland to-day is due to the standards which his predecessors in this House set. Look at some of the appointments that have been made outside of this House! They have been a disgrace to the country, and, no matter where one may travel, they are held up before us. I have no reason to believe that the Premier himself was a party to those things, but the effect of those appointments is apparent, and he is in consequence suffering at the present moment therefrom, and it is up to him to put things on an even keel.

Mr. POLLOCK: What appointments are you referring to?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There is no need to refer to them in detail. It certainly was not the appointment of the hon. gentleman, but there are many appointments upon which there is no need for me to dwell; they have been referred to by me in no unmeasured terms on previous occasions.

Mr. POLLOCK: Then there is need to dwell on them now.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have dwelt on them on previous occasions. I have on a previous occasion expressed disgust with regard to the appointment of Mr. Gillies to the Board of Trade and Arbitration. That is one of the appointments I allude to. I am prepared to repeat what I said on the occasions of those appointments, but there is no need for repetition.

Another point that the Premier made use of was that business men must see that their concerns are run economically and carefully managed if they are to expect the best results from their men. That is perfectly true. If you want to get the best out of your employees, you must give them a chance by efficient management. If there is inefficiency at the head, it passes through the whole edifice. But how does such advice from the Premier sound when we have such white elephants littering the financial pathway of Queensland in mismanaged State enterprises and other undertakings which the Government have delved into with such disastrous results? If the Premier had only applied those words of wisdom to his own party in days gone by, there would have been no need for him to apply them to the commercial community to-day. We all recognise that efficient management is necessary for the conduct of business. We appreciate the hon. gentleman's words, and only hope that he will give effect to them by applying them vigorously to his own State undertakings.

Another statement the Premier made use of was that posterity would get the benefit of what had been done during the past few years. What benefit is posterity going to

[*Mr. Elphinstone.*

receive from the legacies left by this Government?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I feel that the only legacy they are going to receive from this Government is a huge debt and a high rate of interest. Queensland in the future is going to suffer very considerably from the spendthrift methods of the Government. They have borrowed a tremendous sum of money, the returns from which have been comparatively poor, and have paid a high rate of interest upon it. I can only see a legacy of debt and high interest being passed on to posterity as compared with the valuable asset which the pioneers of this country handed down to us, which they by their self-sacrifice and hard work created, and which we by our short-sightedness and lack of vision have sacrificed so tremendously.

Another statement made by the Premier was that it is incorrect to say that the railways are politically controlled. I can only imagine the hon. gentleman must have had his tongue in his cheek when he made that statement. We know perfectly well that our railways have been politically controlled, and, instead of dwelling upon it and arguing whether that is so or not, let us get away from that political control and give our railways a chance. Appointments have been made to our railways of men who are relations and friends of hon. members opposite. Innumerable cases of that have come under my notice.

The PREMIER: I think you stress that too much. I have been trying to find out cases of that description and have been unsuccessful.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: All I can say is that it was fear as to the Premier's attitude which prevented a disclosure of the facts. I know of innumerable cases where men were side-tracked to make room for the nominees and relatives of hon. members opposite. (Government dissent).

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a general charge.

The PREMIER: I put the matter before the Under Secretaries the other day, asking them to supply me with the names of people who were put into departments on the recommendation of politicians.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This is a very important point. When the Under Secretaries realise that the Premier means what he says and can offer those men immunity from victimisation if they disclose the truth, then the hon. gentleman will get the truth.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Until they are satisfied that the Premier is absolutely in control of his office—which is not evident—that cannot be. I am not speaking personally or lightly. I was never more serious in my life. Once the hon. gentleman can demonstrate to Queensland and to the public servants that he is the man he poses as being to-day—and which I hope to God he is—then he will get the truth; but these men never know how soon it will be before somebody else is Premier, who might pounce down on the men who disclosed such information.

The PREMIER: I have asked them, and they were unable to show me where members of this party got jobs for their friends except in a few instances.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Let the hon. gentleman establish his authority. Once the Premier establishes his authority and shows the country that he is definitely in charge of his forty-two followers he will get that information. At the present moment those men are afraid. Every public servant to-day is afraid to open his mouth for fear of the axe that may come down and kill him and those dependent on him.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON: The hon. member is speaking under privilege. Do you make a definite charge against any man putting in a nominee?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will do that at some future time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do it now.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not at present furnished with the information. (Government laughter.) I stand up to what I say. (Government dissent.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: I find there is a good deal of patronage by heads of departments in recommending their friends for positions.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That may be so, but it does not get away from the fact that political interference in the conduct of our railways is one of the reasons for the existing condition of affairs.

Another statement made by the Premier was that until development took place on settlement areas the Government must carry the burden of the railways. Surely the Premier realises that until he alters the system of perpetual lease and gives people an opportunity of acquiring a freehold title to the land which they require he will never get settlement on those areas or anywhere else. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to shake their heads, but if they look at the records for the past ten years, they will see that fact is very clearly indicated. I told hon. members clearly the reasons for that, but they took no notice of it, but I am assuming that to-day I am speaking to a new-born Premier—a man who realises his responsibility—and I tell the hon. gentleman that he will never get settlement along the railways until this policy of perpetual lease is varied.

The PREMIER: Why are people leaving freehold land in Victoria and going to the cities?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not talking about cities. I am talking about the method under which the settler can hold land in Queensland—freehold as against perpetual leasehold.

Another point the Premier raised is this: that money costs to-day 5½ per cent., as against 3½ per cent. That is quite true, and every time members of the Opposition have spoken on the Financial Statement, or on anything else appertaining to the economic situation in the State, we have referred to the fact that money is costing us very much more. Another point that the Premier lost sight of is this: although this money is costing us a great deal more, it only goes half as far as it used to go. Therefore, we are being sucked at both ends—the money costs us much more in interest, and it only goes half the distance it used to go in days gone by, because of the methods which hon. members opposite have inaugurated.

Another statement the hon. gentleman made was that men paid extra money to direct must do their job faithfully and well. That is perfectly true, but how many illustrations could one bring forward

[11 a.m.] where station-masters, who have dared to tell their subordinates what their job is, have been removed to some other place? How many cases could one recall where, because men in authority dared to tell subordinates what their responsibilities and duties were, these men have gone on strike and refused to go back until those men in responsible positions have been removed? How frequently has that been done?

Mr. POLLOCK: Mention some case.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will do so at a later stage. Therefore, how can you expect Under Secretaries and others to disclose their hands to the Premier? They would be perfectly justified in thinking that the Premier was setting a trap for them to disclose what they really thought, and then the supporters of the hon. gentleman will say that these men in responsible positions are no good, and out they go and good Labour supporters are put in their places. I do not blame any man in authority under the existing Government holding his tongue and going with the times, because he does not know when his hour may come if he dares to do the right thing.

The Premier also said that those controlling the service must have ability and pluck. Most assuredly, and we must also carry that out right through the piece, and see that those we put in responsible positions have ability and pluck. Can anyone, under any circumstances, accuse our late Premier of having ability and pluck? In fact, he was pushed out of the Chamber, and the position he now occupies was created for the purpose of saving the Labour party. Yet we are told that men with ability and pluck should be put in control of the service! It is this state of affairs that causes one to doubt that the Premier was serious when he made those remarks. One only hopes he means what he says; but a tremendous lot has to be wiped out before the people can attempt to take him seriously.

Another statement was that he intends to put an end to these stop-work meetings. It would be very interesting to see how he proposes to do it. I venture to say that if he puts that proposition to his party, there are not 10 per cent. of them who would give him authority to prevent stop-work meetings. Stop-work meetings are happening repeatedly in the Railway Department to-day. Look at the illustration that took place only a few weeks ago where certain motor-cars were going to be sent to the Toowoomba Show; where trucks were arranged for, but, because it was a-quarter past 11 o'clock on Saturday morning, the man who was given instructions to load those cars in the trucks for Toowoomba refused to do so, and the gentleman in charge suspended him. The man laughed in his face, and said, "You can suspend me, but I will get back all right." Then the gentleman in charge—this man had pluck and determination—made arrangements for others to load these cars. For the whole week following that stop-work meetings were held. Those men were paid whilst that stop-work business was going on. Can you expect railways to pay or authority to be established under those conditions?

Mr. Elphinstone.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where did this happen?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: At Roma Street.

Mr. WEIR: You had a nightmare.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not saying this to kill the Premier's spirit—he will want it all—but, if he carries out what he says he will, I can assure him that he will have all the support we on this side are capable of giving him.

A very interesting paragraph appeared in yesterday's "Daily Mail," having reference to the report of the visit of a British political delegation to Russia entitled "Russia Within." I was astonished at some of the remarks in the report of this delegation on their return to England, which have a very important bearing on Queensland's problems. This is one of the remarks—

"There were men who were working as long as eighteen hours a day for the economic ideal they had adopted. They had a rule in the party that no Communist should receive more than 225 roubles—about £22—a month, and the true Communist would not take more. If he received more the balance went into the party chest."

If that is Communism, I prefer it to the present Labour party's politics. (Government interruption.)

"They visited some of the large factories, where they found a rigid discipline,"

there is therefore something in Communism. It is obvious that they can run factories and industries there much better than the party opposite. Then we have this statement—

"The women in one factory they visited did not even look up to see what his wife was wearing. That was very remarkable, and the explanation was that they were all on piecework."

This is in Russia, which hon. members opposite have held up as an example. This is another leaf we can take out of Russia's book in our efforts to make Queensland economically sound again. It is gratifying to see that we have such examples from a country which is evidently rehabilitating itself. Another point is this—

"It was extraordinary how keen everyone was in Russia on increasing production. The banners carried in the May Day procession bore such mottoes as 'Give us new machinery.' 'We will learn to work better.' 'We will increase our output.'"

Just imagine hon. members opposite walking down Queen street under banners with inscriptions like those! On the contrary, it is "Down with everything! Down with capitalism! Down with the employer! More pay and less hours!" Yet their colleagues in Russia, whom they hold up as an example, walk behind slogans of this nature, "Give us new machinery and we will learn to work better; we will increase our output!" Those are interesting remarks emanating from the report of the latest political mission to Russia, and I commend them to the Premier as a great inspiration to help him to put Queensland on an even keel.

A great deal has been said about the results of the recent general election, and for my part I think the Labour party have every ground for congratulation on having assumed the reins of power. Speaking for

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myself, I do not envy them one little bit. Any party, other than one composed of professional politicians, which wants to get the reins of power in Queensland, and any man who is aspiring to power whilst the mentality and the outlook of the people of this State remains as it is literally wants his bumps read. (Government laughter.) That is my view. The party which has got Queensland into its mess is the party which should get it out of the mess. We have done a great deal in the way of killing all initiative in Queensland, all desire, all achievement. These elements of sleeping sickness have been introduced to such an extent that it is going to take a tremendous upheaval to alter the mentality and outlook of the people, and any party, strong or weak, which attempts to tackle that problem has got a most difficult job on its hands. It is a wonder to me that the Labour party did not force us into taking control of Queensland for the next three years. (Government laughter.) I am saying exactly what I think.

With Queensland in the position in which she is to-day we should have been compelled, if we had been returned to power, to do so many unpleasant things, that it is a wonder to me that the Labour party did not encourage that way out of their difficulty. I thank my lucky stars, I thank providence, that our party have been saved the task of attempting to take charge of Queensland until real adversity has brought her economically to her knees.

By interjection a few days ago the Premier rather ridiculed the suggestion that business men could be of any value in the conduct of Queensland. He may be quite honest in his views in that regard, but I should like to give the business view of what should be done or could be done in regard to some of Queensland's difficulties. In the first place, I want to ask: Do you think that any business Government would tolerate the present railway position, which must be admitted to be the worst feature we have in the financial position of Queensland to-day? It is surely no pleasure to any of us. No matter what our politics are, or whether we may be the officers in charge or the employees under them, the fact remains that to see a big organisation like that run in the manner in which it is being run—the fair object of criticism of anyone who may be passing through the country—is not good, and therefore I argue that, if a business Government or a business body had held the reins of power in Queensland, that railway system would have been radically and entirely altered. Now, there are two ways of doing it. One is to get rid of the railway system altogether—put it in the hands of some company or some undertaking that will run it on business lines.

Mr. PEASE: Exploit the public!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Exploit the public! Are you not exploiting the public, asking £750 when you are worth only £500? We are all exploiters—it is only a matter of opportunity—and, therefore, I say that one method of coping with the situation is to pass it over, lock, stock, and barrel, into the hands of some business undertaking which is used to railway control and running, and let us have it managed as railways should be managed. If that is not practicable or possible, I endorse the remarks of one hon. member opposite—I am not quite sure which—that we must bring to our assistance the employees and encourage them to take part

in the running of the railway system itself. My opinion is, therefore, that one of the means by which the position can be altered is to encourage the subordinates in the department, or those who are considered subordinates, to express opinions and indirectly take a hand in the running of the railways. Anything to relieve us of the present intolerable position of political interference at one end, and union domination at the other. The men in charge are afraid to assert themselves. They are afraid to rule.

The hon. member for Gregory asked me to name some cases where men had been handled unfairly by the Railway Department. Look at Mr. Brown, the late General Manager of the Railway Department. It just flashes through my mind that the man who had the audacity to take control of the train load of police whom the Ryan Government sent from Charters Towers to Townsville, and the man who acted as his subordinate, are both out of the service.

Mr. POLLOCK: Do you say it is because of that?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I emphatically say "Yes."

Mr. POLLOCK: I emphatically say that you are wrong.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I happen to know both gentlemen, and I have heard their statements, which seem to me to be very much worthy of credence. There is that illustration. If a similar crisis should arise and men are wanted to face the unions and defy their authority, what is going to happen? After the situation has calmed down the unions demand that the men be sacked, and they are sacked almost immediately. Therefore I suggest that there are two methods of railway control that could be adopted—one to obtain somebody to conduct the railways as a proprietary concern or business undertaking, and the other is to encourage the subordinates to come in and assist in the control of the railways. Those who desire to obtain lessons from America can do so. There are many illustrations of miniature Parliaments inside big institutions like the Railway Department. If these men only had an opportunity of voicing their opinions and making suggestions for the betterment of the railways, I am certain that it would tend to the improvement of the railway system. There are numbers of men in the Railway Department to-day who are fretting under the present system. Only the night before last an employee of the Ipswich railway workshops said to me, "It breaks one's heart to see 'new chums'—men supposed to be engineers from England, Scotland, or Ireland—being placed in positions in the railway workshops when we are infinitely more efficient than they are." He pointed out that they were placed in positions over the heads of Australian mechanics. He also complained that they were retained in employment when others were discharged. I recognise fully that our first responsibility is to our own men. We must encourage the best in those mechanics, and not stifle their ambitions as is being done to-day. If some method were encouraged whereby men of whom I speak, good, honest, hardworking men, are enabled to express their opinions and give vent to suggestions which would be for the material benefit of the railway system, then most assuredly it would be for the benefit of the railways generally.

Can you imagine a business Government raising freights and fares on the railway system under existing conditions? It seems an easy thing to do. Shove it on! Pass it on to the consumer! You are not doing so. I am in the motor trade, and every increase in freights and fares on the railways gives a boost to our business. You have a most serious competitor in motor transport. If the railways were run efficiently and the trains arrived on time and goods were delivered as they should be delivered, then it is possible that the position might be saved. But while chaos prevails as it does to-day and you charge 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. more for the conveyance of goods, who will entrust their goods to a chaotic service? It is unreasonable, and as a result you have all kinds of motor transport vehicles jumping into existence. Take Corinda, where the hon. member for Barcoo and myself reside. He knows as well as I do that on 1st August, when the railway fares were increased, a motor bus service was inaugurated from Corinda Station. What was the reason for that? The reason was that freights and fares had been increased.

Mr. BULCOCK: Be fair, and say that it started from old Oxley, where there is no railway service at all.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It comes through Corinda. That is an illustration of what must follow if freights and fares are raised.

Take the work being carried out by the hon. member for Dalby. Cannot hon. members opposite see a threat there? If it is demonstrated that sheep can be carried successfully by motor transport, who is going to worry about the railway system, when hundreds and thousands of sheep are slaughtered by the delay in transport from one place to another? It is a matter of business, and the proper method is not to raise freights and fares but to make the system efficient. We should attract custom, and not drive it away, which certainly is being done by increasing freights and fares. Another point is: If a business Government were in charge of affairs, would it insist upon inferior coal being used because it was obtained from a State coalmine? Would it not be best in the interests of the railway servants to obtain the best coal that was available at the cheapest price? How many of our engine drivers and firemen are perpetually complaining about the inferior coal that is supplied to them from the State enterprises? This is one of the things the Premier ought to tackle, if he is serious. He cannot introduce efficiency if he is going to force on the engine-drivers inefficient coal to drive the engines with. There is any amount of good coal available, and the least the Premier can do is to cut out the bad coal even if it comes from a State coalmine. If decent coal were used, it would tend to lessen the dirty condition of our trains. The hon. member for Bowen travels occasionally from the North to Brisbane. I wonder if he can pick his way among the coal heaps in the first-class sleepers as they come near Brisbane. They are filthy, and that only results in business being driven away from the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not State coal.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The lavatory basins are also filthy. The water is running over the basins, and it appears to be no one's

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business to look after it. The conductor is sitting down smoking cigarettes while the passengers are picking their way through the coal heaps to get to the lavatory basins. How they tolerate it I do not know.

Does the hon. gentleman believe that a competent business man would tolerate for one moment the present State enterprises which have been sucking the vitals out of Queensland? There is only one way of dealing with State enterprises, and that is by cutting them out lock, stock, and barrel. A big man is a man who, after recognising that he has made a mistake, rectifies that mistake by cutting out the cause. If the Premier recognises he has made a mistake in that direction, why is he frightened to act? How pitiful was the answer of the Minister in charge of State Enterprises the other day to a question in regard to State stations! He said that, in company with three colleagues—one of whom finds it difficult to keep his time occupied—he visited the State stations in North Queensland to make an inspection of them. No doubt that visit was made at the expense of the State. When asked how the cattle were, he said, "I am sorry; we did not see any."

Hon. D. GLEDSON: That is a deliberate misstatement.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Hon. D. GLEDSON: It is a deliberate misstatement.

The SPEAKER: Order! The words "deliberate misstatement" are unparliamentary, and I ask the hon gentleman to withdraw.

Hon. D. GLEDSON: I will withdraw the statement, but it is true all the same.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Hon. D. GLEDSON: I will withdraw the statement. I shall have another opportunity of dealing with it.

Mr. BRAND: Fancy a Minister having to apologise!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I based my remarks on the hon. gentleman's reply. If I have made deductions which are not in keeping with the reply, then I am quite prepared to do the right thing.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: They could not muster cattle because the Minister forgot his spurs.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Another point I wish to make is this: If a business man was in charge of affairs in Queensland, do hon members think that the State stores would be purchased in the way they are to-day? I wonder how many hon. members opposite know the enormous amount of money that is spent by the Government in purchasing stores, and the method by which it is done. I am not imputing anything improper. I wish hon. members to understand that.

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

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I beg to move that the hon. member for Oxley, who is making an excellent speech, be granted an extension of time.

[*Mr. Elphinstone.*

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Oxley be granted an extension of time to enable him to complete his speech?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I thank hon. members for the privilege they have granted me. An institution which is spending so much State money in acquiring such a large number of commodities should be conducted on more thorough lines, especially in view of the large number of commodities purchased by a Government which engages as much in industry and commerce as the present Government does. I make bold to say that thousands of pounds could be saved each year if proper business methods were introduced in the purchasing by the State Stores. Those of us who are in business know full well that the art of business is to buy well, and so it is with the State; and I do not think that buying is being done as effectively as it might be done.

Does anybody think that any business Government would permit the conditions of the high stumpage on timber that exists to-day, when by its imposition the Government are actually encouraging the importation of foreign timber into Queensland to such an extent that it may be news to hon. members to know that a lot of this imported foreign timber has been used for the construction of the Trades Hall at Rockhampton? I am sure the Secretary for Public Works will be interested to hear that. It appears strange, but it is true. I myself saw Oregon pine being used for the purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You don't mean to suggest that the Public Works Department is building that hall?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No; it is too good a building altogether to think that. Oregon pine is being imported freely into Queensland.

Mr. PEASE: And into every other State.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There is a reason for that. Queensland is the one State that has timber, and that is not so with the other States. To bring timber to Queensland should be like bringing coal to Newcastle; but the mistake of imposing such a tremendous stumpage on timber is continued so that it encourages the importation of Oregon pine from other parts of the world. In the month of April of this year over 3,000,000 feet of Oregon were imported into Queensland, and the price at which that Oregon pine is being sold is 39s. 6d. per 100 super feet as against 60s. for Queensland pine. That might be all right if the idea was to conserve our Queensland timbers, but I understand that is not the position. The exorbitant stumpage on our Queensland timber is utilised as an auxiliary to our revenue, and apparently the Government cannot do without it. Stumpage royalties to the extent of a million pounds have been collected by this Government during past five years. If that money had gone back into reafforestation, a lot might be said for the imposition, but only a fragment has been used for that purpose. About 80 per cent. of the amount has been used to bolster up our tottering revenue, and it has had the effect of throwing many of our sawmills out of action and creating such a situation that imported timber can find a ready market here.

Mr. PEASE: The key to the situation is the low freightage on imported timber as compared with our own necessarily high freights.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We cannot alter that, and it is no good advancing an argument against things which cannot be altered.

Mr. PEASE: Your own Commonwealth Government refused to alter the situation.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Do hon. members think any business Government would tolerate a continuation of the present Water and Sewerage Board tragedy? Here the Government are imposing upon the people of Brisbane—and it is suggested to extend it to the people of Queensland—the cost of a system which is staggering in its magnitude. Millions and millions of pounds have been sunk in that enterprise, much of which must be written off sooner or later. Instead of arresting the rot when the opportunity arose months back and saying “Now that it is clearly shown that the method of controlling the Water and Sewerage Board is not successful we intend to wipe it out and put three Commissioners in charge,” which would have rectified matters—the Government perpetuated the evil. Goodness only knows what the end will be, because the activities of the Water and Sewerage Board have as yet assumed only comparatively small dimensions. We have a great area yet to be touched, and, if the board continue at the rate of expenditure that has existed to date, I hesitate to think what the result will be. I do urge our Premier, who seems to have a fresh lease of life so far as his responsibilities are concerned, to consider whether the time has not come for wiping that board off the slate and putting in charge of that huge undertaking competent men who understand their jobs and who are free from outside interference.

Another point I want to ask is this: Assuming that a business Government was in charge of affairs, would the public service be left in its present condition? There is a tremendous lot of unrest in the public service to-day. The method by which advancement is secured is not meeting with general approval. There are more men than there are jobs in the public service. [11.30 a.m.] That of course was recognised by the Premier when he directed the Public Service Commissioner not to fill any vacancies that occur. That is a back-door method of admitting that the public service is overstuffed. I state emphatically that many things in the public service want immediate attention. No young man in the public service should regret if he is discharged from the service. A man who has any ability at all is wasting his time in the service. Queensland wants young men of enterprise and ability to come out and assist in her progress, and they are simply stifling their opportunities and killing their energies if they remain in the public service. Let me suggest to those young fellows that, instead of chasing to get into the employ of the Government, they get out of it as quickly as they can and give vent to their energies in some other direction of which there are endless opportunities in Queensland.

If a business Government were in charge in Queensland, do you think that the licensing laws of Queensland would be allowed to be flagrantly broken from one end of the State to the other? Anywhere you will

find that, when one door is closed at 8 o'clock, practically every hotelkeeper, except those few who appreciate their responsibilities and act honestly, opens another one a minute after 8. That goes on regularly. I see the hon. member for Queenston is taking note of my remarks. He knows that they are correct. Why does he not see that the party which passed these licensing laws and controls the administration of them puts a stop to this sort of thing? It is the ability to break the law of the country without being punished that is encouraging people to do it in other directions, and, having determined this licensing question and having arrived apparently at a solution, let us see that the law is respected, otherwise the man who wants to be an honest trader is penalised for the benefit of the man who takes an unfair advantage. That is another way in which the Premier can exercise his authority, and say that at least he intends to run this country fairly, fearlessly, and honestly.

The next question I want to ask is this: Do you think a business Government would allow the present Board of Trade and Arbitration to exist in its present condition? It is an absolute farce, manned by men, no matter what their abilities may be in certain directions, who are not big enough for this job, men who by their very environment are one-sided. You can never expect harmony and peace to prevail amongst all sections of producers unless you put in charge of them an honourably and properly constituted body. I have not much to complain about two of the members, but about the third I most assuredly have, because he was appointed to the position not because he had ability to fill it, but because hon. members opposite wanted to find a haven of refuge for a man who had outlived his usefulness to them. Yet the whole industry of Queensland is being handicapped by a tribunal constituted in the way the present Board of Trade and Arbitration is constituted. I do suggest to the Premier that, if he wishes to introduce this new era into Queensland so that we can all get busy and become efficient and do the fair thing—give a fair return for a fair day's wage—an excellent sentiment—the first thing to do is to start at the top and not put in charge of things men who are not competent to carry out their immense responsibilities.

Mr. POLLOCK: Tell us something about Mr. Justice Lukin's appointment to the Federal Arbitration Court.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I would if I were in the Federal Parliament, but I have quite enough to talk about in connection with State affairs. I have respected the hon. member's feelings by not making reference to the appointment of a judge in Queensland as I might have done.

Mr. POLLOCK: Don't consider my feelings—go ahead!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Another point is this—and I make this remark, which I hope the Secretary for Public Works will take note of—how can we expect Queensland to advance when a one-roomed school 21 feet by 13 feet—the size of a motor shed—is costing £649? Fancy a business Government permitting that to exist for one minute! You can put up a motor shed of that size for £50, and yet it has cost £650 to build a one-roomed school of the same dimensions for children. We quite recognise—and no

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one has been a bigger advocate than I have been—that we must have proper school accommodation

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If I put up a school equal to a motor shed in your electorate, you would have something to say about it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not asking you to do that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why not make a fair comparison?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am mentioning the size of a motor shed so that the House can understand the position. I say that we must have properly ventilated and commodious buildings for our school children, but to spend £649 in putting up a one-roomed building is simply monstrous, and no business Government should tolerate it. That is one of the reasons why Queensland is in such a bad economic condition at the present moment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Is that a fair average, or are you only picking out an exceptional case?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: In answer to the hon. member for Bowen the Minister kindly gave us information with regard to three schools, and the prices ranged from £625 to £650.

Mr. PEASE: No contractor would do the work for less on the specification submitted.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Secretary for Agriculture, when speaking, made bold to say that the Opposition was the cause of the degradation of Parliament in Queensland. I could not understand that remark. To put the blame on the Opposition for the degradation of Parliament existing to-day is simply the pot calling the kettle black. The position is that undoubtedly Parliament has become degraded—

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If we go back a little, Mr. Speaker, we find you and your predecessor were partly the cause of it. You helped to degrade Parliament when you refused to wear the robes associated with your parliamentary position. All these things help to degrade Parliament.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They do not wear robes in America.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the hon. member had been in England when the Labour party was in power, he would have seen the officers associated with the work of Parliament wearing their robes. When the people of Queensland see members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown using their positions to feather their own nests it must degrade Parliament.

Mr. HARTLEY: What are you feathering your own nest for?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am doing it by selling goods to the people. There is one thing I would advise the hon. member to do—that is, to take one of the "Vacant" notices appearing on the front of the "yellow taxi cabs" and put it on the front of his head. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in making a personal reflection.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If an hon. member makes a personal interjection, he must expect to be paid back in his own coin.

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The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If I am out of order, I suggest that the hon. member reverse the notice, and put the word "Full" on the outside. (Laughter.) I understand that the sign has the word "Full" on the other side. (Renewed laughter.) However, if we use positions, the filling of which falls to Parliament, to advance men in the Cabinet to make room for those behind them, again we are degrading Parliament. If our behaviour is unseemly or improper in this House—and not only in this House, but also in the precincts of the House—that helps to degrade Parliament. All these things help to degrade Parliament, and I do hope that in this new era which the Premier has inaugurated we shall all take the lesson to heart and remember that we have responsibilities, and that it is time we set the example to Queensland of what is necessary if we are to reinstate her economically.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. J. RYAN (*Cook*): I think we might well hail the hon. member who has just resumed his seat as the master propagandist for Communism. From the quotations which he supplied to hon. members, I am quite sure that those who are connected with Communism outside will gladly welcome his remarks; but in his endeavour to tack Communism on to the party in power he has slandered those who claim to be Communists outside by giving them the idea that he understands what Communism is. I am quite satisfied that he does not understand what the essence of Communism is.

The hon. member took the Premier to task because he had the temerity to give certain advice to the public service. Just a few minutes previously he told us that money was costing us nearly double what it cost a few years ago, and would only go one-half as far. The Premier in his speech a day or two ago uttered the same remark, so that the hon. member is only bearing out what the Premier endeavoured to show to the public servants in his admonition to them on the occasion to which the hon. member refers. I am quite sure that no one expects the public service to do more than a fair thing for the salaries which they receive, and we can safely assume that the Premier, in his advice to them, is asking them to do no more than a fair thing and to give a fair return for the salaries or wages which they are paid for their services to the State. What a picture the hon. member drew of the strenuous times of the middle nineties of last century, about thirty years ago! We had the spectacle of the Premier of that day imposing a poll tax on the people, and lowering the wages of the public servants and the railway men. Everybody who gave service to the State had then to submit to a wage cut or a salary reduction. I think the action the Premier is taking in these strenuous times is the proper course to take. He is advising the public servants and the railway men that they are only expected to do their duty by the people who employ them—not by this Government, who are only agents or the representatives of the people—men who are sent here by the different classes in the community to see that the finances and other affairs of Queensland are carried out in a proper manner. The hon. member drew a picture—not a very lurid

one—of a lover and his bride or something of that kind. He forgot to mention that sometimes an interloper or co-respondent shows himself after the marriage ceremony. In this case, the Premier was faced with an interloper who gave no notice of his intention to withdraw the per capita payments from the State. The interloper in this case is the Prime Minister of Australia. The Premier, in outlining Labour's policy in his policy speech prior to May last, had no idea that the per capita payments were to be withdrawn. Therefore, he had to make serious alterations in the Speech to be submitted to the House by the Lieutenant-Governor. I consider, in all these circumstances, he has done very well. I am sorry that it has been found necessary to withdraw the childhood endowment scheme—at any rate, for the time being—but I am hopeful that, when the Premier readjusts the finances of the State, it will be found possible at an early date to introduce the childhood endowment scheme, the announcement of which was received so favourably by the people during the elections. I am quite sure it will be one of the first Bills introduced when matters have been adjusted.

During this debate, the only criticism hurled at the Government has been purely a diatribe against the actions of the Government, and our friends opposite seem to have clutched at the only straw left to them, and centred their abuse on the alleged guilt of the Government in roll-stuffing and so forth in connection with the elections. Anyone who has had anything to do with elections must know that it is almost impossible for a person to record a vote twice in any electorate, because the scrutineers have a knowledge of every elector. At every election that I have had anything to do with the scrutineers have had a knowledge of every elector personally. I am speaking of country electorates, and I believe the same thing applies to metropolitan electorates.

Mr. MORGAN: Double voting took place in my electorate.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I have contested five elections, and on each occasion, with the exception of the last, one person voted twice. The remarkable thing is, as I have ascertained, that those persons did not vote for me. I have ascertained from the scrutineers that those persons voted for my opponent, or at any rate they had the reputation of being on the Tory side.

Mr. MORGAN: You admit that it can be done?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I also ascertained that it all arose out of a mistake on the part of the presiding officer in failing to tick off the name. There is a penalty not exceeding seven years for the offence of double voting, and I am sure that no sane man would go to a booth to duplicate his vote in the way suggested by hon. members opposite.

The movement behind this party is the only political movement that can be claimed to have a soul. That soul was instilled into the Australian Commonwealth by the miners who held the Eureka stockade. Seventy-two or seventy-three years ago the English soldiers ambushed the miners within the stockade erected at Eureka, and on each occasion when I visit my native State I stand bare-headed before the monument erected to the memory of those men, as I cannot help contemplating the foundation they laid for us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Hear, hear! That was the first blow for Australian liberty.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I took advantage of the opportunity to write down the names of the first Labour martyrs, whose names are engraved upon that monument. I do not know whether they have previously appeared in "Hansard," but, with that object, I intend to read to the House the names of the twenty-one men appearing thereon:—

John Haynes, County Clare, Ireland
 Patrick Gettings, Kilkenny, Ireland
 Thomas Mullen, Kilkenny, Ireland
 Samuel Green, London
 Edward Thonen, Prussia
 John Hafele, Wurtemberg
 John Diamond, County Clare, Ireland
 Thomas O'Neill, Kilkenny, Ireland
 John Donaghy, Donegal, Ireland
 William Clifton, Bristol, England
 Edward Quinn, County Cavan, Ireland
 W. Quinlan, Goulburn, N.S.W.
 W. Emmerman, Hanover
 Lieutenant Ross, Canada
 Thaddeus Moore, County Clare, Ireland
 Jas. Brown, Newry, Ireland
 Robert Julien, Nova Scotia
 Michael Crowe, Ireland
 Thomas Fenton, England
 Edward McGlynn, Ireland
 John Robertson, Scotland.

Those twenty-one men were ambushed and massacred per medium of the bayonets of the soldiers because they had the temerity to stand out at Ballarat, in Victoria, in defence of their rights as a protest against a Government who were endeavouring to kill the democratic spirit of those pioneers.

The hon. member for Oxley has just referred to what we owe for our inheritance from our forefathers, but I would also like to point out the privileges that those men handed down to this party, and they are privileges that this party prize and will uphold. One of those privileges is the upholding and maintenance of democracy in this country, at least within this State of Queensland.

Mr. KELSO: Are you the only democrats in Queensland?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I am quite satisfied that my hon. friend is not one, or he would not be sitting where he is.

Mr. KELSO: I am a bigger democrat than you are. (Government laughter.)

Mr. H. J. RYAN: To show how bereft our friends on the other side were of a policy, or of the necessary fighting spirit behind them in the recent elections, we beheld the spectacle of five pastoral constituencies falling to this party unopposed.

Mr. MORGAN: Why?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I will tell the hon. member why. After the strikes of 1891 and 1894, which succeeded the 1890 strike, the squatters of Western Queensland counselled the shearers to elect their own representatives to Parliament. To such purpose was that advice acted on by the shearers and workers that we now have the spectacle of five pastoral electorates—Burke, Gregory, Mitchell, Barcoo, and Warrego—going by default so far as our friends opposite are concerned. We are now the squatters' representatives.

Mr. KELSO: You said the graziers were supporting you.

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Mr. H. J. RYAN: Where is the squatters' gold now?

Mr. MORGAN: Over on your side.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: The squatters will not now give their money to assist candidates of the party opposite against the Labour candidates. The fact that five members of this party were returned unopposed at the recent election did not augur well for the success of the Opposition, who were affected by sour grapes and resorted to the cry of "stinking fish." Coming to a later period, we find that in an endeavour to displace this Government our friends opposite adopted any methods that they could possibly conceive.

Mr. KELSO: That is a nasty thing to say, and it is not true.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: Take the endeavour to bribe members of Parliament.

Mr. KELSO: What had we to do with that?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You can't wash your hands of that.

Mr. KELSO: What rot.

THE SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. H. J. RYAN: When we had a majority of only two hon. members opposite failed in their endeavours to encourage hon. members on this side to go over and so give them sufficient men to depose this Government. Their intention, had they deposed this Government for a time, was to gerrymander the rolls and go back to the old system, whereby anybody applying for the right to vote in this State would have to reside in the State for twelve months and in an electorate for six months. Those regulations existed prior to the advent of this Government, which made it possible for a man who had been in the State three months and in an electorate one month to qualify as an elector. Our friends opposite would at once have made it impossible for the man who had to travel the country looking for work, or who had to move about from place to place when carrying on his occupation, to get his name on the roll. This Government made it easy to get on the roll and very difficult to get a person off the roll. Those are the rules we have established, and to which we intend to adhere.

Mr. KELSO: Yet only one-half of the people vote for you, and that not the intelligent half. (Government laughter.)

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I trust that the Premier will introduce a childhood endowment scheme when he has readjusted his financial programme. I quite understand it is possible that the hon. gentleman's financial scheme has been disarranged to some extent through the action of the Prime Minister with regard to the per capita payments.

Mr. KELSO: You know the childhood endowment scheme was only a political gag.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: Another question which is of great importance to me as a representative of the far North is that the Government have seen fit to close down the Chillagoe mines. The closing of those mines has an indirect bearing on the whole of the far North. It has some bearing on the Etheridge and Croydon mining districts, and the Cook and the Herberton districts, which are contiguous to the boundaries of the Chillagoe mining field, and I am in

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great hopes that, even though it has been seen fit to close down those mines as a State enterprise, the Government will give some assistance to the miners and representatives of syndicates to carry on the mines, as well as assisting prospectors in opening up new shows.

I have every confidence in the far northern portion of this State, and I hope that in the Treasurer's Budget some greater provision will be made for granting assistance to prospectors and miners in the far northern district in order to assure, if possible, that the Chillagoe smelters will be kept on as a going concern.

So long as there has been a Federal Government in Australia an endeavour has been made to develop what is known as the Northern Territory. I do not intend to go into the question of what has been done in that direction and refer to the Northern Territory simply because I desire

[12 noon] to refer to a parallel case—that is, the peninsula in Northern Queensland. That peninsula is becoming depleted of population, and this is an opportune time for the Government to take steps, in conjunction with the Federal Government, to develop that peninsula by giving encouragement to settlers and other workers. The first step should be in connection with the timber industry in the peninsula. I am sure that the Forestry Department has no conception of the amount of timber lying dormant there, and which is being burnt out by bush fires and devastated by cyclones and floods periodically. There is a large timber tract between Mount Molloy and Cooktown and much further north than Cooktown. Around Lloyd's Bay and other inlets along the coast there is timber in abundance. The Forestry Department should at once throw open that country and allow cutters to go in and bring that timber to market. I cannot understand the policy of the Forestry Department. Time after time I have endeavoured to fathom it, but it seems to me that for every tree cut out they want to grow another one in its place. That is not a proper policy for a State like Queensland, or, at any rate, for a place like the Cape York Peninsula. There is timber of every description up there. That is the only part of Queensland where good cedar can be obtained to-day. There is cedar there from 6 feet to 8 feet in diameter at the base, and the Forestry Department should turn its eye towards that portion of Queensland and throw open these lands so that sawmills may be established and that portion of the State developed.

While touching on forestry matters, I should like to remark on the fact that a certain area of timber was thrown open near Mount Molloy some time ago, and there is a great disparity with regard to the royalty paid for the same class of timber as compared with that paid at Atherton. I hope the Forestry Department will look into this matter, and, if possible, rectify that anomaly, because cutters and teamsters and others interested in timber round Mount Molloy refrained from putting in any tender for that timber at Mount Molloy because of the disparity between the royalty charged and the royalty charged for similar timber in the Atherton district.

Another matter I would like to refer to is the pearl-fishing industry at Thursday Island. That is perhaps a Commonwealth

matter, but, seeing that the Queensland Government are charged with the domestic affairs of the State and collect revenue from traders and residents at Thursday Island, they should endeavour to get the Commonwealth Government to alter the system of indenturing labour for the pearl fishing at Thursday Island. If I were to mention white labour to some people on Thursday Island I should be howled down; but I am going to advocate that the Japanese pearlbers be driven out of Thursday Island. Something like £20,000 per annum leaves this State and goes to Japan. The population of the island is roughly from 1,700 to 2,000, and of that number there are only 500 or 600 of our own people. A walk up the main street of Thursday Island will bring back to anyone who knew this State thirty years ago reminiscences of Bundaberg, Maryborough, Childers, Cairns, and other sugar-producing countries.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What does the Premier say with regard to that?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I am mentioning the matter so that the Premier may consider it. I am reminded of the time when I used to walk up the streets of Bundaberg, and the shop windows had in them a plug of tobacco, with a ticket marked 1s. 6d. or 2s. on it, to show the kanaka what it was costing. There was no such thing as a proper mark on anything. There would be a red handkerchief, a suit of clothes, or a pair of boots. There would be an amount placed on the toe of the boot or on the end of the garments offered for sale. These were the methods in vogue thirty years ago in Queensland, just prior to the wiping out of kanaka labour. Everyone knows that those who sat on the Treasury benches in those days, as well as those in the Federal Parliament, desired to keep black labour going in those times. There are men in Thursday Island—and hon. members opposite will fight strenuously for them—who desire to keep this coloured labour going there. With white labour we should have a contented community on Thursday Island. It would be better for the people of the Cook electorate as well as the rest of Queensland, and it would be a great thing for Australia. We talk of a white Australia, but here are white men who are employing Japanese—natives of a country who at any moment may cross a few islands and make their advent through the western coast of the Gulf into Queensland and perhaps throughout Australia. If the Northern Territory is to be developed and populated for strategic reasons, then the Peninsula also should be populated and developed, and white labour should obtain in Thursday Island. It should be made compulsory to employ white labour. If the pearl-shelling industry cannot subsist under white labour, then wipe it out altogether.

Mr. KELSO: You also said that the Japanese should be sent away.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: Certainly they should be sent away.

Mr. KELSO: What about diplomatic relations?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I would not say they should be sent away, but they should be taken from that industry.

Mr. MORGAN: Can whites do the work?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: When white labour was introduced into the sugar industry of Queensland some people said that a white man could not do the work, and that it was a black man's work. If you go into the sugar fields to-day you will see the contentment under which the men are working. The sugar industry is the best labour-employing industry in Queensland to-day, and there are more contented employees in it than in any other industry of the State. I say that the work at Thursday Island can also be done with white labour. I know nothing that a white man cannot do that a black man can do. If a Japanese can go down and get a few pearls from the bottom of the ocean a few fathoms deep, a white man can do it. Of all the naked or skin divers at Thursday Island the best are the whites. The Japanese cannot compete with them. They have not the stamina, they have not the courage that white men have, and I say emphatically that this industry should be conducted under white labour conditions, and that this Government should make overtures to the Federal Government in order that this should be brought about. It is a disgrace to Queensland and to Australia that pearl-shelling should be carried out under its present conditions, and that labour should be indentured under the system in operation at present. Incidentally let me remark that I notice by the papers that an endeavour is being made by the pearl traders at Thursday Island and Broome, in Western Australia—practically the only two portions of Australia where this industry is being carried on—to pool their product. I hope that, if anything is done by this Government in the matter, either in conjunction with the Western Australian or the Federal Government, a proviso will be inserted in the agreement that it shall be made a white labour industry. I say that white men can do the work as well as the Japanese.

Mr. KELSO: Your party has had the opportunity to do so during all these years.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: I am urging this Government to make fresh overtures to the Federal Government with a view to making this a white labour industry. Early in the history of the Commonwealth Parliament, an endeavour was made by the then Labour member for Herbert in the Federal House of Representatives to have this made a white man's industry. A board of inquiry visited Thursday Island and Broome, certain evidence was taken, and a report was sent in favourable to the idea, but nothing more was done about it.

Mr. KELSO: The Fisher Government had the opportunity.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: The Government of which my friend is the lineal descendant would not stand for white labour. If they are White Australians, I ask them from my place in this House to take action in the direction I have indicated. I ask that the Federal member for Herbert, Dr. Nott, take steps at once to make this a white labour industry. If that cannot be done, then wipe it out altogether. It is of practically no benefit to the State, since nearly the whole of the money earned goes away to Japan. These are facts. Why attempt to contradict them?

I hope that, when the Treasurer introduces his Budget speech, he will indicate that the

Mr. H. J. Ryan.]

Government intend to do as I have suggested with regard to the mining industry, and that they propose to give greater assistance to prospectors and miners in the far North. I think that in times gone by or within the last few years too much money has been spent in centres which had the reputation of being the bigger mining centres. The time has come when nearly the whole of that expenditure should be cut out and the money given to districts where there are bona fide prospectors, true as steel and hard as nails, who are prepared to go out into the backblocks, who are the true pioneers of this State and Commonwealth, and who only require a little assistance in their endeavour to unearth more of the great wealth that lies beneath the soil. I hope that the Government will assist the mining industry to a greater extent now than ever before. Certain savings will be made by the closing of Chillagoe, and I hope that the amount which will be saved will be spent in the Chillagoe district or in the area surrounding it, in order to assist men attached to the mining industry. We have always urged that the drift from the country to the cities and the coast must be stopped, and action of the kind that I suggest is the only way to retard that drift, as it would assist in developing and opening up the timber lands in far North Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL (*Dalby*), who, on rising to speak, was greeted with cheers from both sides of the House, said: This is the first occasion on which I have had an opportunity of addressing this House. Mr. Speaker, and I desire to congratulate you on your elevation again to Speakership. From my observations of your tact and ability, I am sure you will extend justice to us all. Personally, I am of the opinion that a most suitable person in yourself has been selected, and it gives me very much pleasure to congratulate you on your appointment.

I have been elected member for Dalby in this House, as a representative of the primary producers, and although I sit on the Opposition side of the House, that will not mean that I do not intend to assist the Government in every possible way to pass measures for the advancement of the man on the land. The man on the land has been neglected for quite a long time. He has been unable to obtain sufficient representation in this House, and I am hopeful that in the near future he will be far more extensively represented. I have earned my living on the land ever since leaving school, and it is my earnest desire to assist the Government to the utmost in introducing schemes that will be for the advancement of the primary producers. I desire to take this opportunity of congratulating the Premier upon the wise appointments of Mr. W. L. Payne and Mr. H. D. Macrossan as judges, the former to the Land Court and the latter to the Supreme Court of Queensland. Mr. Payne is a man of undoubted ability and practical experience, and one highly capable of carrying out the important work entrusted to him. In Judge Macrossan we have a man of outstanding ability, and one who has risen to the pinnacle of his profession through sheer merit. By the appointment of such eminent gentlemen the Premier has instilled a feeling of security and confidence in the people of this State. I congratulate him on the wisdom of these appointments.

[*Mr. H. J. Ryan.*]

I feel that I must register my disapproval of the action of the Government in increasing freights and fares on the railways, thereby placing a burden upon those least able to bear it. The burden will fall upon a section of people who will be unable to pass on the charges. The other day an hon. member opposite asserted that the difference between the revenue and the expenditure of the railways represented a subsidy to primary producers. The deficit is not caused altogether through bad management, and, to my mind, it is not an improper procedure to pay a subsidy out of consolidated revenue to the man on the land by this means. There is no doubt that at the present time it is very hard to make the railways pay. The policy pursued by the Government has been a wrong one. Their present policy is: curtailment of services, increased freights and fares, cessation of developmental work, dismissal of men, refusal to connect up railway links, and the encouragement of motor transport. I would like to urge upon the Government that their policy should be an extension of services, cheaper freights and fares, the linking up of the railway systems where it can be done economically and to advantage, and the extension of non-paying lines where it is justified and will lead to the encouragement of further production. I am quite sure that the railways could be made to pay if greater encouragement was given to those on the land. The higher the freights the less opportunity will those men have of using the railways, while a greater encouragement will be given to motor transport.

It was with regret that I viewed the statement of the Government that they looked upon the deficit in the nature of a subsidy to the primary producer, and their subsequent action in not only taking away that subsidy, but in increasing the fares and freights in an attempt to combat the losses on the railways.

I contend that there is no such thing as over-supply. The more production we have the greater the volume of work the railways will have to do. I have heard it stated on the floor of this House that the greater the production the greater the loss. That is absolutely wrong. The greater the production the cheaper the cost of living will become. It is the duty of the Government to provide cheaper means of communication for the people on the land to transport the real wealth of the country to the cities for consumption. If that is not done, motor transport will become more favoured. I would regret to think that the capital invested in our railways should be depreciated by that means, and that the money that should be available for the payment of interest on that capital should be expended in the purchase of petrol and oil for motor transport and paid to other countries.

The land policy of the Government has been wrongly administered. The policy of the Government with regard to land administration has been one of high land taxes, high rents, and high railages. The Government have looked too much to the land for revenue, and have given no concessions whatever to those farmers living on what is called living areas. The policy I advocate is: the abolition of the land tax, lower rents—and these on a sliding scale—lower railway freights, with concessions to those in a small

way—which would tend towards greater production—a better classification of resumptions, and the allocation of large areas.

I contend that the policy adopted by the Government in relation to closer settlement has been wrong, and the result, to my mind, has been a failure. There is no question that we have land second to none. We have the men, and we have the opportunities. We, therefore, have the three main factors necessary, and its non-success shows that the policy of the Government has been wrong. The mistake, to my mind, has been in the administration.

At 12.23 p.m.,

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

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL: There have not been sufficient concessions to the settlers, while the subdivision of the areas has been unsuitable, and the values placed on the resumed properties have been too high. For a successful scheme of closer settlement the rents should be on a sliding scale, merely nominal in the case of living areas, and increasing steeply with each acre held over and above what is regarded as a living area. With this deterrent there will be no reason to limit the areas, as the steepness of the scale of rent will be the governing factor. If a system such as this is fair with respect to land and income tax, it should be infinitely more fair as regards land settlement.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL: Under the present conditions no poor man or a man working for wages can go on the land and start from nothing. I started from nothing on the land and I would never have made good if I had been working under the conditions obtaining at the present time. The reason why more people are not going on the land is because insufficient attractions are being offered to them. How can anyone start from nothing and hope to make a success when the capital value of the land selected is so high? The result of the subdivision of the Jimbour and Cecil Plains areas by the Government has afforded sufficient evidence to show why those resumptions have proved failures. The Government resumed that land at the actual value, and gave it out to the settlers at that actual value plus the expenses of resumption and subdivision. That is wrong. How can a new settler succeed where a more experienced settler has given up? It is quite fair to resume land at the actual value from people holding it, but, when that land is given out to the new settlers, it should be given out at the economic value, and not the actual value. The difference between the economic value and the actual value is the difference which creates an equity for the settler and enables him to arrange finance and carry on. The more improvements he puts into the land the more valuable it becomes as an asset to him. If, when taking land up at its full actual value, the small man has not the advantage of capital, how in the name of goodness can he carry on? It is impossible. The Government are catering only for people who have money, and the poor man has no chance whatever of starting. I hope that the Government in dealing with the resumption of the Mount Abundance country will take into consideration that the land they

have purchased, at what was a fair market value, is at too high a price for any settler to go on a small block and make a success of the venture. The result of the resumption and attempted settlement of the Jimbour country was not only in itself a failure, but it depreciated the value of the land in the Dalby and surrounding districts, because the very fact of that land being unoccupied, and of people making a failure of it has frightened other settlers away from the district. I assure hon. members that there is no better land for closer settlement than the Jimbour and Cecil Plains country, but it is not suitable for intense closer settlement or agriculture. At the present time we are far ahead of ourselves in the subdivision of land. We should not go in for intense subdivision of land, but should go from the large areas to middle-sized areas. Then, as the country develops and population comes in, there will be room for closer settlement. The Government should also remember that in throwing open these lands for closer settlement it is not always the quality of the land that regulates the success or otherwise of the subdivision. It is the rainfall. The land in the Maranoa and Dalby districts does not need to be any richer, but we want a more suitable rainfall. Because these recent resumptions and settlements have not proved a success, it does not signify that the land is not suitable for closer settlement in middle-sized areas, and I am quite sure that success would attend the settlement of those areas if allowed to be held in reasonably sized blocks.

The difficulty of the settler in regard to finance is not that he cannot get money from the financial institutions, but on account of the destruction of the equity that the settler had in his land. [12.30 p.m.] That shrinkage in value has been caused largely through the imposition of the land tax. This tax is a most unjust imposition to the man on the land, and I recommend the abolition of this tax in so far as it relates to rural lands, and it must be remembered that it cannot be passed on.

Mr. CONROY: The land tax does not affect the small man.

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL: If I hold a large area of land in a district and it is worth £2 an acre and another man has a small area which is worth from £2 to £2 10s. an acre, the imposition of the land tax on my land reduces the value by the capitalised amount of the land tax, and the tax having brought my land down, it automatically reduces the value of the land held by the small man, for, if I am on the market at 30s. an acre, the other man cannot get £2 an acre for his land. I wish the Government would look at it in that way. It is not that I want to avoid taxation. It is far easier for wealthy people to pay the land tax than it is for the small man. Some time ago I bought a property on which I paid a very small deposit. In addition to interest on the whole of the purchase money I had to pay £500 a year land tax. As I got on and paid off the purchase price of that land, I did not feel the imposition of the land tax. I do not feel it to-day except in the depreciated value of the holding, for the land tax so depreciates a man's holding that he cannot often arrange finance.

Mr. W. A. Russell.]

I am very pleased to see that the Government intend to bring in an amendment of the Land Act, and I trust that when this amendment is brought in they will have due regard to the tenure of the grazing farmer, which has been depreciated by the present Land Act. Practically the whole of the country where the disastrous drought is now raging is under grazing farm tenure, and, when these people have to restock after the drought breaks, they will find that the financial companies will not accept the grazing farm tenure as security. That tenure is looked upon as doubtful security. The land is always there. We cannot take it away with us, therefore we should make the tenure of that land as good as we possibly can, and let the settlers have an opportunity of allowing the financial institutions to arrange finance for them instead of them having to come to the Government for assistance. In destroying the equity value of the land the Government have done no good to themselves nor to the settler. If, when the land tax came in, the unearned increment had been taken for the use of the people, I would have been in accord with them; but it did not come to anyone; it has been destroyed, and what is destroyed is lost. If the equity were allowed to remain in the land, the settler would have no difficulty whatever in arranging finance from any of the financial institutions already in existence, and the Government would not be asked for assistance, as he would be able to obtain that finance through the ordinary financial channels, of which we have so many in this State. I wish the Government would look at this side of the question. It is not a matter of any advantage to myself—I am speaking for the wellbeing of those people who cannot finance themselves. Men who are well off do not need so much help; it is the poor man we are driving off the land who needs the assistance.

I congratulate the Government on the good work that has been done for the men on the land by the Prickly-pear Land Commission. Our settlers have a great deal of faith in the Commission, but I would like, if possible, restrictions on the small men to be made lighter. In my district there are a good many dairy farmers on pear-infested areas who are doing the very best they can to eradicate the pear. They have to comply with the conditions imposed when they should be resting; that is, they have to work early and late, as long hours are worked in the dairying industry, and they cannot afford to pay award rates in having the pear cleared, and have to do it in their spare time. The Government should do all they can to ease the conditions in regard to these men when evidence is given that they are doing their best to clear the pear. In regard to the bigger man, I advocate no remission at all; whatever conditions are imposed should be enforced. It only means that he has to spend a little more money, and the sooner it is spent and the work is done the better it will be. The bigger men will thank the Government for having imposed these conditions on them and making them clear the land and keep it clean.

I very much regret that the Government intend to raise the salaries of hon. members. I think this is a very bad time to do this, when there is distress amongst the work-

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ing people, which will probably end in the dismissal of men from their employment. I hope the Government will see fit to leave the matter an open question so that every hon. member will have the free exercise of his opinion when the matter comes to a vote.

I notice in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech no reference is made to one of the most important matters with which the Government will have to deal—that is, the immigration agreement. Under this agreement, which has already been signed, the States between them will have the expenditure of about £34,000,000. It is, therefore, very necessary to promote a forward policy of industrial expansion and development in Queensland with a view to absorbing the increased population which will result from immigration. I advocate that a complete examination of all the resources of our State should be entered into with the advice and assistance of leading commercial men, metallurgists, and land and mining experts with a view to evolving schemes in order to carry out the provisions of this agreement, those schemes to then be submitted to the Cabinet for their final approval—the schemes to be non-political. The scheme in its entirety and the keynote of the policy of the Government in the matter should be the development of the resources of the State, giving special attention to those proposals which will make for the economical and more advantageous working of the railways. In this connection I refer to the necessary connection between the Burnett and the Downs, via Kingaroy and Bell. This connection would open up a large area of rich agricultural land, and, although the deputation to the Premier the other day did not get much ground for hope in the matter, unless it was shown then that if the connection would be economically advantageous to the working of the railways, I would like to point out in this connection that it is country where we get very few failures. If you go out West the position is different, but in the area of which I speak there are practically no failures in settlement, and I trust the Government will bear that in mind when dealing with the proposal for this connection and opening up of this land under this agreement.

Another proposal I want to deal with is the extension of the non-paying lines, which are only non-paying because they have not gone quite far enough. A case I wish to refer to is the extension from Jandowae to Burra Burra, which would mean the construction of only another 25 miles. It would tap a rich timber district and open up rich scrub land. A large number of settlers are already there, and a promise of a railway was made to them some years ago. I think it is due to them, therefore, that they should have the railway communication which they have been promised, and which is so necessary.

The other day the hon. member for Eacham stated in this House that the absence of a freehold tenure was not responsible for the position of the man on the land, but the trouble was the want of finance. I would like to inform the hon. member that tenure and finance are interdependent, and, if the tenure is good, finance is easy.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL: The hon. member for Eacham also stated that the value of any

land was determined by what it could produce. The hon. member ought to know that the actual value of land is based not only on what it will produce but also upon what rent is charged for it and its freedom from or liability to taxation. If these two factors are too high, the land becomes depreciated in value, and, notwithstanding its potential value for the purposes of production, high rents and liability to taxation may make it valueless from the economic point of view. The hon. member also stated that increased prices for commodities meant increase in production, with the result that no market could be obtained for those goods, and the result would be over-production. I agree with the hon. member; therefore, I say that we must give increased facilities to the producers by concessions to the men who are obtaining their living from the land—that is, to the men who are actually producing on living areas. Let the bigger men look after themselves. I am using my advocacy for the small men. Having been a small man, I know the difficulty they have to go through in making a living; but, if once you get them well started, and if you do not break their hearts, you will find in them a happy and contented people.

Mr. LLOYD (*Kelvin Grove*): The reference to the relations between the Commonwealth and the State Governments suggests the question which a great many Australians are now asking—in fact, nearly all Australians who take the welfare of this community seriously—Has federation been a failure? I voted for federation, and after twenty-five years' experience I think that I was justified, but only just. I was not an enthusiast in its favour. I saw a little more advantage than disadvantage in it, but only just a little more. I have not seen any improvement in the position since. Federation was achieved by what we might call a miracle of statesmanship and diplomacy. There was fiscal chaos in the Australian community. We had six tariffs in Australia, and the confusion had to be got rid of somehow. The men who really applied themselves to the solution of this task of the elimination of the confusion had to make many compromises in order to get a majority. They had to throw out baits in every direction, and one of the baits thrown out was to catch the growing Labour vote; that bait was "a thoroughly democratic Constitution." The Federal Constitution of Australia was devised not so much to meet the future needs of Australia as to suit the needs of those who sought to obtain interstate freetrade at any cost. As a result we have a customs union, and we have, perhaps, a better means of dealing with matters of defence; but beyond that there is very little to be said. The big things that the Commonwealth Government did were done in the first few years of their existence. Everything that has been done for many years past could have been very much better done by a conference of Premiers, and it is time that we considered the question of a revision of the Federal Constitution. The Australian public are not ready for unification. You might put unification on a political platform as an abstract proposal, but when the concrete application of it arises, then those who are advocating it see strong reasons for opposing it. Some of us who had unification on our platform recently have to recognise that even a limited application of it would be most undesirable and disastrous

at present. We want reform in the direction of having a less cumbersome Commonwealth Constitution. Certainly, this would be an extremely difficult thing to do, because we have vested interests to contend with. Everyone is biased. I have no doubt that, as a member of a State Parliament, I am biased in favour of the retention of State Parliaments. None of us can escape bias. But the opinions I hold now are the opinions I held long before I was a State member, or anticipated becoming a State member, and I believe that the majority of citizens outside are as far off advocating a complete system of unification as ever they were. We want to think out some kind of Constitution that will have no overlapping. All that has been done in the common interests of Australia with regard to defence, customs, and postal matters could have been done by a body elected from the representative Houses of the different Parliaments of Australia. I believe it is time we started a crusade for reform in that direction.

I must congratulate the Government on the stand taken in vetoing the proposals of the Water and Sewerage Board for a new system of rating. The Government, in that case, insisted that the policy which this party advocates should be carried out. The Government did right. In the past I have complained in this House about the apathy of the Government to metropolitan interests. I considered that the Government should have intervened when the Brisbane Tramway Trust started raising fares, but it is better late than never, and, if the Government continue the stand they have taken up, when they find that the policy of the party which supports them is being discredited by another body in control of a semi-Government concern, they will step in and see that its policy is not so discredited. Following that, I hope that before long the Government will use what power it has, or take such powers, if necessary, to investigate thoroughly the conduct of the Brisbane tramways and discover how an enterprise which paid handsome profits to a private company is now losing money.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Do you suggest that the Government should also review their own action in increasing railway fares and freights?

Mr. LLOYD: Review anything at all which may possibly throw light on any mismanagement. I regret very much that the Government found it necessary to raise railway fares and freights. I speak for the metropolis, for I do not know enough of conditions outside it. There was a time when we had to pay tolls on bridges. There was a time, too, in older countries when toll gates were placed along macadamised roads, and the individuals who used those roads had to pay for their upkeep. We have gone further than that. I do not want to give hon. members a shock, but we achieved a certain amount of communism when we substituted roads built out of public rates. I believe the time will come when we shall apply the same policy to the railways. In the meantime, we must make communication as cheap as possible, and in the metropolis it is especially necessary for the health and wellbeing of the residents therein that communication with the suburbs should be easy and cheap. We have a Fair Rents Court to deal with excessive rents that are charged to poorer

Mr. Lloyd.]

tenants. The result is that the rents in Brisbane are lower than in any other capital in Australia. The Fair Rents Court, though, is a very imperfect piece of machinery, and at times it works somewhat unfairly. The real solution of the rents question is to make the outer suburbs accessible to workers to build their own homes. The drawing away of possible tenants from the crowded inner suburbs in this manner will allow the rent question to solve itself. For that reason I very much regret that the Government had found it necessary to increase the railway fares, but necessity knows no law, and I am one of those old-fashioned persons who believe that the ledger must be squared at any cost. So long as this is part of a consistently applied scheme of economy, I will loyally stand behind the Government in putting that policy into operation.

That brings me to another question—a very delicate question. That is the question of the salaries of members of Parliament, which has been touched upon during this debate. I propose to give my individual views on the matter.

Mr. KELSO: Now we will listen to you.

Mr. LLOYD: I shall give my individual opinion. Other hon. members have previously given their individual opinions. I have already declared myself as being opposed to any increase in the salaries of hon. members at the present time, and have done so on several occasions. Certainly what I said was said in private, but it is said that a secret is something that is known only to one person, and the opinions of public men expressed in private invariably become known publicly if the matter is of sufficient interest. I find it is generally known that I am one of the members on this side of the House who are opposed to any increase in the salaries of members at the present time. If I remained silent and allowed my attitude and the reasons for my attitude to be guessed at or inferred, I might be associated with some of those people who are shunning extravagant and malignant charges, such as "A raid on the Treasury," "Legalised robbery." It is in order to dissociate myself from such charges that I am giving my opinion now. I do not for one moment doubt the integrity and the good faith of the gentlemen advocating this proposal, although I differ from them as to the practicability of it at the present time. I credit the advocates of the scheme with thinking that a higher rate of pay is necessary for the efficient discharge of their duties, and therefore in the public interest. While I concede a considerable degree of weight to the arguments in favour of this proposal, I see objections which outweigh and overwhelm all such considerations. I cannot see my way to support this proposal when I consider that everything points to a policy of severe economy being inevitable. I may explain that there is nothing to prevent my taking an individual stand at this moment. The pledge that I have signed binds me to stand by the Labour platform, and I am going to stand by it. I have perfect freedom in this matter, and to the credit of my friends on this side of the House I may say that no attempt has been made by this party to coerce me to refrain from expressing my convictions.

The case for an increase rests mainly on two facts—first of all, that members have to pay out of their own salaries expenses

necessary for the discharge of their public duties. Then there is the contention that the calling of a member of Parliament—because it has become a calling: the demands made on our time have made it a calling—is more precarious than almost any other calling. The hon. member for Burke has very convincingly shown that the net salary, especially in a constituency like his, is very much below £500 a year, which a member is supposed to receive for himself.

At 2 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. SLEAYD: The precariousness of the calling of a member of Parliament is a matter that needs no argument. Sometimes we hear safe seats spoken of. Seats are only safe so long as the present political lines of cleavage remain. In the past unforeseen questions have arisen and the strongest political parties have been split into conflicting sections by new lines of cleavage, and in such a case a member representing what may be called a safe seat may have to choose between treachery to his honest convictions and personal ruin. The question of expenses paid out of salary and the question of the precariousness of a member's position are questions right away from the salary problem, and they require separate treatment. The first is comparatively easy to remedy, and it is to be wondered at that it was not remedied years ago. The greatest anomaly is that the burden of expenses incurred in the discharge of the duty of a member of Parliament falls most unequally upon individuals who are entrusted with the same duties. I represent a compact metropolitan constituency, and my net salary need not be very far below the nominal salary, but I realise the position of others. While a member of the public service I travelled at public expense, and even in those days of rigid economy I know that the expense would have made a very big hole in one's salary. If it were possible to exchange seats and I exchanged my metropolitan seat with, say, the seat of the hon. member for Mundingbura, I should lose probably £100 a year, and an exchange with the member for Burke would probably mean the loss of a great deal more. The remedy for the expenses question is that members of Parliament should be reimbursed for expenditure actually incurred in the discharge of public duties. There should be no objection to that, even at the present time of financial stringency, as it is only asking the community to pay its just debts. With regard to precariousness, something might be done by a superannuation scheme, but it would only benefit members who had been in Parliament a long time. It is those members who suffer most by being thrown out without having anything else to depend on, because, when a man has spent a long time in Parliament, he gets out of touch with his former occupation. I have followed two occupations in my life and am now out of touch with both. I dare say other hon. members, especially those who have been here for a longer period than I have, would make the same admission. Something might be done by making it understood that members of Parliament, after their parliamentary experience, would be eligible for certain Government positions. The experience gained as a member of Parliament is an excellent training for certain positions in the public service. I have not time to go into details now, but I will substantiate what I am saying on another occasion. If it were understood

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that members of Parliament, after a certain term of experience, had preference in regard to these appointments, that would provide something which members could depend upon. The conditions, however, must not be made so attractive as to cause a member to court defeat at an election in order to get one of these positions. The precariousness of a parliamentary career, is, however, a feature which can never be eliminated. Those of us who take on parliamentary life, like those who take on military service, must be prepared to take risks. Those who are not should leave parliamentary life alone. I see nothing in the objection that the question of increased salaries for members should have been made an election issue. The introduction of such a question in an election speech would obscure more vital issues. The proposal for an increase, however just, would call for such an elaborate and detailed explanation that little else could be talked about during the campaign, and we should then have the humiliating spectacle of contending parties bidding for support by offering "to do the job for less." It has been suggested that the matter should be referred to an arbitration tribunal. This is equally objectionable. No matter who it is that decides that an increased rate of remuneration is fair and just, we ourselves have to take the responsibility of voting the money. The public expect efficiency from us, and, if an increase is necessary for efficient service, we have a right to make provision for it, if practicable. There is no reason for assuming that the public expect us to work for inadequate pay, or that the public are unwilling to allow us to be the judges of what is adequate payment. The abusive comment from outside comes mainly from traditional political opponents, who are playing the game of party politics, and who want to embarrass the Government. Then we have also a good deal of abuse from ambitious individuals who lose no opportunity of denouncing the "greedy politicians" because they are hoping to become "greedy politicians" themselves. Federal members put their salaries up to £1,000 a year, and nothing happened. The newspapers which are squealing about the present proposal said nothing during the Federal election about the increase to Federal members, so that the promoters of this proposal are certainly justified in assuming that there is public acquiescence if we think fit to raise the salaries. I admit that a good case could be made out for an increase at the present time if this question could be isolated from other matters; but it cannot be isolated. This matter is an inseparable part of a highly complex system embracing innumerable other inter-related matters, and action on the lines proposed, with respect to this part, cannot be taken without reacting on every other part of the system. Anyone examining the public statement recently made by the Premier must draw the inference that the present position is one of extreme financial stringency.

I firmly support the claim that the financial administration of this State will compare favourably with the financial administration of any other Government in Australia. We are part of a single economic unit with the other States, and we cannot to any great extent be immune from the conditions which affect them, but, through no fault of the Government, increased taxation and the greatest economy are absolutely

necessary at the present time. I am not going into the question of whether the practicable limit of taxation on individual surplus wealth has been reached, though I am inclined to think that it has not. But, even if we could go further in that direction, there would be no room for any expenditure which is not absolutely necessary for some considerable time to come.

Any representations for increased expenditure on the part of the Government, except those which are obviously acute, must, for a considerable time ahead, be turned down, and the answer must be, "No money." The present Government has been far more liberal in its treatment of Government employees than any previous Government, even when making an allowance for the increased cost of living; and I am sure that only in the very last resort will the Government adopt the reprehensible practice of levying, by deduction from salary, a special tax on Government employees. And I am sure the Government will even still further refrain from dismissing employees. Yet these things have happened in the past. They have been done by this Government, and they may have to be done again. No Government can avoid a considerable degree of unpopularity when it has to follow a policy of rigid economy, and such a policy cannot be carried out successfully without a general recognition that it is just, and to secure such recognition every means should be used to gain the support and co-operation of fair and reasonable people who are affected by such economy. Speaking from his place in this House and in the country generally, the Premier, supported of course by his Cabinet, has to bear the brunt of all this. Speaking from his place in this House he can, in the historic words of the French king, say, "The State! I am the State!" A private member, sitting behind a Government, is little more than a human voting coupon, but it is otherwise when he gets to his constituency. When I go before my electors, then I am the State, because it is only through me that they have any control over the State. I am accountable, when challenged, for every item of Government policy which I have supported, and I want to be in a position to support every item. Now, for instance, I have two large schools in my electorate very badly in need of improvements. It will take at least £10,000 to secure a reasonable degree of comfort and efficiency, and, patient man as I am, I must confess that I am becoming impatient at the delay in getting it. I am afraid I shall have to be satisfied with improvements cut down to the irreducible limit necessary for health and safety. If economies such as these are part of a consistently applied scheme of economy to square the ledger, especially with a view to preventing Government employees being thrown on a glutted labour market, then I am in a strong position in my electorate, but I should not be if I supported the proposal for increasing the salaries of members of Parliament.

In reviewing this question, I have done my best to state everything which I believe to be fair in the case which I am opposing. But my attitude is not a "Yes-No" one. In my mind the objections quite overwhelm all considerations in favour of the proposal. It has had my uncompromising objection since I first heard of it, and it will

continue to have it so long as there is a chance of its being reconsidered. I have done all I possibly could to prevent it coming here. If it does come here, I shall vote against it, and try to induce others to vote against it. But I still venture to hope that it will not come. We are now in possession of facts that were not known, or certainly were not familiar to us at the time the proposal was mooted. I refer to the facts that have been made known by statements by the Treasurer. I appeal to hon. members who advocate this scheme to reconsider the position in the light of this new evidence. I am not asking that any notice should be taken of the malignant yapping outside, but that due weight should be given to the facts that we have had placed before us. By all means let relief be granted to members who have to defray expenses out of their salaries. That can be done at once. There can be no objection to reimbursing expenditure incurred on public duty. Make the nominal salary the net salary, and carry on until the question can be approached without incurring the opprobrium inseparable from action at the present time. That is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker, and I must most sincerely thank hon. members for hearing me with the patience that they have displayed. I know that I am up against a view very strongly held, and I appreciate the courtesy that has been shown to me.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): At the outset I desire to express my very great pleasure at the news contained in the "Daily Standard" this afternoon, wherein it is intimated that the gloom which has been over this city for the last fortnight or so in connection with a threatened industrial upheaval is likely to pass away. I am glad to learn that in this case arbitration has succeeded, and there is the possibility that after consultation work will continue smoothly, with satisfaction to both the employer and the employee.

This morning, when the hon. member for Oxley was speaking, the Premier, in an endeavour to secure credit for this State as against Victoria, interjected that the people of Victoria were leaving the land and drifting to the cities. Thanks to the hon. member for Warwick, I am in a position to refute that statement. The following information contained in this morning's "Daily Mail" proves conclusively that the remark by the Premier is untrue.

"VICTORIAN CROPS.

"INCREASED WHEAT AREAS.

"Melbourne, Wednesday.—The estimated area under wheat in Victoria for the 1926-27 season is 3,043,800 acres, as against 2,743,858 acres last season. According to the Government statistician (Mr. A. M. Laughton), the area under oats has also advanced from 1,196,905 to 1,301,000 acres, and that under barley from 31,151 to 39,100 acres."

Those figures show that the total acreage has increased in Victoria this season by 411,986 acres.

Mr. BULCOCK: That proves absolutely nothing.

Mr. ROBERTS: It shows that the people in Victoria are on the land and working the land. What is the position so far as Queensland is concerned? The following figures

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that I have taken are the latest figures—1924—as prepared by the Queensland Government Statistician, for it is not my desire to quote any that are not authentic:—

	Acres.
Area under cultivation ...	1,069,837
Fallow	92,112
Broken	10,545
Lying idle	102,545

I desire hon. members to note the last figures, as they denote the land that has been worked, but is now lying idle. What are we to take from those figures? On the one hand, the area under cultivation in Victoria is increasing to a very large extent, while in Queensland land is going out of cultivation. We all know that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are wrong again, and you know it.

Mr. ROBERTS: We all know that there is not as much land under cultivation in Queensland as formerly. I know that from experience in the East Toowoomba electorate, which I represent. I met a man in Toowoomba a few weeks ago, who related to me his position in regard to the agricultural and dairying industries. He said that he had seven sons in his family, and that, unfortunately, every one had drifted to the cities for occupation; in some instances they had obtained Government positions. His land was up for sale, but the uncertainty existing with the man on the land with this Government in power was illustrated by the fact that no one wished to purchase the land.

Mr. BULCOCK: The majority of the land about Toowoomba is freehold.

Mr. ROBERTS: It is not the question of tenure; it is the unfortunate position of the State under the régime of this Government.

Mr. COLLINS: Don't you know that no additional area can be put under sugar-cane without a permit having first been obtained?

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. ROBERTS: Dealing with the Speech from the Throne, I wish to say that I can quite understand some of the remarks of the mover and seconder in this debate. I very much regret that this Speech, which was prepared at a time when we had His Excellency the Governor-General in Queensland, did not contain any reference thereto. I appreciate very much the early evidence of the desire of His Excellency to become acquainted with this great State of Queensland, which forms part of the Commonwealth, as for the time being he is the representative of the King.

During the course of this debate hon. members on the Government side have attempted to express their gratification as a result of the recent election, and they claim that they represent the people of this State. By interjection a couple of days ago I stated they were representing a majority of the electorates which had been carved out in the interests of the Government. When the Government appealed to the people of Queensland on a direct issue, the people voting as a whole turned them down. What was the position in 1917, when the question of the abolition of the Upper House was submitted to the people? They then voted as follows:—

For	116,196
Against	179,105
Majority against ...	62,909

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will have a majority against the Bruce Government shortly.

Mr. DASH: We have had four elections since then.

Mr. ROBERTS: Those figures show the opinion of the people, yet the wishes of the people on that occasion were brushed aside by the Government. They did not stand by their own platform. I heard the hon. member for Mundingburra interject a few minutes ago that we have had four elections since. I will take only one—the 1923 election. The position then was that supporters of the Country-Nationalist party recorded votes to the number of 198,941, while those in favour of the present Government recorded votes to the number of 134,562—a majority of votes against the Socialist Government of Queensland of 14,379. And yet they talk about one vote one value! They actually had forty-three constituencies in their favour and twenty-nine against, notwithstanding the fact that there was a majority of 14,369 against them. Again, where did they come in the Commonwealth elections? They failed on two occasions to get a seat in Queensland for the Senate, and in the House of Representatives they actually lost a seat. With the support and power of this Government behind them to make that seat safe for the Labour ex-Premier, that gentleman failed to win that seat. There was no packing of constituencies in that case, but there is a packing of constituencies so far as the Queensland Government are concerned. The position is causing the Government to buy votes, yet it has been hurled across the floor of this House that we have no right to use party funds. I have nothing to say against the National Union utilising its funds in aid of a party any more than I have against unionists using their funds in the interests of the party to which they subscribe their allegiance; but no man should be called upon to pay a contribution which is to be used for political purposes before he is allowed the right to work. That is what I object to. So long as matters are fair and above-board I do not mind. Before working men in Queensland are allowed the right to work they have to pay their £1 or 25s. to a union, and that union uses that money for political purposes. Every man in the State, whether he comes here by immigration or is born within the State, should have the right to work.

I was dealing with the position of the Premier. If I did not know the hon. gentleman as well as I do, I might pay more attention to him. I was rather amused with the hon. member for Bowen yesterday when he said he had been looking for years—I do not know whether he means the last eleven years—for a good strong man, and that he had failed to find that man. So have I. We have not had a good strong man as Premier. We have had a man with legal knowledge, another with any amount of bluff, and now we have a bigger bluffer than ever we had before. (Government interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I remind the hon. member that personal reflections are quite irregular.

Mr. ROBERTS: I think I am quite right in using the word "bluffer."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not right.

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr. ROBERTS: The Premier questions where the money comes from to assist our party funds. Will he say that he has not used the funds of this State to bolster up his Government at the last election? Will he explain these figures:—

Expenditure from loan fund—		£
March, 1924	... ..	262,920
March, 1925	... ..	247,918
March, 1926 (just prior to the election	... ..	771,807

Will he deny that the Railway Department was told to put on every available man in the month of April? Will the Deputy Premier deny it? He cannot deny it. There was a leaflet sent out from the Cabinet to the effect that every available man was to be put into employment. What did this big strong man say at Cairns? Addressing the electors of Queensland, when he wanted every vote to count in his interests, referring to the Dawson Valley scheme, he said—

“Three railways were under construction—Rannes to Monto, Mundubbera to Monto, and Many Peaks to Monto. They would be continued until the lines were completed.”

And to-day in the papers we see that Mr. W. J. Riordan, the secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, admits the position that has already arisen. Within three months of the election 500 men in one of these railway construction camps have been paid off. And now the hon. member for Toowoomba can have a “chip” if he likes. He knows that the same thing applied in the two previous elections with respect to the Willowburn works. There were 187 men employed at Toowoomba prior to the election in 1923, and that number was reduced to nine for two years and six months—from 1923 to 1926—and increased again to over 150 just prior to the election in 1926. The Premier talked about business axioms. A business man undertaking a work such as that would see that capital was available to finish the job. I realise the importance of that work at Toowoomba and the need for it, and I say that business methods should have been adopted so that the work could have been completed. We have a number of railways in a similar position—the work completed to a certain extent, and the Government paying interest on the money. The Secretary for Railways feels a certain amount of gratification because he, as head of the Railway Department, is not called upon to pay the interest until he takes over the completed job. In the meantime, unfortunately, it is charged against the people of Queensland and all of us—Opposition and Labour members, workers and capitalists—are called upon to pay this money. It is very much to be regretted.

I do not want to leave the Premier yet, because I rather glory in the talk about the “big strong man.” It was flashed from every platform on which hon. members of the Government spoke. We have men on the other side who do not hesitate to decry men on this side, and without justification. I say the members on this side are just as able, just as willing, and just as honest as any

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member sitting behind the Government. Here is what the Premier said at Herber-ton—

“He wanted to warn them that Labour was going to win, and, if the electors of the Herbert were as foolish as to return the Tory candidate, then he as Premier of Queensland could not be expected to give any attention to the future needs of the Herbert.”

I am quite sure that you, Mr. Speaker, could not subscribe to such a doctrine as that. Would a man who was worthy of the position of Premier make such an utterance if he weighed his words? What about the so-called humanitarian attitude of the Government? Compare the way they dealt with the workers on the eve of the election with the way they have dealt with them since! On 15th March last there were a great many unemployed workmen in Brisbane, and they sent a letter to the Premier, in reply to which he said he had not got time to meet them. Parliament was not then in session. They again appealed to the hon. gentleman, and they wrote on the 24th April, in the middle of the election campaign, when the Premier was travelling night and day to different electorates to speak in the interests of his candidates. He actually could find time then to meet those poor unfortunate men who were out of employment in Brisbane. He could not find time to meet these men in March, but he met them a fortnight before the election took place, and said, “I will see if I can find you some work and if I can get you something to eat.” What did the Secretary for Public Works say a month before that? He said, “You chaps are all big strong men. What do you come to Brisbane for; why don't you stay in the country?” They came to Brisbane because the Government had made it impossible by their legislation and administration for them to find employment in the country, and they had to come to the city. That was the unfortunate position. That is a statement of the facts so far as the Premier is concerned. I was justified in using the statement which you, Mr. Speaker, say I am not privileged to use in regard to the hon. gentleman. The hon. member for Bowen said yesterday afternoon, “We are going step by step.” This is the same hon. member who, in December, 1915, said—

“They were going step by step, and if, after they had been in power three years, the same number of persons had to get relief, it would then be the duty of the Opposition to criticise them.”

What is the position now? A few months ago we had a Commission sitting in Brisbane which called Mr. Walsh, the Director of Labour, to give evidence, and that gentleman gave the following astounding figures with regard to unemployment—

UNEMPLOYED.

1924—				
August ... ..	...	...	...	7,167
September ... ..	...	...	...	7,176
October ... ..	...	...	...	7,775
November ... ..	...	...	...	8,119
December ... ..	...	...	...	9,492
1925—				
January	12,821
February	12,453
March	11,811
April	11,662
May	10,827
June	9,958

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Those figures are a disgrace to us. They were given in a sworn statement made before a Commission in Brisbane by the Director of Labour. What about the statement of the hon. member for Bowen in 1915 that there ought to be some improvement after three years? The Government have been in power over eleven years, and we have that large amount of unemployment according to the figures I have just given.

Then again we had the sorry spectacle this afternoon—and I refer to it with a certain amount of regret—of a man occupying a seat in this House raising his voice in protest against one of the proposals of the Government. But what is it that counts? The only thing that counts is a vote, and where shall we find that hon. member when a vote is taken on that question? Time and again we have had similar happenings. We saw a member for whom I had a certain amount of respect—the hon. member for Fitzroy—taking up a certain attitude on the liquor question. Where was he on the liquor question when a vote was taken?

Mr. HARTLEY: Where were you on the liquor question, you mean?

Mr. ROBERTS: In spite of all he had said, when a vote was taken he was standing behind the Government, because he had signed a pledge and had given allegiance to a platform.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are wrong.

Mr. ROBERTS: To-day we see a similar thing. Much as I regret to say it, we see the hon. member for Kelvin Grove standing up in his place and making certain remarks about the salary question. What is the position of that hon. member? I will illustrate it. Where was the Premier in regard to the 44-hour week? In 1925 he addressed the Australian Workers' Union about it. He said that he was right up against it because we had not got the money. I am not in favour of long hours. I venture to say that in these days there is no man who wants to work men long hours; I recognise that. But on that occasion the Premier said that we had not got the money, and later on in this House he said something of the same kind; yet, notwithstanding the wonderful speech he made in this House when the Bill went through, he did not vote against it. Then what about the salary grab? The hon. gentleman said that he was up against it. Here is an instance where, if this man were a strong man as I estimate men, he would say: “It is not to be done, or you can get a new Premier.” That would be the action of what I call a strong man. There is no reason why he should come over on this side, and, if he were a strong man, he would soon be leading the party over there again. On the 44-hour week question he showed that he was just a piece of the party, and no doubt he will do the same thing or this question. Under those conditions, how are we going to get anywhere at all?

What do we find about the Government? Do we not find that everything they have touched has gone back, has been a miserable failure? Take the State stations. Before the Government went into that business the stations which they acquired were profitable undertakings to the people in charge of them; they were paying. The Government took them over, and after a few years they

have got into such a position that the Government could not realise on them: a tremendous loss was suffered by the State. The Government have also followed the tragic policy of dispensing with their servants at the age of sixty-five years, and intimating to them that they can avail themselves of the old-age pension. In 1912, Mr. Theodore said—

“The most skilful and useful amongst the employees would make up for the shortcomings of the old men or the men suffering from infirmity. That would be the most reasonable and equitable solution of the difficulty, and it was a solution that would probably be carried out if all our industries were carried on under State management.”

Later he sat with a Government that issued an edict that every man should be retired from the service on reaching the age of sixty-five. To-day the Government realise that they have made a mistake in that policy, and I am glad to see that they are retracing their steps in that regard. Their action in admitting their mistake will mean conferring one of the best benefits that they have extended to the State to date, and I congratulate them on the step they have taken.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That has always been done.

Mr. MAXWELL: Look at the number of teachers who were dismissed from the service!

Mr. HYNES: That was under a regulation introduced by a Tory Government.

Mr. ROBERTS: Quite a lot has been said about pamphlets that were issued during the election campaign.

Mr. HYNES: Give us something new.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not going to make a speech to suit the hon. member for Townsville.

Mr. HARTLEY: Make one to suit yourself, and we shall get all the votes we want.

Mr. ROBERTS: I desire to refer to these pamphlets, because I realise that those in Government employ pay more attention to “Hansard” than they do to election dodgers. One pamphlet points out that the unemployed worker is entitled to the benefits of the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act. Now a number of workers who are only casually employed are not entitled to any benefits under that Act. The Act applies only to employees who are covered by an award of the Arbitration Court. Therefore the circular is not true in the assertion that it makes. I have here, also, an election cartoon. No man objects to being caricatured, provided the inference to be drawn is not an unfair one. This cartoon depicts what is intended to be the hon. member for Wynnum, standing near the gates of a hospital, when a person intended to represent the Home Secretary is asked, “Please, is there room for my sick child in the hospital?” The answer is, “No; we cannot take any more, because Mr. Barnes refused £13,000.” Fancy placing that before any elector in Queensland! In Brisbane we have the Diamantina hospital. Hon. members opposite have spoken at length about the humanitarian legislation of the Government.

I asked a question the other day of the Home Secretary in regard to the Diamantina hospital, and was informed that there were

210 applications for admission to that institution; there had been 203 passed by the Government medical officer as fit subjects for the institution, and of that number only 111 had been admitted. I asked that question because, unfortunately, it had been brought under my notice in Toowoomba that a youth, about fourteen years of age, had come to Brisbane, been examined by the Government medical officer, and had been classed as a fit subject for Diamantina, with a possibility of recovering if he was admitted. I have had the case before the Home Office, and they have admitted that my statement is correct, and that, unfortunately, there are ninety-two somewhat similar persons also awaiting admission.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Was he refused admission to any other hospital?

Mr. ROBERTS: All I can say is that the Government medical officer said that he was a fit subject for Diamantina, and that the youth, if treated there, would have a possibility of recovering. As against that—and this has occurred adjacent to my electorate and would benefit my people so I have nothing to fear in that regard—at Toowoomba, on the eve of the election, with a great flourish of trumpets, the Government announced their intention of expending £23,000 on a maternity hospital. That expenditure is before its time. I say that because it is on record that in Toowoomba we have one of the most efficient hospitals in the State, and, so far as results are concerned, there has not been a single death of any child following birth in that hospital.

Mr. LLEWELYN: That statement is not true.

Mr. ROBERTS: If there is a shortage of money, that money could be well expended in other directions. I am not objecting to money being spent in Toowoomba, but I want to know that it will be spent on work for which there is a definite purpose. Under those circumstances the position is to be regretted.

I want to say a word or two now about humane legislation. The Government claim that they were returned to the Treasury benches again on account of their humanitarian legislation. The late Hon. T. J. Ryan, when Premier, said on one occasion that, when a good point was made, it was worth repeating over and over again. There has been a lot of reference during this debate to the Workers' Dwellings Act. The hon. member for Wynnum, who is sitting on my left, was responsible in the Kidston Government for the finest piece of legislation put on a statute-book in the Commonwealth, and it is being freely used by the people of this State; and it would be more extensively used by the people if there were more money and more artisans. Unfortunately, if you go to the department administering the Workers' Dwelling Act and talk about an application for a home, you will probably find that you may get your plan in from four to six months.

Mr. FARRELL: That is ridiculous.

Mr. HYNES: Are you not interested in a building society, and are you not putting out some propaganda for it?

Mr. ROBERTS: You are told that it does not do to put up too many workers' dwellings in the city of Brisbane as there

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are too many jobs offering for artisans. That is, unfortunately, the position through the lack of skilled artisans. We know that, and hon. members opposite cannot deny it. The manager of the workers' dwellings made that statement to me only three weeks ago. We know that in Queensland to-day a number of artisans are getting considerably more than the rates awarded by the Board of Trade and Arbitration, because there is a shortage in their particular kind of labour. Continuing on the question of humanitarian legislation, we have the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, and the Agricultural Bank Act. None of those measures was in any way due to the efforts of the Labour party, who were not in power when those Acts were placed on the statute-book. Then we have the magnificent old-age pension scheme, which was brought in by the Kidston Government. Pensions also were paid in Queensland for a considerable time before the advent of the Labour Government.

It is said that the Government have endeavoured to lessen the cost of living. We know that every time we go to the Arbitration Court it is on the assumption that the cost of living has increased. Only last week I saw an advertisement in the Toowoomba "Chronicle" intimating that for the future bread in the city of Toowoomba would be sold at the rate of 6½d. per loaf. That was over the seal of Mr. Gillies, one of the members of the Board of Trade and Arbitration. Is it not a remarkable fact that bread should be dearer in the city of Toowoomba than in the city of Brisbane, bearing in mind the fact that Toowoomba is one of the centres of the wheat-growing industry? There is something wrong. Bread, at any rate, should be as cheap in the city of Toowoomba as it is in Brisbane.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I agree with you there.

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

Mr. ROBERTS: Well, I regret it, sir. (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): The hon. member for East Toowoomba said amongst other things that he believed that the people of Queensland read "Hansard." If they do read "Hansard," that is the best explanation we can have as to why the hon. member for East Toowoomba and his colleagues are still sitting on the Opposition benches. However, I did not rise to deal with that question.

It has become fashionable in this Parliament to use Victoria as a contrast to Queensland, and Opposition members are prone to bring forward statements to the notice of this House indicating that Victoria occupies a much better position financially and economically than Queensland. The latest recruit to that doctrine is the hon. member for East Toowoomba. This morning the Premier stated, in interjection to the hon. member for Oxley, that people were leaving freehold lands in Victoria and going to the cities, and the hon. member for East Toowoomba presented certain figures to this House to indicate that the statement by the Premier was not correct. I have in my hand the Victorian "Year Book" for 1924-25, which is the latest publication issued on this question by the Victorian Government. I find in relation to the question dealt with

by the hon. member for East Toowoomba that with regard to crops, the position as stated by the hon. member is incorrect. The actual position differs mightily from his statement. Possibly the hon. member is quoting something that he did not quite grasp, or he did not read with that care which it is necessary to exercise before making a public statement.

At 3 p.m.,

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

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member suggested that the agricultural expansion in Victoria had been phenomenal, and that certain crops were being planted ever so much more extensively in Victoria to-day than they were in past years, the inference being that, while Victoria was establishing and extending an agricultural policy, we were doing just the reverse, and were not allowing our arable land to be cultivated because, it is alleged, certain restrictive legislation has been placed in the way of the farmer which is having a detrimental effect on cultivation. Take the crops that the hon. member dealt with. Wheat, in Victoria, in 1924-1925 occupied an acreage of 2,700,000 acres, but even as far back as 1915-1916 wheat occupied an acreage in that State of 3,679,000 acres. It is merely a question of seasonal fluctuation apparently, and not a steadily increasing agricultural cultivation policy so far as that State is concerned. Now let us take oats. I think the hon. gentleman dealt with that crop as well. We find that last year 517,000 acres were planted in Victoria, but as far back as 1919, 519,000 acres of that crop were planted. Then in regard to barley, while last year's total acreage was 63,000 acres, in 1922, 102,000 acres of that cereal were planted. So it is with potatoes. As far back as 1915, 73,000 acres of potatoes were planted, as against 61,000 last year. In the case of hay we find that in 1915 up to 1,330,000 acres were planted, while last year only 1,120,000 acres were planted. These statistics tend to support the argument that there is a gradual decrease of agricultural production, not only in Queensland, but in every other State in the Commonwealth, and practically in every country in the world.

We might go further, and look at this question from the point of view from which it should be looked at. It is no use stating the bare fact that agricultural production is diminishing in the various States of the Commonwealth. It is, and we know it is, but there are more reasons than one for that, and the last reason to which any sane individual who has a knowledge of agricultural economics would attribute the fact that there is a falling off in production is, that it is due to the legislation of the Government. There is nothing more quickly influenced by the law of supply and demand than primary produce. You might bolster up other industries by artificial means, but in the final analysis primary production has, to use a colloquialism, to stand on its own feet; and since that is so, so let us examine the reason why there is a diminution in agricultural activities, not only in Queensland, but in every State of the Commonwealth and every country in the world. Primarily we may say that there is a diminution of the actual acreage under cultivation, because, as a result of the more scientific methods adopted, it is found that greater production can be

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obtained from a smaller acreage than was the case in years gone by. With the use of fertilisers and the more scientific application of agricultural theory it stands to reason that the area is not going to be so great as was the case in years gone by, when the farmer put under crop more than he could reasonably look after in order that he might reap sufficient to enable him to gain a competence.

Hon. members opposite are continually talking about the drift to the cities, and pointing to Queensland as a hideous example in this particular direction, and at the same time we are having commodity boards and various other artificial boards set up in order that we may assist in the marketing of the products that are being raised in Australia. We all realise that the home market is the best market. We realise that the Australian consumption of Australian products is the most desirable economic equation that we could desire to achieve; but on the other hand we have to recognise that the setting up of false standards, so that we may be able to export and compete with other countries, does not indicate a very desirable tendency so far as agricultural expansion is concerned, and that has been directly reflected by the number of men who are leaving the land because they realise that even with these artificial aids, so long as production is greater than home consumption and so long as there are other agricultural countries in close proximity to the main markets of the world, they will necessarily be handicapped. It is not a political equation at all. The equation is purely one of what we can get for our produce when we land it on the other side of the world. The hon. member for Carnarvon says, "Why not have the Paterson scheme?" The Paterson scheme is all right, but it is merely a subterfuge, and so long as the people of Australia do not understand it they will stand for it. The Paterson scheme means that the people in Australia pay 2d. or 3d. a pound more for their dairy produce, so that the people in England can get the produce grown in Australia at a cheaper rate. In a final analysis that is what all these schemes mean. So long as we produce in excess of our requirements from an agricultural point of view, so long will one of two things obtain. Either the man who produces will not get the fair value for the thing he produces, or the Australian public, by subsidising export, will have to pay more than is being paid on the other side of the world. Should there be, on the other hand, any shortage in the centres of the world where the prices are determined, and should prices be higher there than they are here, would our friends of the Country party advocate that the Australian figures should remain? No; they will stand for international parity, irrespective of the fact that during the time we have had material for export the Australian consuming public have been obliged to contribute very substantial sums of money in order that the export trade may be cultivated, developed, and maintained.

Let me deal with another phase of this question. Hon. members opposite, representing, in the main, farming constituencies, during the whole progress of this debate have been condemning the 10 per cent. increase on the freights and fares over our railways. I am very much with the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, who earlier in the day said that he bowed to the inevitable in this par-

ticular regard. Hon. members opposite have been saying that the farmer is hit. They have been isolating the farmer—taking the farmer as the only section of the community who is apparently penalised by this increase in fares and freights. It is obvious that hon. members opposite do not think in terms of the equation of community; they think in terms of the farmer, and suggest that it is only the farmer who is being called upon to bear some of the adversity through which the State is passing at the present time. Not one word has emanated from hon. members opposite about the artisan or the workman who is compelled to pay a little more for his weekly ticket in order that he may proceed to and from work. But the equation is fair throughout the community, and I cannot see that any section should be singled out for commiseration, as has been done by hon. members opposite.

Mr. COSTELLO: The farmer is not earning the basic wage in many cases.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member talks about the basic wage so far as the farmer is concerned, but he knows that under the legislation created by this party we have made some endeavour to give the farmer the basic wage; and the farmer only has to organise his own product in order to get the full result of his labour. The hon. member knows, and we all know, that, while these hon. members have come into the House and pretended that they stand in favour of farmers' organisation and all that sort of thing, they have covertly attacked all that legislation, and have by sinister means and innuendo, and by whispering amongst their colleagues and the farmers with whom they come in contact, done their damndest to kill that system of organisation. Why? Because they do not believe in organisation, and they want a free market so that certain individuals may be enabled to exploit the farmer in the future as the farmer has been exploited in the past. It is all very well to come into this Chamber and say, "We stand for this system of organisation." The true and practical test of their conviction in this particular regard lies in the direction of the support which they have given to the legislation in which they profess to believe, and trying them by that test. Weighing them in that balance they are found wanting.

Now I want to pass on to another question, which is very closely related to that with which I have been dealing. I want to say a few words about the pastoral position in this State. At the outset I would like to say that in the election which we have just won it is a remarkable thing that nearly half the area of the State held by Labour members was not contested. I refer now to the pastoral seats held by the five members, of whom I was one, who were returned unopposed.

Mr. MORGAN: You know why you were returned unopposed.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Murilla reminds me that I know why we were returned unopposed. I do know why we were returned unopposed—because, as representatives of our constituencies, we gave our people satisfaction and a fair deal. No other question was involved. The returning of this party to power on this occasion, I believe, marks a new era in

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the pastoral settlement of Western Queensland. I was very much afraid that, if this party had not been returned to power, the wheels of progress in the Western areas of our State would have been so effectively choked by extensions of leases of pastoral holdings that there would be no closer settlement for some considerable period of time—in short, until the Labour party regained the Treasury benches. I therefore think that it is particularly worthy of commendation that we have been returned so that we may put our policy into operation in the big pastoral areas of this State. During the lifetime of this Parliament many millions of acres of the best pastoral areas in the State will fall in to the Crown, and I unhesitatingly predict that the Crown will avail itself of that land as the opportunity occurs, and in availing itself will settle many dozens of families in areas where at the present time the earnings from the land are going overseas into the pockets of English shareholders of Queensland pastoral companies.

I know that a very grave position will arise out of this drought in the West. I venture to say that, when I tell hon. members that in the main town of my electorate there have been only three inches of rain this year, even members of the Opposition must be convinced that the position is very, very acute, and that the losses which are going to occur in the Western areas are going to be phenomenal, whilst in addition there will be no natural increase in stock to make good those losses. I know that many of our small selectors in these areas are in very great difficulty, and I would like to take this opportunity of appealing to the Government—the Secretary for Public Lands more particularly—to extend as much latitude as is consistent with good government to those individuals who are hard hit by the drought in order that they may have the opportunity to recoup themselves, and in so doing in the course of time recoup the State.

A good deal has been said during this debate about the conduct of the railways. I have been out in the West quite recently and one naturally under those circumstances meets people of all shades of political opinion. I want to assure the House that from station owners down everybody was at one in their praise of the manner in which the Railway Department had handled the difficult proposition arising out of the drought. True there were late trains, and true in some instances it was almost impossible to guarantee that you would be at any particular place on the railway line at any particular time. But hon. members should take into consideration that where one train had been moving on the Central-Western line in normal times five trains were moving, and are moving during the abnormal period of drought pressure. Everybody out West admits that the Railway Department has done magnificent work in relieving the situation and coping with the position that arose in taking starving stock away and bringing fodder where it was impossible to shift stock or find agistment for them. When we come to consider that over 2,000,000 sheep were shifted from the Central-Western areas of our State, I think even the most violent critic of the Railway Department will realise that the work was efficiently and effectively done under great difficulties. I believe that the jibes and sneers that are continually

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coming from hon. members opposite involving the integrity and efficiency of railway men are more than a little bit overdone. Had it not been for the loyal co-operation of the railway men this problem could not have been tackled. It has been tackled, is being tackled, and will continue to be tackled, so long as the drought lasts. The work that has been performed in that regard stands as a monument to the credit of the railway employees and the executive heads in the Central division.

We have had a great deal of talk about the public debt, and again Victoria has been hailed as an example to follow. The increase in the public debt of our State is by no means terrifying when we take in contrast the increase in the public debt of Victoria from which the hon. member for Murilla peregrinated, and so did I. We find that the increase in the public debt since 1900 in Victoria has been 144 per cent., which is a far greater ratio of increase than has been experienced in Queensland. We also find that Victoria is charged a higher rate of interest on the public debt than Queensland is paying for her financial accommodation in the form of loans overseas, speaking volumes for the security and tangibility of Queensland securities.

Mr. MORGAN: Not during the last ten years.

Mr. BULCOCK: Another fashion which has grown up with the Trojans of democracy sitting on the other side of the House is the disposition to sneer at humanitarian measures. Several hon. members opposite during this debate have sneered at the Government for the humanitarian measures they have introduced. The latest gentleman to do that was the hon. member for East Toowoomba. Tears were running down his cheeks while he was condemning the Government for having introduced humanitarian measures.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true.

Mr. BULCOCK: I do not propose to traverse the ground that one might ordinarily and legitimately traverse in applauding this Government for many of the humanitarian measures that have been placed on the statute-book. I simply want to say one thing. Humanitarian measures in the main connote social progress. This party is being condemned for its humanitarian conception of its duty. When this party first came into office the infantile mortality of this State was the highest in the Commonwealth. We introduced certain humanitarian measures, translating our ideals to the statute-book so far as circumstances would permit. The logical outcome of the humanitarian conception of our duty is that to-day the infantile mortality of Queensland is the lowest in the Commonwealth.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The infantile mortality in Queensland is, with one exception, the lowest in the world.

Mr. BULCOCK: I do not think it is necessary to traverse the question any longer. I simply want to say that our humanitarian legislation amply justifies itself, if it only means that it has saved some of the most valuable units in our community—the future citizens of our State—those who are born into our midst.

This morning we were treated to a speech by the hon. member for Oxley. What surprises me most about the hon. member

for Oxley is the fact that he is so prone to condemn, and is of so little use in offering any constructive suggestion. The hon. member time and again rises in his place in this House and hits right and left, saying that this is wrong and that is wrong; but he rarely offers any practical solution in order that we may overcome the difficulties that are confronting us. It was rather refreshing to hear the hon. member espousing the cause of Communism. That is not remarkable, because the hon. member for Oxley has espoused nearly every lost political cause that has come within his ambit. (Government laughter.)

The hon. member for Murrumba, speaking during this debate, had something to say about the possibilities and potentialities of the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme. "Speaking as one," he said, "who knows something about irrigation schemes, I do not think that the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme is going to be a success." The same things have been said against every big irrigation scheme that has ever been projected, and, no doubt, if the hon. member for Murrumba were in Egypt, he would condemn the big Assouan scheme on the ground that it was interfering with the laws of nature and the determinations of the Almighty. I do not share the opinion of the hon. member for Murrumba. I do not recollect whether he took advantage of the parliamentary visit to the Dawson Valley and saw what was projected and what was in the course of construction there; but I do not think the hon. member could have been a member of that party or he would not have committed himself to the statement he made on the occasion referred to. I trust that this scheme will be proceeded with, because it is totally necessary that it should be proceeded with. Apart from the mere merit it may have as an irrigation scheme—and none of us can really express much of an opinion concerning the possibility of the scheme, because irrigation schemes and irrigation settlements are the most treacherous things in the world—the huge inland sea which will be created by the Nathan Dam will have a very beneficial effect on the rainfall of the pastoral areas of Central Queensland. That is a well sustained theory, and I believe it will operate in that direction. Practically every irrigation settlement becomes a success in time, and no big or famous irrigation settlement that I know of has ever been a success at its inception—and when first used for agricultural purposes—because the conditions change so in the course of time, and the changing properties of the soil, due to irrigation and various other factors which have to be taken into consideration, require a few years of experimentation before the soil can be worked to its fullest capacity and capability.

Before I conclude I want to pay a tribute to the Department of Public Instruction for the very fine work that is being done by it in the western areas of our State. Perhaps I have a particular reason for the remarks I shall make, and perhaps I need to qualify some of the remarks I made during the last session of Parliament in regard to educational matters. At that time I was very sceptical about the success of the correspondence system of tuition. Since then I have had an opportunity of examining its activi-

ties in more minute detail, and I am now of the opinion that the system is doing invaluable work in our State. Further than that, I hope the system will be still further extended. At the same time I express the hope that the system of itinerant teachers will not be dispensed with. If itinerant teachers went once or twice a year to the students undergoing correspondence tuition, and so supplemented that correspondence tuition. I believe the whole problem of educating the children in our back-blocks would be overcome. Although I believe that neither the correspondence system nor the itinerant system could be successful by itself, I do believe a combination of the two would be entirely successful.

I notice that a dental car is being fitted out and will be taken to the interior of the State. I commend the Department of Public Instruction for that venture. I know nothing at the present moment of greater importance than the health of the children of the State, and the care of the teeth of those children is a most necessary thing. I may be accused of being parochial, but I do hope that the car will visit some of the towns in my electorate, where dentists are never seen.

During the past few weeks those representing Western constituencies have been bombarded with letters with respect to the proposed rate to be struck by the Rockhampton Harbour Board. I understand that it is to be $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £1, and will extend as far inland as Tambo, and even to Longreach, in the electorate of my friend, the hon. member for Mitchell. I suggest to the Premier that this matter should be examined with minute care before the board is permitted to collect the new rate which it proposes to impose. I have looked into the situation, and I find that officially the Government know nothing about it up to the present time. If the Government give the matter that minute examination which I recommend, I feel satisfied that, while the Rockhampton Harbour Board must be allowed to find some way out of its present financial embarrassment, a more equitable basis for raising its revenue can be arrived at. I trust the Premier will give the question due consideration when it comes before him.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Before proceeding with my criticism on the Address in Reply. I wish to deal with one or two important matters touched on by the hon. member for Barcoo. First of all, the hon. member gave figures to show that the fodder crops in Victoria and other States have not been so great recently as they were ten or twelve years ago. No doubt, owing to the encroachment of motor traction, fodder growing will gradually diminish in Australia, as its principle consumer, the horse, is gradually being eliminated.

Mr. BULCOCK: I quoted cereal as well as fodder crops.

The PREMIER: You now blame the motor-car. Previously you blamed the Labour party.

Mr. MORGAN: Another important matter was the reference by the hon. member to the Paterson scheme. The Paterson scheme is to the producer what the Arbitration Court is to the worker, and what the tariff

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is to the manufacturer. The Arbitration Court is responsible for protecting the worker and seeing that he gets a fair day's pay for his day's work. The tariff protects the manufacturer, and incidentally [3.30 p.m.] increases the cost of everything the farmer needs, and seeing that the worker obtains protection by artificial means and the manufacturer obtains protection by a very high tariff, it is only right and proper that they should pay a reasonable price to the producer, and the Paterson scheme is one way of giving to the producer a better price for his butter than he would otherwise receive.

The hon. member also referred to the fact that five of the principal grazing electorates in Queensland were uncontested during the recent election; but the hon. member did not give the true reason. We all know that in large grazing areas, where little or no farming is carried on, on every station there is the boss and his wife, who vote Country party or Nationalist, as the case may be, and there are ten or twelve employees who vote Labour. But the very moment these large areas are subdivided these constituencies are lost to the Labour party. We had an illustration in the Balonne electorate recently in that respect. In that electorate, which is a large grazing electorate, the candidate standing in the interests of the Country-Nationalist party reduced the Labour majority considerably. The moment that grazing electorates are subdivided and become farming or small grazing areas, the opportunity of successfully contesting those seats will certainly be in our favour.

I listened attentively to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, and I have come to the conclusion that the Speech was the most "wishy-washy" that I have ever listened to during my seventeen years' experience in this House. During the past ten or eleven years that the Labour Government have been in power we have experienced a period of borrow, a period of boom, and now we are on the verge of experiencing a period of burst. The Premier would lead us to believe that from now on everything must be so managed that, unless we co-operate and assist him in every direction, the State is likely to go through one of the worst financial periods in its history.

The PREMIER: That applies to all the States.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not so. Victoria was never more financial than it is to-day.

The PREMIER: They have had a very bad year.

Mr. MORGAN: I admit they have had a very bad year—one very bad year in ten. But Queensland has had ten bad years in ten. A State can stand one bad year in ten, but no State can go on continually losing, as we have done during the period the Labour Government have been in power.

The PREMIER: Losing what?

Mr. MORGAN: Losing money and expending money. We know that the national debt of Queensland has practically doubled itself during the period the Labour Government have been in power. Our national debt was about £50,000,000 before the Labour Government came into office. They have borrowed

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over £40,000,000 while they have occupied the Treasury benches. It took previous Governments fifty years to borrow and spend £50,000,000 of loan money, yet, during the period the Labour Government have been in power, although they went to the country with a non-borrowing policy, they have proved themselves to be the prince of borrowers, and as a result we are paying the piper to-day. I admit that, if the Government had obtained full value for the money they borrowed, we would not have been in the serious position we are in to-day; but if the work represented by every £1 of borrowed money expended by the Labour Government since they have been in power were valued to-day, we would discover that we have only 10s. of value for each £1 expended. If we borrow £4,000,000 and expend it in the way the Government have been doing and find that the asset represented by the expenditure is only worth £2,000,000, we must remember that we pay 5 per cent. on the £4,000,000, and will therefore be paying 10 per cent. on the £2,000,000. In effect, we shall have lost £2,000,000 of the money borrowed and be paying 10 per cent. on the remainder represented in the asset. I claim that no Government or firm can pay 10 per cent. interest and make a success of the undertaking on which the money is expended.

The most important problem before us is the question of successful land settlement. Had this Government not been in power during the past ten years, people would not have left the State as they have done and gone away to other parts of Australia, and settlement would have been much greater than it has been during that period. We heard one hon. member opposite stating that the Government were going to resume large areas of land for the purpose of closer settlement. The Government are always going to do something, but they never seem to do it. They have been in office for eleven years, and what has been the result? In 1912, 1913, 1914, the last three years of their term of office, the Liberal Government resumed and opened for closer settlement 23,987 square miles of country; while for the three years, 1922, 1923, 1924, the Labour Government—which is always going to do something and never succeeds in doing it—resumed only 9,964 square miles of country. They were going to take away the land from the squatter and give people an opportunity to make a living on those areas. We find, however, that, instead of resuming that land as they told the people they would do if they were returned to power, and dispossessing the squatters of it, the squatters have obtained the renewal of leases of land suitable for grazing areas from this Government which has claimed to be the friend of the people. We also find that a great deal of the land which has been open to selection has not been taken up by settlers, simply because the land has been opened under conditions and a tenure the people do not want; and until the Government recognise that fact settlement will continue to diminish, and we shall see the people continue to flock into the cities and towns, which will be very detrimental to the progress of the State.

To show just what has been happening during the last ten years under the present Administration I propose to quote some

figures. In the ten years up to 1914 the Government placed on the land 23,954 selectors, who took up 12,609,000 acres, whereas in the ten years since 1914 only 12,437 selectors have been placed upon 5,950,000 acres. That is to say, in a period of ten years, the Liberals settled double the number of selectors on double the area of land which the Labour party have been able to settle. To show further the drift of the population to the cities as a result of the Government's administration, I want to point out that from 1905 to 1914 the population in the cities and towns of Queensland increased by 24 per cent, whilst in the shires—which are the rural areas—the population increased by 41 per cent. Between 1914 and 1923, on the other hand, the population in the cities and towns increased by 26 per cent, and that in the shires by 8 per cent. The figures I have quoted show that whatever the Government have done to build up Brisbane and other large cities—whatever success they may have achieved in the big centres of population—they have failed miserably in increasing the population in the rural portions of the State. I can speak from my own knowledge of my own district, which was originally settled under a previous Government by people from other parts of Australia. I am sorry to say that we have not got the population we should have got, because some of those districts have gone back rather than forward owing to the fact that the Government have not given them the encouragement which a Government should give. We will admit that there has been an increase in the sugar-growing areas, and, so far as that goes, we would all like to be sugar growers, but unfortunately there is not sufficient of that land for all of us, and from what we can see the production of sugar in the State is more than is necessary for local consumption and some of it has to be exported at a price which is not very profitable; but, generally speaking, land settlement in Queensland has not progressed to anything like the extent it should.

Now I want to deal to some extent with the prickly-pear lands in the State—a question with which I am conversant. I want to say that the Prickly-pear Land Commission is one of the finest bodies of men who have ever been appointed to administer any department in the State of Queensland. They have done, perhaps, everything that it was possible for them to do. I recognise that their work has been handicapped owing to the fact that the Act under which they work does not allow them to do many things which they ought to be able to do, and that therefore in some respects their operations may not be as effective as they otherwise might. I have read the report of the Commission with very great interest, and I think it is a very fine one indeed. There are some matters with which I do not agree, and it is those in particular that I intend to deal with. The report of the Commission says—

“It has become an accepted principle in this State that the work of pear clearing is of such national importance that the whole community should contribute towards it. The infested lands, however, are mostly in the occupation of tenants under existing tenures, and it thus becomes a matter of considerable importance to determine how the community's contribution should be made.

“It is beyond question that, as a general rule, the most economical and

effective means of eradicating the pear on a holding is to place the obligation of doing so on the lessee as a condition of tenure. . . . But it must be remembered that any such obligation affects, and sometimes seriously affects, the rental value of the land. Thus the rents have to be reduced so that the tenant shall not be burdened with an obligation which rightly belongs to the community. This reduction in rent is the community's contribution towards the work and the tenant becomes the agent of the community to effectively carry it out.”

The report continues—

“The huge sum shown as the total reductions in the purchasing prices of selections might be misleading without an explanation. At no time was there any prospect of this sum being collected by the Crown. The unfortunate fate of prickly-pear selections with the passing years has already been indicated. With forfeitures, surrenders, and conversions to other tenures this sum under the old system would have been whittled down immensely. Yet the above figures show the actual reductions in purchasing prices that have immediately been written off the books of the department. The resulting reduction in revenue—that is, reduced purchase price instalments—amounts to approximately £12,000 per annum. Adding to this the reductions in annual rents granted in respect of perpetual lease selections, perpetual lease prickly-pear selections, grazing selections, and pastoral holdings, we get a grand total of approximately £24,300 per annum.”

The Commission point out that they have reduced the amount by £24,300, and, if they had not reduced the rentals, they could not have collected a big portion of that money. The report continues—

“The lessees' efforts are now estimated as being equivalent to an expenditure of £350,000 per annum.”

The men engaged in the destruction of pear have contributed £350,000 per annum. The State's contribution was £24,300, and in respect of that amount the Commission admit that, if they had not made any reductions, the Government would have obtained only a very small amount. Yet the Government claim that the community is assisting in the destruction of the pear. The Prickly-pear Land Commission now has a credit of £77,353. It is very refreshing to find one Government department with a credit balance, but I am afraid that the Treasurer, in his anxiety to obtain funds will, when he finds the financial cupboard bare, interfere with that credit balance. When we are out to destroy the pear is it a proper thing that the Commission should be allowed to accumulate £77,353 out of the £100,000 appropriated each year? There is any amount of work to be done with that money. I admit that the Commission has no right to exceed its appropriation, but, seeing that so much work has to be done, a greater portion of that money should have been expended on the destruction of pear. The small man struggling on his block is being forced to rid his land of the pear. There are hundreds of landowners in my electorate and other parts of Queensland who with myself advocate that free poison should be granted. Last year I quoted the amount that it would

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cost. It was not a very large amount, but what has been the result? This year the Commission have reduced the price of arsenic-pentoxide, from 1st August, by 3d. per lb., and they have also reduced the cost of Roberts's pear poison. The big man may get twenty years or thirty years' extension of his lease for clearing the pear, so that the question of whether it is 3d. per lb. or 6d. per lb., or free, does not enter into his calculation at all. He is prepared to spend £10,000 in clearing the pear, realising that he will reap that amount of benefit by an extension of lease. I am more concerned with the little man who is struggling, and who utilises three or four hours a day in clearing pear. He may be conducting a dairy farm, and he and his sons, when they have a few moments to spare, may endeavour to clear the pear that they have been ordered by the Commission to clear. These men require free poison, but they are the men who are regarded by the Prickly-pear Land Commission as not being bona fide selectors. The £5 that they may be asked to pay for poison in the course of twelve months has often to be borrowed from the bank or the store-keeper.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What do you think about the cochineal insect?

Mr. MORGAN: It is doing good work all over Queensland wherever it has been established for any length of time. It has been found among pear, where the cochineal insect has been established for eighteen months or two years, that the flower or fruit does not mature. It has been discovered that where the cochineal insect has been established for three or four years it has cleaned out the whole of the pear completely, including the root. That being so, the spread of the pear by animals and birds is very much restricted. I do not want to be too optimistic, but I am of the opinion that we have discovered a means which is going to exterminate this pest that has throttled so much land in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It has been suggested that the distribution of these insects should be carried out in some systematic way and under some supervision.

Mr. MORGAN: When the Premier was Secretary for Public Lands he saw an advertisement in the newspapers stating that Morgan and Sons were offering to distribute cochineal insects in pear-infested country, and he called me over to his seat in this Chamber, and told me that he was thinking of prosecuting the firm for distributing the insects without the permission of the Government.

The PREMIER: Up to that time scientists were not too sure whether there was a danger or not in distributing the cochineal insects.

Mr. MORGAN: I told the hon. gentleman that it was our desire, by distributing these insects, to get rid of a pest which was costing the country millions of pounds. The insect has spread over millions of acres.

The PREMIER: Don't say millions—thousands of acres would be correct.

Mr. MORGAN: Mr. Culliford distributed thousands of cases of these insects before the Government distributed one case, while I

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myself distributed over 500 cases before the Government took any steps in that direction.

The PREMIER: I know you did; but that would not cover millions of acres.

Mr. MORGAN: It would. The hon. gentleman fails to recognise that these insects spread themselves.

The PREMIER: Millions of insects would be right, but not millions of acres.

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. gentleman has read the report of the Prickly Pear Land Commission, he will have seen that they claim to have spread insects over millions of acres of pear-infested land, and the Commission has only been spreading those insects for a few years. They claim to have spread 17,000 cases of insects.

The PREMIER: There are millions of acres of land under the pear, but the great bulk of it as yet has not been touched by the cochineal insect.

Mr. MORGAN: I have travelled from Taroom to Miles, and there is not one mile along that road where the cochineal insect is not at work. If the hon. gentleman travelled from Miles to Goondiwindi—a distance in a direct line of 170 miles—he would find right along the line that the cochineal insect is at work there also.

It is claimed in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that the drought is responsible for a great deal of the loss which has occurred in connection with our railways, and that the carriage of starving stock and fodder for that starving stock has been a considerable factor in creating that loss on our railways.

The hon. member for Warrego asked three questions regarding that matter, but the Secretary for Railways did not reply to all of them. The hon. member for Warrego wanted to know what concessions on normal rates the rates charged represented. Why did the Minister not answer that question? The hon. gentleman told us that so many thousand sheep had been carried and so much fodder had been conveyed for those sheep, but when it came to the actual concession, he would not give the information. The railways have lost approximately £1,700,000 for the year. Supposing this concession represented £300,000, we should be able to deduct that £300,000 from the £1,700,000, and would then be able to say that, if the railways had not coped with that traffic, they would have lost £1,400,000. The Secretary for Railways would not give that information, and even some of the daily newspapers were misled. When we investigate the question, we find that the Government have not actually lost in regard to that carriage. I know that at present the railways are losing, no matter what they convey, and if the train mileage were increased by 30,000 or 40,000 miles yearly, they would lose still more money than at present. The more they carry the more they lose.

The hon. member for Maryborough tried to show us the position in other States with respect to the carriage of fodder. The hon. member mentioned hay, straw, and chaff, but he might also have included maize and oats. The hon. member quoted from the Victorian "Year Book" for 1925, which gave figures for 1924, but did not say that a considerable increase had taken place in Queensland, but

that no increase had taken place in the other States. I have gone to the trouble of finding out exactly what the Queensland figures are

through a question I asked the Secretary for Railways, and this is how they compare with the other States—

RAILWAY RATES PER TON ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

	Train Miles.											
	50		100		200		300		400		500	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
New South Wales	7	3	11	5	14	5	16	1	17	9	19	0
Victoria	6	4	9	9	12	11	14	10	16	10	18	7
Queensland (to ports)	6	8	11	10	20	0	24	6	29	9	35	1
Queensland (up-country)	10	11	18	11	30	1	37	2	45	2	53	4
South Australia	7	5	11	5	14	1	16	7	18	10	21	1
West Australia	8	3	10	11	14	1	19	0	24	0	26	0
Tasmania	8	4	12	11	20	0	27	6	..	..	..	..

At 4 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. MORGAN: These figures show that the "to ports" rates exceed the rates in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania. Then when it comes to "up country" rates they are, in some cases, 100 per cent. more, and, when you deduct from these figures the 27.27 per cent. that is allowed for the carriage of fodder for starving stock, you get these figures—

"200 miles:—

Queensland "up country" rate,
30s. 1d., less 27.27 per cent. = 21s. 11d."

The rates to convey fodder in Victoria and New South Wales "to port" or "up country," for 200 miles, are:—

	s.	d.
Victoria	12	11
New South Wales	14	5

As against 21s. 11d. in Queensland, after deducting the allowance made on fodder for starving stock. Now let us take the 500 mile rate:—

	s.	d.
New South Wales (at all times)	19	0
Victoria (at all times)	18	7
Queensland (to ports)	35	1
Queensland (up country)	53	4
South Australia (at all times)	21	1
Western Australia (at all times)	26	0

After deducting the 27.27 per cent. from the 53s. 4d.—which is the usual rate "up country" in Queensland—it leaves 38s. 10d. This 38s. 10d. per ton represents 100 per cent. more freight than is charged in Victoria and New South Wales for the carriage of hay, chaff, and straw at all times. Yet the Government and some of the newspapers who support them claim that they are carrying this fodder at a loss.

Reference was made in His Excellency's Speech to the Hamilton cold stores. It is a pity the Speech made any reference to these stores at all because, like all other ventures of the Government, they are likely to be a white elephant. Unfortunately, the Minister did not listen to the practical producer. He listened, evidently, to the advice of experts, with the result that the cold stores were erected in the wrong place. Owing to the high cost of the cold stores and the long delays, the cost of storage to the producer is considerably greater than the cost of cold storage in New South Wales. The result is that

producers here who are competing with the New South Wales producers are handicapped owing to the fact that this white elephant which has been constructed by the Government against the advice of practical people is too costly to be used.

I wish to refer to the wheat industry, to which reference is made in the Speech, in these terms—

"The wheat industry, controlled as it is by the growers themselves, under the provisions of the Wheat Pool Act, is showing a healthy development."

We all know that the wheat crop in Queensland is not a main crop, but that it is all right as a side issue. If rain does not fall during the next fortnight or three weeks, the appearances are that there will soon not be a blade of wheat growing. Yet we find the Government opening up land for settlement—I refer to the Mount Abundance resumption, for instance—with a compulsory clause that a certain amount of land has to be placed under wheat. The men who take up that land are going to be compelled to incur a huge expenditure to provide machinery for the cultivation of wheat, when we know that year in and year out wheat-growing in that particular area is precarious. The opening up of that land under these conditions is going to mean disaster—another Cecil Plains or Jimbour—owing to the fact that the Government, instead of opening up land in areas which will allow men to go in for sheep farming—areas that will carry 2,000 or 3,000 sheep and be a success—are going to open up the land in small areas of 1,280 acres and compel the settlers to go in for a certain amount of wheat-growing. We know that, if we only grow 20 acres of wheat, we have to buy the same amount of machinery that is required for 400 acres.

Mr. BURCOCK: Does not that apply to anything else?

Mr. MORGAN: The point is whether the district is capable of growing wheat or not, and whether it will give a man a decent living. Hon. members know that the natural conditions of Queensland are not suitable for wheat growing—at all events not as a main crop.

I also wish to refer to matters in connection with the Department of Public Instruction. I endorse the remarks made by the hon. member for Barcoo in regard to correspondence classes. I have had an opportunity of placing before the department a petition from people in my electorate asking that

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teachers be appointed for the purpose of supervising the work of the children who are receiving this correspondence tuition. There are many parents of children who are getting this instruction who are capable, perhaps, of supervising the instruction given, but there are other parents who are not capable, or who have not got the time to devote to the children. I maintain that where there are twenty children in a centre the department will build a small school at the cost of £650 shown by the figures we have recently had quoted, and a teacher will be supplied. But there are many homes in isolated parts with, perhaps, from two to six children, and too far apart from each other for a school to be erected at a central place so that the children would not have more than 3 or 5 miles to go to school. Some of the children might be 8 or 9 miles from the centre, and it would be too far for them to travel. It was suggested in the petition I have referred to that in these cases teachers should be appointed to visit the homes and supervise the correspondence tuition. They could spend a week in one place, and then go on to another place; there would be no necessity for schools to be built, as the parents would provide suitable rooms for the purpose. In the same way, if there are thirty children, the teacher will go along and instruct the children and likewise the parents in order that the pupils may get the full benefit of the system. I believe that is a good system, and I believe that it is necessary to have these teachers, and not merely itinerant teachers who go round only once every six months. That is no use. I want the children to get the benefit of instruction from a teacher every six or eight weeks. To visit these homes once in two years or twelve months is not sufficient.

Mr. WEIR: It will increase the expenditure.

Mr. MORGAN: I certainly approve of the system, and I hope the Secretary for Public Instruction will bear out what I say, because we must recognise that, whilst some parents are capable of supervising the instruction their children get from the correspondence classes in Brisbane, on the other hand, there are many who cannot do so. Many of them have no education; many are too tired or too busy; and, instead of a system of itinerant teachers, like the one at Gcondiwindi, going from place to place once every three or four months, it would be much better if that man's attention were directed to the instruction of twenty or thirty children in a small area. The department will build a school wherever there are twenty children who can attend it, and surely they should be prepared to provide a teacher who would go from home to home and instruct the same number of children and their parents in their own homes.

The matter of Forestry is mentioned in the Speech. In this connection I want to point out to the Minister who is responsible that a great waste of timber occurs because the Government sawmills which cut sleepers for railway purposes will not take a log which will cut into more than two or three sleepers. If a big tree is felled, the timber-getters cut off the top, which will cut into two or three sleepers, and the remainder lies on the ground and rots. That butt would cut into eight or ten sleepers if the sawmills would take it, but it is allowed to lie on the ground, and perhaps a bush fire comes along

eventually and sweeps it up. The stick that the mill will take may be only 1 foot or 15 inches through, and it is not matured, and sleepers cut from it will not last anything like the time that sleepers from a tree of 3 feet or 3 feet 6 inches through will last.

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

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I cannot help saying that it was a very great disappointment to most hon. members to see that the very promising programme which the Government put before the people on the eve of the election was so different from what we have read in the Speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor at the opening of this session of Parliament. No doubt if the Government, even before they were returned to power and whilst they were still placing their all-glorious policy before the electors, did not realise that Queensland was in a serious industrial and financial position, they at any rate fully realised it when they were preparing the Address which they asked His Excellency to read to us. Before the election great promises were made to the people. In His Excellency's Speech apologies were offered and excuses were made, and the drought was blamed for all their broken promises. There was not one admission from hon. members opposite that their promises were impossible of fulfilment. When they were on the hustings they knew deep down in their hearts that it would be impossible for any Government to carry out the policy that they had propounded.

Among the many things promised was a childhood endowment scheme, which held out hopes of financial benefit to the unfortunate mother in the country supporting five or six children, and receiving a great deal less than the basic wage. The income of many of the small settlers in the country does not exceed £200 per annum. These people anticipated receiving some benefit by the Government putting their policy into effect. Fancy inducing an unfortunate woman to vote on the strength of a promise like that! Will the Government deny that they bribed the people with promises of that nature on the eve of the elections? In order to soothe the disappointment of the electors they are told, through His Excellency's Speech, that it is unfortunate that we are suffering from a drought as the money is not now available to carry out the promises they made.

I regret very much that no mention is made in the Opening Speech about the establishment of a hail insurance fund for orchardists. We have a hail insurance fund established under a co-operative system by the wheatgrowers which has been an undoubted success, and which the wheatgrowers are prepared to continue. The fruit industry is an important industry to Queensland, and the time is over-ripe when we should provide a hail insurance fund. We do not ask the Government to provide the whole of the funds for the assistance of the orchardists against hail during the ripening period, but we believe it is the duty of the Government to encourage an industry that has been struggling so long by providing a sum of money to establish a fund to carry it over a period of about eight to ten years. It would not cost more than £15,000 or £20,000 to establish a hail

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insurance fund for orchardists. If the Secretary for Agriculture, together with the Council of Agriculture and the Director of the Council, had the welfare of the orchardists at heart, they undoubtedly would have had some scheme outlined in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech for the consideration of Parliament.

This afternoon the hon. member for Barcoo criticised and condemned the producers for organising. He condemned the Paterson scheme for the protection of industry. Although he claims to have had an agricultural training, he forgets that the producers in the past have not had any assistance from any Government in the way of organising themselves. They have been at the mercy of the open market. Probably some may say that it is quite right that they should be. Probably some farmers would contend that.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you say that I condemned the pools?

Mr. COSTELLO: You did.

Mr. BULCOCK: I did not condemn pools.

Mr. COSTELLO: The hon. member condemned the Paterson scheme and commodity boards. He was of the opinion that, if the farmers organised themselves into pools, the consumers would be expected to pay more than the world's parity for their requirements. He was afraid that his supporters would be compelled to pay a price that would return to the farmers an amount equivalent to the basic wage. I give the Government some credit for encouraging the farmers to organise, but the organisation has by no means been the success we hoped. I stand for the organisation of the farmer, and I hope the hon. member for Barcoo will give this matter a great deal more consideration when he is dealing with it in caucus. He is one member who should have known better, as he possesses perhaps a greater knowledge of agriculture than any other hon. member on that side.

Mr. BULCOCK: I will be quite fair and say I condemned the Paterson scheme, which I did.

Mr. COSTELLO: I do not agree with the opinions of the hon. member in regard to some of his closer settlement schemes. This is the wrong time to attempt any scheme of closer settlement, and, what is more, the wrong crowd are on the Treasury benches successfully to launch any land settlement scheme. No doubt the hon. member was referring to some Western land, but let me ask him how many of the small men in the North, North-west, and Central-west are left to-day? How many selectors with 10,000 or 15,000 acre blocks have survived this drought?

Mr. BULCOCK: They are all hanging on.

Mr. COSTELLO: There will not be 10 per cent. of those small men left when the drought breaks. That country will not stand closer settlement. We must give a man an area that will not give him a bare living, but sufficiently large to enable him not to over-stock or to stock up to his full capacity. A man with a 10,000 or 15,000 acre holding in the West is compelled by necessity to stock to the utmost, and, when drought falls on the district—and there

have always been periodic droughts—he has no reserves to fall back on.

Mr. BULCOCK: Apparently you know nothing about Western conditions.

Mr. COSTELLO: It is the big man, as the hon. member for Dalby stated, who can survive droughts best, as he has several holdings and can shift his stock about. We have had many a good man on those small holdings who to-day is wiped out by the drought. It is a vital matter that the area should be more than a living area—a living area with sufficient to spare to meet any reserve.

Mr. BULCOCK: What do you call a living area?

Mr. COSTELLO: It all depends on the locality you are in. Some say that holdings of 5,000 or 10,000 acres are large holdings, but holdings of 20,000 or 25,000 acres in the West, or North-west would be sufficient for a man to provide against times of drought.

The Government have embarked upon closer settlement in the Maranoa electorate. They no doubt will open up beautiful lands. The Mount Abundance lands have cost the Government something like 30s. an acre, but the cost of the survey and water conservation will bring that price up to at least 45s. That land will be opened to selection under leasehold tenure. It will be cut up into 1,280-acre blocks, but by the time the selector has erected his fences and buildings it will have cost him an additional pound per acre, and he will still have his machinery to purchase. That will bring the cost of the land up to £3 an acre, with the result that the selector commences with his land over-capitalised at the start.

Mr. BULCOCK: How much worse off would he be if the land were in fee-simple and he had to pay for it?

Mr. COSTELLO: Could that selector go to any financial institution and say, "I want some financial help for my 1,280 acres of beautiful country on Mount Abundance"? Has he got an asset left? He has not; he is over-capitalised, and any financial adviser will tell him that he was a fool to have an asset like that, that it was worth nothing, and that he could not advance money upon it. If the manager of the Agricultural Bank were asked how much money he would advance on land under similar circumstances, what would he say?

Mr. BULCOCK: Will not the Agricultural Bank make advances on a leasehold tenure?

Mr. COSTELLO: It has done so, but it takes the value of the lease into consideration.

Mr. PETERSON: The value of the lease is nil; the improvements are the only asset that is valuable.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are saying what is not true. The Agricultural Bank advances on the unexpired period of the lease.

Mr. COSTELLO: What value has the unexpired period of the lease? Where the settler is over-capitalised the value is nil, and, instead of being an asset, it is a liability. It is impossible for any man to carry on and make a success under those conditions. If those men who went to the Upper Burnett have not sufficient resources

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of their own to carry on for four or five years, they will not be able to carry on successfully with the money advanced by the Agricultural Bank. The £500 or £600 advanced by that bank is not sufficient. As the hon. member for Dalby informed the House this morning, no labourer can now save up sufficient money to go on the land. In the good old Tory days, in the days of Liberalism, any number of our labourers went off the labour market on to the land, and I know any number of lengthsmen who were receiving 6s. a day who are now successful settlers.

Mr. BULCOCK: Then there are some successful farmers in Queensland?

Mr. COSTELLO: I would not care to have them like the hon. member, making a failure of the job. They had some measure of success under the Liberal Government.

Mr. BULCOCK: You said they are still making a success.

Mr. COSTELLO: Some of them have survived the increased land taxation and other penalties imposed by this Government, but many are now leaving the land. What a few years ago would be considered by a bank to be an asset worth £2,000 or £3,000 is now valued at about £1,500 only. If hon. members opposite do not wish to believe my argument, I can take them to many parts in Queensland and show them concrete cases.

Mr. BRUCE: Can you sell any good land cheap?

Mr. COSTELLO: That is one of the things we argue against. Fifteen years ago you could not buy land on the Darling Downs for £15 an acre, but to-day you can buy the very best holding there for £6 or £7 an acre, the assets having depreciated so greatly under socialistic rule. A property that was worth £500 or £600 to a man a few years ago is now worth practically nothing. To-day a man needs a property worth £1,500 or £2,000 as an equivalent of the property worth £500 or £600 a few years ago, and it becomes impossible for the Agricultural Bank to function as the Government expected it to function. They have a policy to carry out, and can advance only a limited amount of money. I place all the blame on this Government. A man is now put on an area that is not a living area, and, when he goes to the bank for assistance he is given a small sum and then left without further assistance. The result is that 50 per cent. of the properties are being relinquished.

Do we not always remember the glorious address of the Premier when going through the electorates prior to the general election?

Do we not remember some of [4.30 p.m.] those glorious promises that he made? He stated that the finances of the country were quite all right, and that the Opposition, if returned to power, would lead the country into blue ruin. He said, "We have something to offer them in the way of humanitarian legislation." To use a vulgar expression, he was "kidding" the people. At the present time the people are clamouring for bread and they think they can get something from the

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Government, and they are out to get it. A man's politics to-day is measured by the depth of his pocket, and members of the Government party have been pandering to the greed of the people; but their day of reckoning is in sight. The other day we heard the Premier appealing to the good sense of the Opposition to support him. He also appealed to the head of every department and asked them to economise.

Mr. BRUCE: An appeal to Cæsar.

Mr. COSTELLO: It is like appealing to the wind to appeal to members sitting behind him to help him economise. Is it not well known that he has had trouble in his own party all along, and has had to give a small gratuity to these hungry, greedy creatures, who were elected to represent the people, to keep them loyal? I venture to say that they will remain loyal only so long as the unions remain quiet. Let a strong organised force of unionists come here and hold a pistol at the head of the hon. member for Maryborough, whom I hear clattering in the corner, or the hon. member for Bulimba, and they will no longer support the Government. It is a matter of self on every occasion. These people are not in Parliament in the interests of the country, but in their own interests. They went so far as to make unfair promises to the electors, and unfortunately the Labour party was returned to power. In the face of the present financial position, how can we do anything else but economise? Members of the Country-Nationalist party told the people that we would economise, while members of the Government told the electors that they would borrow more money and spend it extravagantly. Did the Premier not say that none of the railways under construction would be discontinued until they were completed? Did he not promise consideration to requests for further railways? Did he not promise in my electorate that an overdue railway would be constructed, or would be favourably considered?

Mr. WRIGHT: What did you tell them? You told them you would be Secretary for Agriculture. (Government laughter.)

Mr. COSTELLO: I was asked if I would support the construction of that railway, and I told the people that I would not guarantee anything; that everything would be dealt with on its merits, and would be justly dealt with. No false promises were made by members of this party, and we expect members of the Government to live up to the promises they made. I refer to the promise which the Premier made to the people of Texas that the Public Works Commission would proceed there at an early date. That is a different statement to the answer I got this morning from the Secretary for Railways, who said that the matter would receive the consideration of the Government. There was a definite promise on the part of the Premier that the Public Works Commission would proceed at an early date to make a further report on the proposed railway from Inglewood to Texas. We have seen how workers in the Burnett and other electorates are being treated, the railway works in those electorates having to be discontinued. When I was going through Toowoomba the other day it was stated that the Willowburn railway work would be discontinued, but it appears likely that the Government will have

to complete that work before the next election in the interests of their party.

Generally speaking, the Government have been returned on the lavish promises they made at the election, and they now come down and ask the Opposition to be good boys and not indulge in any undue criticism which would embarrass the Government in dealing with the finances of the State. We all know that the finances of the State are in a very deplorable condition at the present time. We have lived in a fool's paradise, and are now riding for a severe fall. There is nothing so much as the present deplorable financial position that will bring the people to their senses, and enable them to realise the fool's paradise they have lived in while supporting the present Government, and giving them power to spend money in the reckless way they have spent it.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I want to give my meed of praise to the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply for their speeches, and I sincerely trust that they will be members of this House for a long time to come. I have not the slightest doubt that as time goes on and they gain more experience in political life their services will improve. I must also congratulate other hon. members who have recently come into the House, including the hon. member for Dalby, who made a very interesting and straightforward speech. I have been interested in listening to members of the Opposition trying to explain and excuse themselves for being still sitting in opposition.

Mr. KELSO: When did they say that?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The hon. member was one of them. He tried to explain why he and his party were still in opposition, and hon. members opposite have one after another tried to give some reason and explanation why they have not been able to defeat the present Government and are still sitting in opposition.

Mr. COSTELLO: I have just told you.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The hon. member for Nundah, who interjected, made the excuse by saying that what was needed to enable them to get on this side was a redistribution of seats. He has referred to that particular subject on more than one occasion. He has evidently got redistribution on the brain. There is no doubt that, if a redistribution of seats took place, and the hon. member for Nundah was the man who made the redistribution, there might be some chance of his getting over here; but for a very long time to come the hon. member will remain where he is. After all that can be said in reference to redistribution, we know what redistribution meant when hon. members opposite made it. We know the effect it had then upon the electorates. We know what they did to gerrymander and secure another lease of life after the election of 1912.

Mr. KERR: Do you believe in following their example?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Sometimes imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and the hon. member's interjection indicates that he does not object if we do follow his example, particularly if it is a good one. What has been said in reference to this

question is simply bunkum. If the hon. member for Nundah believes in the principle of one vote one value, why does he not recommend it to the hon. member for Murilla, the hon. member for Burnett, and other members who sit on his side who represent country constituencies? Why does he not ask them to agree that the bulk of the voting power ought to be concentrated in the cities and that the country districts should be left practically without representation? That would be the logical outcome of the theory of one vote one value in its literal sense; but if it is the correct way of looking at the question, how does it happen that provision is made in the Electoral Districts Act passed by the Kidston Government that such great differences may exist between the numbers of electors in city and country electorates? As a matter of fact, some of the metropolitan electorates would be well represented if they had no member at all, for the simple reason that they have 101 different persons who can represent them. They are close to the seat of government; there are local authorities, progress associations, chambers of commerce, and other bodies who can put their case without difficulty and without expense, whereas in the country districts the people have only their members of Parliament to look to for what representations have to be made on their behalf to the Government.

Mr. KELSO: Do you think we could dispense with the hon. member for North Brisbane, then?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I think we could dispense with the hon. member for Nundah: I do not think anybody would miss him. (Government laughter.) After all the explanations which have been made and all the excuses which have been given of the fact that we find hon. members opposite still on the Opposition benches, the real reason is that they had nothing to offer the people of the country comparable with what the Government could offer them and have given them. As a matter of fact, if the party opposite cannot put before the country a better policy, and if they cannot offer the people a better managed and better organised party than they are themselves, they deserve to remain in opposition for the rest of their lives; and in all probability that is where they will remain. The very first plank in their platform was their intention to resurrect the dead-and-gone Legislative Council.

Mr. KERR: Do you believe in resurrection?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I do not believe in the resurrection of the Legislative Council. As a matter of fact, since the Legislative Council was abolished I have not heard anybody say that he had any regret or that he was sorry. On the other hand, what did the Opposition say about the results which would follow from the abolition of the Legislative Council. In a leaflet which they issued, they said—

“Just consider what could happen if the Legislative Council were swept away. Then the majority in the Legislative Assembly would be dictators of Queensland. They could alter the electoral laws so as to give votes to a select few in the community, just their own friends.”

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We are generally told that the trouble is that we have given votes to everybody—votes to which the Opposition say many of them are not entitled. No doubt that leaflet had some effect on the referendum, because it went to every elector in the State. They led the people to believe that, if the Legislative Council were abolished, something very dreadful would happen. They pointed out that the Government in one hour could pass through Parliament a Bill extending the life of Parliament for another three, five, or ten years. Those who wrote that leaflet were expressing their own views and crediting somebody else with the things that they would like to have done. It is a well known fact that hon. members opposite advocated a restriction of the franchise to prevent what they termed nomads, "scallywags," and loafers from getting a vote. Those were the terms that were applied to the workers going from place to place seeking employment. They claimed that those people should not have a vote at all. The circular also pointed out that, in addition to extending the life of Parliament for ten years, the Government could appoint themselves members of the Assembly for life. It is also pointed out that if the Legislative Council were abolished, not one public servant would be sure of his billet for twenty-four hours. It is admitted that the public servants have never fared so well as they have under a Labour Government, and they know it quite well. The leaflet also pointed out that, if the Legislative Council were abolished, there might not be any general elections, but there would be nothing between the people and I.W.W.-ism. Since then I.W.W.-ism has gone by the board, and Bolshevism has taken its place. It was also pointed out that, if the referendum were carried, it would be a fatal blow at future Queenslanders, and it concluded by asking the people to safeguard the children's rights and liberties, and not allow them to be robbed of a proper Parliament. The Labour party has done more to preserve the rights of the children in Queensland than any other party. The Legislative Council could not have done more, no matter how long it might have been in existence.

During the election campaign and during this debate hon. members opposite have endeavoured to convey the idea that they were the initiators of practically all the beneficent legislation that has been passed in Queensland. The hon. member for Kurilpa claimed that the Nationalist Government were responsible for the introduction of the old-age pension. In fact, it has been inferred by hon. members opposite that the Labour party had done practically nothing. What the hon. member for Kurilpa said probably was true, but he did not tell the whole truth. It was also said that reform would have eventuated whether the Labour party had been in power or not, and even if they had not been in existence at all. No reform has ever taken place in any country at any time unless it was forced. Eternal vigilance is not only the price of liberty but also the price of every reform in the interests of the workers. In the Commonwealth "Year Book 1908-9," the position with regard to old-age pensions is made quite clear. It points out that pensions were first paid in New Zealand on 1st

April, 1893. The first State of the Commonwealth to make provision for old-age pensions was Victoria, in which State legislation on the subject came up for discussion on 12th January, 1901, and in August of the same year it came into force. In Queensland early in 1903 an Old Age Pensions Bill was passed and became payable on 1st July of that year. The final enactment with respect to old-age pensions throughout Australia was passed by the Commonwealth Government in 1903, and payment commenced on 1st July, 1909. Old-age pensions were passed in this House during the first session I sat here. That measure was passed by the Kidston Ministry with the support of the Labour party, and but for the Labour party supporting the Ministry they could not have passed anything. The people who were in opposition then are in opposition at the present time, and had practically nothing whatever to do with the passage of the Bill. At that time the Labour party had entered into a coalition with the Kidston-Morgan Administration, and it was only by that means they were able to carry on. Hon. members opposite, therefore, had nothing whatever to do with old-age pensions, or any of the other legislation passed during that session, or the previous session.

I want to say a word or two in reference to the country in which we live. Anyone who listened to the funeral dirge of the hon. member for Carnarvon would not be very much impressed with the potentialities of this country. He certainly would not be prepared to rush to the West, or anywhere else in Queensland, and settle upon the land. It does seem remarkable that hon. members, in their endeavours to belittle the Government and discredit them, do not hesitate to stoop to discredit their country. I listened with interest to the hon. member for Toowong when he spoke the week before last and discussed the statement made by a distinguished visitor who was in this country last year. It is rather a remarkable thing that, when anybody does come to Queensland and does say anything favourable about the country, we cannot get the credit for it. The quotation from the "Courier" cited by the hon. member did not support his remarks, because he said that the statement by Dr. Mott did not apply to Queensland but to the whole Commonwealth. I am not depending on the "Courier" or on the hon. member for Toowong for what was said, but I am depending on myself, for the simple reason that I was at the civic reception and heard what Dr. Mott had to say. What he said could not possibly apply to the Commonwealth, because he had only just arrived in Queensland at the time. He had just come from the East, and the substance of what he said was that Queensland was the gateway from the East. He said that what was making the people look to Australia and to Queensland in particular was that we were trying some experimental legislation which was of great interest to other countries. He said we were trying to populate the tropics with a white race. That could not apply to any State but Queensland. He further pointed out that apparently we were succeeding in that direction. Dr. Mott said that he believed in a White Australia, and that it was complimentary to Queensland that we should be succeeding in that direction. He also pointed out that the Government were

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interested in humane legislation, and that they had succeeded in providing an object lesson to the whole of the wide world. He intimated that the whole world was interested in and watching us very carefully, and that they were particularly interested in our methods of education. He commented very favourably on the attention we have given not only to primary and secondary education but the way we have made it possible for the poor man's child to get through those stages of education to the University. Yet we have the hon. member for Toowong, who poses as a super-patriot, working himself into a perfect frenzy and trying to prove that our distinguished visitor did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. MAXWELL: I said the gentleman was being misrepresented.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WINSTANLEY: This distinguished visitor said something to the credit and honour of Queensland, and the hon. member tried to make it appear that nothing of the kind had been said. There is no doubt about the authenticity of that speech. Dr. Mott had been to this State ten years ago, and was able to gauge the progress that had been made during the interval. We should always be prepared to hear criticism, and the hon. member should be prepared to listen to these good things which were said about our country.

There is one paragraph in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech which overshadows all others, in my opinion, and that is the reference to the intention of the Commonwealth Government to discontinue the capitation grants now made to the States.

Dr. Earle Page, when dealing with this question in the Federal Parliament, said:—

"The principle underlying the proposals is that as far as possible the authority which expends money shall have the responsibility of raising it. . . . In the field of direct taxation being vacated the Commonwealth has been collecting sums of money in excess of the capitation payments actually made."

It is undoubted that matters of taxation vary, and vary very considerably. Earl Chatham, many years ago, said that you could tax the shirt off a man's back by indirect taxation, and not a word be said, but, if you taxed that man directly, there would be an immediate outcry. It does seem to me that an attempt is now being made practically to cripple the States from a financial point of view, so that

[5 p.m.] they will have to concede things to the Federal Government that otherwise they would never think of conceding. The Federal Government propose to withdraw the entertainments tax, land tax, estate duty, and 40 per cent. of the income tax, but all these taxes will have to be added on to the taxes that are already levied on the people. While they are relieved of Federal direct taxes they certainly are not relieved of indirect Federal taxation, which amounts to £27,000,000 a year. That taxation is imposed on the people who are least able to bear it, yet that taxation is not accomplishing the purpose for which it was imposed, for every year it is increasing. It means that the State will have to impose

practically double taxation, because in all these fields of taxation, with the exception of the entertainments tax, we already impose taxes. The Commonwealth Government are going to place every State Government in a position that certainly will be very awkward and very inconvenient for them.

Everybody knows that at the present time the pastoralists are having a pretty bad time, and, when a question was asked quite recently as to what was going to be done in connection with their rents, the Secretary for Public Lands said that every individual case would be dealt with on its merits. That is all right so far as it goes, but while it might be unfair to the Government to reassess rents at the present time during drought conditions when some of these pastoralists have no income and others have difficulty in keeping their stock alive, it seems unfair to leave some of them with their rents as they exist at the present time. Although it might be possible to deal with each application on its merits and deal with it fairly, quite a number of the pastoralists have a fairly strong claim for consideration considering the difficulties they are suffering at the present time. I am quite sure, from what I know of the Government, that they will do the fair thing.

In regard to rolling-stock, after all has been said that can be said about the railway rolling-stock, and particularly in connection with the North Coast Railway, there is no doubt that no railway expert or anybody else in Queensland had the slightest conception of the changes that would take place when the whole of that North Coast Railway was opened. Quite a number of us thought it would make a wonderful difference, but nobody had the slightest idea that from its very inception the traffic would be as great as it has been. Just imagine a thousand miles of railway all connected up as one line where previously there had been half a dozen separate lines. We must remember that during the present season hundreds of thousands of sheep have had to be transferred from one place to another over great distances, and, if one train is delayed, it means the delay of perhaps half a dozen more trains: hence congestion has taken place and great difficulties have occurred.

I was interested in the advocacy by the hon. member for Maryborough of decentralisation in connection with railway workshops and the establishment of a workshop at Maryborough. In addition to that, I certainly think that Charters Towers has a very strong claim for consideration, and that a workshop should be erected there which would do something to help in repair and construction of rolling-stock required on the great length of line on the Northern Railway. There are scores of men there who at the present time are depending to a large extent on railway contracts for sleeper logs and other railway timber. While it may be necessary in some instances to economise, I hope there will not be false economy. I hope the Government will see that the rolling-stock is not only increased, but that the road is kept in good order, and that these men are continued in their work.

I admit that it is the duty and privilege of an Opposition to criticise—and no matter what the Government did or did not do, it could not escape criticism—but, after all, a mere broad generalisation does not count for much. We have asked hon. members

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opposite for concrete examples of wrongdoing on the part of the Government, but they have not been forthcoming. Hon. members opposite have made statements without bringing forward anything to back them up. Everybody knows the Government have a difficult task in front of them, and I am quite confident they will be equal to the task. The humane legislation of the Government has been sneered and scoffed at by members of the Opposition. I heard one prominent official say that he had read through the Speech from beginning to end and could not find one solitary sentence in regard to health. The Government have looked after the health of the people, and done more for the wellbeing of the women and children in the State than was ever done in times gone by; and nobody can question the fact that they have to a large extent succeeded in carrying out their ideals. Although there may be hard times ahead, I am quite satisfied that the Government will do the fair and reasonable thing by all sections of the people, and that so long as they pursue that course they will remain in power.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): 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 Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 5.10 p.m.