

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 1926**

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THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER, 1926.

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

CENTRAL SUGAR MILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the accounts of the Central Sugar Mills under Government control for the year ended 30th June, 1926.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

COST, GOODS STORED, AND REVENUE RECEIVED,  
HAMILTON COLD STORES.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“1. What was the estimated cost of the Hamilton Cold Stores?

“2. What was the actual cost when complete?

“3. How many boxes of butter have been stored there since the opening of the store, and what revenue received?

“4. Number of crates of cheese stored, and revenue received?

“5. Number of cases of fruit stored, and revenue received?

“6. What quantity of other goods stored, and revenue derived from same?

“7. In the case of dairy produce, names of companies that have stored goods?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*) replied—

“1 and 2. I would refer the hon. member to answers given by the Honourable the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock in reply to questions asked by Mr. G. P. Barnes on the 4th August, 1926.

“3. 279,804 boxes butter; revenue, £14,052 19s. 3d.

“4. Eighteen crates of cheese were stored in connection with the recent annual show. No revenue was received, as the charges were waived.

"5. Five cases fruit; revenue, 5s. 8d.

"6. Nil.

"7. New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency, Limited; Foley Bros., Limited; Dairy Products Co-operative Company, Limited; Farmers' Co-operative Distributing Company (Queensland), Limited; Wide Bay Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited; W. Johnson and Markwell; Scott, Garrard, and Company; H. M. Russell and Company, Limited; Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Company, Limited; Barnes, Limited."

#### UNEMPLOYED AT TOOWOOMBA AND REGRADING RAILWAY WORK ON MAIN RANGE.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"In connection with the proposed regrading work on the railway between Helidon and Toowoomba—

1. In view of the large number of unemployed at Toowoomba, will he arrange that preference of employment be given to local men?

2. Will he also make arrangements with the Australian Workers' Union that men who, owing to having been out of employment for a considerable time, are not financial members of the Australian Workers' Union be eligible for this employment subject to the necessary ticket being obtained within a reasonable time after employment?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*) replied—

"1. The member for Toowoomba (Mr. E. J. Llewelyn) has made repeated requests on behalf of the workers of Toowoomba that they should be given preference of employment in their own district. This has already been arranged.

"2. Preference of employment is given to financial members of the Australian Workers' Union on certain works, as their members follow up these particular callings from year to year. It has been arranged that unfinancial members of the Australian Workers' Union shall be given a chance of obtaining work so as to enable them to take out the current year's ticket."

#### PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Fifth annual report of the Commissioner of Main Roads.

#### SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—SIXTH AND SEVENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.  
CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—

"That £30,600 be granted for 'Department of Public Works—Chief Office.'"

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): When you left the chair this day week, Mr. Cooper, I

was discussing the policy of the department in invariably carrying out work by day labour instead of contract, no matter what the circumstances might be. I pointed out the great waste of public money being caused by that policy, and in proof of my statement showed that the work would have been done far more economically if tenders had been called. I also pointed out that the work of repairs could be done more economically under contract by local tradesmen than by the permanent staff of the department under day labour conditions sometimes brought 30 or 40 miles for the purpose. I instanced a case in which two schools 4 miles apart had been built, one with a superficial floor space of only 630 feet, by the Works Department at a cost of over £1,000, and the other with over 1,200 superficial feet by a church at a cost of £760, or £240 less. The amount set down last year for "State School Buildings, Additions, Improvements, Furniture, Repairs, and Painting" was £60,000, while this year it is £51,900. We know that there are numbers of children in the country districts who are going without education to-day because the Government say there are not sufficient funds to build schools for them. I think some protest should be made against the system of day labour under which so much money is being wasted. I am quite aware that there are cases in which day work may be applicable, but there are many other instances, not only in connection with work entailing only a few pounds expenditure but also involving large amounts of money, where the piecework system is better.

Let me take another case in point. I find in the report of the proceedings of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, when inquiring in Melbourne in October, 1918, into the question of a 44-hour week in the engineering industry, one witness, the managing director of the "Sunshine Works," said—

"The methods adopted in our factory are quite modern. We work on the piecework system. In my opinion, the system is beneficial in many ways. A man is compensated for his labour and the system accelerates production. A man may use both his brains and his hands. The average weekly wage for a man working on an hourly rate is £4 16s. 8d., whereas the pieceworkers average £6 13s. 6d. We have certain moulders in our establishment in receipt of £7 a week. These are on piecework. I think the rates for job moulders are £5 16s. a week."

And I notice that in high places in the Labour movement to-day the piecework system is resorted to. I have here a report of a meeting of the Typographical Union held within the last few days.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: I want to point out, while I am on the subject of day work in the Department of Public Works, what a different position might arise if they adopted the piecework system. Even the "Daily Standard" is doing its jobbing work by piecework. I suppose I would be out of order if I quoted the report of that meeting, but, if I did, I could show that the work of printing the "Producer" and the jobbing work of the "Daily Standard" itself are done on the piecework system. When money

*Mr. Swayne.]*

is so scarce and the Treasurer is constantly urging the need for economy, is there any justification for the excessive waste of money which is going on year by year in the erection and repair of our public buildings?

Speaking particularly on the vote for State schools, I have already stated that in many instances the Government have said that they are not able to build State schools in different localities, although they say they are out to encourage the people who are on the land. In my district—and I suppose a similar condition of things obtains in other districts—there is a stretch of 20 miles along a railway line which is closely settled, but without a school. I have made three applications for schools within that area, and I have been told that there is no money for the purpose. Only three or four months of the present financial year have passed, yet I understand that the whole of the vote asked for to-day is already spent. The vote for State school buildings is £51,900, and, if the system I am urging were adopted, I suppose the same amount of money would do as much as £75,000 would effect under the present system. That would mean a great deal to the people in our country districts, more particularly to the children whose parents go out and do the pioneering work in our outlying areas. There is no getting away from the fact that one of the factors which deter many good people from going on the land—people who would be successful in the hard work which is necessary in pioneering new areas—is the consideration, "What about the children? If we go on a farm everything else may be satisfactory, but there are no schools for our children." A greater injustice could not be meted out by the Government to the children of the country than by depriving them of educational facilities. I sincerely hope that the Government will follow the example set by the "Daily Standard," and will allow some of the work to be carried out by contract when such a system proves to be more profitable. If that were done, the Treasurer would obtain a better result for the money expended, not only by the Department of Public Works but also by the Railway Department. Most of our public works are carried out by the expenditure of loan money borrowed at a high rate of interest, and, if ever there was a time when in the interest of the community we should obtain the utmost return for the money expended, that time is the present.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The Premier would be well advised if he gave attention to matters connected with the Department of Public Works and the Railway Department. I feel sure that the time has arrived when the department under consideration should be thoroughly overhauled with a view to altering the system under which work is carried out. Time after time during the past seven or eight years hon. members on this side have bitterly complained of the extraordinary cost of buildings constructed by the Department of Public Works. We know from experience that, by and large, buildings have cost 50 per cent. more than if they had been erected under a system different from the present extravagant system of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you not think that the work is 50 per cent. better?

{*Mr. Swayne.*

Mr. MORGAN: No. If the work performed by contractors is not carried out according to the specifications of the department, then the inspectors of the department are to blame; and the quicker we secure inspectors who are prepared to see that the work is properly performed the better it will be for the department and for the taxpayers. The Home Secretary admitted to me that the work carried out at the Barambah aboriginal settlement would have cost from 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. more if it had been carried out by the Department of Public Works.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you suggest that we should erect public buildings with the assistance of aboriginal labour?

Mr. MORGAN: Every person employed on the work carried out at Barambah was paid the award rate. We have the right to expect a full return for the loan money expended. Apparently the system at present in operation is one that cannot be changed by the Government. It continues in operation in spite of the fact that hon. members on both sides have repeatedly referred to the enormous cost of constructing small buildings in country districts by the department. It makes one heartily sick and tired to go round and observe the manner in which work is performed on various public works in Brisbane. Certain methods are adopted right under the eyes of the departmental officers, who are evidently unable to see that the men employed at a high rate of pay give a fair day's work in return. That is my complaint. I could not help observing the method in which the work was carried on in connection with our Technical College. It made one absolutely disgusted to see the antics which the men adopted deliberately to kill time and string out the duration of the work.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Rubbish!

Mr. MORGAN: That went on right under the eyes of the officers of the department; but they were not game to tackle the problem and insist on a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. If the inspectors and the officers attached to the department are afraid to carry out their duties irrespective of the consequences, the quicker they are cleared out the better. The quicker those officers realise that they are in a responsible position to see that the men engaged on public works give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay the better it will be for the country. I believe in giving good wages to men who are prepared to earn them. I am one who believes that there should be no limitation on the amount of money a man should earn if he has the ability. I believe that the system in vogue in the sheep industry in regard to shearing sheep, where men can earn up to £2 and £3 a day, should be extended to other industries.

Mr. BULCOCK: Yet the increase to the men in that industry is opposed in court.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member overlooks the fact that the application in court embraces the payment of that increased wage to the slowest as well as the most highly skilled worker. Why should we not adopt the system in operation in the sheep industry in our building industry and make provision to pay bricklayers so much per thousand bricks? It is an acknowledged fact that bricklayers in this State lay on an average

from 300 to 350 bricks a day under day-labour conditions. We also know that many bricklayers are capable of laying as many as 1,000 bricks per day, and that it would not be an excessive day's work for them to do so. If those men were paid according to the work they performed, they would be only too pleased to lay 1,000 bricks a day, and do the work as well as it is being done to-day. Every man should be encouraged to earn according to his ability. The ultimate result would be that our workmen would be encouraged to mount to the top of the ladder of success. The work of every man on a job to-day is controlled by the ability of the slowest man. That encourages men to go slow, and every man who lays a few more bricks than his neighbour, or does a little more carpentering work than the man alongside him, is quickly brought to heel and informed that he is doing too much work. He has consequently to slow down and perform the same quantity of work as the slowest man on the job. The result is that, instead of the work being performed in much less time at reduced cost, it is strung out simply for the purpose of giving longer employment to the men engaged on such constructional work. There seems to be no one in the department game to tackle this problem. If inspectors attempt to interfere to secure a fair day's work for a fair day's pay from the men, they become marked men, and methods are evolved to remove them from their job.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is nonsense.

Mr. MORGAN: It is not nonsense. I have been told so by inspectors engaged in numerous departments. We know that these men have no redress, and that what I complain of is occurring every day. If a ganger in charge of men endeavours to obtain a decent day's work for the pay they receive he immediately becomes a marked man until he is removed from the job. That man is penalised because he tried to protect the public and do justice to his department. The result is that men pursue the line of least resistance. Men will not do their jobs properly if they are not backed up by the department and the Government. They will not run the risk of losing their jobs and creating dissension if they are not supported in their endeavour to do a fair thing to the country.

Excessive cost of construction is the order of the day throughout the State so far as departmental work is concerned. Only the other day the hon. member for Wide Bay asked a question as to the cost of three schools erected in his electorate. Those schools measure 21 by 18 feet and the cost was from £630 to £649! Is that not excessive? If one were putting up a building of those dimensions he would almost want it studded with diamonds if it were to cost £649. There must be jewels in every knot-hole to justify that expenditure. I estimate that those schools cost at least £150 more than they should have cost, and that applies to similar buildings throughout the State. Thousands of pounds are placed on the Estimates for the building of schools, and it means that, instead of having, say, fifty schools built for the amount voted, we are having only thirty-five schools built. We are losing about fifteen schools annually owing to the fact that the Department of Public Works

is spending money in an extravagant manner, due to a lack of control. I do not say one word about the quality of the work performed, but I complain about the method adopted in expending the grant. I hope the department will take the matter in hand. I even go so far as to assert that a Commission of Inquiry is necessary to go into the activities of this department. Certain work has to be performed, and an estimate is drawn up. That estimate is prepared by an officer of the Department, instructed by another officer of the department. Such estimates are never checked by an outsider, and it is only natural that the officers in the different departments endeavour to play into each other's hands so that they will not be hauled over the coals. An estimate may be drawn up for a building, stipulating a certain sum. Next year additions to the original estimate are found to be necessary, and the following year the same thing occurs again; and so it goes on. I contend that when work is necessary, the department should be compelled to draw up plans and specifications for such work, and tender for its completion in competition with outside contractors. The lowest tenderer, provided things are satisfactory, should receive the work, irrespective of whether that tenderer is the Government or otherwise.

Recently the Commonwealth Government called for tenders for the construction of a section of the Kyogle-South Brisbane railway, and the Queensland Government were successful in securing the contract. We have noticed what a tremendous difference there has been in setting about that contract, and what a different system obtained with regard to the supply of sleepers. The Government know that they are limited to a certain expenditure, and are setting about the contract in a more business-like manner than prevails in connection with the construction of public works throughout Queensland. The time is ripe for a thorough over- [11 a.m.] haul of this department, as it is a crying shame to see the money that is wasted in connection with the work executed by the department. The sooner something is done to relieve the people overburdened with taxation of this extravagant expenditure, and to see that a fair amount of work is performed for the money expended, the better it will be for the State.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): This is one of the big spending departments of the Government. Altogether the department expends over half a million pounds per annum, and if we, as representatives of the people, can see any way in which money can be saved, we are perfectly justified in drawing attention to it, provided it does not in any way interfere with the excellence of the work that is done.

First of all, I want to thank the Secretary for Public Works and the Home Secretary for accepting a suggestion that I made to secure a property in Toowong for a police station. I wish in other directions that the Government would adopt the practice of securing permanent sites for Government buildings.

Last session I referred to the necessity for building schools in my electorate. I again draw attention to the necessity for erecting a school at Auchenflower and one in West Toowong in my electorate. I do not say that a school should be built in West

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Toowong immediately, but as a business proposition the department should secure a site before land prices get too high. The Secretary for Public Instruction and I have had a talk about this, and the hon. gentleman sees eye to eye with me. If a site were secured now, it could be held until it is necessary to erect a school building, because by that time prices will have become almost prohibitive, as they are becoming in the Auchenflower district to-day. It is a good business proposition for the Government to select sites for public buildings before prices become too high.

When the hon. member for Murilla was speaking the hon. member for Fitzroy interjected that work done by day labour is better done than work done under contract. I need not go past the parliamentary buildings to prove that that is not the case. It is not long ago since the outside of these buildings was painted. At the time I drew the attention of hon. members to the colour of the paint on the doors and windows, and I told the Committee that it would not last.

Mr. HYNES: Did you suggest red?

Mr. MAXWELL: No. That is a dangerous colour, and it will not last—I am not dealing with the hon. gentleman's colour—I am dealing with the colour of the paint on the windows and doors of this building.

Let me draw attention to the work which has been done on the Treasury Building, which is as fine a building from an architectural point of view as we have in the State. Look at the manner in which the doors and windows of that building have been painted! It is like a stable. The doors and windows of the building lend themselves to artistic treatment, but look at the colour! I know that it is done like that for economical reasons. It is an ordinary colour—with a base of white lead carried right through with white lead. It is not satisfactory as a colour, in my opinion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you say that the painting of the Treasury Building is not workmanlike?

Mr. MAXWELL: No; nor did I infer it. I am talking about the outside, not the inside—I mentioned the exterior of the doors and windows. We have some of the finest buildings it is possible to get in the City of Brisbane—the State Insurance Building, the Executive Building, and other buildings which are a credit to the men who built them. It is not fair for hon. members opposite, who are prepared to take advantage of the contract system in regard to buildings for themselves, to traduce a body of respectable men who are taxpayers in the community.

I am not blaming the department for the day-labour system—I blame the Government, because it is their policy, and the officers are carrying it out to the best of their ability. Instances have been given this morning by the hon. member for Mirani in connection with the cost of buildings. I drew attention, when speaking on this subject in 1922, as reported in "Hansard," page 1228, for that year, to certain buildings being erected in the Townsville district under the contract system at a cost of £58 per square, while under the day-labour system of the department, and supervised by their own officers, they cost £102 per square. I sounded a note of warning on that occasion, and stressed the neces-

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sity for something being done to prevent that kind of thing taking place; but we find the position to-day is very much worse. The hon. member for Wide Bay asked the following question on 3rd August last—

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

"2. What are the dimensions of the schools mentioned?"

The Secretary for Public Works replied—

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

"2. 21 feet by 18 feet in each case."

That has panned out at £172 per square. Would the Minister or any other hon. member opposite pay £172 per square for buildings such as those?

Mr. MORGAN: Outrageous!

Mr. MAXWELL: It is criminal. I am not talking without my book. I find that to-day the ordinary cottage costs £45 per square, and the bungalow cottage, with its ornamentation and its trimmings, £60 per square. There are heaps of workers' dwellings being erected to-day at £37 per square, yet the Government persist in throwing away the people's money by paying £172 per square! It is criminal to waste money in that way. I want to draw the attention of the Minister to these facts, and suggest that in view of the statement which has been made by the Treasurer about State enterprises, he should bring them before the Cabinet so that such wasteful expenditure can be dealt with.

I also want to draw attention to the system of estimating in the department. I say that whoever is responsible for the estimating in the department is absolutely wrong. The original estimate of the cost of the Hamilton Cold Stores in 1919 was £215,508 (including railway siding, £21,508). The expenditure up to date has been £319,510 17s. 6d. The Auditor-General, in his report, however, remarks—

"Extras have, however, since been added which were not included in that amount."

I want to know what those extras are that the estimate should have been exceeded by £104,000. There is something wrong in that connection. Again, I find that interest has not been charged by the Treasury on the loan indebtedness with respect to those stores, amounting to a sum of no less than £319,510 17s. 6d. Why should not interest be charged when it has been built out of borrowed money? I want to know from the Secretary for Public Works, too, how it is that the estimate was so greatly exceeded.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have not control of the building now.

Mr. MAXWELL: I quite appreciate the Minister's position, but he is in charge of these Estimates, and it is on these Estimates that we get our opportunity of discussing these matters. I believe that he will inquire into the statements I am making. It is for that reason I am making them. I protest most emphatically against the wasteful expenditure which has taken place.

On the other hand let me take the completion of the Treasury Block. On 3rd

August I asked the Secretary for Public Works—

- “ 1. What has been the cost to date of the addition to the Treasury Block?
2. What is the estimated cost?
3. When does he anticipate it will be ready for occupation? ”

The Minister replied—

- “ 1. £117,113 13s. 9d.
2. £230,000.

3. The basement and first floors are occupied, and it is anticipated that the remaining floors will be ready for occupation at the end of 1926.”

I say that any ordinary schoolboy could have estimated the cost of that building. On a previous occasion I drew attention to the ridiculousness of the position which had arisen with regard to the Treasury Block, and compared the cost of the Executive Building and the State Insurance Building with the estimate which had been made for the completion of the Treasury Building. The estimated cost of the completion of the block was £230,000, and the total cost to 30th June last was £119,229 3s. 8d. The Auditor-General says—

“ This includes £30,738 17s. 5d., expended in connection with the purchase of Miller's Quarry at Helidon, and the working of same.”

It is quite right to debit that building with the cost of the stone used on it and the time taken to get it out; but it is not right to charge the whole of that purchase money to that one job. No man would conduct his business on lines like that.

Mr. RIORDAN: Don't get worried.

Mr. MAXWELL: Somebody has to get worried when the Government are wasting money like this.

Mr. WEIR: You spent £1,000 when you were on the City Council.

Mr. MAXWELL: What I spent when I was on the City Council has nothing whatever to do with the question before the Committee. This is a very serious matter. I am showing where wrong estimating has been taking place. Something is wrong somewhere. I want to know how an estimate of £230,000 was given. I have my own idea. Of course we know that it is difficult to estimate the cost of constructing a building under the day-labour system. Perhaps the estimate is made excessive in order that the Government may boast of having saved the public a considerable sum of money by carrying the work out under the supervision of the department.

Mr. DASH: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman knows absolutely nothing about even the rudiments of this business. I know what I am talking about. I am sorry that the hon. gentleman is not serious. This is a serious matter, and I am dealing with it in a reasonable and honourable way. I am setting out my viewpoint, and, if the hon. gentleman can prove it to be incorrect, then let him do so. There was something wrong when the estimate for the Treasury Building was considerably in excess of the cost of the other buildings I have mentioned. When I drew attention to the matter I was ridiculed, and informed that the conditions

were entirely different. I knew that, and I allowed for it, and I allowed for the class of work that had been done. The day-labour system is the policy of the Government, but it is wrong to perpetuate such a policy; in fact, it is criminal to waste the money of the people in the way it is being wasted. It is being squandered simply because certain gentlemen believe in the day-labour system. I desire to inform the Secretary for Public Works that the money expended on the Roma Street Police Station has been absolutely wasted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a very serious statement to make.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is quite true.

Mr. MAXWELL: I will prove it.

Mr. DASH: You cannot prove it.

Mr. MAXWELL: The building should have been removed. The additions should never have been carried out. I do say that before very long a new central railway station must be constructed on the site of the municipal markets. The Government have wasted £25,000 in alterations to a building which before very long will have to be removed. That is not the fault of the officers, but of the Government in deciding to carry out the work. The estimate of the cost of alterations to that building was £20,547 13s., and, according to the report of the Auditor-General, the work has cost £25,000 to date. When you come to put two and two together and ask yourself why there should be such a difference between the estimated cost and actual cost, you must conclude that something is wrong, and that it is time the Minister ascertained the cause of such errors.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Give us the secret.

Mr. MAXWELL: My secret is that they do not understand how to estimate the jobs. If the hon. gentleman were quoted a price of £15,000 for the erection of a building in North Queensland, and on its completion he was asked to pay £20,000, he would not say, “ Give us the secret.” He would consider that the policy was wrong. It is a pity that hon. members opposite do not realise the futility of such a policy, as they have realised the utter hopelessness of conducting certain wild-cat schemes with which they have been connected.

I desire now to refer to unemployed workers' insurance. I desire to deal with that matter in the few moments I have at my disposal.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I suggest that you leave it until the special vote is reached.

Mr. MAXWELL: I intend to deal with it now. According to the Auditor-General's report, during the year 1924-25 the amount expended in connection with the Unemployment Insurance Fund was £204,538 18s. 3d.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I suggest to the hon. member that he discuss that subject under the special vote.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would suggest to the hon. member for Toowong that he defer his remarks on that subject until the Committee reaches the Trust and Special Funds.

Mr. MAXWELL: If you suggest that, Mr. Cooper, I will do so.

*Mr. Maxwell.]*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: For the information of hon. members, I would state that the Estimates of the Works Department will be taken by the Secretary for Labour and Industry and myself. Therefore, I suggest to hon. members that they confine their discussion to the special votes of either department.

Mr. MAXWELL: I accept the suggestion of the Temporary Chairman and the Minister. I will now proceed to deal with the vote for the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I suggest that you defer your remarks until we reach that vote.

Mr. MAXWELL: I shall be pleased to do so. I would stress the necessity for an overhauling of the particular questions I have dealt with. The evidence I have submitted shows that the system of day labour has failed. I also contend that there is something wrong with the system of estimating in the department. The very glaring fact confronts us that no interest is charged in connection with the Hamilton Cold Stores. I would like to know the intention of the Government in connection with that matter. I hope that, so far as Government buildings in my electorate are concerned, the Government, in the interests of economy and in the interests of the people, including the children, will exert every effort to secure sites for the buildings I have mentioned.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): Hon. members opposite have argued that the men on the jobs are responsible for the high building costs. That statement is not altogether accurate, because a boss is usually placed on the job to see that the work is carried out satisfactorily. If that official is not doing his duty, then the department should deal with him.

Reference has also been made to day labour versus contract system; but I would point out that a contractor carries out most of his work under the system of day labour. After having secured a contract a contractor must then secure labour. If he is more successful in this respect than the Department of Public Works, then there is something wrong, not at the root of the tree, but at the head. The heads are entirely responsible for any mismanagement of the nature complained of. One hon. member opposite said that it was the fault of the Cabinet. It may be the function of the Cabinet or the head of the department to deal with those officers, if they discover that the statements of hon. members opposite are true, but I am not going to accept the statements of the hon. member for Toowong or any other hon. member without hearing the other side of the question. I know that in the electorate of the hon. member for Gregory, the Winton Hospital was constructed for something like £600 or £700 below the estimated cost, and the Department of Public Works handed that amount over to the hospital committee. What private contractor would do that? This is one of the weaknesses that I can see existing with the Department of Public Works in connection with the day-labour system. At Hughenden we have a branch of the department, and there is a man in charge there. It is the duty of that man to attend to the whole of the schools in the district. He may be called upon to effect some minor repairs at Richmond—say, repairs to a fence. He leaves Hughenden

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and takes two or three men with him. He has to charge fares against the job, the night allowance for those men who are away from home, and travelling time. I suppose he is carrying out his instructions to do the job by day labour, but if I were the head of that branch I would engage a man living in Richmond to carry out the job, so saving the Government a good deal of unnecessary expense.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: Let me quote a case. At Dimbulah one of the outhouses was blown over. There were eight or ten men working on a new school at Einasleigh. That outhouse could have been re-erected on its blocks by any sort of labour—not necessarily skilled labour at £1 a day. At the time the head of the department was R. A. Tills, and he insisted—being no doubt a good supporter of the contract system, and wishing to strike a blow at the day-labour system—on bringing the whole of that gang of men from Einasleigh to Dimbulah to put that outhouse back on its blocks. There was only one train a week running, and those men were seven days away from Einasleigh before they could return. What would be the cost of doing that job? That is the sort of thing that kills the day-labour system; yet hon. members opposite come here and try to bolster up their case by attacking the men engaged on the job. I consider that just as conscientious men work for the Government as for private employers. I consider that the Government, under the day-labour system, have very successfully competed with outside contractors in big jobs. The day-labour system has effected a big saving on big jobs in our Railway Department.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in pursuing that line of argument.

Mr. RIORDAN: I am just showing where day labour has saved Queensland a great deal of money on big jobs. Any weakness of the system is not the fault of the men on the job, and I suggest to the Minister in charge of the department that little jobs in small country towns should be carried out by local labour. It is not necessary for the man in charge of the department's activities in a district to secure a contract price for the work. He should have some idea of what it will cost, the length of time necessary for its completion, and arrange for it to be done by day labour. A good many jobs could be done that way.

A good deal has been said in regard to the erection of new schools. I have no complaint against the Department of Public Works under that heading. The department has been most sympathetic in the matter of erecting schools in country districts [11.30 a.m.] and where it has been found necessary to carry out urgent work that has been done. For many years past the Hughenden school, which is of the old type, has been neglected, but provision has been made this year for the necessary repairs. Every hon. member claims that the work required in his electorate is more urgent than the work required in the next electorate; but the best judges in these cases are the men in the department. The attack made this morning on bricklayers and labourers has been uncalled for, and no one has proved that there has been a deliberate slowing down. If the Under



Secretary for Public Works is thinking of making inquiries into the cost of work, then those inquiries should not be made about the bricklayer and the labourer, because they have a boss over them, and they are as closely watched as anybody else. There is a tendency in all departments for little cliques to work together to get in their friends, and good men have been squeezed out of the Department of Public Works by these little cliques. If a worker sees anything wrong and points it out to the man in charge of the job, it is not long before he receives his walking ticket. These things are worthy of investigation, and the Minister and Under Secretary should not take everything they hear from the boss as gospel without hearing the other side of the question. The suggestion of getting work done in country districts without shifting a big gang of men about to do little jobs is worthy of consideration, and it is a matter that should be dealt with by the Minister.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): The hon. member for Burke has made out a perfect case why the contract system should be adopted as against day labour. He has stated a definite case—and it is not the only instance of the kind—where ten men took something like a week to put an outhouse back on its blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not what he said. He did not say it took ten men.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member stated that there was only one train a week, and they could not get back for over a week.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He did not say that ten men were sent.

Mr. EDWARDS: I know of a case where two men were sent to put a sheet of iron on a shed at a place some distance away, and they could not get back for three days. That sort of thing is occurring in different parts of Queensland. I am not going to say for a moment that the men are at fault. It is the system that is absolutely wrong.

I am not quite in the same position in regard to the erection of country schools as the hon. member for Burke, although we receive every courtesy from the Under Secretary for Public Instruction and also from the Under Secretary for Public Works. These two gentlemen are doing their best in the interests of country children, but they find that they are absolutely up against it on account of the system adopted by the Government. I notice the vote for buildings this year has been decreased by something like £11,000. It must be known to the Secretary for Public Works, if he takes any interest in the department—and I believe he does—that country schools have been hung up for years past on account of funds not being available to carry out necessary work. Only yesterday I took a deputation of two gentlemen to the Under Secretary for Public Works. Those gentlemen pointed out that they are 8 miles away from the Kumbia school at the present time, and that the school is overcrowded. There has been an agitation for years past for an addition to the Kumbia school. I admit that the Under Secretary on this particular occasion saw the necessity for trying to get a building with sufficient accommodation to give the children in that locality the education they need, and he suggested that the people in their centre

might give some help to put up the fence and cart the material to the ground, which the deputation agreed to do. One of them said to me, "We can ill afford to do this, as we can scarcely find sufficient for the needs of our families and keep going on the farm, but we wish to have our children educated." Parents who are prepared to go out to the country districts should not be subjected to that sort of thing.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is often done.

Mr. EDWARDS: Does the hon. member think it is a fair thing in the interests of the country people? I do not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That shows a splendid spirit.

Mr. EDWARDS: Of course it does.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The department gives the people every encouragement in cases of that kind, and tries to help those who help themselves.

Mr. EDWARDS: I know the Minister gives the people every encouragement; but is that a fair thing, seeing that those people are taxpayers, just the same as people in large centres of population?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is a good deal of that spirit shown all round the metropolitan area.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Minister will realise that people in the metropolitan area are not in the same position as people in the back blocks. Although the people I have mentioned are in difficulties, they realise the seriousness of leaving their children without education. This school is at Alice Creek, 8 miles from Kumbia, which is 18 miles from the Nanango Railway Station. I hope the Minister will seriously consider the advisability of carrying out the work immediately. The Department of Public Instruction recognises that work like this should be done in the district. It is quite clear to anyone that parents who are interested in the education of their children will not stay in those places year after year if they cannot get educational facilities. Parents think more of the education of their children than of anything else. The Government should be strong enough to see that the thickly settled areas pay a greater proportion than they are doing at the present time for the education of the children. It is the only possible means for developing the State as it should be developed.

Now let me say just a few words on the question of the day-labour system versus the contract system. It must be quite clear to the Minister that, if the Under Secretary for Public Works were in a position to call tenders for building a school in an area such as I have mentioned, that school would be built for possibly a little more than half what it costs at present. Some of the parents of the children are carpenters, and quite capable of carrying out the work.

Mr. HARTLEY: Bush carpenters.

Mr. EDWARDS: Many bush carpenters are better carpenters than the carpenters in the city, and, not only that—they are workers. If the Government could alter their policy to this extent, it would be a big step in the interests of the education of these children.

Mr. HARTLEY: Your party built schools in the shape of bark huts.

*Mr. Edwards.]*

Mr. EDWARDS: That interjection shows the unfortunate characteristic of the hon. member. "The party opposite" is never out of his head. He can never see anything else.

Mr. WEIR: Are you quite free of it?

Mr. EDWARDS: Absolutely free of it. I am here in the interests of the State of Queensland, and not in party interests. If what I suggest were done, work could be carried out for little more than half what it costs to-day, and it would create a better feeling amongst the people, and assistance could be obtained from them to an even greater extent than to-day. I say that a child of twelve or fourteen years in the bush who has not had the necessary facilities for education is no credit to any Government.

Mr. WEIR: None of them is in that position.

Mr. EDWARDS: One of the gentlemen whom I took to the Secretary for Public Works recently made the statement that children of twelve to fourteen years of age had not the necessary facilities for education.

Mr. WEIR: The parents ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Mr. EDWARDS: Possibly so, but the hon. member knows what the bush is and the conditions which exist in the bush. (Government interjections.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. EDWARDS: I am evidently waking these gentlemen up. They should take things a great deal more seriously than they do at present.

Mr. WEIR: You do not take education seriously.

Mr. EDWARDS: I do, because I have known the want of it myself. I realise the necessity for providing the necessary facilities to enable all children to get an education. That is one of those things which are going to keep people in the country districts. Just as the Government have broken down on a lot of their policy since 1920, so are they going to break down on the day-labour system; but at present it is unfortunately carried out to such an extent that many children are losing the education they should have for the sake of adhering to a hard-and-fast rule. I hope the Minister will seriously consider this question, and under no consideration neglect the children in the country districts, but that he will see that they get the necessary school buildings. It must be clear that once the Secretary for Public Instruction decides that a school should be built the Department of Public Works should not hang up its construction for years. It must be apparent to the hon. members opposite that that is entirely wrong in the interests of the State and of the children, and in every way a bad business from the Government's point of view. I hope that from this out such things will not occur, and that the Government will see their way clear to stretch their policy to the extent of allowing the contract system to operate in country districts where schools are so urgently required, and where it is incumbent upon us to do our very best in the interests of the parents and of the children.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): When hon. members opposite address themselves to this vote they endeavour to belittle the Government's policy of the day-labour system.

[*Mr. Edwards.*]

Mr. MORGAN: We have cause to do so.

Mr. HYNES: I think it is generally admitted by all parties that the day-labour system has been a success.

Mr. MORGAN: Nonsense.

Mr. HYNES: If it has not been a success, it should be easy for hon. members opposite to cite an individual instance where it has not been a success. The hon. member for Burke referred to a case where, owing to the stupidity of the officer of the department, a staff was sent out to re-erect an outhouse when the work could have been done more effectively by men on the spot.

Mr. MORGAN: That happens frequently.

At 11.47 a.m.,

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. F. A. Cooper in the chair.

Mr. HYNES: There is an easy way of dealing with such an officer. He should be "sacked" without any hesitation. But that does not prove that the day-labour system is wrong. An ex-Secretary for Railways, Mr. Paget—a man of considerable experience—advocated the day-labour system, and quoted statistics in this Chamber to prove that it was the best system. Since the Labour party have been in power they have expended a large amount of money on the construction of schools, not only in the metropolitan area and the large towns in the State, but in all parts of Queensland, making it possible for parents desirous of educating their children to give them a decent education. The statement was made that there were children of fourteen years of age in Queensland who had never been to school. I think the disgrace is on the parents, and, irrespective of what might be said to the contrary, I emphatically state that there are parents avaricious and callous enough to-day to keep their children at home milking cows when they should be sent to school.

Mr. MORGAN: Most of those people vote Labour.

Mr. HYNES: Still hon. members opposite are hypocritical enough to blame the Government for that state of affairs. We have constructed more schools than any previous Administration.

Mr. EDWARDS: So you should.

Mr. HYNES: There is no reason why we should not. We believe that the first concern of any Government should be for the future citizens of the State—the children. It is the bounden duty of every Government to see that every child has a decent education, whether it be born in a bark humpy in the "Never Never," or in a house in the city.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why do you not carry that out?

Mr. MORGAN: The Government have closed more schools than any other Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: No.

Mr. HYNES: We have also improved the type of building. It is generally conceded now by medical authorities that a large amount of eye trouble and other diseases suffered by children in the past were contracted in their school days, as the result of defective architecture in the construction of schools. I think it is generally conceded that the type of building which has been

erected by the Labour Government is much superior to the old type of building. Hon. members will remember the type of building in existence when they went to school. There was no attempt at proper ventilation, and no attempt at providing for the proper lighting of the school, with the result that many of the pupils were afflicted with defective eyesight. The Minister informs me that the type of desks was responsible for a large amount of physical deformity. We have dealt with this state of affairs, and now we have a better type of school and better furniture. If hon. members opposite are truthful, they will admit that this statement is correct.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is not correct.

Mr. HYNES: I observe that the vote for "State school buildings, additions, improvements, furniture, repairs, and painting," has been reduced from £60,000 last year to £51,900 this year. That is not wise. It would be well for us to continue the policy which has prevailed since the Labour Government came into office in 1916, and keep the school buildings in a proper state of repair, and to proceed with the construction of schools where necessary in remote parts of the State.

I commend to the Minister the necessity for the installation of a proper system of sanitation at the State schools. Hon. members cannot accuse me of working the parish pump in the matter I am about to refer to, because since I have entered Parliament I have agitated for, and endeavoured to secure, the installation of a septic tank at the West End School, Townsville. Such a system is essential for the health and well-being of the children attending our large schools; and it is more necessary in the tropics than in the semi-tropics or cooler climate of the south. I would suggest that the Government should proceed with the policy of installing septic tanks in every large school. I realise that there is a scarcity of money, and that, if such a scheme were carried out immediately, a large appropriation would be necessary, but I suggest that the department should adopt a policy of installing the system in Class I. schools. Where those schools are adjacent to a sewerage system they could be connected; and where no sewerage system exists septic tanks could be installed. The State school at West End, Townsville, is the only Class I. school outside of Brisbane. The six Class I. schools in the metropolitan area will in the near future be connected up with the sewerage system. The work at the West End School, Townsville, should be proceeded with as soon as possible in the interests of the health and well-being of the 1,000 children attending there.

Mr. FARRELL: That is too many children for one school. It should be divided into two schools.

Mr. HYNES: The probabilities of a serious outbreak of an epidemic would be considerably minimised there by the installation of a septic tank.

The hon. member for Toowong has a bee in his bonnet about the day-labour system, for on every occasion when the opportunity offers he attacks the Government upon it.

Mr. KERR: He has a good knowledge of it.

Mr. HYNES: I have had the privilege of discussing the question of day labour with experienced men who have held responsible positions in the department as well as with experienced men outside the department, and they all agree that, with proper and efficient management and administration, the day-labour system is absolutely the best. They also agree that it does away with slumming work. We had an illustration of that in the Brisbane City Council, of which the hon. member for Toowong was a member. The disclosure was there made that slumming was indulged in by contractors. There is no danger of that occurring under a properly administered system of day labour. I am satisfied that the large amount of time taken up in attacking the system of day labour is so taken up by small-minded men for the purpose of securing political kudos.

Mr. KERR: Nonsense!

Mr. HYNES: I sincerely hope that the Administration will go ahead in connection with their policy of constructing public buildings, especially schools in the remote parts of the State, so that the children in those outlying districts may have the same opportunities as are available to those living in the more centrally situated portions of the State.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): The debate on this vote has centred around the questions of school buildings and day labour versus contract. I regret to note that there has been a reduction in the amount granted for State school building. The amount last year was £60,000, and this year it has dropped to £51,900. With that reduction hon. members will have great difficulty in securing their requirements so far as country school buildings are concerned.

Other hon. members have referred to the enormous cost of school buildings. I regret that the Government do not adopt a different system so that they might bring about substantial reductions in the cost of such buildings. The school buildings specifically mentioned as having been erected in my electorate were—

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

I understand that the cost of the building at Munna Creek will be nearer £700 than £600 when completed. The dimensions of those schools is only 21 feet by 18 feet in each case; therefore the cost appears excessive. I admit they are of the sectional type, which provides for an extension, if necessary. That is a move in the right direction. The type of school is excellent, and the only thing I find fault with is the excessive cost. The schools are well lighted, have an eastern aspect, and are situated on high blocks.

Mr. HARTLEY: How far did they have to carry the timber?

Mr. CLAYTON: In connection with the Bell's Bridge School, probably 10 miles; at Kia Ora the softwood may have been carried 14 miles—the hardwood only a very short distance. Seeing that we are threatened with a shortage of softwood timbers, I suggest that the Government should set an example by constructing the walls of these buildings of hardwood instead of pine. I believe the

*Mr. Clayton.]*

cost would be less, and, instead of having to cut into our immature softwoods, we could well utilise more of our hardwoods in the construction of these buildings. Hardwood timbers will dress up very nicely, and a partition of hardwood can be made to look just as well as a pine partition.

Mr. PETERSON: Hardwood requires a little more seasoning, that is all.

Mr. CLAYTON: Yes, but the cost would be so much less that the department could afford to give the interior walls a coat of paint if they did not like the appearance of the hardwood. The department [12 noon] should do something in that direction, and thereby set an example to private enterprise. I understand at the rate we are going we have only sufficient softwood timber in Queensland to last another fifteen years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you suggest that we should put hardwood inside the studs?

Mr. PETERSON: Hardwood boards both inside and outside.

Mr. CLAYTON: Has the Secretary for Public Works never seen a partition of hardwood? Hardwood could be used with advantage in a great many cases where pine is used to-day.

If tenders were called for the erection of schools such as those constructed in my electorate, the cost would be considerably less. If it is against the policy of the department to have school buildings constructed under the contract system, they might experiment and see what the cost would be under such a system. The Government call tenders for workers' dwellings and workers' homes, and why not do the same with school buildings, and give the system a fair test? Then, if it was found that the cost under the day-labour system was less, the Government would have something to go on, and it would do away with the criticisms we hear year after year in this Chamber.

I trust that the financial position will be such that funds will be available for the school buildings required. It would be an excellent thing if this vote were placed under the control of the Department of Public Instruction instead of under the Department of Public Works. Unfortunately, at the present time, when permission for the erection of a school is granted by the Department of Public Instruction, delay is caused in the Works Department, which has to find the money.

School buildings are necessary to afford facilities for the education of children in country districts, but I know of many instances where the parents have provided accommodation under what is known as the provisional school system, and educational facilities have been given by the Department of Public Instruction. In some instances the parents providing the accommodation have received a rent, and the building provided has been used until funds were available for the erection of a State school. I cannot understand any children in Queensland of ten or twelve years of age going without education when we have such admirable facilities provided through the correspondence school; but we contend that the Government should give greater consideration to the education of children in country

[Mr. Clayton.

districts when the people there are prepared to assist the department in the erection of the necessary buildings.

I would like to touch on a matter which comes under this vote—that is, the issuing of Orders in Council in connection with electric light. I have recently had occasion to go to the department with regard to the issuing of Orders in Council to enable the towns of Goomeri and Pialba to be lighted by electricity. I find that it is the policy of the Government not to issue Orders in Council to private companies or individuals. It has been done in some cases, but I understand the Act provides that the Government "may" issue the Orders in Council. It appears to be the policy of the Government to refuse to issue Orders in Council other than to local authorities. I approached the Under Secretary with a petition from the town of Goomeri asking that an Order in Council be granted to the Kilkivan Shire Council for the lighting of the town by electricity, and suggested that a private firm named Anderson Brothers should be allowed to supply electricity in bulk, but the local authority refused to apply for the Order in Council, and the town of Goomeri has not yet got the electric light. As a consequence people are having to put in their own plants. The Government might surely have allowed this firm to lay mains and supply the electricity in bulk; but simply because it conflicted with the policy of the Government the proposal has been turned down.

I also went into the matter of the issuing of an Order in Council for the lighting of Pialba. A firm of the same name, Andersen Brothers, were quite prepared to take on the work, and we approached the local authority there, who were quite prepared to apply for an Order in Council. As a matter of fact, they have issued instructions to their solicitors to apply for an Order, on the understanding that Andersen Brothers should have power to control the work; but, from information I have received from the department, the local authority will have to control the whole business, and will not be allowed to delegate power to Andersen Brothers to charge for electric light. It will be very interesting to know whether the Government are prepared to allow the local authority to go on with the application for the Order in Council. The Government are holding up this firm, which is prepared to spend money in the lighting of Pialba. Before an Order in Council is granted a poll of the electors has to be taken. We find now that the Treasurer is not prepared to lend any money to local authorities, so that, in any case, we would be compelled to borrow from private sources. Under these conditions, how much better would it be for the Government to allow this local authority to use its own judgment, and permit Andersen Brothers to go ahead with the lighting of Pialba and supplying of power to people there and round about? If the Government are going to stick to the policy they have laid down, I am inclined to think it will be a long time before we get proper lighting in the small towns of Queensland. That would be unfortunate, and I hope the Government will go into the matter and do something in the direction of allowing private firms to negotiate with local authorities in such cases and spend money on undertakings which are for the convenience of the people.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I have been very interested in the discussion this morning, particularly that part of it dealing with the controversy as to the merits of the day-labour and contract systems. I am one of those who say candidly that there is no reason in the world why day labour should not pay; but the fact which presents itself to us throughout the departments is that it is not the system of day labour which has failed but its administration.

Mr. HARTLEY: Faulty supervision.

Mr. PETERSON: Yes, from both sides; and, as custodians and trustees of the people's money, we are concerned in seeing that service is given in return for expenditure. While consistently maintaining the rights of the workers through our Arbitration Court, and offering a higher standard of living if necessary, we must also consider the public.

I listened with a good deal of interest to the hon. member for Townsville. That gentleman has for years been a representative and secretary of an organisation which is the biggest "pay by results" union in Australia. The mining branch and the shearers' branch of that union are both paid by results, and no complaints have been made. A few years ago there was a keen agitation at Mount Morgan against continuing the contract system, but a plebiscite of the workers turned down by a tremendous majority a suggestion that day labour should be adopted. Prominent members of the Australian Workers' Union and the coal workers, too, are determined that they shall be paid by results on piecework, but that, in the case of anybody else, the policy of day labour shall be maintained. It is just as well here to repeat what Mr. Philip Snowden has said in a very interesting article he wrote after a visit to America. I have here an extract quoted by Dr. Jensen, who seems to be his disciple, which was published in the "Daily Mail" on 13th September last:—

"The enormous advantage which the American wage-earners have gained in recent years is attributable to the system of payment by results.

"There are other features of the American system which might be copied with advantage by British employers."

If the day-labour system is to be given a fair and square "go," then the Government should see that all waste is eliminated. When the Westwood Sanatorium was being constructed in my electorate the very first material to arrive on the job was the joinery.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Whoever sent it out should have been sacked.

Mr. PETERSON: Exactly; but you do not sack them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. gentleman points out any individual who does that sort of thing, he will be sacked.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. gentleman was like myself at that time—a humble lone-hand follower of the Government. He was not responsible. That might happen under any Government. I am not blaming his department for that, but I am pointing

out that, if you wish this system to succeed, you must eliminate waste, and, if you do not eliminate it at the top, how can you expect it to be eliminated amongst the rank and file? Just imagine joinery being the first material on the job when it is wanted last! The next timber to arrive on the job was roof timber; and the workmen had to wait weeks and weeks for the foundation timber. The cost of all that had to be added to the job, with the result that the estimate was exceeded. It is not fair to blame the day-labour system for that. I am not going to blame the system because of inefficiency. The reason why it has failed is because it lacks incentive. If you destroy incentive, you immediately destroy all initiative; and, if you destroy initiative and incentive, you must have monuments of costliness. When it is considered advisable to permit of the contract system in the construction of workers' dwellings and workers' homes, where the employees engaged are protected by awards, why not adopt the same system in other activities?

Mr. HARTLEY: You have not shown that the contract system gives better results.

Mr. PETERSON: I shall deal with that aspect in a moment. A building could be erected much cheaper under the contract system than under the present system of day labour and without impairing the position of the workers. I am not condemning the day-labour system. I am condemning the way the system is being carried out at present. I am sure the position could be remedied if all concerned were to give a fair return for their award. I am a believer in the day-labour system. I am building under that system to-day. I believe in it, and will always stand up for it; but, so long as you have a lack of initiative and efficiency you must fail. Dr. Jensen quoted further from the remarks by Mr. Philip Snowden:—

"Far more consideration is given in America to the elimination of waste in an industrial management. There is more consultation between the employers and the men with the object of exchanging ideas as to where economies in management and production can be effected."

If the ordinary worker in a Government department were to go to the Under Secretary and point out how things could be improved, he would get a very rough time. He would be told to mind his own business. In America, if an employee says to his employer, "I can show you where the firm will be able to save £5 a week by adopting certain action," that man will probably secure an increase in his wages. He has shown himself to be a man with some initiative. There is no incentive for the workers in the Government departments to make such suggestions. The boss in charge of the job believes that the other fellow is after his job, and so he silences him. The sooner you deal effectively with this system the better it will be for the principle of day labour. Dr. Jensen further quotes:—

"There is a closer association between firms engaged in the same business for the purpose of pooling the common experience."

Mr. HARTLEY: Does not that sound like the socialisation of industry?

*Mr. Peterson.]*

Mr. PETERSON: No. I am giving the views of Mr. Philip Snowden. Dr. Jensen further quotes:—

“The British trade unions have looked with suspicion on talk from the employers about reducing the cost of production, because far too often the employers look only to a reduction in wages as a means to attain that object. A century of painful experience has developed a trade union policy which the example of America is proving to be based upon fallacy and error. But the employers themselves are responsible for this, because they, too, have acted on the mistaken notion that low wages meant low costs of production. The very opposite is now proved to be the truth.

Mr. Snowden condemns with equal vigour the gospel of low wages amongst the British employers, and that of limiting production and going slow among the men. He strongly advocates payment by results.”

Mr. Snowden strongly advocates payment by results. Mr. Snowden is one of the leaders of the British Labour movement, and, after travelling through America studying the various phases of industrial life, he makes the statement that, in order to make the system successful so far as the wage-earning capacity of the workers and efficiency are concerned, a system of payment by results should be instituted.

To come back to the question before the Committee, I do not envy the Minister his job of attempting to make the money go round. If the hon. gentleman would care to take the advice of members of this party and adopt principles which will enable the money at his disposal to go further than it does at the present time, he will do something which will earn the gratitude not only of members of his own party but of the people of Queensland.

Day labour can be made a success, and I only hope that the future will prove it a success; but under the present conditions it is absolutely futile to expect the system to be a success. Little schools which have been erected at Kunwarara and Upper Carmilla in my electorate have cost over £800, and any contractor would be prepared to go to those centres to erect those buildings for £600 and do well out of the job, paying the union rate of wages as prescribed by the Arbitration Court, and in addition the allowance for living away from home.

Mr. HARTLEY: You could not obtain any contractor in Rockhampton to erect those schools at that price.

Mr. PETERSON: I know that Mr. Ball and other contractors in Rockhampton, who erected a considerable number of schools prior to the introduction of the day-labour system, erected them considerably cheaper at that period. I am not talking of the present day, when everything is dearer; but at that time they erected that class of building for about £150 less than the Government are building it for to-day. Mr. Ball did not get the money, for the workers were paid the award rates, and the people of Queensland benefited. It is our duty to conserve the funds of the people. If we now are only erecting fifteen schools instead of twenty, whom are we hurting? We should

[Mr. Peterson.

be just as anxious to conserve the money of the State as we are to conserve it in our own homes. Those of us who are married and have our own homes to look after see that our money goes as far as possible; and some husbands develop a bit of a “grouch” if their wives go a little over the line. In regard to the bigger things of State we should conserve our funds and see that the people, through the Government, get a fair deal.

Mr. LLEWELYN: That is a very good illustration.

Mr. PETERSON: The Minister would save money by adopting this policy.

There are a large number of schools and other buildings in country districts which occasionally require repairs, which would perhaps cost just a few pounds. What happens? A report is sent in, an inspector is despatched to inspect the building—a journey which will probably take three or four days each way. That inspector's time is charged against the job. A great deal of money could be saved if instructions were issued to the officers concerned in such cases to have such small repairs executed by local men.

Mr. MORGAN: We have advocated that for years.

Mr. PETERSON: The Government could obtain estimates for the work through the local police magistrate, the schoolmaster, or a local public servant. In the old days, at any rate in connection with the schools with which I was concerned, the headmaster was entitled to spend up to a certain amount in repairs.

Mr. MORGAN: They will not trust him now.

Mr. PETERSON: At the school at which I had the pleasure of attending, the headmaster, Mr. Slade, had authority to call in local men to carry out small repairs, and those repairs consequently cost considerably less than they would to-day. It is far better to economise and secure the same results than to introduce additional taxation measures. Take the question of school fences. There are quite a number of schools in my electorate that have no fences. Children have to ride 5 and 6 miles to school, and there are no fences within which to put their horses. The excuse offered is that no funds are available. If the school committees were permitted to do the work, it would cost one-third of the amount it costs the department. Why not let those committees do the work? It would not be hurting the workers, but would save the cash of the workers if the principle were adopted. Does it not look stupid when you go to the department and they tell you that a rough bush fence has to be constructed by day labour? Talk about straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel! It is ridiculous.

Regarding the use of hardwoods, the hon. member for Fitzroy can bear me out in this matter. We have ample hardwoods in Queensland, which, if properly milled and seasoned, would be quite as satisfactory to use as our softwoods. I know officials of the Department of Public Works would pooh-pooh the idea, but I happen to be a practical man; I am in the building trade myself, and I will not give second place to anyone in this matter.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: I know the Government would save thousands and thousands of pounds if they used hardwoods instead of pine, and any officer of the department who claims to the contrary ought to be sacked for not knowing his job.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: If the people are to have the benefit of efficient administration and to receive value to the extent of 20s. to the £, this is one of the things on which the Government should start. I hope that during the current financial year the system of day-labour will be given an opportunity of proving in the truest sense its value. The adoption of the suggestions made by the members of the Opposition would assist towards that end. If that success is achieved, when the Minister comes before this Chamber when next presenting his Estimates I for one will cordially say, "Hear, hear!" to his remarks.

Mr. KELSO (*Nunda*): Under this vote the report of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is dealt with, and, in view of that, a little discussion on the activities of the board will not do any harm. Twelve years ago the sewerage scheme was commenced, and it was then said that the whole scheme would be completed in five years and would cost £1,800,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where is there anything in this vote in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board?

Mr. KELSO: Under the vote for "Head Office." The report of the board is sent to the Secretary for Public Works, and that gentleman has also vetoed certain things, therefore I take it the administration of the board is part of the duties of the hon. gentleman, and that I am in order in discussing the matter, notwithstanding the interjection of the Minister. The war intervened, and five years ago estimates were given before a Royal Commission. At that time £1,426,000 had been spent. The president of the board, when asked five years ago for information on the subject, estimated that it would take £100,000 to complete the main sewers and £300,000 to complete the reticulation sewers.

Mr. COLLINS: Who made those estimates?

Mr. KELSO: The president made those estimates. The water and sewerage problem at that time had assumed rather large proportions, and the people of Brisbane were concerned with the increasing cost and with the fact that comparatively [12.30 p.m.] slow progress was being made in connection with the work. They were faced in the future with an unknown expenditure: they wanted to find out where this thing was going to end, and what it was going to cost. A Royal Commission sat on the matter, and the chairman of the Royal Commission said that in his opinion £500,000 should complete the work in a couple of years. On referring to the Auditor-General's report recently tabled, we find that the expenditure and the capitalised interest on the sewerage works to 31st December, 1925, amounted to £3,535,533, and including the other sphere of the board's operations—water supply—the total indebtedness was £6,723,536. The whole of the sewerage scheme, according to the chairman of that Royal Commission, was to have been finished at a cost of £2,000,000. On

18th July, 1924, the president of the board stated that the completed sewerage scheme would cost about £6,000,000. In 1925 the assessments numbered 61,533, and £430,311 was levied as rates. That makes an average of nearly £7 per assessment, or an increase of 127 per cent. on the assessments for the year 1917. No wonder the public are getting anxious about this public utility, when from 1917 to 1925 the increase in the assessments was 127 per cent! Of course, it is patent to everybody that during the coming year the assessments will be very much higher. We know perfectly well that the board base their estimates on the capital value of the land as assessed by the Greater Brisbane City Council, and we know from recent experience that, owing to a uniform system of valuations, the valuations in the suburbs of Brisbane have been materially increased, and it is to the suburbs of Brisbane we must give attention in this regard. If there is any relief to be given, it must be given to the residential portion of the community; but, owing to the vast increase in the valuations of the suburbs of Brisbane, it must necessarily follow that there will be an immense increase in the water rates payable by suburban residents. This is a very serious matter for the residents of the suburbs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What do you suggest to avoid it?

Mr. KELSO: I want to lead up to my subject in a perfectly logical way, and I feel certain that, when I suggest the remedy, the Minister will naturally see that there is no other way out of the difficulty. Let us compare what has taken place in Melbourne. I want to be quite fair in the matter of pointing out that Melbourne—a city of 850,000 inhabitants—has a capital debt of only the same amount as Brisbane, which has only 250,000 inhabitants. I know the war has intervened, and I know there has been an increase in the basic wage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: And in the cost of material.

Mr. KELSO: Making allowance for all that, there is something wrong with the operations of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board to-day. It is too costly, and I have no hesitation in saying that a blunder was made at the start in designing a scheme with an outfall at Pinkenba. If necessary I could produce figures showing where there has been a lot of capital money wasted which will never be recovered.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Give us the figures.

Mr. KELSO: It would take a couple of hours to discuss this matter thoroughly, and, considering that I have only twenty-five minutes in which to speak, I cannot give the figures. Every hon. member knows that tremendous mistakes have been made.

Mr. HARTLEY: What do you think we ought to do about it?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member is nearly as impatient as the Minister. The remedy I suggest is something on the lines indicated by the Premier a little while ago in the public press, when he stated that he would probably take some action in the matter. Action should be taken to wipe out these elective boards altogether, because they are only a continuation of the strife of politics in matters into which politics should not

enter. The representatives on the board are supposed to represent the ratepayers. This is a great public utility which should be governed by men who know their business from A to Z.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The men who drew up the scheme designed the sewers.

Mr. KELSO: I expected that interjection. I was going to say that it is unnecessary to have a board with all the expense attaching to the election of these men. What can these men do on the board?

Mr. HARTLEY: They are business men. You are always talking about business men.

Mr. KELSO: What is the good of business men on a board like that? We do not want these alleged business men interfering in a matter which ought to be controlled by experts. A certain amount of business knowledge is required. My suggestion is that we should have an expert in sewerage, an expert in water, and a business man in charge of the work.

Mr. BULCOCK: When the experts differ things will be worse.

Mr. KELSO: There is no question of the experts differing.

Mr. BULCOCK: Experts always differ.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member could not have been listening. There would be no room to differ, because there would be an expert in sewerage, an expert in water, and a business man to complete the trio. Each of these men would be in collaboration as a board and would put their views before each other; but each of them would have an absolutely free hand in his own particular line. This is a matter which the Government could well take into consideration. They know that this system, which has dragged on for years, will probably cost about £7,000,000 before it is finished, and they know that there is inefficiency somewhere.

I have indicated briefly the lines upon which a public utility like this could be successfully worked. Even at this late hour of the day lots of things in connection with the system could be improved, and the citizens of Brisbane will feel more secure about the work which has still to be done—and there is an immense amount to be done in connection with reticulation—if they know that it will be carried out efficiently and at a minimum of cost.

At 12.40 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*) resumed the chair.

Mr. KELSO: It is impossible to say the exact amount which has been wasted under the present system.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They wasted a few thousands on their contracts.

Mr. KELSO: I think that is calling the kettle black, because we know that the Government were jubilant about the failure of the contract system in certain directions in the sewers, but, before they could stop cheering, they were hoist with their own petard when it was pointed out to them that precisely the same thing had been done in the day-labour sections. It all comes back to this: Whether it is day labour or contract, it is a question of management and

[*Mr. Kelso.*

efficiency, and of whether the workmen give a fair deal.

I want to say a few words particularly on this good old perennial of day labour versus contract. If this debate has become a perennial debate, that very fact shows that the Government have not given proper consideration to the matter, and proves that the suggestions which have been made by the Opposition have not been carefully weighed and adopted by the Government, because the criticism which we offer to-day is usually adopted by the Government in perhaps two or three years. Some hon. members opposite say that the Opposition are always destructive in their criticism; well, I shall endeavour to be constructive. I would suggest to the Minister that he persuade the Cabinet to let him treat the Department of Public Works as a tenderer and look upon every job as a contract job. Let the department put in an estimate for the work and invite tenders from outside also.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: They are not game to do it.

Mr. KELSO: As the hon. member for Toombul says, they are not game to do it. We have asked them time and again. I am going to suggest in all good faith and sincerity that the Government should test the matter now. Examples have been given this morning by hon. members on this side of the Chamber of the absolute waste which has taken place under the present system, and I say once again: Let the Government prove their sincerity in the matter of day labour by allowing the department to tender competitively with contractors outside and give the job to the lowest tenderer. Then we shall find out whether the department can do the work more cheaply than the outside contractor. The department is then put on its mettle. If it charges too much, it loses the contract. If it charges too little, it loses money. That would enable us to test the advantages or disadvantages of the day-labour system. We have heard hon. members opposite say that the private contractor sweats the men working for him. That argument might have had some effect some time ago before the basic wage was introduced; but now the conditions of labour and wages are laid down in all industries. The men working under both the day labour and contract systems work under similar conditions; and, if the Government let a contract, it is up to them to have efficient inspectors and to insist that they get value for their money. If there is a failure, the blame is not altogether to be placed on the contractor; it is also to be laid at the door of the bad inspection of the department. There should be efficient inspection also in the case where the department has tendered for a job and has got it.

If my suggestion were adopted, in a couple of years so much public money would be saved and the work would be carried out just as efficiently that I am perfectly certain that hon. members opposite who are now always prating about the value of day labour would be ashamed to mention the system.

Mr. WYNSTANLEY: That suggestion was tried when the hon. member for Wynnum was in a Government, but it failed.

Mr. KELSO: If the suggestion were carried out, we would be able to ascertain if public money was being wasted. This is a constructive proposal, and I dare the



Government to put it into operation. They are not game to do so, because they desire to have a huge army of men at their disposal so that they may shift them like a mobile army east, west, north, south, wherever the fire is hottest during an election campaign. They desire to take them from one section and place them in another in the same way as they have employed workers on the Willowburn works prior to every election campaign.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELSO: These men are made use of only for political purposes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELSO: I must obey your ruling, Mr. Cooper. If the Government take my suggestion into consideration, I feel sure that much benefit will result to the State.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Vitroy*): One thing that is rather satisfactory in this debate is the admission by the hon. member for Nundah that the Opposition have abandoned the old fetish of having a board of business men to manage the affairs of the State.

Mr. KELSO: I did not say that. Do not misquote me.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is very satisfactory to hear that statement.

Mr. KELSO: You are very good at twisting.

Mr. HARTLEY: When we consider that the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is composed of these so-called business men elected by a universal franchise and boosted by the capitalistic press of this city, it is refreshing to hear the hon. member admit that the principle is a failure.

Mr. KERR: He did not make the statement.

Mr. HARTLEY: That was the meaning of his argument. He condemned the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and considered that in its place there should be a board of expert engineers, a water authority man, and one business man. If that does not condemn administration by business men, I do not know what it means. Evidently the hon. member has not read very much about Henry Ford and his opinion of experts. When any man becomes an expert in the business of Henry Ford he is passed over to a rival firm so that Henry Ford will be sure of securing the business of the opposition. The experience of Queensland in the employment of experts has been particularly unfortunate. The Rockhampton City Council employed an expert to advise them in connection with a water scheme. First the expert recommended the wrong scheme. He recommended a scheme which was estimated to cost £200,000, but, instead of costing that figure, it cost nearly £310,000. The quantity of water to be available under the scheme was supposed to be adequate to meet the expansion in the population of Rockhampton for the next thirty years, but the people there are becoming afraid that it will not be sufficient to meet their needs in the next three or four years. That is an expert from a university for you!

Mr. KERR: Why didn't you take the job on yourself, and do away with the expert?

Mr. HARTLEY: I deal with things that I have been trained in and know of.

Mr. KERR: Then why run the other people down?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: When any fool of an engineer with a string of university letters to his name estimates that he can install a scheme for £200,000, and the actual cost is £310,000, I am satisfied he is a "dud." Does the hon. member say that he is not? Does he contend that the results obtained in that scheme justified us in depending on that expert?

We have had the same experience in the installation of an electrical scheme in Rockhampton. An expert consulting electrical engineer was obtained from the South to advise on the installation. He placed his own electrician in charge, and, instead of the work costing £70,000, it cost £110,000, and each of those men sacked the other three or four times during the job.

Mr. KELSO: You don't believe in experts.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, I believe in trained men who have learned their job from the A B C. I will take the word of a practical man against a theoretical man every time.

Mr. KELSO: You do not believe in a man being expert in anything?

Mr. HARTLEY: There are very few experts, but there are very many first-class tradesmen. Take the case of a doctor who specialises in a certain disease. If he is consulted on any other disease, he invariably sends the patient to another medical man who specialises in it. Unlike many of our experts, he does not attempt to deal with matters he has not studied.

A certain amount of criticism has been devoted to the construction of schools, but neither the hon. member for Normanby nor the hon. member for Wide Bay gave sufficient data on which the department could be condemned. The hon. member for Wide Bay mentioned three or four schools that had been constructed at a high cost. Anyone will admit that £600 odd is a very high cost for a building having dimensions of 21 feet by 18 feet. It looks as if there is something wrong, and if there are no other circumstances explaining additional expenditure, the cost is extravagantly high. I asked the hon. member where was the nearest sawmill, and he replied, "Ten to fourteen miles."

Mr. MORGAN: That is not very far.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is very far to those who happen to know the local conditions. If the timber had to be carted in £10 lots from a little bush sawmill, its cost would be added to greatly.

Mr. CLAYTON: The cartage costs for one building would not be £20.

Mr. HARTLEY: I have had experience in carting timber in Southern Queensland, and I know that in many cases a "bullocky" or teamster charges 5s. per 100 feet. You cannot induce them to accept timber loading for 4 or 5 miles at less than 4s. per 100 feet. Take the case mentioned by the hon. member for Normanby. I happen to know the locality, which is in the vicinity of 70 miles from Rockhampton. It is about a mile from the railway station to the school, and it is a difficult matter to secure transport facilities from the station to the school. I am satisfied that, if a contractor from Rockhampton had tendered for the job, his price would have been greater than that quoted by the Department of Public Works, because he would have had to take all the timber

*Mr. Hartley.]*

from Rockhampton; he would not have had enough local knowledge to obtain it from the small sawmills in the district. He would have had to pay the "out-of-town" allowance to his men in addition to extra wages, travelling time, etc., and that sort of thing, and I do not suppose there would have been much difference eventually. In the final analysis the whole question of the merits and demerits of contract versus day labour narrows itself down to efficient management. If you have not efficient and faithful management, you have bad results under either system.

The whole trouble with the Department of Public Works is that it centralises everything in Brisbane. It has a big ineffective staff in Brisbane, and that is the stupidity of the policy. If work has to be done at Kunwarara, Murgon, or some other place, there should be facilities for purchasing the material locally at the nearest big centre of trade. It should not be necessary to send to Brisbane for all the material. Undoubtedly the same material of equal quality could be purchased in many instances at Murgon or any other centre cheaper than if it were sent from Brisbane, and without the loss of paying the ineffective staff in Brisbane.

I have seen cases similar to that mentioned by the hon. member for Normanby where the roof and rafters came up first and the ground plates did not come until the last, causing a whole group of men to waste time or to fill in time on odd jobs. I know cases where a whole lot of stump caps were omitted and the job held up until the stump caps were obtained from Brisbane. That sort of thing would damn any system, whether it was day labour or contract. But that is inefficient management and is not the fault of the system. The argument which hon. members opposite do not attempt to answer is, "What is the result of the contract system?" Given an honest contractor, you secure as good results from the contract as from the day-labour system; but, if you have a dishonest contractor, the result is the use of bad materials and bad workmanship. The contractor might agree to put in concrete with the mixture of cement one in three or one in four, and, instead, he supplies it one in six or one in seven. Unless you have a highly qualified man watching that contractor, that sort of thing will go on. In addition you have the contractor's profit to take into consideration. The driving power behind the contract system is the greed of the contractor to secure the utmost limit from his employees in order to make a big profit, no matter what the effect is on the employee—that is the trouble.

Mr. KELSO: The men would go out on strike if that were done.

[2 p.m.]

Mr. HARTLEY: There is no doubt that under an intensive system of piecework the human operator is worn out and the greed of the contractor takes no account of the human factor. That is one of the real dangers that can be urged against the contracting system. It is not possible to compare the Government day-labour system with a private contracting system, as the influences operating are absolutely different. The boss contractor himself believes in day labour. If a private employer takes on a contract to metal Queen street, he employs men on day labour, because he makes the most profit in that way. He does not let the work out at so much for every 100 yards of street or 20

cubic yards of concrete; he employs men on day wages.

Mr. KELSO: How could he do otherwise?

Mr. HARTLEY: It would be the simplest thing in the world. The hon. member evidently does not understand how to get work accomplished. If a contractor took on a contract to concrete Queen street and its extensions to the Hamilton he could let out the work in 100-yard blocks to sub-contractors or to groups of workmen, but he does not do that because it would mean dividing his profits. If the hon. member for Toowoong had a contract to paint a big building, he would not let out the work to his employees. He would pay them by the day. Why is it that he would not let it out at so much per yard? Because he wants the whole profit.

Mr. KELSO: The men do not want it any other way.

Mr. HARTLEY: The men cannot take it any other way, because they are driven by necessity to get their daily wage, and that is where the private contractor has the advantage over Government control. In private employment the necessity is different to what it is in Government employment, and that is what the department is up against in getting results. In the Government there are too many shock-absorbers, and you cannot sheet the blame home to the man responsible for any neglect. If you go to a Government department to make a complaint, the Under Secretary will bring in his Assistant Under Secretary; the Assistant Under Secretary will bring in the Chief Clerk; and so on right down till you get to the message boy, but you cannot get absolute proof as to who is to blame, and you cannot sheet home the blame. That is the trouble in a Government department, whereas in the case of a private contractor he goes on a job and, if he sees things have not gone on all right and that less work has been done than ought to have been done, he calls up his foreman, and, if it is the foreman's fault, the foreman goes. If it is something that the foreman has not noticed, he points it out. The foreman walks up to the men on the job, and says, "This has not been done properly, and, if you cannot do it better, you will have to go." There is an incentive to do the job well because a man knows that he will have to go if he does not do it properly. There is not that incentive in a Government department, consequently we have a much lower state of efficiency in the State service than anywhere else. That is the defect in regard to the Socialistic system. We know that men are born under different conditions and educated differently, and it is difficult to get them all to come up to one mental standard and one manual standard. It is difficult to make them realise that it is just as imperative to give of their best to the State, because they are part owners of the State, as it is for them to give of their best to the boss contractor, under whom, if they do not do the work properly, they will be sacked. To develop a social state we must first develop a social conscience. One of the troubles in connection with a Government department is that, owing to the system of promotion by seniority, there is a lack of incentive to do the best, and you cannot sack a man for anything which goes wrong. Until we provide that each man in the public service shall hold his job on his merits, just the same as a man

[Mr. Hartley.

does under a private boss, we shall always be faced with this problem. The system of promotion by seniority in the public service, which makes it necessary for everything to be proved down to the last item before a man is dealt with, militates against efficiency. A man in charge of a job must have the right to say to an employee, "This work is not done properly, and, if you do not do it right, I shall have to get somebody else to do it."

The hon. member for Wide Bay and the hon. member for Normanby spoke with regard to cheapening the cost of school buildings and workers' dwellings by the use of second-class hardwood. There is not the slightest doubt that the high cost of first-class timber is a big factor in increasing the cost of schools and other public buildings. We have a lot of good hardwood timber in Queensland which is not being used, and which would be very suitable for building purposes provided it was not put into the ground or exposed to the weather outside. For inside work it is just as good as pine, although a little heavier. In some cases it would be much more ornamental. White gum is as fine and straight a timber as we can get anywhere, and grey stringy bark is also a good timber for many classes of work. It would be well for the Department of Public Works to co-operate with the Forestry Department to get some of the second-class timbers on the market and prove their worth. I have known some of these timbers condemned by the department on the ground that they would be attacked by white ants. I have used them myself and found them to be good, and other men who are better versed in this matter than I am say they are very good. The department should experiment with these second-class timbers with a view to saving the department the extra expense incurred by using first-class soft-wood timber.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I would like to say something on the matter of the divided control in building schools. It is absolutely bad to have two controlling authorities, and I would like to enter my protest against the system. Under it the Secretary for Public Instruction has not the final say as to which schools are to be built, as a result of which the schools actually approved by the Government for construction may not be those which are most needed by that department.

Then I want to protest against the insufficiency of the number of schools through a lack of funds. I have no doubt that the Department of Public Instruction would be glad to approve of the building of schools, and the Department of Public Works would be anxious to build them, if the funds were placed at their disposal; and I maintain—particularly after hearing the hon. member for Fitzroy—that the money should be there. It is all very well for the hon. member to point out that waste occurs and blame certain classes of people for it. They are to blame, and it is scandalous. I quite agree that, when they have their own Government in power, and when they are their own masters, they should be men enough to give the State a fair deal. They should not loaf on the job: but, unfortunately, this waste does occur, and very often it destroys the chance of getting a school.

I have heard hon. members say that the schools put up in olden times under the

contract system were inferior to those that are being built to-day. I want to inform those hon. members that not one school in the Murrumba district which was built under the contract system is inferior to those being built now. They are all good. There are schools which have been up for fifty years, and, although there have been repairs in the shape of new blocks perhaps, they are as good to-day as ever they were. Take the Morayfield school, for instance. It has worn out two floors in its time, and it is a monument to the men who supplied the timber and built it. Whilst I believe that more work is put into a school nowadays than is necessary—I mean that it is not necessary to have the fine finish which is given to such buildings—it is also necessary that every centre where a school is justified should have a school. It is not good for the cause of education that we should have to transport children long distances. In cases where schools are too old to be rebuilt or remodelled, and there has been a shifting of population, so that schools are a long distance from where the children are, the two departments—particularly the Department of Public Works—ought to be able to devise some means to give us the schools we require. It is not the children or the people, but the management, which has brought about the present conditions of things, and I hope the Government will give very serious consideration to the question and alter their methods.

Mr. HARTLEY: Discharge some of your friends.

Mr. WARREN: I am not very anxious about the question of contract versus day labour, but it was remarkable to hear the previous speaker talking about letting sub-contracts for cement roads. If the hon. gentleman were to give one thought to the matter, he would realise that hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of machinery are necessary to carry out that work. It would not be the same as sub-letting a contract for painting, where all the equipment necessary would be a paint pot and two or three extra brushes.

Mr. HARTLEY: It could be made a term of the contract that the sub-contractor should be allowed the use of the machinery. That has been done.

Mr. WARREN: I admit that has been done, but the work would have to comprise more than a hundred yards of road construction if all the machinery was to be utilised. Under the system suggested it would not be possible to break up the streets for the purpose of laying down up-to-date roads. The department should give every consideration to the adoption of some system which would bring about better results. It is no use blaming an individual. The hon. member for Fitzroy said that the blame could be traced from the Minister down to the lowest subordinate.

Mr. HARTLEY: You could trace it to the message boy. He is the person to blame. On one occasion I traced the blame down as far as the message boy, and then I gave it up.

Mr. WARREN: You might trace the blame as far as you like, but there is no desire on the part of the Government to alter the system. The Government should take immediate steps to establish an efficient system in all departments, particularly with regard to the construction of schools.

Mr. Warren.]

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I regret very much the decrease in the vote for schools. I believe that, if we are to have school buildings erected as we should erect them in the various parts of the State to keep pace with the growth of the population, it may be necessary before very long to impose a special public instruction tax.

Mr. MAXWELL: You have not exhausted all your methods of taxation?

Mr. COLLINS: Not by a long way. We are only on the fringe of taxation. While hon. members are complaining about the decrease in the vote, I am quite satisfied that, if the department had the funds at its disposal, it could spend £250,000 this year in building new schools and bringing other schools right up to date by painting them as they should be painted. We have to get down to tin-tacks. It is no use beating about the bush and saying this thing should be done and that thing should be done, because we should know from experience that you cannot accomplish these things without finance. The question for the State to consider in the future is the method by which the necessary funds for the erection of schools and for bringing them up to date can be raised. Some hon. members complain about the cost of erecting the schools. The work carried out by the department in my electorate is work that has been well done. There is a difference between work that is well done and work that is scamped. I know that under the contract system of building schools and carrying out public works a lot of the work was scamped, or, in other words, it was not well done. If you desire the work to last, you must have the work well done, and I take it that is what we are obtaining in Queensland at the present time.

Mr. EDWARDS: The work is not being done at all.

Mr. COLLINS: It is no use hon. members comparing the cost of school buildings erected twenty or thirty years ago with the cost to-day. First of all, we were over-worked twenty or thirty years ago. We worked too hard. To-day, under modern conditions, the rising generation will not be put in their graves as early as some of the earlier pioneers were. Whether hon. members like it or not, we have to look facts in the face and realise that conditions have changed. What would be the use of boasting of our modern civilisation if that were not so? It is all moonshine to be continually boasting of the wonderful inventive faculties of man, of the wonderful uses that machinery can be put to—that it will accomplish in one hour as much work as would take four, five, or six hours to accomplish under the old conditions—if man is not to receive some benefit. What is the use of all those inventions if we are expected to work as hard as we did under the old conditions?

My friend, the member for Fitzroy, put his finger on what I consider is the main fault in connection with our day-labour system. In passing from a system which was oppressive to a freer system we cannot expect to proceed from a state of imperfection to one of perfection, even in the building of our schools, in the short space of eleven years. We have to realise that. We have to teach our people that, when they are working for the State, they are expected to give the best that is in them, just as they did

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when they were working for a private employer. Unfortunately for us as a party, many of our men have not yet realised that they are the State. That is what we are suffering from at the present time. No hon. member on this side stands for loafing or inefficiency. We stand for efficiency.

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

Mr. COLLINS: Unfortunately, we have not been able to induce all our people to realise that fact.

Mr. KERR: Efficiency with lip service.

Mr. COLLINS: There are those who have not realised that they are the State, and that, if they set themselves out to rob the State, they are robbing themselves. That is the reason we are not making the progress we ought to be making to-day. There is nothing wrong with the socialistic doctrine. The great mass of people—and I am speaking of my own class, the working class—have not yet recognised that they are the Government, and that, if they rob the Government, they are robbing themselves.

Mr. KERR: They have had their legs pulled long enough about being the Government.

Mr. COLLINS: Hon. members will know that under the old contract system in the construction of our railways, the Government were compelled to have an engineer on the job, to see that the contractor did his work properly. Double supervision was necessary—supervision by the Government, and supervision by the contractor.

Mr. MAXWELL: Tell us something about the supervision of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not going to deal with Brisbane matters. I realise there are twenty hon. members representing Brisbane, ten sitting on this side of the Chamber and ten on that side. Surely they can look after Brisbane without my worrying about it! As a Northern member, I am not worrying to a large extent as to what is happening in Brisbane. We can look after the North.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: You are very parochial.

Mr. COLLINS: I rose for the purpose of pointing out that the work that has been done in my electorate is good and solid work—work that will stand the test of time. Just as the old Roman roads—and I am inclined to think they were built by day labour—stood the test of time, so the work done by this Government in my electorate will stand the test of time. It compares well with the jerry-building done by contractors in times past.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: We inherit this Department of Public Works from hon. members opposite—not those particular hon. members, but the party they represent. That party was in power for fifty years, and it filled up the public service with their own political friends. We inherited all those political friends in this department, and it might have been a good thing had this Government emptied out all those men and substituted men of our own political ideas.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is a very cowardly statement.

Mr. COLLINS: It is not a cowardly statement. I say that for fifty years the party of the hon. member filled up the public service with their own nominees. They were never known to appoint a Labour man if they were aware that he was a Labour man. Therefore, if the work is not being supervised as it ought to be, hon. members opposite are responsible, because they and their friends are responsible for what took place before we assumed office.

Mr. KERR: Have you not made a few political appointments since your party came into office?

Mr. COLLINS: If you want work well done, you must have men to do that work who are in sympathy with the party in power—men who desire to see the work well done. As time goes on, no doubt we shall achieve that object. There is no need to be disheartened at all. Do hon. members think that a man like me, who has had to battle from his infancy, will be disheartened because there may have been one failure or half a dozen failures?

Mr. BRAD: You have need to be disheartened to-day, because the Premier has thrown you overboard.

Mr. COLLINS: The Premier made a few statements that might have been necessary in the interests of the mass of the people and the State. We are a nation in the making, and I often say to myself, very much in the making. Notwithstanding the criticism of hon. members opposite, we shall keep straight on with our policy, and show our own people that, if we are to realise the objective of this party, those working for the State must give of the best that is in them, realising that they are giving to the State and helping to uplift humanity to a higher ideal—higher than has been seen on this planet before.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I have no desire to enter into a controversy in regard to day labour versus contract work, but I should like the Minister to give some information in regard to very serious allegations that have been made in connection with the administration of the Department of Public Works. It has been stated that a considerable amount of "graft" has been going on in connection with buying in the Department of Public Works.

Mr. HARTLEY: "Graft"?

Mr. KERR: I am using the word "graft" advisedly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You had better be careful.

Mr. KERR: The Public Service Commissioner had an officer of the Auditor-General's Department seconded to him for the purpose of making investigations into these matters, and the Minister should give the Committee a full explanation of what has happened. One outstanding feature that we have been told is that one officer concerned has been dismissed the service for a start. The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat states that the policy of the Government should be to appoint their own supporters so that the work will be carried out properly. I understand that the officer who was dismissed was a very firm supporter of this Government, and was placed in a high position over the heads of outstanding public servants.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not true.

Mr. KERR: In the end he had to be dismissed. If "graft" has been going on in the Department of Public Works, the taxpayers are entitled to have a full confession as to what has happened. On the 1st September the hon. member for Toowoong asked some questions in this Chamber, and at the time the Minister considered it inadvisable to give further information. I understand that since that date the investigations have been completed, and it looks as if it was ascertained by the audit inspector that such things as quotations were not generally circulated, and, when they were circulated, it was not always the man who put in the lowest quotation who received the contract. I could give a lot more details, and I could tell hon. members that, when certain gravel was required a little while ago for the hospital, one man who owned a quarry put in a quotation but did not get the contract, while another man who put in a higher tender got the business and got the material from the quarry belonging to the man who put in the lower quotation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What are you talking about? I want a specific instance.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman can get it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why not give the name of the firm you are referring to?

Mr. KERR: I am not going to mention names. I am giving the Minister an opportunity of explaining what happened in regard to that investigation. I am asking him to give the Committee the information to which it is entitled. That is all I am asking for to-day, and I am pointing out that certain allegations are made which demand that the Minister should make a full confession as to what has happened in the Department of Public Works in regard to this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I want the name of the firm.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman can get the name from the department. I do not want to bandy the names of firms about in this Chamber. The hon. gentleman should know. We asked for the report of the investigation to be placed on the table of the House. Has that been done? I say it has not been done. The Minister said it was not opportune to give further information. The speech of the hon. member for Bowen advocating that the Government should fill the public service with Labour supporters brought this matter to my mind. The attitude taken up by the hon. member for Bowen is absolutely intolerable. Every public servant is entitled to his own political opinions, and is entitled to vote as he likes.

Mr. COLLINS: You would not allow that in your day.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. KERR: Surely the hon. gentleman knows that under the previous Governments the ballot-box was secret! The Government know perfectly well that under our Government every public servant had the right to cast his vote in any way he desired. I rose for the purpose of having this thing thrashed out. If the irregularities which

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have been disclosed have occurred in the department, I am justified in bringing the matter forward. It is intolerable that there should be anything like this occurring in the public service, in which the general taxpayer is concerned; but it is hard to stop it. This investigation is of considerable importance to Queensland. The Government are responsible, and the Minister must take responsibility for his department in this regard. These allegations seem to be well known. They should be fully ventilated here and an explanation given in regard to them.

MR. FARRELL: What are the allegations? Why don't you name the people concerned?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You will get all the names.

MR. MOORE (*Subjunctive*): I am sorry to see the reduction in the vote for State school buildings, the need for which is so great in country districts. I take exception to the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen in regard to work in the department which was carried out by the contract system. The contractor who took the job he referred to had to carry out the work according to the specification of the department, and the Government had a check on him. As to the hon. member for Bowen saying that the public service is filled up with political supporters of this party, the hon. member has no grounds whatever for saying that. My opinion is that the public servants of this State are loyal to whatever Government is in power, and will see that work is done in the way it should be done. I do not think that, when public servants were appointed prior to 1915, their political opinions were taken into consideration in the slightest degree. I do not suppose that, when a boy goes in for the public service examination and enters the public service to-day, there is any inquiry as to his political opinions. If he passes and there is a vacancy he goes into the service without regard to his political opinions.

MR. PEASE: Did you ever read Steele Rudd's book on the public service?

MR. MOORE: Because hon. members are able to quote exceptional cases now and then it is most unfair to cast a stigma on the whole of the public service, and say that they are not carrying out the wishes of the Government to-day because they happen to have been appointed under a previous Administration.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did you hear of a man called George Ryland being discharged by the Cook Government?

MR. MOORE: The hon. member likes to take an isolated case and make it of general application. I believe the public servants are carrying out their duties according to the instructions given to them by the various Ministers. I have seen no sign of disloyalty amongst them at all. The hon. member knows that political opinions do not come in at all. The only time when political opinions come in is when members of the public service dare to express opinions contrary to the views of the Government, and then they are "sacked."

MR. HARTLEY: That is not true.

MR. MOORE: If they dare to have freedom of opinion and to express it they are dismissed; but it is unfair to put a

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stigma on public servants because they are endeavouring to carry out their duty. I personally believe that the Department of Public Works has not the effective supervision under the day-labour system that it ought to have. I can give instances. When I was at St. George some months ago the foreman at the hospital had been dismissed because, when the inspector came up, he was absent from the job. What happened? The two men who were left on the job were there for three weeks after the foreman left and no work was done by them. There was a big heap of timber which had been carted all the way out to St. George, and it had been there for a fortnight before it was discovered that it was not meant for that hospital at all—that it was meant for Goondiwindi. That is not efficient supervision. The hon. member for Bowen says that it does not matter if we have failures—the Government must expect failures. But the Government are not paying for these failures.

MR. COLLINS: I said that I was not going to be disheartened by one failure or even half a dozen failures.

MR. MOORE: Or 100 or 2,000 failures! We must not be disheartened by failures! But it is not the Government who pay; it is the children outside who are paying for the failures, for the extravagance, for the want of efficient supervision. In my opinion it would be ever so much better for the Department of Public Instruction to conduct its own building and authorise what should be done.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MOORE: And carry out the work by contract or by day labour, whichever is the more suitable method. Just as good schools were built under contract as are built under day labour to-day. We have to realise that the people are paying for this adherence to a fetish—for that is what it is, and it cannot go on indefinitely—the people are paying for these failures, and I say that they have to be stopped. If we can get just as good a job more cheaply under contract, then we should get it. It is not the Government but the children who live outside who are paying, as we who live outside know, for the dearth of schools. If we want a school, the Department of Public Instruction hangs on day after day, day after day, in an endeavour to get the people to promise to do certain work. They have got to cart the timber, or put up the blocks, or fence the school area. The idea is, "How much can we get the people of the district to do before we give them a school?" I know of schools which cannot be built because the people cannot afford to give the amount of assistance which the Government demand they should give.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Under your Government they had to find one-third of the cost.

MR. MOORE: I know plenty of people to-day who have to build their own schools. I was one of three who built our school, paid the whole cost, and handed it over to the Government, land and everything, free of debt, and I know of two other cases where the department have said that they would supply a teacher if the people built the school. If we have a certain amount of money to spend, it is up to us to see that we get the best for it rather than adhere

to a fetish, or carry out an experiment, or cling obstinately to an idea in an endeavour to prove that a certain policy is right. It has been proved to be extravagant, and the thing is to get away from it, if we cannot get the best value for our money in that way. The theory that because men work for the State they will give of their best is very nice; but, as the hon. member for Bowen said, so far the people have not realised that they are working for themselves. The only way in which we shall get people to give of their best is by paying them for what they produce. If a man works harder or possesses more skill, then he should be paid for it. That is the only way in which we can obtain efficiency. We cannot reach the millennium by saying that, because a man is working for the State, he will give his best to the State even if he is not paid for it. He will not give his best if he is only to be paid at the same rate as the worst man on the job. If the Government are prepared to pay him for his skill and for the extra work that he does, then we shall arrive at a satisfactory position.

Mr. HARTLEY: You have all the work on your farm done under the day-labour system.

Mr. MOORE: Yes. A great deal of the work performed by the shire council of which I am a member is carried out under the day-labour system, but I do not say that the work is always carried out satisfactorily. If we believe that the work can be carried out more economically and efficiently by contract, then it is carried out under that system. That is the only way in which we can have efficiency. We never know what a building is going to cost under the Government system of erection. An estimate is given, but it is altered time after time.

Let me refer to one particular instance that has been under notice during the past few years. I refer to the Hamilton Cold Stores. These are the figures showing the estimates for the work at different times—

	1920.	1921.	1922.
	£	£	£
Buildings ..	125,000	125,000	150,694
Machinery ..	75,000	75,000	75,000
Wharf ..	27,500	34,000	35,000
Railway Siding ..	21,500	21,500	21,500
Contingencies ..	..	..	6,000
	£249,000	£255,500	£288,194

The estimate for 1924 was £311,434. The total amount expended to 30th June, 1922, was £142,493. The actual cost furnished by the Department of Public Works in 1925 was £310,683, and the actual cost set out in the Treasurer's financial tables is £328,030. It seems that the estimates are of no value. If a contractor takes on work at a price, he must stick to that price, and the same principle should operate in the case of day-labour work.

Mr. HARTLEY: You evidently do not wish to understand the figures. You know that the railway was put in afterwards and the plans were added to.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know anything of the sort. The original estimate provided for the construction of buildings, machinery,

wharf, and railway siding. The original estimate was £249,000, but it has increased to £311,434.

Mr. HARTLEY: Because the plans were added to.

Mr. MOORE: That is all very fine. An estimate was given for certain work, and year after year the estimate is altered.

Mr. FARRELL: That does not apply only to the Government.

Mr. MOORE: We are dealing with the Government. If a private individual puts in a price, he must stick to it.

Mr. FARRELL: We had an instance in Rockhampton where the estimate was £290,000 and the actual cost £390,000.

Mr. MOORE: It possibly happens in certain cases, but that was not work carried out by contract.

Mr. FARRELL: It was a contract.

Mr. MOORE: I suppose the plans were altered. I am talking of an ordinary job.

Mr. FARRELL: It has happened outside the Government, too.

Mr. MOORE: There is one item in the report of the Department of Public Works to which I wish to draw attention, and receive some information upon, as I cannot find it in any other report of the department. On page 13, I find this—

“Kulpi, consideration money, £450.”

I do not know what “consideration money” means. It cannot be for the building of a school, as a school has been erected there for many years.

I also notice in the report of the Auditor-General that there is a trading loss last year on the Ipswich Road Workshops of £5,456 16s. 7d. An extraordinary thing seems to have been done in connection with these workshops, inasmuch as the total loss sustained on account of the fire was charged against the one year, though I do not know whether in the long run that will make a great deal of difference. I also observe that this loss was sustained in spite of the fact that a fixed rate of 12½ per cent, was added to the landed cost of stores and 22½ per cent. to the factory cost of manufactured goods to cover overhead expenses. That seems to be an extraordinarily big loss to make in a department like this. I do not understand, if this is to be continued and if these expenses are to be added on, how this department can be carried on successfully. It does not appear that there is any desire to carry on these concerns economically, for, whenever losses are incurred, further taxation is imposed on the people. The percentages that I have quoted appear quite sufficient to enable these workshops to be carried on—perhaps not at a profit, but at any rate to be self-supporting. When we find big losses like this occurring it is time that there was some investigation to discover what is the matter. If we are to continue to have these losses year after year on these enterprises, the best thing to be done is to close them up and purchase material somewhere else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: And pay 25 per cent. more for it?

Mr. MOORE: That is just a question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is not a question; it is a fact.

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Mr. MOORE: We should call for tenders to see if this work can be done at a cheaper rate than at present. If that is done, I think we shall not have this excessive loss. There is no occasion for it. An ordinary individual carrying on a workshop of that nature, and having the opportunity of adding 12½ per cent. to the landed cost of stores and 22½ per cent. to the factory cost to cover overhead expenses, would be perfectly capable of supplying those goods without making a loss like that. The position is not satisfactory. What we have to do is to see if we cannot stop these recurring losses and avoid fresh burdens of taxation being imposed on the people every year. The hon. member for Bowen claims that we are not yet out of the transition stage, but we have been in that stage for eleven years and cannot remain indefinitely in it. It has resulted in more and still more taxation.

Mr. HARTLEY: Your class were in that stage hundreds of years, and are still in it.

Mr. MOORE: Our party were able to conduct things on economic lines, and were able to carry on the business of the country without this excessive taxation. We erected our public buildings at a considerably lower amount proportionately than is the case to-day, and exercised an economic control.

Mr. HARTLEY: With Gatling guns.

Mr. MOORE: No. We achieved it by economic administration. The present Government have continued in the transition stage for eleven years, and they want to go on in that stage in the hope that Providence will step in and alter human nature, instead of recognising that human nature is human nature and cutting their coat according to their cloth.

Mr. COLLINS: We are suffering because you crushed the soul out of the workers.

Mr. MOORE: I do not want to go back with the hon. member to what he calls the middle or the dark ages.

Mr. COLLINS: You on that side are still in the dark ages.

Mr. MOORE: The Government of the hon. member are in the dark ages when they fail to recognise that, when a thing is not paying, it should be shut up.

Mr. HARTLEY: What age are the coal-miners in England living in to-day? Is it the enlightened age about which you talk?

Mr. MOORE: Their position is due to the economic conditions following the war. It is far better for men to have something to work at and to earn a reasonable wage than to have nothing. If a country is going to lose the whole of its coal trade on account of the excessive wages demanded, it is better to carry on at a reasonable wage than to lose the trade and have nothing.

Mr. HARTLEY: And pay a million a week in royalties.

Mr. MOORE: This Government must realise that economic conditions apply to Queensland as well as to other places, and that extravagant administration must be abandoned. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to ask that we should continue in such a way year after year, saying that in another ten years everything will be all right. If we continue the country will be bankrupt, and we want to stop before we reach that stage. We want

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to reach the stage when people providing money for business will receive a reasonable return, and when those earning money will give full value for what they receive, when they will be paid for what they produce, and not merely for the time they put in.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): I am sorry that the Government are economising in a direction that is not going to be advantageous to some of our country districts. I refer especially to the Department of Public Instruction. Great care is being bestowed upon our young life, but apparently little attention is to be devoted to providing the country children of our State with the means by which they may obtain an education. I speak in this way because my own electorate has for many years been affected by that course of action. One hon. member, when speaking this morning, put his finger very rightly upon one of the causes—that is, the manner in which the Department of Public Instruction is treated by the Department of Public Works. We want a severance there very badly, and, if a severance were brought about, the highest

[3 p.m.] interests of education would be reached. The policy of economy adopted by the Government is having a bad effect on educational life in Queensland. The matter is causing extreme concern. I have had promises that certain expenditure would take place in providing for school residences in some districts. At Mount Alford, just outside Warwick, we have a school with over 100 pupils, but no teacher's residence. The teacher has to come in and out of town, and has done so for years. Possibly he may prefer to do that, but it seems to me that, if a school is to be properly conducted, the teacher's residence should be near the school. The same thing applies to Maryvale. Although applications have been made again and again for a teacher's residence, there is no teacher's residence there. The vote is less than for last year, and the possibility of getting any expenditure in connection with the various matters referred to seem to be extremely remote. I cannot understand economy in this direction. Are the Government so pessimistic that they cannot undertake to provide the necessary expenditure to equip our various educational establishments properly?

Mr. MORGAN: The State enterprises have taken all the money.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: No doubt; and we are paying the piper for that shameful waste of expenditure. Some eight or nine months ago when the Minister was in Warwick his attention was drawn to the Warwick Technical College and High School, and we then indicated that certain things were necessary in order to get abreast of the growing requirements of that school. No place in Queensland occupies a higher position educationally than Warwick. We have no less than seven secondary schools there, including the convent, and it is necessary that the school which makes the pace for the other schools should be kept abreast of the other schools. We have other establishments in our centre adding addition after addition, yet we are stagnant.

Mr. COLLINS: The Government cannot have ruined the farmers, after all.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Educationally, Warwick has set a fine example. We have the



best technical college and high school in the land, and it has proved an unqualified success. The Government are to be congratulated on the way they have equipped and staffed the school, and everything is running smoothly, but that does not do away with the necessity for meeting the requirements with regard to additions to these schools in order to fulfil the aspirations of the people there.

I now come to a small matter in connection with a school. For some years now the people concerned have been agitating for a playshed at the Freestone School. Evidently the Department agreed, in response to a deputation which waited upon them, to find the iron for the purpose, valued at £30, on the condition that the people would carry out the work. Only a few days ago I received an intimation from the department that the promise given had been cancelled. The mere granting of £40 worth of iron to that school has been cancelled on account of the desire of the Government to economise. The Under Secretary, Mr. McKenna, promised that the iron would be supplied, and I am inclined to think that the Minister agreed with the proposal. Last week I received two intimations—one regarding local authority grants, and the other having to do with this paltry promise of £30 worth of iron for the playshed at Freestone School. The children were have no playshed or any place to go to eat their lunches. They have to broil in the heat of the summer in the open. When rain is falling they have no shelter whatever, and the disadvantages they have to suffer are very great. The people were prepared to erect a playshed; but the department now refuse to give the £40 promised, which will prevent the people from carrying out their intention. My district is being pinched in consequence of the economical spirit that influences the decisions of the Government.

We are now putting up many very fine wooden structures, but I think the day has come when we should decide upon a different kind of structure for our better class of schools. We should go in for either stone, brick, or concrete buildings, which are of a more lasting nature and more in accordance with the importance of our State. One of the things which strike visitors is that we seem to be in a transitory stage and are not building for all time—that we are doing things in a spasmodic way, and not doing the best we might do. Wooden buildings may be all right from an economic point of view, but we should raise the tone of our various districts by the erection of public buildings of a more permanent character. It would be much better if, in connection with our maternity homes, for instance, the buildings were constructed of brick. I believe that the maternity home in Warwick will be built of brick, but in many cases that is not so. The department should give more attention to the character of these buildings. I would like to know how long we are to carry out economies of this kind to the detriment of our people.

Mr. HARTLEY: Until we have paid back the war interest to the war patriots.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The State is not paying anything at all in that direction. Many things have been said on this vote by hon. members on the other side with which we on this side are in direct accord. The hon. member for Burke referred to the way in

which workers are sent long distances to do trivial jobs which could be done by men on the spot. Surely the Secretary for Public Works could give instructions that works of no great consequence should be carried out locally, and thus save an enormous sum to the State. I would like to know from the Minister when we may hope for a more generous expenditure on our schools than obtains to-day.

Mr. FARRELL (*Rockhampton*): Quite a lot can be said in support of the statements made by the hon. member for Nanango, the hon. member for Normanby, and others about school buildings throughout the State, because there is no doubt that many schools in country districts are not up to the right standard. I can quote several instances where teachers have written to me personally asking that I interview the Under Secretary for Public Works and endeavour to have something done or repairs effected. At the Montville State school, in the electorate of the hon. member for Cooroora, the condition of the head teacher's residence is such that it is a source of worry to him every time rain falls. It is in one of those districts where rain falls fairly often, and the result has been so serious that his wife has had to consult a doctor and is now in hospital, and I have not the faintest doubt that her present state of health has been caused by the conditions I have mentioned. That is just an isolated case.

Mr. MORGAN: The playsheds of some of the city schools are better than the residences at some country schools.

Mr. FARRELL: I admit that, and, whilst I do not want to criticise the department harshly—because I know the vote is limited—I do ask that in the matter of repairs first consideration be given to schools in the country, because they require it most.

Now I come to the question raised by the Secretary for Public Instruction at the opening of a school recently. He said that sooner or later an education loan would have to be raised to bring the schools of Queensland up to the proper standard. Seeing that millions of pounds have been set aside for railways and the improvement of the rolling-stock, I do not see any reason why next year or at some other time £1,000,000 should not be set aside to bring the schools of the State up to the proper standard. I really believe that a special loan should be raised purely for the purpose of constructing new schools and effecting repairs to our present schools.

This morning certain hon. members—particularly the hon. member for Nanango—referred to parents in country localities having to provide voluntary labour in the construction of their schools. While I think that is a very fine spirit, I believe that parents who are keen on securing a school should help the department as much as possible; but that spirit prevails in the city as well as in the country. Let me instance the Ascot State School, where something like £1,500 has been spent on the school by residents of the area, who are desirous of making the school one of the best in Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: The same thing has been done in my electorate.

Mr. FARRELL: I admit that there are wealthy people in that area, but they take a pride in their school. During the two and a-half years that Miss Ludgate has been in

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charge of the Rockhampton Central School, nearly £1,000 has been spent in improving it. That is only a small school. This money has been expended in the direction of providing swimming-pools, mural decorations, gardens, basket-ball courts, tennis courts, a eurythmic hall, etc. All these things have been provided by voluntary effort.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is a very different thing from building schools for the education of children.

Mr. FARRELL: Probably it is; but the same spirit that exists in the country prevails in the city. It is only a natural thing. I do not want the people of country electorates to get away with the idea that it is only country people who are interested in the beautification of State schools. No matter how we may look at this question, it must be admitted by hon. members on both sides that during the time the Government have been in power great strides have been made in the construction of schools. The hon. member for Normanby knows that during the first three years that he was in Parliament twenty-five or twenty-six schools were erected in his electorate.

Mr. PETERSON: More than that; but I had to sweat like a nigger to get them.

Mr. FARRELL: That goes to show that the Government recognised that the Normanby electorate had been neglected in that direction, and the fact that twenty-five or twenty-six schools were built in three years is proof that the Government recognised their responsibility. I am heartily in accord with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Warwick with respect to the erection of school residences. I know the case to which he refers. Where a teacher has to travel some 20 to 25 miles to his place of residence, he naturally is away from the influence of his school, and that has not a good effect on the tone of the school, and has not a good effect on the general progress and conduct of the school. If the Minister carries out the idea of an educational loan, I hope that he will set aside a good portion of it for the purpose of building additional school residences.

Mr. PETERSON: Do you not think it would be a good plan to give the teachers residences of the type of workers' homes?

Mr. FARRELL: The great difficulty would be in connection with the transfer of teachers. If you read the report of the Under Secretary to the Department of Public Instruction, you will discover that practically every inspector in his report mentions the necessity of shifting teachers, particularly head teachers, more frequently than is the case at the present time. That would be the great difficulty there. Otherwise it would be a very fine scheme. There is also the cost of the transfer.

The question of closing certain schools was mentioned. It is a fact that many schools in Queensland have been closed, and properly so.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The question of the closing of schools will come up for consideration under the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction.

Mr. FARRELL: I was about to suggest that the schools which have been closed should be shifted to some other locality whose

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population warrants such a course, and where the establishment of a school is justified.

Mr. EDWARDS: It takes about ten years to get a school removed.

Mr. FARRELL: I now want to deal with the type of school. Mr. Inspector Baker, in his report to the department regarding the new type of school, has this to say—

"The new buildings are not of suitable design. They are divided off into separate class-rooms, entrance to which is from the verandas; there is no direct means of inter-communication by sliding partitions, doors, or windows. This arrangement makes direct supervision by the head teacher extremely difficult, and where, as often occurs, there are pupil-teachers, student-teachers, or weak assistants on the staff, it is not conducive to the efficient working of the school."

Those are the new buildings that are being built, and, although Mr. Baker is the only inspector who definitely makes that report, almost every one of the other inspectors has something to say concerning them.

I am pleased to see that, during the last twelve months, an officer of the Works Department has been attached to the Education Department for the purpose of carrying out any small repairs. It is a very fine scheme. Minor repairs, instead of being sent from the Education Department to the Works Department, are now undertaken by this officer, and a great deal of time is thus saved.

Mr. BRAND: That policy can be extended.

Mr. FARRELL: That is so. Regarding this officer, Mr. L. D. Edwards, the Chief Inspector of Schools, has this to say—

"During the year an officer of the Works Department was attached to this office and authorised to attend to minor repairs and additions without referring these matters to the Works Department. This effected considerable saving of time, it avoided unnecessary circumlocution, and enabled this department to effect minor repairs expeditiously."

If that principle were extended, it would be a very good thing for both the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Instruction.

In conclusion, so far as the officers of the Works Department are concerned, I desire to say that I have always found them most courteous when interviewing them. They have always endeavoured to put everything at the disposal of hon. members, so that they can obtain any information they require.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: The most sensible speech from that side to-day.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL (*Toombul*): The question of day labour versus contract has been a bone of contention for some time between members of the Opposition and members of the Government. Despite the fact that the Government are slowly jettisoning a good many planks of the party, they still adhere to the present system of constructing all public works and the maintenance thereof by day labour. We hope that, as wiser counsels seem to be now prevailing in the Government regarding many other matters, they will give this question some consideration, because, if proper investigation is made as to the merits and demerits

of the two systems it will be found that the day-labour system in Government works has proved to be a failure. At the same time, it must be admitted—we have got to be fair on this matter—that in some instances day labour may be the proper system to adopt. Where a certain class of work is continuous and the workers are educated up to a high standard of efficiency it might be unwise to make a change. But, generally speaking, in the spending of public money on buildings and so forth, the time has arrived when the contract system should be given a trial by the present Government, even at this late hour. We know how hard it will be for them to depart from the policy they have carried out for the past ten or eleven years; but, if they have an eye to the failures of the past, they must admit that there is some justice in the contention of the Opposition, that in the great majority of public works, the contract system would be cheaper and just as efficient as, if not more efficient than, day labour. We could cite numbers of cases where day labour under some Government or semi-Government department has proved a ghastly failure. It is only necessary to cite the recent investigations by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board in regard to the sewerage works constructed under the day-labour system, where there were glaring instances of scamping of work which occurred under the supervision of the board's supervisors. The main requisite in all these things is efficient supervision. We know that under the contract system the person who pays the money has the privilege of appointing a supervisor to watch his interests and see that the contractor fulfills the terms of his contract. In addition, there is always a clerk of works who is appointed at the expense of the person finding the money, and who sees that the right quantities of material are provided, and attends to other details. Hon. members opposite speak of the scamping of work under the contract system; but just as much scamping of work, and even more, occurs under the day-labour system.

We know very well that it has been the pet policy of the Labour party to insist upon day labour in all work constructed under its supervision. The very term "contract," and even the term "employer," are anathema to them. All along they have insisted that all Government work shall be done by day labour. That is in consonance with their settled policy of building up an industrial army, a great horde of Government servants, who shall be subservient to their Government bosses and obedient to the political machine. That is part and parcel of their Socialism—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The time has arrived when that policy should be discontinued. It has meant that the best men in the service of the Government have eventually been reduced to mediocrities. The "government stroke" must set in, and work is not done as cheaply or as efficiently as it would be done under the private contract system. There is no incentive for the immediate supervisor of a day-labour job to be over-scrupulous in doing justice to the job. He is not financially interested, and, when you destroy incentive, the supervisor does not do justice to the job, and expenses must be heaped up. Under the contract system, where the contractor is bound down to a

specific price, he will see that he obtains good work from his workmen. What is more, the workmen do better, because there is better supervision under the contract system, and you have not the spectacle of men being held up through shortage of material, as is usual on Government jobs. I am not blaming the men. They give good service provided they are under proper supervision, which is not the case under the Government day-labour system.

The result to-day is that, after eleven years of Labour regime, we have built up a great number of sub-departments. These departments are increasing day by day, the number of men on the pay roll is con- [3.30 p.m.] stantly on the increase, yet the Government, instead of endeavouring to economise and cut down this enormous expenditure as they could do, are endeavouring to shelve their responsibility and are putting taxation on one class to make up for the deficiencies of their administration. The time has arrived when there should be a full investigation, not only into the administration of this department but into the administration of all departments. Let the Government jettison their day-labour policy, as they are jettisoning other policies. Why are they getting rid of State stations? Because they know that under Government control these things can never be a success. In future work let the Department of Public Works put in an estimate and call for tenders, and then see how they will get on. I venture to say that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the estimate of the Department of Public Works will exceed the estimates of private contractors.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You are wrong.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: That has been the experience, and I am speaking with knowledge. That has been the experience of the Greater Brisbane City Council, where a similar system is in operation, and where you have engineers and inspectors of works. Where tenders have been called for in nearly every case the estimate of the Council's expert has been above the price tendered by the private contractor. We must remember that when the Department of Public Works is asked for an estimate, naturally, in order to make the best fist of the business they will inflate their estimate, fearing that, with contingencies they may be called upon to provide, they will find that they have made their estimate too low and that they will be brought to book for exceeding that estimate. Naturally their estimates must be inflated. To-day the Greater Brisbane City Council are carrying out most of their big undertakings by contract, and, if you contrast the work of the private contractor with the work performed by the Council's employees, any unbiased man will admit that the Council's work cannot be compared with the work of the private contractor. Look at the roads built by private contractors to-day! They far surpass Government roads or roads built by the Council's own engineers, and they cost less.

I am surprised at the speech made by the hon. member for Bowen, but I daresay such a speech can be expected from that hon. member, because he is supposed to be the leading exponent in the House of the Government's socialistic and communistic theories. The hon. member admits that there have been many failures, but he is not disheartened. His party are always making

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failures. The taxpayers are sick of the failures, and it is about time common sense prevailed and the socialistic theories were thrown overboard. Let us return to sane methods in every department of the State. Many thousands of pounds could be saved by taking away from the Department of Public Works the carrying on of work by the Government. Let all work be carried out by contract.

Mr. HARTLEY: And then you will have graft.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Then take the case of work required in different centres of the State. Why should this work be done in Brisbane? The work could be done just as well in centres where the work is required.

One hon. member has referred to the Hamilton Cold Stores. These works have cost over £319,000. The estimate was £215,000. That is a white elephant. The Hamilton Cold Stores are practically shut down to-day, although I will admit that there is very little butter being exported. The co-operative factories which are exporting to-day fall back on the private refrigerators to store their butter, so that butter which should go to the Hamilton Cold Stores is being sent to Birt and Company and other cold stores. A huge amount of money has been spent in the construction of the Hamilton Cold Stores from which there is practically no return. How will interest and redemption be paid on the enormous cost of this building. It shows the fallacy of the Government interfering with enterprises they know nothing about. I do not blame the Minister in charge of the department—he has to rely on his experts—but, if the Government are foolish enough to spend money on these wild-cat schemes, they must expect failures, because, when we take away the incentive for improvement, the whole scheme must fall to the ground.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You did pretty well with the Department of Public Works.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Yes; I am not in business for the good of my health altogether. (Laughter.) I hope that the Government will even now give contract labour a chance, to see whether any saving can be effected in the carrying out of work. I think they will then admit the error of their ways and discontinue the day-labour system in all their undertakings. I think it has had a fair trial. It must be admitted that it has been a failure, and something else should be tried.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Defence Department do not let out any works on contract.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: There is no analogy between that and putting up Government buildings. There is no need to call tenders to build works of that nature, because, after all, it is necessary that expenditure on defence should be expended to the best advantage.

Mr. HARTLEY: That knocks your argument on the head.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I do not know what the Minister meant when he interjected about defence works. At any rate, the great bulk of the work so far as Empire defence is concerned is done by contract. I have said before that from a theoretical point of view day labour is

all right, but unfortunately under the system of Government control we cannot get the efficiency which is needed. The hon. member for Fitzroy was quite justified in his statements to-day on this question. The man in charge of Government work is subject to the Government of the day, and he knows that it is not worth while to insist on getting efficiency when there is just a fear that a man who may be discharged will be put back on the job. We had an instance in connection with the radio station, when the Secretary for Public Works admitted that the job had to stop five or six months till the men on the work had found other employment. They secured other work through the Labour Bureau, and consequently fresh men could be brought on to the radio station. Under ordinary conditions day labour should be cheapest.

With regard to the sneer of the Secretary for Agriculture, there is nothing wrong in the hon. member for Toombul, as a business man, getting orders from the Department of Public Works if he is giving value for the money he receives.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why are you apologising for him?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not apologising for him. I am taking exception to the Minister throwing insinuations across the floor of the Chamber that the hon. member was doing something which was not honest and honourable. He has a perfect right to look after the interests of his clients, and I take it that the department will not purchase from the hon. member for Toombul articles which it can get for less elsewhere.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not going to discuss that question, however, because I recognise that it is the policy of the Government, though they have changed considerably during the last eighteen months in respect of many points of policy, and I am hoping that they will change also on this. I am not finding fault with the heads of the department or the men on the job. I realise the difficulty.

The system under which the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works operate in these things is unsound. I regret the position which exists as to the decision as to what work is to be undertaken. We know that recommendations go down to the Department of Public Works from the Department of Public Instruction, but unfortunately they are not always carried out. I recognise that it is not the fault of departmental officers, because the money is not available. As the hon. member for Burke said, it seems that a larger sum of money should be voted. The demands are greater than can be met, and something must be done.

I want to say in passing that, possibly by reason of the fact that there is a larger number of members in the city, too much attention is given to State schools in the vicinity of Brisbane.

Then, again, there is the form of work and the plan which are set out and under which the department carries on this work. I am not in the business myself, but I think that some of our costs are too great. I think that we could go in for cheaper construction more suitable for the purpose which the building is to serve.

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Then there is the question of removing buildings. I suppose the Department of Public Works will be removing a school building in my electorate shortly. I presented a petition from the residents of Prestons to the Secretary for Public Instruction asking him to hold his hand and stating that, if it was a question of money, they might be able to pay something in order to keep the school there, because, they say, in eighteen months sufficient children will be in the district to warrant the existence of a school. I ask that the school be not removed.

We have a very large school in East Toowoomba where there is need for attention to the drainage of the school grounds. The committee are anxious to help the department. They had a sale of work or something of the kind the other day and raised £300, which they are going to spend on the improvement of the school grounds. I have visited them after a very heavy fall of rain—we know what red soil is in Toowoomba—and the children for, perhaps, a week after such a fall go backwards and forwards in mud. That is not healthy for them, and the school grounds require a real overhauling in the matter of drainage. I hope that the matter will receive the consideration of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I have listened with considerable interest and a certain amount of amusement to some of the statements made by hon. members opposite. It is another illustration of the fact that people who have no definite policy and no definite aim should keep a record of what they say. When the Secretary for Agriculture was dealing with an important measure in this Chamber I listened to hon. members opposite repeating ad nauseam the statement that people were leaving the country districts in large numbers. If that was a fact, then the logical result would be that this department would not be harassed or pestered for new schools or additions to schools by hon. members representing country districts. Notwithstanding those statements every hon. member, representing a country constituency, who has risen on the Opposition benches has condemned in unmeasured terms the lack of sympathy alleged to have been shown by this department for the need for country schools. If the country districts of Queensland are being populated and settled, and as a result of that population and settlement new schools are required and additions are required for schools already erected either by this Government or previous Governments, then there is sufficient proof that the statements of hon. members opposite that the people are leaving the land and drifting to the cities are absolutely without any foundation.

The hon. member for Murilla stated that men loafed on Government jobs and so forth. That is an allegation frequently made by hon. members opposite. Any system depends for its maintenance and success on the human element. Whether it be the day-labour system or any other system which is contrived for the erection of public buildings or small country buildings, it will depend in a large measure for its success on the human element of those engaged. If you have the right class of foreman, who is able to lay out the work as it should be laid out, is able to handle his staff and knows his work

generally, the work will be erected well within the estimate. I admit that to a very large extent he is dependent for the success of his job on the loyal and hearty co-operation of the men on the job. It has been stated by the hon. member for Bowen—and I want to emphasise the point raised by him—that it is about time that every man in the public service and every man engaged in the construction branch of the Department of Public Works, whether he be the foreman at the head or the apprentice on the job, realised that in working for the State he is not working for an individual who is making a profit out of his labour. They should all take some pride in the erection of every public building on which they are engaged, whether it be the splendid addition to the Treasury Block now nearing completion or some small school on the outposts of civilisation erected to meet the educational requirements of the settlement in that distant portion of the State.

Mr. KERR: Is that not an inference that they are not doing it to-day?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman is possessed of a peculiar type of mentality. I do not intend to deal with his statement at present; I shall have something to say on that matter later on.

The hon. member for Toowoong discussed at considerable length, as is his wont, the question of day labour versus contract. I do not question the sincerity or honesty of the hon. gentleman in espousing the cause of contract labour. He declared without any equivocation that it was the superior method for the erection of all buildings. Let us look at the position. No one can deny that there are certain defects in the contract system. When the hon. member for East Toowoomba was talking I remarked that no country in the world would allow the defence of its people and its institutions to be carried out by contract.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Battle-ships are not built by contract.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Some of them are.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Away back in British history I believe certain nobles obtained concessions on condition that they raised a portion of the standing army to defend the King's dominions when called upon to do so. I do not know that that was found to be a very satisfactory system of defence.

Possibly even that form of contract was found to break down when the real interests of the Sovereign and the people were at stake. During the late war we had ample evidence that the contract system was thrown overboard by gentlemen who had no hesitation in sponsoring it at every turn and on every occasion. I can recall, immediately after the outbreak of war, in this very Assembly, when Mr. Denham, the then Premier, brought down a Bill, every line and clause of which had been cabled to him by the Imperial authorities, and invoked the aid of the Opposition in putting that Bill through all its stages in one day, and likewise through the Legislative Council, because it was necessary to commandeer the cattle in Queensland in order to guarantee the men in the army and navy with food.

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Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Did you contract with the meatworks for the meat you obtained from them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I quote that as an illustration to show that, when vital interests were affected, the contract system was thrown overboard.

Mr. KERR: It is absolutely absurd.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is nothing absurd about it. It is an absolute fact. Everybody knows that, in addition to huge food supplies, huge munition factories were organised under the control of the Government to ensure that the men would be not only fed with iron rations, but, as Napoleon said, with the rations that every army travelled on.

Mr. COLLINS: There were contract scandals in the Crimean War.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As the hon. member for Bowen reminds me, there were scandals in connection with contracts in the Crimean War. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite may laugh.

Mr. KERR: If you have to go back seventy years for an argument, you are hard up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have given those illustrations to prove that, when real and vital interests were at stake, the people who believed in the contract system threw it overboard.

Mr. MAXWELL: You believe in the contract system, anyhow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Toowong had a great deal to say about the contract system. I intend, in this connection, to quote the report of a deputation which waited on the Hon. W. H. Barnes when that hon. gentleman was Secretary for Public Works.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The same old stuff.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is very interesting. I have listened very attentively and patiently since about 11 o'clock this morning to the same old stuff about the merits of the contract system, and now I intend giving hon. gentlemen opposite the same old stuff from an hon. gentleman who holds the same political views as themselves. The following is a report which appeared in the "Brisbane Courier" of Wednesday, 3rd December, 1913, of a deputation which waited upon the Hon. W. H. Barnes, the then Secretary for Public Works:—

"CONTRACT *v.* DAY LABOUR.

"FOUNDATIONS OF SAVINGS BANK.

"*Master Builders' Request.*

"Minister's Reply.

"Members of the Master Builders' Association, consisting of Messrs. A. Ferguson (president), A. Lind, T. Keenan, A. Walls, J. Maskery, G. E. Day, J. P. Parry, A. Gillespie, C. D. Skene, W. R. Juster, W. Kitchen, G. A. Baumber, and the secretary, Mr. C. G. Stevenson, waited upon the Minister for Works (Hon. W. H. Barnes) yesterday, to urge that the work of constructing the foundations of the new Savings Bank Building should be open to them by tender. Mr. A. B. Brady, Under Secretary, was also present.

"Before proceeding with the business of the deputation, Mr. Ferguson welcomed Mr. Brady after his tour abroad. He hoped that the result of his trip would be a benefit to the country and the department. Mr. Brady briefly acknowledged the compliment.

"Mr. Ferguson said that they had noticed a report in the papers to the effect that it had been decided to proceed with the foundations of the Government Savings Bank Building by day labour. They came to ask that tenders might be called to give the Brisbane contractors an opportunity of submitting prices. They did not approach the Minister in a dictatorial or carping spirit, but they contended that public interests would best be served by accepting their suggestion. He thought that the departmental officers might submit an estimate, and, if the tenders were below that, the work should be given to the lowest in the usual way. He could assure the Minister that if this course was adopted there would be at least eight tenders. The day-labour revelations in New South Wales had recently shown that the day-labour work had cost up to 100 and 110 per cent. more than the department's estimate.

"Mr. Keenan said that if the day-labour plan were carried out the conditions might not be the same as those imposed upon a contractor.

"Mr. Barnes said that there was no justification for a view of that sort.

"Mr. Keenan contended that if their proposal was carried out there would be no reason to complain afterwards. They were not afraid to face day-labour conditions on fair grounds.

"Mr. Gillespie thought it was not fair to the contractors to carry out a job of that kind while there were men ready and willing to compete by public tender. His opinion was that there had been no profit in the day-labour system for the State. The system had failed badly in New South Wales. They all knew what was meant by the 'Government stroke.' The inspectors did not like to tell all that they saw. Then the system made for delays. One railway he had in his mind was to have been finished by this, but it was a long way off completion. So far as he was concerned he would not like to have men working for him under the same conditions. The public could not help noticing this sort of thing. He felt sure that the builders could do the work more cheaply and more efficiently. The same system was not practised by the departments in other matters. When they wanted a supply of boots or saddles they did not start factories, but called tenders publicly and accepted the lowest price. The contractors were local residents who spent their money here and were ready to assist public institutions as citizens. If they were to be denied work there would be nothing for it for some of them but to go elsewhere for a field for their enterprise.

"Mr. Lind said they had some difficulty in handling men who had been employed on Government jobs. They

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came back discontented, wanting shorter hours and more pay. They blamed the laxity of Government supervision. He urged that if tenders were called for the Savings Bank work it would mean a saving of public money.

"Mr. Maskrey thought that if the work was carried out by day labour there should be some independent person appointed to supervise. A contractor was obliged to carry out jobs of that sort exactly according to the plans and specifications. He had worked for the Government before. He was a builder and he had heard men say when spoken to that they would tell Mr. So-and-So about it. (Laughter.) The builders had a right to be considered in a matter of this kind as citizens.

"Mr. Barnes, in reply, said that a body of men so representative had a perfect right to place their views before the Minister of the department. He congratulated them upon the temperate way in which they had put their case. He would certainly give their request the fullest consideration. In the past the officers had been careful to make their estimates, and if the lowest tenders were higher, the work was taken up by the department. Often fresh tenders were invited. Personally, his inclination was in favour of tender, but he was face to face with the fact that the officers' estimate of day labour was sometimes much below the contract prices. There was no other course therefore in the public interest but to go on with the work. He had no right to let his own desires weigh in that regard when public duty stood in the road. So far as the department was concerned the great bulk of the work was carried out by public tender. He was quite free to admit that very often the lowest tender was less than the official estimate. They had reminded him of the high cost in New South Wales of some of the work recently carried out in that State, but

there were no such figures available in connection with his department. So far as he knew there was no such thing in existence as the 'Government stroke.' He quoted a few cases to support his view. On the new refreshment-rooms in the gardens, though the work had been increased on the original plan by £200, they had still saved £270. In the Lands Department job the lowest tender was £484, but they carried out the work for £286. In the Geological Branch they saved £254 on a job as compared to the lowest tender.

"It had been said that in these works no charge was made for the work of the officers engaged, but that was not so. Everything was properly apportioned.

"Something had also been said about work at Goodna which was being carried out by day labour, but they would save something like £9,000 on the job. If they thought the specifications were not adhered to, he would be glad to drive a party of them out to inspect it.

"It was only fair to the officers to say that many thousands of pounds had been saved by the system at present in force.

"One big work had been mentioned which he would refer to. That was the Rockhampton Technical College. The estimate was £12,733 and the lowest tender £15,703, and it was expected that fully £3,000 would be saved on those figures.

"At Goodna, the estimate for one ward was £16,621 and the lowest tender £20,799, and they expected to considerably cut under the estimate. He promised to fully consider their request to call tenders for the foundations of the Savings Bank building."

[4 p.m.]

I have here a table showing a comparison between the price submitted by the lowest tenderer and the actual cost of carrying out several large works by day labour—

Jobs.	Lowest Tenderer.	Price.	Cost Day Labour.	Saving.
Goodna—Two New Wards, Nos. 1 and 2	G. Baumber	£ 41,598 0 0	£ 32,324 9 7	£ 9,273 10 5
Goodna—New Ward, No. 8	A. Keddle	12,876 0 0	11,085 9 11	1,790 10 1
Rockhampton—Technical College	J. Boyle	15,703 0 0	12,139 8 6	3,563 11 6
Rockhampton—Savings Bank	J. G. Hobbs	5,975 0 0	5,595 17 9	379 2 5
Babinda—State Hotel	W. Kerr	17,282 4 9	13,146 12 6	4,135 12 3
Ipswich—Hospital for Insane	A. Keddle	21,088 12 6	16,748 18 10	4,339 13 8
	Total	£114,522 17 3	91,040 17 1	23,482 0 2

With reference to the State hotel at Babinda, it was so faithfully constructed that it was the only building which stood up to the terrific cyclone which wrecked Babinda. If hon. members complain that I have gone too far away, and that I ought to get down to the present day, I have here an extract from the "Telegraph" of 5th October, 1924, which deals with the cost of homes at the aircraft depot at Laverton, in Victoria, which

was erected under the supervision of the Public Works Department of the Commonwealth Government. The extract reads—

"A meeting of the Commonwealth Parliament Public Works Committee was held yesterday, when evidence was taken regarding the cost of mechanics' homes at the aircraft depot at Laverton, Victoria.

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"Mr. J. S. Murdoch, Chief Architect of the Commonwealth Works and Railway Department, was questioned as to the discrepancy between the estimates and the tenders for the mechanics' homes. When the Committee members visited Point Cook to inspect the houses in course of erection there they were told that they would cost £1,100 each, but Mr. Murdoch produced tenders showing that the actual cost for the smallest type of cottage was £1,700.

"Mr. Murdoch stated that tenders had been called for the erection of three classes of homes at Laverton—mechanics', non-commissioned officers', and officers'—estimated to cost £1,300, £1,380, and £1,870 respectively. The tenders for the smallest type of house ranged between £1,820 and £2,100."

Hon. members have had a great deal to say in connection with the supervision of the Department of Public Works. I propose to put the "Brisbane Courier" in the box to give testimony in support of the supervision of the department with which I have the honour to be associated. This is an extract from a leader in the issue of 24th July, 1924, regarding sewerage disclosures—

"... Had this work, whether day labour or contract, been under the supervision of the Public Works Department, or under the control of an expert commission, it is safe to assume that such scamping would not have been tolerated."

Quite recently in Melbourne a large public building which had been erected by contract labour collapsed. Several of the workmen engaged in it were killed, and it was disclosed during the inquiry that the class of work which had been done was largely responsible for the collapse of the building. An extraordinary amount of sand was used, quite out of proportion to the amount which should have been used according to the specifications, with the result that there was no stability in the structure, and, when it got to a certain height, it collapsed. The unfortunate part was that the individual responsible for it was not under the building when it collapsed, but the men who carried out his instructions were.

Mr. FERRICKS: It reminds one of the collapse of the building in the picture, "The Ten Commandments."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I saw that picture in Melbourne shortly before I left, and after I arrived in Brisbane the building I refer to collapsed in Melbourne, where the picture, "The Ten Commandments," was being shown at the time. A great breakwater was being constructed at Warrnambool, and the evidence at the inquiry held into that matter disclosed that cement which had been condemned was afterwards used, and a large amount of concrete was mixed in a way which was not in accordance with the specifications. The concrete was poured into the sea, and there were no proper safeguards to prevent the whole breakwater from being washed away. I do not want to infer that there are not contractors who are just as honest and straightforward as any other body of men. In connection with my experience in the Department of Public Works in workers' dwellings and workers' homes sub-departments, we have contractors who are doing excellent work,

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and who require very little supervision; whereas, on the other hand, we have individuals who have to be watched, and the inspector has almost to sit on the job to get satisfaction. But we have a method of eliminating that class of contractor.

Mr. KING: I suppose that contractors are not the only men who do wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I suppose that so long as the human race lasts we will get this unfortunate type of individual, whether he is a commercial man or even a politician. They seem to exist among all sections of the community, therefore I do not wish my reference this afternoon to be construed to mean that contractors as a body are a gang of scoundrels. I would not suggest that, but I suggest that the contract system gives encouragement and an opening to an unscrupulous individual to do these things.

Mr. MORGAN: Not under proper supervision.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In the early days of the work in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, a number of contracts were let and thrown up. The contractors found that they were unable to carry out the contracts, as they met with difficulties which they did not anticipate.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Owing to wrong data being provided.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not know what the reason was, but I would point out to the hon. member for Toombul that it goes to prove that even an expert cannot be relied upon. We hear a lot to-day to the effect that we should dismiss the present Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board and hand the operations over to experts; but I do not know that those people are more infallible than the ordinary members of the board, and their blunders and mistakes sometimes run into a great deal of money.

I think it was the hon. member for Toowong who suggested that the Government should display some foresight in the selection of sites for schools and other public buildings. I find no fault with that very excellent suggestion, but I think that, to a large extent, some of the delay which occurs now in obtaining sites arises from the lack of foresight in previous Governments. For instance, in the hon. member's own electorate, at Auchenflower, a thickly populated closely settled district, no block of land can be got suitable for a public school which is urgently required, and I do not see any prospect of getting that very necessary site except by resuming some of the excellent areas already built upon. It is true that the site of the late Sir Thomas Mellwraith's residence was under offer, but I think the hon. member for Toowong will be fair enough to admit that the Government were not justified in paying the price which was asked. I do not know anything about the school at West Toowong to which the hon. member also referred; but I would like to say that the Department of Public Instruction moves first in these matters and selects the site, and then the Department of Public Works comes in and erects the school.

The hon. member also made a complaint about the manner in which the Treasury



Buildings had been painted. I have not heard anything about it, but I will make inquiries.

MR. MAXWELL: It is the appearance I referred to.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know the hon. member is a tradesman, and, if he makes a statement of that kind, it is certainly entitled to some inquiry. I am not going to say that probably he is justified, but I realise that he is a leading man in this class of work in the city, and I do not think he would make a statement unless he believed that he was justified as an honourable man in doing so.

Now I am not going to be so soft with the hon. member. He had a good deal to say about the cost of a school in the electorate of the hon. member for Wide Bay. He got to work, probably at double pressure, and somehow or other made out that the school cost £175 per square. I have to inform the hon. member that he is very far wrong in his calculation. He may have arrived at that result because he was not in possession of all the facts. It just shows the necessity for hon. members to put themselves in possession of all the facts on which they base their conclusions before making such statements. He evidently based his conclusion on the fact that, in my reply to the question by the hon. member for Wide Bay, I said that the school was 21 feet by 18 feet. I would like to add that there is a veranda 47 feet by 8 feet and the usual outhouses and furniture, and, when the whole thing is calculated out, the cost of the school was not £175 per square, but £81.

Reference has been made by more than one member representing country constituencies to the necessity for some encouragement of parents in country districts who are prepared, at some sacrifice, and possibly at some cost to themselves, to do something in the erection of their own schools.

Since I have been Minister the people in various country districts have said, "You provide us with the wire and posts, and we will erect the fence." In every instance we have done that. Every encouragement will be given, particularly to country school committees. I realise that those associated with school activities in the country are scattered over a wide area, and have not very much spare time for themselves. If they are prepared to organise a "working bee" on Saturday afternoon or on a public holiday in the interests of school children, many of whom are compelled to ride to school on ponies, then their action should be commended. They are a great deal luckier than the children were in my time, when they could use only "shanks's pony." That is another illustration of the onward march under a Labour Government.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You ride in a motor-car now.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am not ashamed of the fact that I ride in a motor-car. If I have won my way to the position of a Minister of the Crown in my own native State, I have won it fairly and squarely and by hard work, and hard work only. At one period before schools could be erected in any district it was necessary for the people to subscribe one-fifth of the cost. That condition is

wiped out, and it was a very excellent move forward. A great deal of encouragement has been given to struggling selectors requiring schools.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Are you not suggesting going back to it in another form?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No. I am not going to allow the hon. gentleman to suggest that the department is treating country districts any worse than any previous Government. I am prepared to say that country districts are being treated a great deal better now than they were under any previous Government. The public spirit manifested by parents, not only in country centres but in the metropolitan area and cities like Maryborough, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Townsville, and other large centres, and their general attitude in organising fetes, etc., for the improvement of the school grounds by providing swimming pools, in laying down cricket pitches, football grounds, and tennis courts, is to be highly commended. The parents generally are to be congratulated on supporting any move, whether by subscription or voluntary work, which will improve the school for their boys and girls and make them better men and women physically.

Reference has been made by the hon. member for Bowen, the hon. member for Rockhampton, and other hon. members to the necessity for a special loan for the purpose of dealing with the requirements of our educational system in the direction of more schools, and in the direction of bringing the old schools up to the standard that is expected in accordance with the latest ideas of the department. I remember reading the remark made by an ex-Minister for Public Instruction in New South Wales, Mr. Bruntnell, when being attacked on the floor of the House in a somewhat similar fashion to the way that I am being assailed to-day, about the inattention of the department to the requirements of public schools, not only in the city but also in the country, when he stated that, if Parliament would give him a special loan of £2,000,000, he would undertake to satisfy the requirements of hon. members. I believe that, if I were granted £500,000 to bring our public school system right up to date by providing those schools that are required and renovating and altering the old type of buildings, I would be able to place our educational establishments on up-to-date lines. Only the other day I read of an incident in Victoria—where they have a farmer for Premier—of a school teacher falling through the floor of the school when giving a lesson. You see, Mr. Cooper, that even in a State like Victoria, which is continually being quoted for our special edification, instruction, and emulation, we have a school teacher falling through the floor of her school when carrying out her work. That is an indication of the state of the public schools in Victoria.

The hon. member for Townsville made reference to the advisability of the department giving some consideration to the important question of the installation of septic tanks in large schools of the type of West End school, Townsville. That is a matter of great importance. I realised the importance of the advocacy of the hon. member from the health point of view of the children, and, if money were available, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to install this

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system in such schools outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. FARRELL: There are some very large schools in Rockhampton which might also be considered in that respect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Rockhampton also stresses the necessity for similar action at Rockhampton when this policy is inaugurated.

The hon. member for Toowoong had something to say on the excessive cost of additions to the Roma Street Police Station, and added that the Government were not justified in making those additions because before very long a new central railway station must be erected in Market square. When the hon. gentleman made that statement the statement of hon. gentlemen opposite about the political control which has existed in our railway system since the Government came into power also came to my mind. When I look at the Central railway station, the Ipswich railway station, and other railway stations, I ask myself the question, "Was the engineer who designed such buildings worthy of his profession in putting those buildings on their present sites, or is their position due to the political jobbery that was rampant at the time?"

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I would point out to the hon. member for Toowoong that £2,000 of the additional cost of the work at the Roma Street barracks was rendered necessary through the action of the contractor who constructed the original building. Instead of putting the foundations of the wall facing Turbot street to the depth he should have done, he only sunk it a few feet, and, when the alterations were entered upon, it was found necessary to spend £2,000 to put that wall in a safe condition before proceeding with the additional alterations.

Mr. HARTLEY: Contract work again!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Burke complained of some foreman taking men off a job to carry out a small job elsewhere. I hope that, if anything of that nature comes within the knowledge of hon. members on either side of the Chamber, they will let me know of it, and I will have the matter investigated. If the statement is found to be correct, that man will be relieved of his position, and replaced by a man who knows how to handle his men and carry out the work.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not think you can do it. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have had some difficulty already. Not very long ago I dismissed a caretaker for not attending to his duty, and inside a couple of days no less than four hon. members came to see me.

Mr. MORGAN: What happened?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That man was dismissed. So far as I am concerned, it does not matter whether it is a caretaker, a watchman, a foreman on a job, or any other individual, if he does not do his duty, then he will go out.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The hon. member for East Toowoomba referred to the wireless station. What hap-

pened there? The foreman, in the exercise of his duty, and quite within his rights, dismissed two labourers for what he considered improper work. The remainder of the labourers held a meeting and demanded the reinstatement of those two individuals. I certainly gave those two men a hearing, and I also gave the foreman a hearing, and I determined that the foreman was right and I stood behind him.

Mr. MOORE: What did you do with him?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He is there, and was promoted recently. The two men went out and remained out.

With regard to the statements made by the hon. member for Enoggera, the hon. member rose in his usual way and suggested that quite recently an inquiry was held into a matter of "graft" in connection with the Department of Public Works. The hon. member did not choose to give the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry, but he took advantage of his privileges as a member of this Chamber and suggested that a certain officer of the department was guilty of "graft." Immediately suspicions were aroused that the buying was not as it should be. A Committee of Inquiry was appointed by the Public Service Commissioner at the request of the Minister concerned. Following upon its inquiry, that committee made certain recommendations, and those recommendations were carried out. In no part of its report was there a definite statement that any officer of the public service had been guilty of "graft." The principal person concerned has lost his position.

Mr. KERR: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Because the Public Service Commissioner, in the reorganisation of the department, found there was no further work for him.

Mr. KERR: You know perfectly well that is camouflage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I made a suggestion to the hon. member. He is not game to say that outside this Chamber, and give the individual concerned an opportunity to defend himself.

Mr. KERR: All I ask is that the hon. gentleman shall give us all facts in regard to the inquiry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member has taken advantage of his parliamentary privilege by stating what is not true—what is gathered from street-corner gossip.

Mr. KERR: Tell us all about it.

Mr. NOTT: Give us the details.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will give the details to the hon. member, and he may not then be so "cocky" as he is now. The hon. member for Enoggera may have done this thoughtlessly, but I put it to him, is it fair to take advantage of his position in this Chamber?

Mr. KERR: It is not, but I have not done so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member made a definite charge of "graft." I had nothing to do with the inquiry.

Mr. KERR: What started it?

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The matter was handed over to the Public Service Commissioner. I had nothing to do with it, as it is not within my province. Possibly the hon. member will take advantage of the matter to attack my name. I handed it over to the Public Service Commissioner, who had an inquiry made, and who submitted the report of the Committee of Inquiry to me.

Mr. KERR: What did you hand over?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The matter of an investigation into certain buying by the department.

Mr. KERR: Tell us the facts? What was the buying?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The investigation had reference to the buying of linoleum, silky-oak timber, pine of a first-class quality for joinery work, "Keystone" galvanised iron, and cement.

Mr. KERR: Nothing else?

[4.30 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No. There is the report of the Public Service Commissioner of the inquiry. As I told the hon. member for Toowong, I tell the hon. member for Enoggera, and any member of the Opposition or any member on this side, that he can inspect the papers at the office of the Department of Public Works and get all the information he requires.

Mr. KERR: What caused you to hold the investigation?

Mr. KELSO: Did you have any suspicions?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Some time ago the State Stores Board was established to do the buying in connection with all Government departments, but the Department of Public Works, under a special arrangement, was allowed to do a certain amount of buying, as it was felt that the officers concerned would be better qualified to do that buying than the State Stores Board. That was a recommendation—not of my predecessor, Mr. Smith, nor of his immediate predecessor, Mr. Theodore, nor of myself—but of the Public Service Commissioner, and the officer to whom the hon. gentleman referred to-day was not selected by any Minister. As a matter of fact, he was an inspector in the outside construction work of the department, where he was doing good work, and he was specially recommended by Mr. Storey to do the important work of buying for the Department of Public Works.

Mr. KERR: You would say anything.

Mr. PAYNE (to Mr. Kerr): You would say anything. You ought to apologise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not want to mention any names. I have not done so, but have given the information asked for. The hon. gentleman challenges my statement. If he does not believe me, and if he thinks that I am misleading this Committee, I resent the dirty insinuation and cast the insinuation back in his face, and I tell the hon. gentleman to go to the Public Service Commissioner and he will get confirmation of what I have stated.

Mr. KERR: I have asked you what caused the investigation, and you do not seem to know.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What caused the investigation was certain

information supplied by the State Stores Board.

Mr. KERR: Why did you get an officer seconded from the Auditor-General's Department to hold the inquiry?

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you make a dirty insinuation?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: When a charge is made against a public officer holding a position of trust—in this case more than a position of trust—a position where he bought largely, and where he dealt with firms in this city, not in pounds or hundreds of pounds but in thousands and twenty thousands—an inquiry has to be held, and as soon as any suspicion came to me that the buying of that man was challenged, in fairness to him and to the people who made the suggestion, and also to protect the interests of the Department of Public Works, the Public Service Commissioner was immediately approached—he was the proper man to approach—and asked to appoint a Committee of Inquiry. He did so. He appointed a gentleman from the Audit Department and one of his own officers, and they came over to the Department of Public Works. The instructions I gave Mr. Quinn, the Under Secretary, was that every assistance was to be given this Committee of Inquiry to probe this matter to the bottom.

Mr. KERR: What matter?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The buying of the articles that I have mentioned.

Mr. KERR: You do not grasp it.

Mr. PAYNE: You would say anything.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am sure that, if I appeal to hon. members of this Chamber, 99 per cent. of them will admit that I have made a fair statement of the case. They will realise the position I am in. This man has lost his position.

Mr. KERR: I am not concerned with the man. I am concerned as to why the investigation took place.

Mr. PAYNE: You have not sufficient brains to understand the position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The investigation was held because it was alleged that this particular buyer was paying more than he should pay.

Mr. KERR: Did he do so?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: According to the report submitted, the Public Service Commissioner went fully into the matter. I do not want any hon. member to go away from this Committee and say that I have withheld anything or that I have tried to shield any person.

I have been perfectly frank in the whole matter. I state again that the reason why the investigation was held and the Public Service Commissioner was requested to appoint a Committee of Inquiry to investigate certain matters was due to the fact that a suspicion had arisen that the buying of the Department of Public Works was not being conducted in the manner in which it should be conducted.

Mr. KERR (Enoggera): I want to pay a little attention to the Minister's remarks. He has told the Committee that a suspicion arose in connection with the buying in the Department of Public Works. This is the

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position as I know it: A special investigation was made because of a suspicion, as stated by the Minister. Subsequently an officer from the Auditor-General's Department was obtained to investigate the matter. I do not know the result of his report, but, when the report was finally brought out, the result of it was that the services of the head official concerned in this buying were dispensed with. I do not know anything personally about the gentleman concerned, but it is common knowledge that the buying was not up to what it should be, and the Minister could not answer my question in that regard. If the buying was wrong, and the taxpayer was footing the Bill in connection with it, surely this Committee is entitled to know the result of the investigation! The hon. member for Toowong asked that the papers be placed on the table, but they have not been tabled yet.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why? Is it so that you can start a persecution?

Mr. KERR: I am entitled to ask that the papers be placed on the table. It is no good the Minister trying to vilify me in the performance of my duties here. When I ask for the result of the special investigation, which is acknowledged by the Minister to have taken place, why does he get into all this heat in regard to the matter? Surely there is something behind it!

Mr. HARTLEY: You made a straight-out statement that there was "graft." You should prove it now.

Mr. KERR: I said the allegations amounted to a charge of "graft." The Minister did not mention the matter of the gravel, and I would ask him to investigate the question of gravel in connection with the hospital.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why don't you make a straight-out charge?

Mr. KERR: The hon. member need not bandy words with me. I could say a great deal more about that matter. I say that the allegations in connection with the buying lead one to draw certain inferences, because the services of the officer concerned in this buying were dispensed with. As for the Minister saying that it was only at the last moment that it was thought necessary to transfer the buying to the State Stores Board, that matter was never mooted in the first instance, and was not included in the investigation. The allegation was that the buying was not right, and that the prices paid for goods, for which the taxpayers have to find the money, were higher than they could be bought for by anyone else. Why are we not entitled at this stage to ask the Government what is behind this? If discrepancies have occurred in the Department of Public Works, is it not right that Parliament should ask for a confession of the whole of the facts? I do not know whether the Minister is au fait with the whole situation. The allegations are to the effect that there is more in the matter than the transference of the buying business to the State Stores Board. That was only the last consideration. It was so serious that Mr. Story, when asked about the investigation, brought a professional officer from the Auditor-General's Department. Was it to see whether the purchasing should be handed over to the State Stores Board? The thing is too ridiculous for words, and I say that there is more behind it, and I

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stand up to my words, and repeat that, if the Minister wants more information, I will give it to him.

Mr. HARTLEY: What is wrong with giving it to the Committee?

Mr. KERR: I am not going to entertain the hon. member. Two Agents-General talked about purchases in the Agent-General's Office. It looks to me as though the same thing occurred in the State under this Government. I would not know the officer concerned if I saw him. I do not know him from Adam. I spoke for only a few minutes, and asked the Minister to give a fair statement of the result of this investigation, and, rightly or wrongly, honestly or otherwise—and I give the hon. gentleman all credit for giving what he believes is his honest opinion—the Minister replied that it was merely a question of handing over the buying to the State Stores Board. I do not understand it in that way, and I hope the Minister will investigate the matter and let the Committee know what has actually occurred.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): After the breezy interlude we have had, I would like to say something about the Minister's remarks with regard to the controversy about the contract and day-labour systems and some cases he quoted. Before doing so I would like to say that I have said to the Minister privately—and I have never any hesitation in saying publicly what I have said to the Minister privately, unless it has been confidential on his side or mine—that my experience of him has been that he has always treated me fairly about local matters. The hon. gentleman has always tried to do his very best to meet the requirements in my electorate—and whenever it has been particularly droughty when we have gone out together—I am not going to say that we have got "on the spree"—rain has always fallen. (Laughter.)

The Minister made some remarks with regard to some buildings which were decided upon during my term of office as Secretary for Public Works. He trotted out two or three works, one of which was some buildings at Goodna. I think it only right to say that the policy pursued by me as Minister was this: We were not wedded either to contract or day labour, but we were wedded to getting the very best value for the money of the people of the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think I have dealt with the Goodna business before, but I shall deal with it again. When the first tenders came in for certain improvements at the Goodna Asylum we found that they were too high, according to the estimate of the department. Was I simply to sit down and accept a tender because it happened to be the lowest amongst several? That was not my conception of my duty. I had before me the departmental estimate of the cost.

I issued instructions that further tenders should be invited in connection with the work. The matter is perfectly fresh in my mind to-day. The contractors, who were very busy at the time, put up their backs and said they would not tender at all. One or two outsiders did tender. When I found, after the second tenders had been called, that they were still dead up against the department, there was only one course for a

straight Minister to follow, and that was to carry out the work by day labour, and we carried out the work by day labour. If I were faced with the same position again, I would do exactly the same thing. If I had done anything else, I would have been absolutely guilty of wasting money.

Let us go to some other work to which reference has been made. I desire to refer to it to show that the contract system sometimes is highly advantageous to the Government. I refer to the State Insurance building. What happened there? First of all, tenders were called for the foundation. That work was carried out. Subsequently other tenders were invited for the construction of the building. The lowest tender—I am speaking subject to correction—was about £3,000 higher than the estimate furnished by the department. I recommended the Cabinet to accept the lowest tender, because we were then on the eve of trouble which seemed likely to accrue in connection with building generally. If we had not accepted that tender, the building would have cost £50,000 more than it did cost. I say that deliberately as an ex-Minister. I believe in calling for tenders. Simply because a Minister believes in a certain thing, he has no right wilfully to throw away the money of the people when he believes that a mistake is being made. Let me draw attention to another fact. We have heard a good deal from the Minister about day labour. I want to ask him why he does not trot out buildings where extreme prices have been paid because they are pursuing the day-labour policy. The other day we were informed of a small convenience which cost £120. The Minister can correct me if I am wrong. If he would only tell us of the work that has cost an excessive price instead of picking out jobs as he has to-day—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am not going to prove your case.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not suggesting that. He has picked out certain buildings to prove his case. I have not the advantage of being able to peruse the books of the department, but I venture to say that sometimes extreme rates are paid as the result of the day-labour policy, and one would more than counterbalance the other. I do not want to be personal, but if the Minister, like myself, had a job to do, he would not have it done under the day-labour system. He would have the contract system. We have evidence that somehow or other the Government are not fully wedded to their own policy.

The Minister incidentally mentioned workers' dwellings. If any contractor attempts to take down the person for whom he is working, or attempts to take down the department, it is the clear duty of the Minister, if he knows of it, to say, "I am going to have nothing more to do with that person"; and it would be our duty to stand by him. We have no right to stand up for a man who does jerry work. The construction of workers' dwellings is carried out by contract to-day.

MR. COLLINS: Individual ownership comes in there.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am surprised to hear the hon. member speak in that way, for it is the Government who have the lending of the money.

The Minister made reference to Governments of the past. I want to deal with the Government of the present.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: An effervescent Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is well to be self-satisfied, but it is often found that self-satisfaction precedes a mighty fall.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. COLLINS: There was a mighty fall in 1915.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We are dealing with the Department of Public Works of to-day, and not of 1915.

MR. COSTELLO: The country is paying for it to-day.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have only to take the letter which I, as well as other hon. members, have received from the Premier telling us that we are to go slow.

The Minister has spoken of an area of ground for building purposes not being what it should be. I repeat that every time the Minister has been able to help me he has helped me, but, notwithstanding that we are face to face to-day with a position at Manly, a district which every hon. member knows is growing—where we have a small area of ground and the opportunity presents itself of doing something, we cannot do it. The same remark applies in regard to Wynnum. The reason for that arises from the fact that the Government have been too prodigal.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Oh! Oh!

HON. W. H. BARNES: They have wasted money in every direction, and, when the occasion arises to do necessary things for our child life, they cannot do it.

MR. HARTLEY: Did not your Government throw open all the Crown lands?

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister made reference to the fact that there was a time when contributions had to be made by the people for new schools. The hon. gentleman is perfectly correct; but did he not also say that the Government to-day were seeking to encourage people to give time, iron, and other things so that they might erect schools? I am not blaming the Government for doing that, for it is a good thing to do.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was in connection with swimming pools, and such like.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to make another statement in reference to which probably no hon. member will agree with me. There has been too great a tendency in Queensland to construct schools and every possible kind of thing, but it would be better for Queensland if more independence were displayed. Many of us were delighted the other day when we read of the splendid gift that has been made for a site for the University. Many of us realise that the thoughts of people are proceeding along the right lines when they desire to help in the erection of school buildings which will stand as a lasting monument to them. Such contributions of money would be splendid, and no Government should refuse to accept any such gift. When hon. members hear the Minister trot out, as he did to-day, single cases, when they know that there are others

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largely the other way, they are inclined to the opinion that there is something behind the whole of the argument of the genial Minister.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The Leader of the Opposition asked for some information which the Minister has not yet supplied.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about the discrepancy I mentioned?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. M. J. Kirwan, Brisbane*): I am sorry I overlooked the question of the Leader of the Opposition. The item "Consideration Money" refers to a site selected by the Department of Public Instruction for a school at Kulpi, which has been purchased by this Department. The same remarks also apply to a site at Yeerongpilly. I thank the hon. member for Logan for his reminder.

The hon. member for Toowong is evidently not satisfied, and is thirsting for more information. The hon. member particularly directed his remarks to the Roma street police barracks.

Mr. MAXWELL: No—the discrepancy between the estimate and the cost of the work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member must realise that the Department of Public Works was considerably handicapped in carrying out that job, inasmuch as it had to carry out the work and at the same time pay some regard to the convenience of the men living in the barracks—particularly to the police on night duty, who had to sleep during the daytime. If the department could have transferred the whole of the police force from those barracks, it would have been able to carry out the work much better and much cheaper.

Mr. MAXWELL: That did not occur with the Treasury Building and the Hamilton Cold Stores.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh, be satisfied.

Item (Chief Office) agreed to.

#### SERVICES—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

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

"That £43,900 be granted for 'Services—Public Buildings.'"

There has been a decrease of £500 in "Rents for Public Offices," and an increase of £1,500 in "Water Rates," due to having to connect the various buildings with the water and sewerage scheme. There is an increased amount for "Cleaning (Metropolitan District)" of £500, due to increases in rates of wages and to having to make allowance for recreation leave, and an increase of £50 for fire insurance, making a total increase in the vote of £1,550.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I draw attention to what must strike anybody visiting our public buildings—and more particularly the Treasury Building. The interior is in a terrible state of disrepair, the linoleum and that sort of thing is in a disreputable condition, and it looks as if something were wrong with the department.

[5 p.m.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The remarks of the hon. member would be more appropriate on the next vote.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: Before sitting down I would like to ask the Minister why it is that the item, "Rent for Public Offices," is reduced by £500. Then I think the Committee ought to know the reasons why some of the items have gone up. The item "Cleaning (Metropolitan District)" has gone up by £500.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is due to the new award and additional recreation leave.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then I notice that the item "Electric Current and Telephone Rentals, £6,000," is the same as last year. It would be interesting to know whether £6,000 was spent last year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. M. J. Kirwan, Brisbane*): In reply to the hon. gentleman, I would state that the Treasury Building is in a state of chaos, inasmuch as, when new offices are available, different departments are being moved into the new quarters. A whole system of rearrangement is going on, and I can assure the hon. gentleman that, when we get the offices fixed up definitely and the different departments moved into them and the building cleaned up as it will be, he will have no reason to complain.

The decrease in the item "Rent for Public Offices" is due to the fact that the Electoral Office used to be in Edward street, and is now established in the Treasury Building at the corner of Elizabeth and George streets previously occupied by the Government Savings Bank. Later on we hope to place the Main Roads Commission in new offices on College road, and other places will be vacated as we make room for the departments in the new building. The amount asked for in connection with "Electric Current and Telephone Rentals, £6,000," is the same as was spent last year.

Item " (Services—Public Buildings)" agreed to.

#### BUILDINGS.

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

"That £121,400 be granted for 'Buildings.'"

There is a general decrease in this vote amounting to £10,650, made up as follows:—

	Increase.	Decrease.
General Repairs, &c.	£	£
Furniture and Fittings, &c.	450	2,000
Court Houses, Police, &c., Buildings, &c.	..	1,000
State School Buildings, &c.	..	8,100
Technical College and High School Buildings	..	1,000
Hospital Buildings ..	..	1,000
Other Buildings, &c.	2,000	..
	£2,450	£13,100

That shows a net decrease of £10,650.

In connection with the school furniture mentioned, I would like to state that, owing to the destruction by fire of the Government workshops at Ipswich road, the department was compelled to let out the making of school furniture to private firms, and we had

another illustration of the glorious and beneficial results of the contract system, because we were immediately called upon to pay 20 per cent. more for school furniture.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I want to draw attention to the fact that there is a reduction of £1,000 in the last year's vote of £10,000 for "Court Houses and Police Buildings: Additions and Improvements." There is only £9,000 put down on the Estimates this year for the whole of Queensland in this regard. I represent a growing electorate, and I want to draw the Minister's attention to the Bowen coalfield, where we have two centres, Collinsville and Scottville, with a population of a little over 1,500. We have been asking for a court house for a fairly long time. I hope that we are going to get one, and that provision for it is included in this vote of £9,000.

Mr. NOTT: You ought to have a decent building there.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course; because we have got a lot of decent people there. So far we have been able to get along without a court house. I hope the court house there will be a decent building, because most Government buildings are decent places. This is a growing centre, and, more than likely, will double its population during the next three years, so that a court house will be required.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): Notwithstanding the curtailment of expenditure in connection with court houses and police buildings owing to financial stringency, I hope the Government are not going to hold up improvements to a number of buildings which are necessary and the erection of buildings which are required for the convenience of the community. I want to make my position clear in connection with school buildings. I say that they ought to be erected in the places where they are urgently required. There may be something in the argument used by one hon. member this afternoon in connection with railways having £1,000,000 allocated to them for the purpose of carrying out certain work, and he contended that a similar procedure is also necessary in the interests of the Department of Public Instruction. The vote in connection with the education of our children should not be starved, and the housing of those who are teaching the children should be attended to. A number of teachers go outside to the country districts and are deprived of the comforts which we enjoy in the towns and cities, and they should have any extra consideration which can be given to them. There are buildings which are absolutely necessary at the present time. I drew the Minister's attention to some buildings erected in the Wide Bay electorate under the day-labour system.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not want to discuss the matter at length, but the information I based my calculations on in that connection was derived from the Minister himself.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! That was fully discussed on the last vote.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not want the Minister's statement to go without contradiction.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I notice that there are amounts put down in this vote for expenditure in connection with additions and improvements to court houses, additions to State school buildings, and additions to technical colleges. Of course, we know that the revenue is not too plentiful, and we must expect that this vote for repairs and renovations, which comes out of revenue, is going to be less. I should like the Minister to tell me if the Government have any settled policy in regard to additions and the other items I have mentioned. If some of the items which are put down here as additions were charged to loan, more money from revenue would be available for very necessary repairs and painting. I would be out of order in discussing the Loan vote here, but when one finds "additions"—not "renovations," but actual additions—to the capital value of schools and other buildings. I hold that it would be far better to build all schools and additions out of loan and use the revenue thus made available for other things.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Additions are built out of loan provided they are new additions, and are not embodied in an old building.

Mr. KELSO: I thank the hon. gentleman for the information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: For instance, a new class-room is an addition paid out of loan, but, if you put 5 feet on to a veranda, it is charged to revenue.

Mr. KELSO: The use of the word "additions" in contradistinction to the word "improvements" means an addition to the capital value of a school, court house, or other building. I would like to know the policy of the department in the matter. The Minister will agree that he could spend a lot more money on repairs and renewals, and I would like him to give me the information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. M. J. Kirwan, Brisbane*): A new work is charged to loan. That is to say, if we found it necessary to make an addition to a school to accommodate thirty or forty scholars—practically a new class-room—that would be charged to loan; but, if we boarded up the end of a veranda, or a floor was in a state of disrepair and it was necessary to put in a new floor, that would be charged to revenue. Where a very small addition is made—perhaps, boarding up the end of a veranda to form a porch where the children may place their hats—we would not regard it as a new work. I think the hon. member will gather the policy from the illustrations I have given.

At 5.15 p.m.,

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. F. A. Cooper in the chair.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): It is not often that I disagree with the hon. member for Nundah, but I disagree with his statement that the revenue in connection with this vote is not going to be expansive. I believe that, as a result of the new taxation, there will be a lot of money available. There is nothing more vital to the community than school buildings or improvements, yet the Government, as a result of their wastefulness, have reduced the vote from £60,000 to

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£51,900. There is an old truism, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." We have been sowing, and now we are reaping, and the unfortunate children are to suffer as a result of the reaping. There is a decrease in the vote in every item with the exception of "Furniture and Fittings," which shows an increase of £450. For "General Repairs," etc., there is a decrease of £2,000. There is a decrease of £1,000 in connection with "Court Houses and Police Buildings." Is it that, as a result of the new liquor law, there will be a lesser need for police buildings? (Laughter.)

The Minister made a statement which was really in answer to the hon. member for Nundah. If my memory serves me correctly, a good deal of the vote in past days of sane government came from revenue. It is only in these days when we are running at such a rate that we find this kind of thing happening.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS** (Hon. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): The hon. member for Wynnum referred with some pride to Governments of days gone by. I presume he referred to the time when he was Treasurer and Secretary for Public Works in a Government that built schools and carried out additions from revenue. I have a recollection of that Government being rapped across the knuckles by the Auditor-General when it was found that they showed a surplus created by building schools out of loan funds instead of from revenue. (Laughter.)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That proves my point.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The Minister remarked that the devastating fire at the workshops in Ipswich road prevented furniture being supplied, and intimated that it was now costing 20 per cent. more through being manufactured by private enterprise. I desire to point out to the hon. gentleman that a rural school in the Murrumba electorate has been completed six months and the furniture is not there yet.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS**: What is the name of the school?

Mr. WARREN: The Caboolture school. This building cost £1,400, and has been lying partially idle. The fire at the workshops may have been the cause to some extent, but, through the mistake of some person, that school has been allowed to remain idle a long time. I ask the hon. gentleman to have the matter remedied.

The Minister has mentioned that the department has saved money on the construction of buildings by the day-labour system. I would point out that on several occasions work is not completed, and employees have to come back long distances to complete it. The men had to be brought back to this work from a considerable distance. That is an instance of how the cost of such work is increased. If the department would exercise economy in such directions, more money would be available to overtake the many necessary works that are asked for.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Minister attempted to administer a rebuff to the private individual in the matter of school furniture. I happen to know something about that matter, and it is only right that the hon. gentleman should be fair when he talks about the cost of such work. We all know that at the present moment the

Government are only using the private individual as a matter of convenience; but, if he was assured that a reasonable amount of work would be offering on the part of the Government, provision would be made to enable tenders to be lodged for it. I understand that the Ipswich Road Workshops are now almost fully equipped again, and that the machinery has been or is being replaced. There is every reason, therefore, why the Minister cannot obtain satisfactory prices from the private individual.

I regret the reduction in the vote with respect to school buildings. Every hon. member is seized with the importance of necessary work to school buildings in his particular electorate; yet we find that the appropriation asked for is £9,000 less than last year. How can we hope to undertake the work in that direction? The result must be that these public buildings will further deteriorate. An honest effort should be made to procure money to conserve the property of the Government.

I frequently have business to do with the State Children Department. The furniture and fittings there give me a sort of shudder, especially when I see that where the poorer people have to congregate to receive assistance from the State—the only convenience they have for sitting down is a deal form. I made inquiries, and obtained all sorts of answers, but I am not satisfied. In all Government departments cushioned seats, such as we have here, are provided for the public. In that one place alone the tone of the place should be altered. On behalf of the women and children who are forced to go to that department, I appeal for better furniture to be placed in the waiting room.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to the school building at Talwood. When that building was built galvanised iron was very dear, and a shingle roof was placed upon it. The shingles have discoloured the water, which is very black in colour. I have had the water analysed, and it is not fit for drinking purposes. The children, who travel long distances to school on ponies, have to carry their own water-bottles, which hon. members will recognise is a very dangerous practice. The request of the school committee for galvanised iron to be placed on the roof has been refused owing to the lack of funds. The spouting and tanks are all there. It is only a small school—18 feet by 21 feet or 22 feet. The Minister might take immediate steps to grant this request. He should do that, because these children are suffering by reason of the water being unsuitable for drinking purposes.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I notice there is a reduction of £8,100 in the vote for "State School Buildings." Under previous Administrations it was the custom to supply residences for State schools, but to-day the policy seems to have changed. In the Greater Brisbane area there are ninety-eight schools, and only twenty-five are supplied with residences, seventy-three being without residences. The reduction of this vote indicates that the department are more or less encouraging the payment of rent by schoolmasters instead of themselves erecting residences. There is well over £2,000 annually paid in the Greater Brisbane area in rentals for school residences. That amount would pay interest, redemption, and repairs on

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thirty school residences, if they were erected by the department, and it is just a question as to whether it is not more economical to provide residences than to go on year after year paying £2,000 in rentals.

Mr. DASH: What about the upkeep?

Mr. KERR: I am taking that into consideration, and also interest and redemption.

Mr. DASH: You need land.

Mr. KERR: Land is not a great consideration. You can buy beautiful allotments for £100 now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where?

Mr. KERR: If the hon. gentleman will come and see me, I will show him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Ask the hon. member for Nundah what allotments cost in his district.

Mr. KERR: I know that at Ashgrove the department purchased 3 acres at an average cost of £60 an allotment, and Ashgrove is a very fine suburb.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It will be in a few years.

Mr. KERR: It will be a magnificent suburb in a few years. The Secretary for Public Works, in conjunction with the Secretary for Public Instruction, could very well go into the question as to whether it would not be more economical to build residences for schoolmasters rather than pay that £2,000 a year. It would create an asset. I would like to hear from the Minister as to what he thinks of the proposition. Very often parents are keen on interviewing the schoolmaster after school hours. Hon. members may say it is unjust to approach the schoolmaster, but personally I do not think any fair-minded person objects to that sort of thing. There are instances where a school teacher lives miles away and he is never approachable except during school hours. If the schoolmaster is living near the school, he is a great acquisition to the district, and he takes a greater interest in the district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The first point is to build schools.

Mr. KERR: Yes; but, instead of paying over £2,000 in rentals, if money were borrowed to erect the buildings, that sum would be sufficient to pay interest, redemption, and repairs on about thirty residences. The present system is false economy.

[5.30 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It will be somewhat difficult to obtain land in the metropolitan area on which to erect residences.

Mr. KERR: That might be so, but take the case of Ashgrove. Two magnificent allotments could be obtained there for £200, and a residence erected thereon at a small cost which would be much more economical than allowing a rent allowance of 30s. or £2 a week to the teacher who is not even living in the district. If money was borrowed to erect a school teacher's residence, the rent paid would be sufficient to pay interest and redemption on the loan, and in twenty to twenty-five years the house would become the property of the State, and the life of a wooden house is fifty years. I should like to hear the opinion of the Minister on this matter.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I regret very much that the vote for buildings has been reduced on account of financial stress. The hon. member for Enoggera referred to the question of erecting teachers' residences, and he said there were ninety-eight schools in the Greater Brisbane area. In the electorate I represent there are over eighty schools. I do not know whether it is on account of my modesty or not, but I have never yet approached the department and asked for a teacher's residence to be erected. I think I am particularly fortunate if I can get school buildings erected in which the settlers' children can be educated without worrying about residences. If hon. members are going to advocate the expenditure of large sums of money on the erection of teachers' residences this year, it is going to be more difficult for country representatives to get the school buildings they are so keen on having provided. A reduction of this vote means that we are not going to get the consideration that we should get in connection with additions and repairs to country schools. I have in my mind's eye three schools in my electorate that are very much overcrowded. These are the Crownthorpe, Boonara, and Ross Creek schools. It is estimated that 8 square feet of floor space is sufficient for a child. That is all very well in the winter, but in the hot summer months the overcrowding is such that it is very hard on the teacher and on the children. I trust that the Minister will see whether he cannot do something to enlarge these schools. Recently I received a letter from the school committee at Rosendale school asking that a tank be placed at the school. Instead of these matters having to go to the Department of Public Instruction and then to the Department of Public Works, which department sends an inspector out to make a report, I think it would be wise to accept the recommendation of the school committee. Members of school committees are usually practical men, and in the instance I refer to, if a tank were sent, the committee would be prepared to go into the matter of erecting a tank stand. That would save a great deal of trouble to the representative of the district, as well as to the inspectors and to the department. More could be done in the direction of affording better facilities for the education of the children by the erection and improvement of school buildings than is being done at the present time. I would suggest that the Secretary for Public Works and the Secretary for Public Instruction should confer with a view to affording greater facilities in regard to school improvements generally.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I regret very much indeed that even in the face of the stringent financial position of the State the Government have curtailed the vote for "State School Buildings: Additions, Improvements, Furniture, Repairs, and Painting" by something like £8,100. It is a pity the Minister did not put up a bigger fight in the interests of those who require school buildings, knowing the difficulties which beset the people in those areas.

The question of building teachers' residences has been mooted this afternoon. In many of the country districts teachers are not able even to get a place to board. In many districts they have to travel many miles to their schools because there is no accommodation in the vicinity of the school.

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I know many married men who have been teaching for a number of years who have to live 4 or 5 miles away from the schools in any dwellings they can obtain for their families. Schools are the first essential, but the department would be well advised to consider carefully whether residences could not be built for these teachers. There are many centres in my district which are urgently requiring schools—Alice Creek, for instance. There are many cases in which schools have been approved for over two years and they are still waiting to be built. The old Nanango school, for instance, was built over fifty years ago, and its renovation, which was approved of some time ago, has not yet been carried out. I hope the Secretary for Public Works will see that this class of work is carried out in the interests of the country children. It is a very difficult problem in many country districts for the residents to find any money to assist in the erection of a school, but, if the department would definitely lay down what it is prepared to do and what it expects the residents to do we might get somewhere, instead of letting the question drift on for years until some of the largest families leave the district and the others suffer accordingly. A good deal of money has been spent in city areas in giving children swimming pools and that sort of thing, but it must be clear even to city members that a school building is a first essential in a country district, and, when the Department of Public Instruction make a recommendation and the Department of Public Works cannot see its way to build a school in accordance with that recommendation, it is only fair that it should lay down some practical line of action for the people concerned. If they would say what they require in the matter of the work to be done, we might get more schools built. In my district a sawmill was built on Bunya Mountains by Lars Andersen and Sons. Several married people in the district made application for a school, but it was held up long after its construction was approved by the Department of Public Instruction. Lars Andersen and Sons came in and built the school themselves. The Department of Public Instruction then supplied a teacher, and the school work went on. That is the sort of thing we should encourage at every turn; but on the other hand there are instances such as that which I mentioned this morning where the people are not able to give any help because it takes them all their time in the early stages of their settlement to keep their families. Somebody said that the correspondence school system got over the difficulty, but in many cases the parents are practically uneducated, and so find a difficulty in applying that system to their children. So it behoves the Department of Public Works to do everything it can, and I hope that both Ministers will give every possible assistance in such cases. I again say that I regret that the vote has been cut down, because it does not show that progress which is so essential in our educational system.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I also regret that the vote has been cut down, and I only hope that my electorate is not going to suffer in the general curtailment of expenditure. I notice from the report of the department that certain works have been carried out in my electorate, for which I am thankful. A school has just been opened just outside my electorate in the electorate of the hon. mem-

[*Mr. Edwards.*

ber for Bulimba. The hon. member is very lucky, and I congratulate him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I suppose some of your children go there?

Mr. KING: I was just going to admit that. It was hoped that the congestion which existed at the Coorparoo school would be removed by the erection of that school, but such is not the case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There has been an increase in population.

Mr. KING: Yes. My electorate has the largest population of any electorate in Queensland, and the increase in population and erecting of buildings is proceeding at a very rapid rate. Proper accommodation should be provided in the schools to meet this growing population. The present schools are taxed to the utmost, and I am sure that the Secretary for Public Works and the Secretary for Public Instruction both recognise that increased accommodation is necessary, and regret very much that funds are not available to enable it to be provided. Let me refer to the Coorparoo school.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It is a very deserving case.

Mr. KING: Portion of it must have been built fifty-five years ago. It is a very old and dilapidated structure, and I sincerely hope that the Government will see their way clear, when they build a new school for Coorparoo—which they must do very shortly—will erect a good up-to-date brick building. The locality warrants it. I believe that there are over 1,000 children on the school roll, and the accommodation is nothing like it ought to be. There is an excellent committee working in the interests of the children with a view to making a decent playground, and they are now endeavouring to construct a swimming pool. The same remarks apply to the Junction Park school and the Greenslopes school. We require more accommodation, and I earnestly pray that the accommodation will come along very shortly. New schools are required in other parts of my electorate. I refer to Cooper's Plains and Holland Park, where the population is increasing rapidly. The children of Holland Park go either to the Greenslopes school or to the Mount Gravatt school, but these schools are taxed to the utmost. Holland Park could very well do with a school of its own, and I doubt very much whether, at an early date, the schools at Mount Gravatt and Greenslopes will be able to cope with the children even if a new school is erected at Holland Park. These requests are at present before the department, and I hope the Minister will be able to give some relief in the immediate future.

Mr. FARRELL: If they are overcrowded, the better scheme would be to make one a boys' school and another a girls' school.

Mr. KING: I am very glad of that suggestion. Holland Park could very well do with a school of its own, but some of the other schools could be enlarged as occasion demanded. You cannot make addition after addition to old structures. I do not think it is wise to do so.

Mr. DASH: It is using up the ground.

Mr. KING: Yes. It is taking away from the children's playground. I hope that the Minister will consider the wants of my

electorate, and I hope that my schools will not suffer as a result of the reduced vote.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): We have heard a great deal as to whether our land settlement schemes are successful or not. Very often in new settlement areas married people come along, and the first question they ask is if there are any schools in the area. If there is no school in the vicinity, settlers who would like to settle down in those areas will not take up land because there are no facilities available to educate their children. On the other hand, after settlers have settled in those areas and made application for a school, it takes two years from the time the first step is taken until the building is erected. In many cases the settlement is very lucky if the school is erected in two years. Some time ago there was a considerable number of families settled at Pheasants Creek, in my electorate. The department was good enough to grant a school in that locality after the inspector had been there and reported upon its prospects. It took two years from the date of approval for that school to be erected, and, in the meantime, the farmers left the district because of the absence of educational facilities, with the result that the school has never been occupied. It is a lovely little building and a credit to the department. I am sorry to have to report the position. Hon. members representing metropolitan areas have talked of the crowding of schools, but hon. members representing country constituencies have to report that schools are closing up for want of attendance. The reason of the closure of the Pheasants Creek school was because of the inordinate delay in bringing about its completion. I hope the Minister will try to obviate such delay in the future, because it is necessary that the land schemes of the Government must go hand in hand with educational facilities.

We have been agitating for a long time for a new school at Edungalba. The department adopts the attitude that, so long as you have a school, no matter how disreputable it may be, it has to stand. That is the position at Edungalba. You can obtain a new school in a district where there is no school—I give that credit to the Government and the Minister—but where there is an old dilapidated structure you cannot obtain a new one. If the Minister had an opportunity of inspecting that school, he would admit the necessity for a new building. It is one of the old type, with canvas walls, which are blown to tatters with every storm, leaving the teachers and scholars without any shelter.

Mr. FARRELL: I think I had a letter from every teacher who was at that school.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member for Rockhampton, as a former secretary of the Central Queensland School Teachers' Association, knows the position in regard to that school. It is the one blot on the educational horizon in my electorate. I hope the Minister will be able to provide a new building from the vote this year.

We have heard a lot of criticism about the cost of building schools. I want to be fair and give credit where it is due, as well as take umbrage when it is necessary. We had a school erected at Carmilla West in record time. The work was a credit,

not only to the men engaged upon its erection, but to those responsible for the job. If the estimates were referred to, it would be seen that the two men engaged on the building had regard for the interests of the department and for the people in the district. There would be no complaints about day labour if the spirit of those men was imitated.

I have not troubled the genial Minister for Works for a couple of years, because I was well treated before that period; but, as there are several schools in my electorate in a dilapidated condition, I hope he will not take umbrage at my calling attention to them. It is most regrettable to notice that quite a number of country schools are being closed down. I represent an electorate of 400 miles by 200 miles, which contains quite a number of schools. Where it is proved that such schools can be conveniently re-erected in other localities the department would be well advised to take that action.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We shift them when we find it profitable to the department to do so.

Mr. PETERSON: That is what I advise—to transfer them to areas where they can be utilised to advantage. Frequently the departments are to blame for the closing of schools, particularly the Railway Department. Departments have a habit of transferring married men to places where there are no schools, and single men to places where there are schools. If there was co-ordination of departmental administration, they could use to the fullest advantage the school buildings supplied by this department. I trust that my modest appeals will meet with the approval of the Minister.

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I take the opportunity of endorsing the remarks of the hon. member for Logan in regard to the needs of the Coorparoo school. I do so because about 40 per cent. of the children attending that school belong to the Bulimba electorate. I shall make no apology for using the parish pump on this occasion, and I submit that the case for the Coorparoo school is probably stronger than that of any other school in Queensland. There are something like 1,200 children attending the school, and there is not nearly adequate accommodation for that number.

I also take the opportunity of conveying my appreciation to the Minister and officers of this department for the two very nice schools that were erected in the Bulimba electorate last year. I was quite justified in my advocacy. While the school at Mount Bruce has not given much relief to the Coorparoo school, it is filled to capacity at present. The Morningside school was built for 200 pupils, and now has on its roll 475 scholars. I take the opportunity of asking the Minister to give serious consideration to the question of building urgently needed extensions to that school. I am quite sure the hon. gentleman recognises the difficulty experienced by teachers of that school in educating 475 scholars in accommodation sufficient for only 200. I am not blaming the Minister or his department. It is due to the lack of foresight on the part of officers in the Department of Public Instruction, who failed to realise the rapid development that would take place in the Bulimba electorate.

*Mr. Wright.]*

I hope the extensions will be made as soon as possible.

At 7 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*) resumed the chair.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I should like an explanation from the Minister in regard to the question I asked as to what was meant by "Consideration Money" for the school at Kulpi. The Minister has stated that it is for a school site, but £450 seems rather a large sum for that purpose. Possibly it means that the department is going to erect a school residence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): The hon. member for Murrumbidgee stated that, although six months have elapsed since the rural school was opened at Caboolture, so far the furniture had not arrived. I stated earlier in the day that the department was put to considerable inconvenience and considerable extra cost through the destruction caused by the fire at the Ipswich Road Workshops, and I am informed that the delay in sending the furniture to the Caboolture rural school was due to that fact. However, the hon. member can accept my assurance that the matter will be expedited.

The hon. member for Murilla asked that the roof of the school at Talwood be covered with galvanised iron, as the water collected from the shingle roof was unfit for the school children to drink; and he stated that it was necessary for the children attending the school to carry water in bottles. I can assure him that that matter will have attention, as country children should not be expected to carry water to school.

The hon. member for Enoggera raised the question of providing residences for head teachers, and he stated that a large number of schools in the metropolitan area had no teachers' residences attached to them, and that the teachers rented houses. The hon. member also suggested that it would be advisable for the department to expend a large sum of money in erecting teachers' residences, thereby doing away with the necessity for making an allowance to teachers in lieu of rent, which he estimated to be in the vicinity of £2,000 a year. I am inclined to think that it would not be a good proposition. At any rate, there would be some difficulty in carrying out that suggestion in the metropolitan area.

Mr. PETERSON: There is a school teacher's residence at the Annerley school, but the head teacher does not live in it. It is let to someone who is not a school teacher.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What the hon. member says goes to prove that some teachers prefer to live in some locality not in the immediate vicinity of the school. I am sure hon. members will agree that it would be a very difficult matter to erect residences in the school grounds in the metropolitan area. If it were done it would mean that the children would be deprived of a large part of their playgrounds.

The hon. member for Wide Bay, the hon. member for Logan, and the hon. member for Normanby raised the question of school requirements in their various electorates, and I can assure those hon. gentlemen that, as far as the vote will allow, favourable consideration will be given to their representations.

[*Mr. Wright.*

The policy of the department generally is to give consideration to the country electorates; but we find that, as a result of having done that, city members on both sides of the Chamber are clamouring and making representations, and not without due cause, as to the necessity for increased accommodation in suburban schools, and a number of those schools will have to receive attention. Country members will recognise that, while their electorates require attention in this respect, the steady and continuous growth of the city of Brisbane, in which new suburbs are being formed, renders it necessary to give attention to the requirements of the metropolitan area.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Earlier in the debate I referred to the schools in the metropolitan area. I notice by the 5 o'clock edition of the afternoon papers that there is an amount of £3,500 to be spent on the Kelvin Grove school, and I think they got about £1,500 there about eighteen months ago. I am advised that there are two schools in the Oxley electorate, and a third school is proposed to be built in the same neighbourhood, which will bring the three schools within a distance of 2 miles. While I do not wish to prejudice city schools, we are justified in asking for some consideration for country districts. The Government are refusing to build schools asked for in country districts on account of the scarcity of funds, while they are closing up some schools in the country, and the children have to walk 5 or 6 miles to school or else receive no instruction at all. That has been the position in my electorate. In the country districts where there is no railway the children must walk or drive long distances to go to and from school. In addition to the three proposed schools mentioned in the papers this evening in connection with the metropolitan area, there is also to be one at Hughenden—a country centre—and I have no fault to find with that—and also one at Parramatta, wherever that is. Though the Minister has said that the country districts must not be aggrieved at the metropolis getting these facilities, it is to be regretted that the country is in such a state that people are flocking into the towns in the way they are doing. I would like to see something done to keep people in the country. One thing which is causing them to come into the towns is that they cannot get facilities for the education of their children, and they come to the city to live so that their children can be educated under more reasonable conditions.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): It was quite refreshing to listen to the debate this afternoon, and I think some of the statements which have been previously made about the country being deserted by the people who are flocking to the towns have been shown not to be justified. We have heard men who represent the country getting up one after the other and claiming that there is not sufficient school accommodation, and asking for more schools. We know that some schools are flourishing in the country while others are declining, and that goes to show that the arguments of hon. members opposite cannot both be true.

Mr. PETERSON: There are four schools closed in my district.

Mr. COLLINS: I can do with those four.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It just goes to show that, when it suits hon. members opposite,

they use an argument one way, and then, when it does not suit them, they use it in another way. The country has not been deserted to the extent hon. members opposite would lead us to believe. The mining districts have declined, but there are other places in the country which are growing. There are districts in my own electorate which are on the decline, but there are other parts of the electorate which are going ahead faster than others are declining. The fact is that the country is not being deserted and the people flocking to the cities as alleged by hon. members opposite, who argue that way when it suits them to do so. Whilst I have not always got all that I have wanted for my electorate or all that I thought it deserved from the Department of Public Works, still I have always got a "fair go," and generally most of the requirements of the electorate have been complied with.

Something has been said of teachers' residences in connection with schools. They are very desirable and very nice where it suits the convenience of the teachers to live in them; but in a great many instances the teachers are not too keen about having their residences close to the schools. I have known instances where a school has been in an isolated spot, and it has been much more convenient for the teacher to live in the centre of population and travel 2, 3, 4, or even 5 miles backwards and forwards, perhaps by motor-car. After all, the first consideration is the school, and I think it would be a pity to spend money on residences if it is going to interfere with the provision of the more necessary building, even though the residence may suit the convenience of the teacher.

The hon. member for Nanango said that the department should have some clearly defined rule as to what it was prepared to do in connection with fencing, playsheds, etc., at country schools and what it expected the local people to do. It is not an easy matter to lay down hard-and-fast rules. The department deals with each case on its merits, and my experience in quite a number of instances of schools in isolated districts away from centres of population is that the committee has often been prepared to do something and has said that, if the department would defray the cost of the material required—perhaps for fencing or a water supply—it would find the labour. Local people can provide the labour when they cannot provide cash, and it is much cheaper that they should do it than that the department should have to send men scores of miles, as has been pointed out by other hon. members, to do what is perhaps not a carpenter's job. My experience has been that in quite a number of instances where the department was prepared to find the material for fencing or for a tank or a windmill on the condition that the committee provided the necessary labour the committee has fallen in with the proposal, as any committee worthy of the name would do. In several instances with which I have been connected I have acted on my own responsibility and said to the committee, "If you are prepared to find the labour, I think the department will find the material," and in the majority of instances the committee has fallen in with the proposal, and the school has got its fence or water supply.

Some of the schools in my electorate were built many years ago—I suppose some as long as fifty years ago—and they are certainly not up to date so far as light or ventilation is concerned or in a proper state of repair. One or two of them are under consideration by the department now, and I am hopeful that something will be done to make them more convenient and more congenial for the children from a recreation point of view and from the point of view of more efficient work. In one or two places—I do not know the cause—but the fact is that after heavy rain the school is almost in a lake. In a case like that something should certainly be done to rectify the error. That is one of those things which would not be very expensive, and I hope the department will do something in that direction.

It must be plain to anybody who cares to study the question at all that, in a country like Queensland, where there are so few people in many districts, and you often cannot get more than the minimum number of scholars necessary for a school, it is difficult for the State to provide all the schools which are necessary just when they are wanted. My experience has been that the department has done its very best to meet the needs of the district, and I am sure that it will continue to do so. It is rather remarkable that on the one hand the Government are charged with being extravagant and squandering money, and on the other hand they are charged with being parsimonious. They cannot both spend money and be parsimonious at the same time. We are all agreed that every facility should be extended to the children where there are sufficient to warrant a school being erected.

At 7.17 p.m.,

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. F. A. Cooper in the chair.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I desire to offer a word of praise to the officers of the department for the excellent manner in which they have carried out their work in my electorate. The workmanship, the architecture, and the conveniences provided equal anything that could be provided from any other source. In certain parts of my electorate the population is growing, and the department has been compelled to erect more schools. In one instance the school committee intimated that they were prepared to level off a piece of land and fill in a swamp if the department would purchase the land and carry out the necessary improvements. The department purchased the land, and £300, the proceeds of a fair, were spent on the land, making it a good bargain for the department. The schools in my electorate are in a good state of repair, and I have nothing to complain about. I simply rose to point out that the workmanship carried out in my electorate is of the very highest order. We have one of the finest technical colleges that can be found in any portion of the State. I have suggested on former occasions that school committees should be empowered to carry out work to the value of £5, under the supervision of the department. I know the department has already given power to school committees to carry out such work as gravelling under the building. I have not had the experience of some hon. members of a whole staff being sent out to repair two or three boards. My school committees have carried out such

*Mr. Dash.]*

work rather than worry the department about it, and the department has rendered them every assistance possible. The committees have carried out improvements in the way of fencing the school, making garden plots, and erecting tanks on the system of the department supplying the material and the committee carrying out the work. Not only is this work carried out in the country, but it is also attended to in the towns. The committees have collected and expended considerable sums of money to enable the scholars to have the benefit of tennis courts, gymnastic halls, etc.

Item (Buildings) agreed to.

BOARD OF TRADE AND ARBITRATION.

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*), who was received with cheers, said: I beg to move—

“That £11,962 be granted for ‘Board of Trade and Arbitration.’”

This is only a simple little vote, and should not take very long to dispose of. There is a considerable increase in the vote as compared with last year. That is on account of the reconstitution of the Board of Trade and Arbitration and the classification increases. The Board of Trade and Arbitration is now administering the Profiteering Prevention Act, and it has set about reorganising the price-fixing department. That department has now undertaken an inquiry, as most hon. members will have noticed through the press, and has established a new procedure by holding the inquiry in public, into the cost of clothing, boots, shoes, and hats.

The reorganisation of the department also affects the question of prices. This department will now be charged with the work of collecting all data in connection with price fixing. That information will then be placed before the Board of Trade and Arbitration. Statistics will be gathered all over Queensland in connection with the cost of living. The department has been strengthened by the appointment of a thoroughly qualified accountant. It will be his duty to investigate all matters concerning the cost of living, investigate confidential matters, and compile statistics. It is hoped that all concerned will co-operate to make the department a live one, and that the result will be that, when the wages of the workers are increased, profiteers will be prevented from filching away all the benefits of the increased wages received by them.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): I am very glad to hear the statement of the Minister that there is an intention to extend the price-fixing functions of the Board of Trade and Arbitration to such things as clothing. The extension of these functions should go further, for, while the price of food as consumed in the households will be fixed, there is no attempt to fix the price of food as provided in restaurants.

Mr. MORGAN: Would you extend the inquiry to hotels, too?

Mr. BEDFORD: I would be scarcely in order in referring to the vile conditions of many Brisbane restaurants, but it is germane to this question in showing that these conditions produce bad service, on top of which there is an overcharge. Therefore, if the Board of Trade and Arbitration can extend its price-fixing work into the charges made

in restaurants, it will be doing a very great deal for those people who are not always eating in their own houses.

On the matter of clothing the policy of this Government, and all Australians generally, is preference to Australian goods. We all naturally considered that the Commonwealth tariff would have the effect of giving Australian goods a greater popularity, but there is the fact that, although Australian woollen manufactures are superior in every way to imported woollen manufactures, because there is no price fixing in these matters, Australian manufactures are given a black eye by reason of their prices being brought up almost on a line with the prices of the imported articles.

In the case of hats, I know of one particular hat—an excellent hat made in Melbourne—on which the cost and factory profit amount to 13s. 6d. a hat. It costs 14s. to market the hat. One dealer handles it wholesale, and he is allowed to charge 18s. 6d. to the retailer, serving only such retailers as agree not to sell at less than 27s. 6d. Here is a case where the price-fixing section of the Board of Trade and Arbitration can get in and do some of the finest work it has ever done. There are varying grades of money-holding people, and there are in very many of these grades many snobs, who regard value only in terms of money, and who can only consider a thing is right if it is dear. One of the reasons given for the retail price of this hat being fixed at 27s. 6d. when the factory cost and profit amount to 13s. 6d. was that, if it were put at any lower figure, Australians would not buy it, but would buy some imported article at a higher price. It is the duty of the Board of Trade and Arbitration so to allocate a reasonable profit on the factory profit of hats and on woollen underclothing and hosiery that Australian preference may have a fair chance to function.

There are further important matters. The hon. member for Murilla interjected just now as to whether I intended to consider the price of liquor.

Mr. MORGAN: No—the price of hotel accommodation.

Mr. BEDFORD: Certainly. That would come under the heading of restaurants. The price of liquor should also be considered. One of the most sheltered industries we have is gradually calling for interference by reason of the fact that it has just as great a discrimination against Australian goods as the draper has. For many years prior to and since federation, while Martell's and Hennessy's brandies were being prescribed in Australian hospitals, British and European hospitals were prescribing “Boomerang” and “Chateau Tanunda” brandies. Apparently the pure Australian spirit, made under the most rigorous conditions as regards cleanliness and high standard of purity, has had to go to other countries before it could be appreciated.

Mr. CARTER: It is the finest brandy in the world.

Mr. BEDFORD: It is the finest grape brandy on earth. Here is a case where Queensland is lagging behind the other States in its loyalty to Australian preference. It is a certainty that snobbishness and conservatism in drinking act as a more than sufficient handicap against Australian goods.

[*Mr. Dash.*]

That handicap is lengthened and increased if the imported spirit, under the Licensed Victuallers' Association, is enabled to keep the Australian spirit back by the existence of just as high a price for the Australian as for the imported spirit. Here are certain figures which have been handed to me which show that the prices demanded for Australian whisky by the Brisbane hotel-keepers are—

“8d. per measured nobbler (public bars only); 9d. per measured nobbler (private bars); 10s. per bottle.”

“The size of the measure is one-fifth of a gill, which gives twenty-six nips to a bottle.

“The following figures show the percentage of profit on cost at the foregoing prices:—

Cost to Hotels.	Per bottle.	26 nips per bottle at 9d.	
84s. per dozen =	7s.	= 19s. 6d.	= 178%
		26 nips per bottle at 8d.	
84s. per dozen =	7s.	= 17s. 4d.	= 147%
		sell at 10s.	
84s. per dozen =	7s.	= per bottle =	42%

“The measure used in Melbourne is a quarter gill, which gives twenty-one nips to a bottle, and the retail price is 7d. per nip. In Sydney the price is 6d. per nip of one-fifth of a gill (the same sized measure as used in Brisbane). The price per bottle in both these cities is 7s. 6d.”

If we are to insist on a reasonable price to the consumer and a reasonable profit to the seller, then certain action should be taken in this case. Certain action [7.30 p.m.] should be taken in any case where the old scheme of reducing the measure of the liquor and at the same time increasing the price has been followed.

To get back to the actual food end of the matter and to the clothing end, which forms so large a part of the weekly budget of the householder, price fixing is incomplete until it includes food, drink, and clothing in its operation. The price fixing and the quality fixing of food in restaurants is an important matter to the large floating and travelling population—the vileness of the Brisbane restaurants on top of over charges constitutes another evil which the Board of Trade and Arbitration would do well to inquire into.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The hon. member for Warrego has spoken in regard to secondary industries. I should like to say a word in regard to primary industries, which, after all, are of the first importance. I notice that the vote has been largely increased, but I do not think, even if it were twice as large, that any hon. member would object so long as the Board of Trade and Arbitration fulfilled its functions, and one of its important functions is to secure industrial peace. When these tribunals were first brought into being, Mr. Bowman, the then Leader of the Labour party, who were sitting on the Opposition benches, said it was hoped that it would bring in an era in which industrial strife was unknown. Unfortunately, to the great loss of the community, that has not been the case. I am not going to say that it is a fault of the members of the Board of Trade and Arbitration, but it seems to me that the legislation under which the board is

functioning is defective. Take the position of the sugar industry. When the harvest commences the grower generally is influenced by a fear that after all his hard work he will get no return for his industry, as the whole of his produce will be held up on the way to market. We all know what happened in the Burdekin district last year, when something like £300,000 was lost to the growers. This year again in the district which I have the honour to represent the growers suffered a considerable loss through the illegal action of the employees. All the conditions of the award were complied with, and the industrial magistrate who was brought in to settle the dispute stated that there was no cause for the hold-up. Yet, in spite of that, the grower, who was a perfectly innocent party, was made to suffer. Over the sale of a farm to Italians and through a dispute between two unions the sugar was held up for some weeks, and at one time it looked as though the mill would have to shut down.

I notice that the necessity for dealing with this position is being brought home to the Government in another direction. The Secretary for Railways has given notice of a Bill to deal with railway workers who stop work, and we want additional powers placed in the hands of the Board of Trade and Arbitration to see that, when an award has been made, there shall be no hold-up of an industry. One of the fundamental principles upon which arbitration is based is that while there is an award there shall be no strike. When the Industrial Arbitration Bill was under discussion, I moved an amendment that had for its object the placing in the hands of the Board power to impose on organised bodies, who had very great privileges conferred, damages for loss caused by illegal acts. I urged then that some means should be provided in that legislation for dealing with those who were guilty of the holding-up of an industry by means of an illegal strike. I know it will be urged that no one can make a man work, and I am not so foolish as to suggest for one moment that we should endeavour to do anything of that kind; but I say that, when an industry is carried on legally and in compliance with awards, that industry should be protected from outside interference. When an industry is being carried on under an award and any influence is brought to bear to compel those engaged in it who are willing to work to cease work, some punishment should be inflicted on those who interfere with the workers. The price of sugar is affected by the heavy losses which have taken place through the hold-up of the industry at different times. We know that the shipping strikes which caused our meat to be held up inflicted heavy losses on the cattle industry. Every thinking person must realise the need for an improvement in the direction I have indicated. I hope that something will be done to remedy one of the greatest evils we have in our midst at the present time—the continual strikes in cases where the workers are protected by awards.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*): I would like to ask the Minister for an explanation in regard to the increase in the vote for “Contingencies” with regard to “Railway Fares and Freights, Printing and Stationery” from £1,100 to £2,500. I do not think there is any occasion for me to enlarge on what has been said by the hon. member for Mirani in regard to the loss caused by

*Mr. Edwards.]*

strikes. I am satisfied that the Government have had it brought home to them very forcibly during the last twelve months. They must realise that a great deal of the financial difficulty in which the Treasurer finds himself to-day has largely been brought about by industrial trouble in the State, and no effort should be spared in the direction of seeing whether the Board of Trade and Arbitration cannot bring about some improvement in that regard.

It is a very important question, and one which has driven one of our best manufacturing industries to the other States, and I hope that in the near future we shall get over the difficulty and institute better methods of working. I am satisfied that, if we can get the whole-hearted co-operation of every right-thinking man in this State, we shall go a long way towards solving the difficulties surrounding the establishment of those secondary industries which everybody knows are so essential.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I think we all agree that it was very refreshing to listen to the very lucid address of the hon. member for Warrego with regard to the prices charged by city hotels. Hon. members on this side have been wondering for some time when something was going to be done about the extraordinary tariffs charged by such people, particularly the city hotelkeepers. It was said during the prohibition campaign that, if prohibition were carried, the price of meals and lodging in the hotels would be increased considerably because the hotels would be deprived of their chief source of revenue. The hon. member for Warrego tells us that the profits on the sale of drink range from 100 per cent. to 300 per cent., and the licensed victuallers admitted during the campaign that it was because of the profits on drink that they were able to give cheaper board and accommodation. When I first came to Brisbane I stayed at an hotel, and the tariff was then 5s. a day. To-day it is 13s. 6d., and, as everybody knows, the cost of liquor has gone up considerably in the meantime. This has happened under a Labour Government, but nothing has been done by them. I am pleased to know that at last one member on the Government side has drawn attention to the matter. They have interfered with the price of the butter of the farmer—the man who is on the breadline and has to work all hours milking cows—we have attacked the price of meat at a time when the State stations have been working at a loss amounting now to over £1,000,000; yet the price-fixing authorities have allowed the hotelkeepers to exploit the general public. I think it would be beneficial if drink were 2s. a nip or £1 or £2 a bottle, although I know that, when rum was costing 4s. 6d. and whisky 5s. 6d. a bottle, everybody working in the bush at ringbarking or anything else would go into town on Saturday night and bring home a bottle. He would keep that in his camp and take a nip every night when he came home from work, and no doubt it was beneficial to him. Now the price of rum has gone to 12s. 6d. or 13s. and whisky to 15s. a bottle.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. MORGAN: I am speaking of the prices charged in my district and similar districts; I am not speaking of the city. Those prices are charged in our country

[*Mr. Edwards.*

districts, and sometimes good whisky is sold at £1 a bottle. What has happened? The man in the bush does not have his bottle of whisky.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: It has done him good.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: A teetotaler by compulsion.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. I am not complaining about the price of drink, but I am complaining because the price-fixing authorities have allowed the prices of board and lodging to soar to the clouds and we have had no protection in respect of these necessities. I have no objection to the Board of Trade and Arbitration making inquiries and fixing prices at reasonable figures, but I have a decided objection to their powers being used for political purposes. The Board of Trade and Arbitration is used for political purposes. A few months prior to the last elections the board reduced the price of meat in the metropolitan area. Why? Because an election was not far distant.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We reduced the price for shingles and lost a lot of votes.

Mr. MORGAN: You have not had a shingle yet. For a considerable period the private butchers and State butcher shops were allowed a free hand, but just before the elections the price-fixer stepped in and fixed the price of meat. That was done in order that the Government might curry favour with the electors. I have it on good authority that that action resulted in the State butcher shops being affected to the extent of £15,000. The Auditor-General in his report on those trading ventures states that the State butcher shops made a paltry profit of about £400 throughout the State.

Mr. DASH: That is good enough.

Mr. MORGAN: Had the price not been fixed, they would have made a greater profit. In fact, when we reach that vote, I shall be able to show that that £400 profit was not made by the State butcher shops, but was possible only because the State stations did not charge a reasonable price for their stock.

Some considerable time ago a Board of Inquiry was appointed to inquire into the rural industries of the State. That board heard evidence throughout Queensland with a view to ascertaining whether it would be wise to subject the rural industries not already under an award to the Industrial Arbitration Act. An enormous sum of money was expended by the board, but we have not seen any report or any evidence. The whole thing has been hidden away in some pigeon-hole.

Mr. DASH: No.

Mr. MORGAN: It has never been made public.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Go and see the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

Mr. MORGAN: The finding of the board should be made public. We, as members of Parliament, have a right to it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Go and see the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

Mr. MORGAN: I have the right to have the finding placed in my hands.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is not a parliamentary report.



Mr. MORGAN: We are entitled to the finding of that body. A case will probably come before the board at some future date, and we have a right to know the result of the inquiry.

Mr. HARTLEY: You can go to the court and read the evidence.

Mr. MORGAN: I have no right to do that.

Mr. HARTLEY: Of course you have.

Mr. MORGAN: Some of the evidence appeared in the press.

Mr. HARTLEY: You can see all the evidence at the court.

Mr. MORGAN: I want to know their finding. Did they come to the conclusion that the rural industries should be subject to an award of the court? If they did, then why has the necessary legislative action not been carried out?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The industrial boards were not authorised to make a finding. They were authorised to collect the evidence for the information of the court.

Mr. MORGAN: Evidently the information has not been acted upon.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The court may act upon the evidence if it so desires, or any party concerned may move the court. If you desire an award, you can have a case cited.

Mr. MORGAN: I quite understand that.

Mr. HYNES: Are you advocating an award for rural workers?

Mr. MORGAN: At one time I was strongly opposed to such a thing, but perhaps it would be the very best thing for the farming community. It would mean that, instead of butter realising 1s. 8d. or 1s. 9d. per lb., it would realise 2s. 8d. or 2s. 9d. per lb. It would have the effect in some respects of increasing the basic wage to a greater amount than rules to-day. I believe that we should be better off, for, instead of taking the dregs of the working class who go out into the country looking for work after all the other industries have had their requirements supplied—and who in the majority of cases cannot do a fair day's work—a better class of workers would be offering at the new rates. Our dairymen and other producers growing foodstuffs to feed the people in the cities at sweated rates of wages would then be compelled either to leave the industry altogether or receive a price for the article they produce commensurate with its cost.

Mr. HYNES: You will be excommunicated by your party.

Mr. MORGAN: The moment that happens there will be a breakdown either in the system of arbitration or in industry. While section of the community remains without the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court the other section will profit by their labours. The moment the primary producers obtain a price for their goods equal to the cost of production they will become equal with the wage earners in the city, and that moment will be the best day that has ever happened for Queensland.

Mr. HARTLEY: Come over here. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: I only want the producers other than the sugar-growers placed in the same position as the sugar-growers, because

I recognise that from an agricultural point of view the sugar-growers are the most prosperous community in Queensland.

Mr. HYNES: They bitterly opposed the award. The hon. member for Mirani knows that.

Mr. MORGAN: If the award of the Board of Trade and Arbitration was able to make the sugar industry as prosperous as it is to-day, then by making an award for workers engaged in other rural industries it will be able to make the dairying, fruit, and wheat industries prosperous also.

Mr. HARTLEY: Where is the "red flag" now?

Mr. BRAND: What is going to happen to the basic wage?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: If you are not careful, you will be in the Domain next.

Mr. BRAND: The front Government bench are not game to carry out the hon. member's suggestion.

Mr. MORGAN: I have come to the conclusion that in opposing awards being made by the Board of Trade and Arbitration our people were silly and foolish, and the time has now come when they should change their policy in that regard.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HYNES: A death-bed repentance.

Mr. MORGAN: If that is brought about, it will be the larger centres of population that will suffer most. It is quite evident that the Board of Trade and Arbitration has come to the conclusion that it will not further increase wages. It is also evident that it has come to a conclusion not to reduce working hours any further, and, in order to place the worker on a better footing, inquiries are now being conducted into the cost of clothing. The very moment it decides that it will not increase the wages of the worker and will not reduce his working hours, it will come to a successful conclusion. There is only one way to secure 20s. worth of value for the £1 sterling, and that is by preventing the purchasing price of money from going down. If the Government will give a living wage to rural workers and place them on a standard similar to the sugar-growers, they will then be in clover.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I was very pleased to hear the remarks of "Comrade" Morgan, the hon. member for Murilla. (Laughter.) They show that he at last subscribes to a principle which has always been advocated by this party—a decent wage for all industrial workers. We have always subscribed to the principle that, by increasing the wages of the workers of the community, you necessarily must increase their purchasing power, and the people whom the hon. member states he represents in this Chamber—the primary producers—will benefit more than any other class by an increase in wages by reason of the fact that the wage-earners, who constitute the major portion of the community, will then be in a position to pay a decent price for and purchase a larger amount of the commodities produced by primary producers.

I hope that the farmers' associations with which the hon. member is associated will take steps to secure at least the basic wage for the rural and industrial workers in our rural industries. I am very pleased to know that

*Mr. Hynes.]*

one member of the Opposition has had the courage to make such a statement in this Chamber. We have made similar statements here on several occasions, and have received nothing but hostile criticism from the colleagues of the hon. member. I am very glad that, even at this eleventh hour, the hon. member has realised the wisdom of the policy which has always been the policy of this party. It is quite a simple matter to secure an award to govern the rural industries. All the associations with which the hon. member is connected need do is to make application to the Board of Trade and Arbitration. If the industrial unions concerned do make such an application, I hope the hon. member for Murilla will courageously come along and express the opinion he has expressed here to-night.

At 7.58 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER resumed the chair.

Mr. HYNES: I desire to make reference to a statement made by the hon. member for Mirani. He stated that the thing he regrets mostly in connection with the administration of the arbitration policy of this party is the non-observance of awards made by the Board of Trade and Arbitration. We realise that is a pretty serious thing, but it is green in my memory that in 1916 the hon. member for Mirani organised the farmers against the Dickson award, and he, with other agitators of the farmers' unions, went through the district where I was organising for the Australian Workers' Union and induced the farmers to go on strike against the award of the court. The hon. member now has the temerity to come here and decry the very action of which he himself was guilty.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Mr. Cooper, I rise to a point of order. The statement made by the hon. member for Townsville is quite untrue. I would not have risen but that the statement has been made so often. I ask that it be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. HYNES: I was organising for the Australian Workers' Union at the time, and I know the influence of the hon. member was used in the direction of getting the farmers in the Mackay district to object to paying the rates prescribed by the Dickson award, and, as a result, the workers were locked out.

Mr. COLLINS: At Proserpine, too.

Mr. KELSO: Are you not going to accept the denial of the hon. member for Mirani?

Mr. HYNES: Reference has been made by the hon. member for Mirani to the dispute that has occurred in his district between two unions. I take it that the hon. member referred to what is known as the Louisa Creek dispute. In that case one union claimed that certain work should be done by members of their union, and the other union said that the work should be done by members of their organisation.

[8 p.m.] There would have been a serious hold-up if it had not been for the intervention of the Board of Trade and Arbitration—a body which was brought into existence by this Government. The Labour Government enacted legislation establishing the Board of Trade and Arbitration, and, as a result, a great deal of industrial peace has been brought about; and the

very case the hon. member has cited to-night is one in point. As a result of that dispute the sugar sheds at Louisa Creek were filled to overflowing, and the farmers were faced with the position that they would have to cease operations on account of not being able to get their sugar away. The Board of Trade and Arbitration intervened and summoned representatives of the two unions to Brisbane. An agreement was arrived at, as a result of which industrial peace has been restored and the growers are able to carry on their harvesting operations. The Board of Trade and Arbitration has effectively carried out a large number of the duties which it was brought into being to carry out; and, as a result of the intervention of the Board in many industrial disputes, instead of the contesting parties fighting it out in the old way by a strike or lockout, they have been able to come to an amicable agreement.

I notice there has been an increase of, approximately, £7,000 in connection with this vote, and I consider that that money has been well spent. The Board of Trade and Arbitration is not getting the prestige to which it is entitled. Just consider the important duties that the Board has to carry out as compared with the duties of the other courts! If a man in the Gulf country is charged with stealing a "poddy" calf, no money is spared in the endeavour to bring that man to justice. The whole of the machinery of justice is at the disposal of the Crown, and a large amount of money is expended in connection with the matter, yet a large number of people object to the expenditure of public money in connection with the Board of Trade and Arbitration, which has to do with the fixing of wages, which concerns thousands and thousands of industrialists, concerns their standard of living, and their bread and butter problem. The Board of Trade and Arbitration is carrying out the work for which it was created, and in most cases it is doing it very effectively.

There is one aspect of their duties to which I would like to refer, and with which I am not altogether satisfied—that is in connection with the collecting of data for price-fixing. It is futile to endeavour to maintain living standards for the industrial workers by fixing wages alone. As a natural corollary to wage fixation we should have fixation of prices. We find that in very many instances what the worker secures by way of an increase in wages he loses as a consumer by the increase in prices. I am pleased that the Board of Trade and Arbitration is taking this matter in hand and is engaged in an investigation which should have very good results. The old system of arriving at the cost of living was obsolete and stupid. The Commonwealth Statistician's figures were accepted in connection with the cost of living. Those figures were compiled from statements or reports sent in by various business people in the community. For instance, the grocer sent in his monthly report to the Commonwealth Statistician, and other business people did the same thing. In almost every case the people supplying the data were employers of labour, so we had the spectacle of the employer giving the data upon which the wage of his employee was fixed. That is not a correct method of arriving at the cost of living, and I am glad that the Board of Trade and

[*Mr. Hynes.*]

Arbitration is tackling the question in a more scientific manner.

If we are to maintain confidence in the operations of the Board of Trade and Arbitration, it must be understood that the board is going to base its award on the cost of living and that it is going to arrive at the effective wage of the worker by taking into account the purchasing power of the money he receives as wages. It is absolutely futile to expect contentment amongst the industrial workers if, while we keep increasing the nominal wage, we do not allow the purchasing power of the money which the worker is getting to be regulated by the board. It was very wise on the part of the Government to give the duty of price fixation to the Board of Trade and Arbitration, which also has authority to fix wages. The two things should always be worked together.

Mr. WALKER: How would you deal with the cost of living? What improvement would you make?

Mr. HYNES: There is one thing which should be done—that is to prevent the exploitation of the consumer. I contend that under the legislation passed by this party that can be done by the Board of Trade and Arbitration fixing the price of commodities.

I do not think there is much danger of the farmers being exploited at the present time. They fix their own prices, and in many cases arbitrarily.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is quite wrong.

Mr. HYNES: The consumers are not taken into consideration when the prices of their products are being fixed.

Mr. EDWARDS: You do not know what you are talking about. You are spoiling a good speech.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. member is not looked upon as one of the geniuses of his party, and he says I do not know what I am talking about! I have made a study of this problem and know what I am talking about. The hon. member reminds me of Mark Twain's McClintock, who made loud-sounding, rambling speeches, which amounted to nothing.

Mr. EDWARDS: What were you pulled up in Mackay for?

Mr. HYNES: When I was in Mackay I put in the whole of my time trying to improve the conditions of the working class, and I succeeded pretty well in doing it. Any man who lived in the district where I was always gave me credit for doing that same thing. At any rate, I never went out, like the hon. member, organising ostensibly for the primary producer and beat my colleague for his job. In the environment in which I have worked that was called "scabbing," and I was never guilty of "scabbing" on a mate.

I want to draw the attention of the Minister to what, in my opinion, is an important matter. I refer to the expenses allowed to men who are called upon by the Board of Trade and Arbitration to attend round-table conferences to discuss matters in dispute and endeavour to preserve industrial peace. In many cases men who are brought from their every-day work to Brisbane do not receive sufficient expenses to enable them to avoid incurring financial disability through coming here. Their services are given to the com-

munity in an endeavour to arrive at amicable settlements of disputes, and they should not be expected to suffer financially. I commend to the Minister the proposition that liberal expenses should be allowed to all representatives who are brought before the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I admit frankly that I am an absolute believer in arbitration. I also believe that arbitration, like democracy, is on trial. I believe that it is the duty of every man who thinks anything of his country to do everything he can to make arbitration a success, and that it is not possible to build up a great State except through arbitration and co-operation.

I was rather astounded at the utterances of the two last speakers, one of whom said that the farmer is getting an undue benefit by fixing the prices of his products. That is not a true statement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No one said that.

Mr. WARREN: He did say that, but I want to say that only in a protected industry is the producer getting anything like a living wage. It has been said in this Chamber to-day—from the other side, too—that the producer is a worker in the true sense of the word. The producer is the greatest worker in Queensland. No man doing a labourer's work has to work as hard as the producer, and I do not agree with the statement made by the hon. member for Murilla. Until we can fix prices for the producer, arbitration cannot be applied to him. It would be absolute murder. I am speaking from my own point of view, and not from the party point of view; and I say that, until we bring about that harmony which we would all like to see, it is absolutely impossible and absurd to apply arbitration awards to the producer. He is sweated, and will always be sweated, because, unfortunately, he cannot sell his products at a big price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmer lacks imagination.

Mr. WARREN: The Minister says that the farmer lacks imagination.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was referring to you.

Mr. WARREN: The producer does lack imagination. I am a producer myself. I have tried to organise the producers during the past thirty years, and in some cases I have had a great amount of success. The fruitgrowers were organised until the Government interfered and reorganised them to a fine point of efficiency. Until the farmers are thoroughly organised it is idle for us to talk about applying arbitration to the agriculturists. Let me refer to milk, which is the most essential element in the sustenance of children. What has the Board of Trade and Arbitration done for those connected with the milk trade. It has extended protection to the middleman, but no protection for the producer. Until the Board of Trade and Arbitration gives serious consideration to the essentials of life it is useless saying what arbitration will do for the people of Queensland. What is it doing for the producer? The producer is producing more and more. It is all humbug to talk about the farmer obtaining a fair

*Mr. Warren.]*

price for his produce. All this talk about price-fixing is only throwing dust in the eyes of the workers, and is done purposely to throw dust in the eyes of the workers. There is no sincerity in it. It will not hit the "fat man." The "fat man" is agreeing with the Government to-day. The Government are not attempting to benefit the workers. They are merely hoodwinking them with the present arbitration system. They are making no attempt to benefit Queensland. They are doing something only to hold on to their positions in this Chamber, and the longer they can hold on the better for themselves. They do not give a rap for Queensland. I stand for arbitration; but I stand first and foremost for arbitration for the producer, because I believe that is where you must start. I am trying to show the fallacy of the present arbitration system, which really benefits the middleman.

Every hon. member wishes to see industrial peace, but the great majority of people who are supposed to benefit by this legislation must admit that the benefit is a very doubtful one. The milk producer is paying anything from £10 to £15 per ton for fodder, and is as "down and out" as any person can possibly be. Instead of the Board of Trade and Arbitration assisting that producer, it has assisted the middleman.

Mr. CLAYTON: The dairyman only receives 1s. 4d. per lb. for butter.

Mr. WARREN: I am only showing in one instance—a very little thing probably to a lot of people, but a big thing to the people interested—that these producers, who work at all hours of the day and night in order to supply the children of Brisbane with that great essential, milk, receive very little benefit from arbitration.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): As is usual, the hon. member for Townsville could not make a speech without making a personal attack on myself.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are a nightmare to him.

Mr. SWAYNE: The reason is to be found in the fact that twice he has opposed my election for Mirani, and twice I have defeated him.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: On one of those occasions my majority was one of the largest that I have ever received. He was born in the district, I have lived there for forty years, and the people had the opportunity of choosing between us, and they chose me instead of him.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: I referred to the dislocation and loss which the sugar industry has suffered from industrial disturbances, in which the hon. member for Townsville was a factor. The "Telegraph" to-day has this to say—

"The financial position of the Government-controlled mills in their relationship to the Treasury is generally unsatisfactory," stated the Auditor-General (Mr. G. L. Beal), "and it cannot reasonably be expected that the Treasury should continue to carry the losses made. I understand that the Government has the matter under consideration, and has decided not to operate in 1927 three of the mills."

[Mr. Warren.

The Government contemplate closing down three sugar-mills. What will happen to the sugar farmers around those mills is a question upon which hon. members can form their own opinion. I am afraid that what applies to these Government mills also applies to some co-operative mills. However, it shows that the position of the industry is serious. That position is largely attributable to the industrial strife I have alluded to. Therefore I was quite justified in referring to the matter and making a practical suggestion that something should be done to cope with it. That is something which some hon. members do not do. The Secretary for Railways has found it necessary to introduce a Bill enabling the Commissioner to deal with strife in the railways. The hon. member for Townsville referred to another industrial matter which was really a dispute between the water-side workers and the members of the Australian Workers' Union—that at Louisa Creek. I am not concerned with the merits of that dispute, but what I do say is that it caused serious loss and inconvenience to a large number of producers, and it brought that mill to the verge of stopping operations. It further supports my argument that, if there is any statesmanship on the Government side, they will devise some method of coping with catastrophes of that kind.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I listened very attentively to the hon. member for Mirani. He cannot dispute the fact that in 1916 he advised the Proserpine farmers to resist the Dickson award.

Mr. HYNES: He moved the adjournment of this House to discuss the award.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. The farmers of the Proserpine district have never forgiven the hon. member for Mirani, because time has proved him to have been a false guide. The hon. member urged men to disregard an award prescribed by the court, yet he rises in this Chamber and tries to preach a new gospel—that the workers should at all times abide by an award. Why did he not preach that gospel at that time?

We all know that the Board of Trade and Arbitration has control of the Profit-sharing Prevention Act. The point I want to make is whether price-fixing will prove beneficial to the mass of the workers. That can be borne out only as time rolls on. I have waited, and I am prepared to wait, to see if it tends in the direction of bringing about the objective of this party. I do know that there are certain firms in Queensland which are making enormous profits.

Mr. KELSO: What is your objective?

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: I shall quote from the Brisbane "Courier" of 18th September, 1926, dealing with a firm by the name of McWhirters' Limited. They made a profit for the last financial year of £84,181.

Mr. KELSO: Is that net?

Mr. COLLINS: I am giving the exact words reported in the "Courier"; £84,181 was distributed amongst their shareholders as a profit.

Mr. KELSO: Is that a net profit?

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: Mr. A. J. Lansdowne said—

"Another point on which I would like to touch is the enormous increase in

wages. You will notice our increase in working expenses is £11,975. Of this amount increases in wages represent £11,700. This enormous increase had to be met."

I want to make a point there. First of all, the profits were £84,181.

Mr. WALKER: Under a Labour Government?

Mr. COLLINS: The chairman refers to the enormous increase in wages, and reading on there is this statement—

"Mr. R. J. Archibald said: Now we have a series of years where we have seen the profits mounting from £40,000 in 1921 to £84,000 in 1926."

You notice the point, Mr. Cooper—the enormous increase of wages—£11,700. No mention of the enormous increase in profits from £40,000 in 1921 to £84,000 in 1926! When I read that it called to my mind a saying by Thomas Carlyle, speaking of a cotton manufacturer—

"Noble spinners, this is the hundred thousand we have gained, wherein I mean to dwell and plant vineyards; the hundred thousand is mine, the three and sixpence daily was yours; adieu, noble spinners, drink my health with this groat each, which I give you over and above."

That is practically what Mr. Lansdowne said when he stressed the enormous increase of wages of £11,000, and inferentially stressed the small amount of profits of £84,000. The hon. member for Cooroora might know of this instance. That report puts me in mind of a mining speculator of Gympie, a Cornishman, who on receiving a dividend from a mine said to me, "You know, Mr. Collins, a 6d. dividend is very light, but a 2d. call is very heavy." (Laughter.) These people make enormous profits, but of course they are not enormous from their point of view. The only thing that was enormous was £11,700 increase in wages.

Mr. WALKER: Quote about Alexander Stewart and Sons?

Mr. CARTER: Quote that yourself when you get up.

Mr. COLLINS: The Board of Trade and Arbitration is doing useful work. Soon after the general election, we had a dispute on the water front amongst the men at Bowen, which was taken in hand by the Board of Trade and Arbitration. That dispute was settled, and up to the present we have had no further trouble at that centre. Many of these disputes can be settled if a little common sense is exercised.

[8.30 p.m.] We have on the Board of Trade and Arbitration men of common sense, with the result that a decision was given in connection with the Bowen disputes from a common-sense viewpoint, and I am told that things are working very satisfactorily inasmuch as the port of Bowen to-day is loading and unloading goods as cheaply as any other port in North Queensland. That goes to prove that the Board of Trade and Arbitration has done good work in that direction. I am satisfied that, as time rolls on and people, especially the working masses, realise the effects of arbitration, we shall have less and less of these industrial disputes. We are fairly free

from industrial disputes compared with other countries in the world. Look at that great country, Great Britain, and see what is taking place there at the present time.

Mr. KELSO: That is where the Marquess of Salisbury lives. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, and it may be news to the hon. member for Nundah that the Marquess of Salisbury owns land on which, I understand, there is more than one coalmine. Let us contrast what is taking place in this Commonwealth to-day with what is taking place in Great Britain. When people talk about this being a land of strikes they are talking nothing but sheer nonsense. In Great Britain for the last six months there have been a million men out on strike and not producing anything, demanding what they consider their rights, and here in Australia, especially in Queensland, we are practically free from industrial upheaval. Of course I know that hon. members opposite get alarmed if they see half a dozen men on strike. I do not know what would happen if they were in Great Britain; they would become paralysed altogether.

Mr. KELSO: Did you have a strike at Bowen?

Mr. COLLINS: We have had more than one strike in the Bowen electorate, and, in spite of all the strikes that have taken place there, I have come out on top every time.

I got up with the express purpose of pointing out that the Board of Trade and Arbitration can do good work in connection with the inquiry into the clothing trade, and I hope it will get correct evidence, because it has the power to get it, and I trust that about this time next year we shall not be reading in the "Brisbane Courier" about one firm having to pay enormous increased wages and also having enormous increased profits. We all know that the people engaged in the clothing trade are making enormous profits, as is shown by the balance-sheets of the different firms published from time to time. We all realise they are making greater profits than the man on the land, and greater profits than the average business concern. I am pleased to think that the Board of Trade and Arbitration has taken the matter in hand, and I trust that in the near future we shall see a reduction in the price of clothing.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): The Opposition ought to be gratified at the statement made some time ago by the Premier in connection with the Board of Trade and Arbitration being the proper authority to deal with the basic wage. It seems to me that the Government at last have agreed with the arguments adduced by the Opposition during the last session of Parliament. The amount of ridicule that was heaped on the Opposition during the recent elections was misplaced, as the Government have adopted the suggestion made by the Opposition that the Board of Trade and Arbitration was the proper place to decide what the basic wage should be.

In replying to the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville, I want to refer to what seems to me to be a contradictory statement. He was dealing with Federal statistics relating to the cost of living, which he said were absolutely wrong because they were framed from information supplied by the employers. If that is the case—and I

*Mr. Maxwell.]*

must accept the statement of the hon. member—I wonder how he can accept the statement he has given, based on figures supplied by employers, that Queensland has the lowest cost of living in the Commonwealth. According to the hon. gentleman, the employer cannot be so bad in his attitude towards the employee. I was somewhat struck by the statement made by the Secretary for Labour and Industry—whom I congratulate upon his first appearance in introducing the Estimate of his department—in reference to the question of profiteering. All I can say is that a new prophet has arisen in the Government. There is an old adage that “new brooms sweep clean,” and, according to the Minister, now that he is the Minister the question of profiteering is going to be dealt with by the Board of Trade and Arbitration. At the present time there is a gentleman occupying the position of Price-Fixing Commissioner—Mr. Ferry.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are wrong.

Mr. MAXWELL: I mean that Mr. Ferry occupied the position prior to the Board of Trade and Arbitration taking it on. I am aware that, as soon as the board was constituted, the members of the board took over the control of price-fixing. It was asserted during the election by hon. members opposite in pamphlets which they issued that they were going to deal with profiteering. If profiteering was going on to the extent they would lead us to believe, why did they not deal with it before? That was a most ridiculous statement for hon. members opposite to make. It is not long since we had an Economic Commission, presided over by Mr. Sutcliffe, a Commonwealth statistical officer, for the purpose of securing data on which to arrive at the fixation of the basic wage; but perhaps the hon. member for Townsville would not be prepared to accept the opinion of a man of the statistical ability of Mr. Sutcliffe, owing, perhaps, to the tainted information that had been supplied by the employers of Australia. Mr. A. B. Piddington, who went into the question of the wealth production of Queensland, expressed a different opinion to that of the Economic Commission in connection with the basic wage. The determination of the Board of Trade and Arbitration. Then we find that the Board of Trade and Arbitration, in accordance with the Act, can hear and determine the prices of commodities. I do not know where all this is going to lead us. The whole trend of this debate and the effect of what we hear elsewhere is that, unless a section of industry can get, not only a bigger amount of profit out of industry, but, as has been said by the agitating class, can secure the whole of the means of production, they will not be satisfied. And they would not be satisfied even if they got them.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Who are the agitating class?

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman is one of them. He does not believe in Arbitration Courts, although he is the Minister in charge of this department. He believes in a co-operative commonwealth where wages boards and arbitration courts would be abolished. If we are to maintain industrial peace and stop these disputes which act to the disadvantage of the community, we must amend the existing law, and I hope

[Mr. Maxwell.

that even at this late hour the Government will do something in that direction. I drew the attention of Parliament some time ago to the necessity for the amendment of the Act.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will not be in order in reading his remarks.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not going to read them.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss prospective legislation or proposals for legislation on this vote.

Mr. MAXWELL: I was pointing out how we can obtain industrial peace, and I was trying to advise our friends on the other side that, if they desire to accomplish the objective which they say they want to achieve, they will at an early date introduce legislation which will bring that about. Under present conditions it is impossible for an award to be given for any extended period. The Act is perfectly explicit. I refer hon. members to section 16 (1), where they may read the provision for themselves. As often as either a union or an employer chooses, so often can they or he approach the court, and so keep an industry in a state of unrest. I hope that the new Minister, who I have said believes in a co-operative commonwealth, will bear this in mind. If he will only bring about such a condition as I have in mind, I shall forgive a good many things he has done, and believe that he is working towards a condition of things which makes for industrial peace in the State of which he is a Minister of the Crown. I am making these statements because I believe them and because of the experiences I have had in my business career. I am one of those men—and there are numbers of them on this side of the Chamber—who realise that the only way to have a peaceful community is by having industrial peace, and not by stirring up industrial strife, which a section of members on the other side are doing by their speeches and in every other way possible.

Mr. HYNES (Townsville): I desire to reply to the statement of the hon. member for Mirani with regard to the Dickson award.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He beat you twice. (Laughter.)

Mr. HYNES: I do not bear the hon. member any ill will for that. The electors of Mirani have my sympathy. (Laughter.) I bear no grudge against the hon. member. There was only a small margin between us, and I can assure hon. members that the hon. member “had the wind up” on both occasions. On 29th August, 1916, in this House, the hon. member for Mirani brought up the matter of the Dickson award. On page 125 of “Hansard” for that year the Speaker reported that he had received the following letter:—

“29th August, 1916.

“The Speaker,

“Legislative Assembly, Queensland.

“Dear Mr. Speaker,—I desire to give you notice, in accordance with Standing Order No. 135, when the House meets this afternoon for the conduct of public business I shall move its adjournment for the purpose of debating a definite

matter of urgent public importance—viz., the late award in connection with the sugar industry which is seriously affecting the industry.

"I am, dear Mr. Speaker,

"Yours very sincerely,

"E. SWAYNE."

In a lengthy speech the hon. member attacked the award.

Mr. SWAYNE: Quite justifiably.

Mr. HYNES: I had something to do with that award. I was in the court. The evidence that the hon. member for Mirani brought before this Chamber was similar to the evidence that was adduced before the court by the person representing the employers in the industry.

Mr. BRAND: Do you consider it was a reasonable award?

Mr. HYNES: Most decidedly. I take some credit for helping to secure it. The hon. member for Mirani denies my statement that he was opposed to the award. He made a lengthy speech asking the Government to upset the award, in the same way as a previous Minister had upset a carting trade award for Central Queensland. The hon. member refers to the judge of the court in these terms—

"He is only like a mad elephant trampling and devastating everything before him. I hope the Government will use the power they have in their hands under section 46 to solve the present position. Unless they do this something serious will occur."

Mr. MAXWELL: What does that prove?

Mr. TAYLOR: You incited the workers to flout awards.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. member for Mirani wanted the Government to exercise some powers that he said they had under the Act in order to defeat an award of the court. I know that he made certain remarks in Mackay for the purpose of inciting the farmers there to strike against the award. I want to point out how inconsistent the hon. gentleman is. That is really my reason for referring to this matter. The hon. member, like many other hon. members opposite, would like industrial conditions for the workers fixed in the same way as they were fixed prior to the passing of any Arbitration Act. In 1906, when the first attempt was made to regulate the wages in the sugar industry in the Mackay district, the hon. member for Mirani represented the employers at the conference, and an agreement was arrived at. The workers had to accept that agreement because they were poorly organised at the time. There was something done which does not reflect any credit on the hon. member for Mirani. In fixing the wage they provided that the maximum wage should be 3s. 4d. a day. At that time the workers were uneducated in arbitration matters, and these men who came fresh from the fields did not understand the terminology of that agreement. To me it looked like a sly piece of work. The employers used the word "maximum" in place of the word "minimum." When they provided that the maximum rate was to be 3s. 4d. a day it meant that the minimum rate could be anything, or, in other words, the farmers who paid more than 3s. 4d. a day would be "scab-

bing." Under our existing system a minimum rate is fixed, and, if an employer considers an employee is entitled to more than the minimum rate, he is permitted to pay in excess of that amount. I noticed with some regret that the Board of Trade and Arbitration in fixing wages a few weeks back were not guided altogether by the cost of living data upon which they based their award. In order that future success be assured the Board of Trade and Arbitration and in order that industrial peace be maintained in our community it is absolutely essential and imperative that the Board of Trade and Arbitration should give the workers an increase whenever an increase in the cost of living warrants it, and the increase should be commensurate with the increase in the cost of living. If that is not done, then the workers concerned will lose confidence in the Board of Trade and Arbitration. I sincerely hope that that basis will be strictly adhered to, and that the workers will be given a fair share in the prosperity and the increased productivity of the industries in which they are employed. It is time that the workers got away from the fodder allowance. It is time that the workers shared equally with the employers in the increased prosperity of an industry. If that is done, we shall bring about among the workers contentment and confidence in the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

Mr. CLAYTON: You did not prove anything against the hon. member for Mirani.

Item (Board of Trade and Arbitration) agreed to.

#### INSPECTION OF MACHINERY, SCAFFOLDING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

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

"That £31,321 be granted for 'Inspection of Machinery, Scaffolding, and Weights and Measures.'"

The total increase in the vote is £1,765. There has been additional expenditure of £2,515 incurred in the appointment of additional inspectors to police the Weights and Measures Act. There are also the usual grade increases provided under the Public Service award. The vote for "Contingencies" discloses a decrease of £750.

Mr. SWAYNE (Mirani): A good deal of the work of these inspectors lies in my electorate, because there are several sugar-mills there. The department is to be complimented on having such an excellent body of men. I am quite safe in saying that they do their work efficiently and with the least possible friction. The feeling between the inspectors and machinery owners in my electorate is good.

Mr. MOORE (Aubigny): I would like some information from the Minister respecting the inspectors of weights and measures. The administration of the Act causes a good deal of inconvenience to people in outside districts. On what basis are the charges made under the Act? Supposing an inspector proceeds to a district where there are a dozen or more scales to inspect, is that inspector supposed to charge mileage from, say, Toowoomba, where he comes from, to a place 50 miles distant against every owner of a set of scales that is inspected, or is the cost divided among all the owners of

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scales? The charges are becoming very heavy, and the people are put to a great inconvenience if their scales are sent away.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): The fees are divided pro rata. If the expenses of an inspector amount to £10, and he had twenty sets of scales to inspect, those expenses would be divided among the persons concerned.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The particular item to which the Leader of the Opposition has just referred is a very considerable one in this vote, amounting as it does to nearly £8,000. A little more information might be supplied by the Minister to the Committee. What revenue is derived from the fees throughout the State? The cost of administering the Act is set down at £7,700, and fifteen officers are engaged in administering the Act. This sum seems a fair amount to be expended for the supervision of this Act throughout the State.

Mr. WALKER (*Coorooora*): We have been carrying out the inspection of boilers very efficiently for the last twenty or thirty years, and of late I find the methods have been vastly improved. The officer in charge should be acquainted with that fact through the channel of this Chamber. The matter of going over a high-class boiler at the present time is really the work of an expert, and through the efficiency of the department the fact arises that there is an absence of news in our press as to explosions of boilers in Queensland. That shows distinctly that in regard to our big boilers the supervision is very efficient.

Some twelve months ago, when an amending Bill was going through this Chamber, I drew attention to the use of small engines which did not come within the scope of the Bill, which were unprotected and were really a menace to those working them. I drew attention to the fact that the Machinery and Scaffolding Department should be given power to act in co-ordination with the Department of Agriculture, which should empower its dairy experts to supervise the many small engines used on farms. I am not advocating at the present time any additional expense, because the officers of the Department of Agriculture could carry out the work. Since the time when I first mentioned the question we have had two dreadful accidents in Queensland and another in New South Wales, proving conclusively that my argument was sound. I know what I am talking about, as I have a first-class engine-driver's certificate. I claim that a lot of these milking machines are a menace to the children who have the duty of starting or stopping them. They are even a menace to an adult, who has the wit to run away from any risk. Through the co-ordination of the two departments I mention officers could see that rails were erected to protect any little ones when leaning over to do something to the engine or to attend to a belt—probably a twisted belt. Such action would no doubt result in the saving of lives. It is a small suggestion, but a practical one, and I hope it will have the approval of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A very good idea.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): Dealing with the matter of inspectors of weights and measures as they apply to my electorate and country

towns in that electorate, these inspectors from time to time come around and inspect the various weights and scales in the different stores in the towns. Quite a number of the scales are condemned. About a day after the inspector arrives another gentleman with a carriage arrives, pulls up at the railway station, and goes round claiming to be a man qualified to fix up those scales and measures. The storekeepers in my electorate have a strong suspicion that there is something in common between the inspector and the man who comes along later to adjust the scales. If they do not have their work done by that man, their scales are not going to be stamped. I ask the Minister if the Chief Inspector will make inquiries to ascertain if there is any collusion between the inspectors and these individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): Replying to the hon. member for Windsor, the amount of revenue secured as fees in connection with the Weights and Measures Act for the year 1925-26 was £6,740 3s. 3d.

With regard to the matter raised by the hon. member for Burrum, I understand from the Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures that certain firms do this class of work. Surely the hon. gentleman does not suggest that any inspector employed by the department would condemn any scales that should not be condemned!

[9 p.m.]

Mr. BRAND: The storekeepers have a suspicion about it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Suppose the department did not arrange for these scales to be attended to and the unfortunate storekeeper could not carry on his trade, we should have another attack on the department for having inspectors condemning scales and not having the necessary machinery to see that the scales were adjusted.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Could not the departmental officers do that work themselves?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a matter that might be considered, but I am assured by the Chief Inspector that everything is above-board. It is only in cases where scales are condemned that they are attended to, and it will be recognised by hon. members that it is necessary, in the interests of the country storekeepers, that their scales should be put in proper order with the least possible delay, so that they can carry on their business.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): There is one other matter in connection with weights and measures that might be looked into. I think I am correct when I say that the Railway Department have their own staff who travel round in one or two trucks with all the necessary appliances for testing railway scales and machines throughout the State. I do not know the methods adopted by the Department of Public Works in having machines and scales tested, but it might be possible to have some co-operation between the Railway Department and the Department of Public Works. If railway inspectors travel through the various towns of the State, an arrangement might be made for those inspectors to do the work now done by the inspectors of the Public Works Department. If that were done, a good deal of money would

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be saved. I notice that £1,000 less was received by the department than the cost of testing scales, and it might be possible by some co-operation between the two departments to reduce the loss in that direction.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): The suggestion of the hon. member for Windsor is a good one. In many cases it would be possible for the inspectors connected with the Railway Department to do the testing as well as the work of repairing any scales that were found out of order. On many occasions you see the Railway Department inspector, the weights and measures inspector, and three or four other inspectors in town at the one time, and it is about time that the heads of the departments woke up to this and endeavoured to get some co-ordination between the departments in connection with this work. It would mean a big saving to the taxpayers of Queensland if this policy were adopted.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I would point out that the Minister did not reply to the inquiry made by the hon. member for Cooroora. I am sure it was quite unintentional, but the hon. member for Cooroora raised a most important point in connection with certain machinery over which apparently there is no control, and he referred to the fact that there was very grave danger of loss of life in that connection. That is a most important point, and I trust the hon. gentleman will furnish a reply to the question of the hon. member for Cooroora.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): It is refreshing to find the hon. member for Cooroora suggesting that more vigilance should be displayed by the officials of the department in connection with certain machinery used in the drying industry. As a rule, when the department attempts to do anything of this kind, the action is met with a hostile reception. I well recollect the hon. member for Cooroora calling attention to this matter when the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Bill was before this Chamber. When inspectors are going round the districts they give instructions with regard to this machinery, and, if there are any places in the district of the hon. member for Cooroora or any other hon. member where the farmers are willing to receive instruction, it will be readily given.

Mr. MORGAN: It might cost them something.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It will not cost them anything. The inspector will be in the district, and will be only too glad to advise farmers as to the use of the machinery and its control and management.

The hon. member for Windsor and the hon. member for Burke raised the question of the advisability of co-ordinating the activities of the inspectors of the Railway Department and the inspectors of the Weights and Measures Department in regard to the inspection of scales. I would like to explain for the information of hon. members that the Weights and Measures Department controlled by Mr. Henderson does all the necessary testing, and the Railway Department provides the necessary repairing staff. If an inspector of the Weights and Measures Department finds the scales on any railway weighbridge out of order, he will point out the repairs required, and the staff which

is under the control of the Commissioner for Railways will effect those repairs. It has been suggested by the hon. member for Windsor and the hon. member for Burke that advantage might be taken when these inspectors are visiting different portions of the State to effect the repairs. I will undertake to discuss the matter with the chief inspector and see if anything can be done in the direction suggested by those hon. members.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I would like to know whether the whole of the charges made in connection with the testing of weights and measures finally reach the Treasury. I wish to ask whether the individuals who test the scales, and possibly employ mechanics to carry out the work, make any charge for doing so. I am quite satisfied that charges of a very excessive nature are made by someone—either by the department or the individuals concerned—and there is need to make accurate inquiry as to the charges made and as to where the money finds its way to. In nearly every town periodical investigations are made, and following those investigations extremely high charges are made. I would like to know the position in connection with this business. The inspector evidently hands over the repairs to a mechanic or someone else who makes the charges. I know of charges having been made which are positively startling. Sometimes a charge is made for repairing scales and the owner allows them to go out of commission in preference to paying the charge.

Mr. MOORE: People buy new ones very often.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I have certain facts and figures which would be helpful in this matter, but unfortunately I have not them with me. If my memory serves me correctly, in one case it was indicated that the charge would be £32. Of course they were heavy scales, still the charge was excessive, and I think we need a good deal of information about the charges which are made in this connection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. M. J. Kirwan, *Brisbane*): I hope the hon. member is not mixing up the administration of the department with the necessary work of repairs. I am informed by the Chief Inspector that, when an inspector visits Warwick, for instance, he inspects all the scales used by the business people in the course of ordinary business and charges the inspection fee, which is paid in to the local petty sessions office; but, if the inspector discovers that Brown's scales are out of order and directs certain repairs to be carried out, they are charged for by the firm or person who carries out those repairs and not by the department.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The department should regulate what those charges ought to be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is quite refreshing to hear the hon. member suggesting that we should fix prices for repairing scales. However, if the hon. member has any particular case which he thinks justifies him in saying that the charges are excessive, and he will forward the information to the Chief Inspector, inquiries will be made.

Item (Inspection of Machinery, Scaffolding, and Weights and Measures) agreed to.

Hon. M. J. Kirwan.

LABOUR, FACTORIES, AND WORKERS'  
ACCOMMODATION.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*): I beg to move—

“That £40,328 be granted for ‘Labour, Factories, and Workers’ Accommodation.’”

The increase in this vote is made up by grade increases, £1,000 extra for travelling expenses, an increase owing to the extension of the work of the inspectors, and an extra amount of £600 for printing the “Industrial Gazette.” The total increase is £2,669.

Item agreed to.

THE GAS ACT OF 1916.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*): I beg to move—

“That £2,610 be granted for ‘The Gas Act of 1916.’”

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.  
CHIEF OFFICE.

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

“That £22,631 be granted for ‘Department of Justice—Chief Office.’”

Item agreed to.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

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

“That £80,164 be granted for ‘Courts of Petty Sessions.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I desire to make some remarks in connection with one or two police magistrates. An extraordinary situation arose out of something that occurred during the last elections. The matter is reported in a Mackay paper of 27th May last, and refers to a case that was tried in Mackay. We know that all sorts of people attend election meetings and interrupt and kick up a row, and in this case the candidate hit back. I do not see anything dreadful according to the report in the paper, but action was taken against the candidate. This is the report:—

“Mr. Amiet: Did defendant say, ‘There is a man in my audience here to-night who keeps a billiard-room round at the hotel where I sleep?’—No, defendant said, ‘There is a certain man in the audience here to-night who runs a billiard-room not far from where I sleep; what right has he to come here to interject and try to break up my meeting?’”

“Mr. Amiet: You are sure about the words?—Witness: I heard them very plainly.”

“Examined by Mr. Hughes, witness said that when she heard the words she was puzzled to know whom Mr. O’Brien was referring to, and thought it might have been the man who had the billiard-room at the rear of Con Sullivan’s. She took the words to mean a hint to some person to cease interjecting. When Mr. Bradbury rose, she then thought the remarks must have referred to him.”

\* \* \* \*

“During the course of the address and amid interjections, he heard Mr. O’Brien say, ‘There is a man in this audience who runs a billiard-room not far from where I sleep; what right has he to interject and try to break up my meeting; what stake has he in the country?’ The words, ‘At the hotel where I sleep,’ were not used.”

The prosecution was based on those words. There does not appear to be anything very dreadful in them. This man was interjecting all the time, and an objection was taken to the words, “What stake has he in the country?” The case was tried, and the candidate was fined £10 for making that simple remark at an election meeting.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He will never miss it.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of whether he will miss it or not. The question is whether it was just.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you prepared to pass judgment on the matter?

Mr. MOORE: I am prepared to criticise when I see a report like that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You cannot do that unless you have the whole facts. I would not pass judgment on a newspaper report.

Mr. MOORE: The case is very fully reported in the paper.

Mr. PEASE: Is that O’Brien?

Mr. MOORE: Yes.

Mr. PEASE: He deserved ten years.

Mr. MOORE: That is just the point. Has any influence by the Government been directed towards the police magistrate? Because Mr. O’Brien was a candidate opposing the Secretary for Agriculture, why should he be victimised? That is just the remark that I expected from some hon. members opposite. There is just the suggestion that, because this man was opposed to a Minister of the Crown, he did not get the justice that he was entitled to. The Attorney-General says that he will not miss the £10. That is not the point at all. The hon. member for Herbert says he deserved ten years.

Mr. PEASE: I know him.

Mr. MOORE: Because he was opposed to the Minister?

Mr. PEASE: Not because of that.

Mr. MOORE: It appears to me to be a very rough sentence for something that occurred at an election meeting.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was not a sentence. This was a civil action.

Mr. MOORE: Call it what you like; the man was fined. He had very rowdy election meetings, and there were organised attempts at interruption wherever he tried to speak.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is quite untrue, and you know it to be untrue.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know it to be untrue. I believe it to be true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Belief is not evidence.

Mr. MOORE: We have a definite statement here on which the action was based. There is a very definite statement, and I do

[Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

not think the Secretary for Agriculture himself would say that it was a very dreadful statement to make. It seems to be a very severe fine to impose upon a man for a remark made at an election meeting.

Mr. HYNES: I understand that there is something more in the case than what appears in the press. You want to read the depositions.

Mr. MOORE: I have a press report here of the proceedings in the police court. Witnesses were called to depose to the words which were specifically objected to. It was a very severe sentence. What I want to obtain from the Minister is, Was there any suggestion that, because this man happened to be a political adversary of a Minister, he was victimised in this manner? He did not seem to get justice.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you reflecting on the integrity of the magistrate?

Mr. MOORE: I am not, but I have every right to criticise him. A magistrate is not sacrosanct.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are expected to be truthful, though.

Mr. MOORE: I am truthful.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Your statement is the reverse of truthful. You have no right to criticise a magistrate on a report appearing in the press.

Mr. MOORE: I have my rights as a member of this Chamber, and as Leader of the Opposition. I am quoting the case from the newspaper reports.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Your inferences are indecent.

Mr. MOORE: I make no inferences. I said that I wanted to know whether this was right. In my opinion, it was wrong.

Mr. PEASE: He had the right of appeal if he was not satisfied.

Mr. MOORE: He has the right of appeal, but what prospect has he of appealing against someone with a bottomless pocket?

Mr. PEASE: You refer to Mr. Bradley; he knows all about it.

Mr. HYNES: He had the National Union behind him, with their hundreds of thousands of pounds. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: If the hon. member for Townsville only knew the stupidity of his remark, he would not make it, for there was not a "bob" in the treasury of the National Union, yet he talks about hundreds of thousands of pounds!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. PEASE: Bradley had plenty of money to spend.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What about the gentleman you took up North with you during the by-election?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: What I am objecting to, and what seems to me to be unfair, is the harsh sentence passed on the man. I want to ascertain from the Minister whether there is any suggestion that, because this man was a political opponent, he was fined a greater amount than he otherwise would have been. It is an unfair position.

Mr. PEASE: He has the right of appeal.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was damages that were awarded.

Mr. MOORE: The remark was perfectly harmless. I am at a loss to see the least damage that was done to the individual.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are trying the case.

Mr. MOORE: I am not. I am criticising the judgment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are taking an ex parte view, and giving a verdict.

Mr. MOORE: I am not. I am quoting the remarks attributed to the man.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You admit that you have not the facts?

Mr. MOORE: I can read the words that were published.

Mr. DASH: In what paper?

Mr. MOORE: The "Mackay Mercury."

Mr. PEASE: A good old Tory paper.

Mr. MOORE: It does not matter what it is; it is a perfectly legitimate paper. On the evidence the verdict was excessive. If the Minister was not here when I read the words, I will do so again.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I heard all you said.

Mr. MOORE: This is the evidence—

"There is a certain man in the audience here to-night who runs a billiard-room not far from where I sleep; what right has he to come here and interject and try to break up my meeting? What stake has he in the country?"

There is nothing one can take exception to in that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have not all the evidence there.

Mr. MOORE: According to the newspaper, those are the words that he was prosecuted for.

Mr. HARTLEY: No court would accept that clipping as evidence.

Mr. MOORE: I do not say that it was evidence.

Mr. HARTLEY: Then you have no evidence.

Mr. MOORE: I have the evidence of the press as to the words that were used.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: From the evidence of the press, I cannot see anything in the remarks that is likely to do harm to the plaintiff?

Mr. PEASE: Why did he not appeal?

Mr. MOORE: He had no money to appeal.

Mr. PEASE: Bradley had thousands of pounds.

Mr. MOORE: Mr. Bradley was not being sued. Mr. Bradley was not connected with the incident.

Mr. PEASE: Mr. Bradley was with him.

Mr. MOORE: I beg to differ from the hon. member. He knows perfectly well, if he knows anything—I doubt whether he knows much—that Mr. Bradley had nothing to do with the matter.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member for Herbert would say anything.

Mr. MOORE: I am merely bringing the facts of the case before the Attorney-General.

*Mr. Moore.]*

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The trouble is that you have not quoted the whole of it by any means. The case was continued for a period, and a further report appeared in the paper. You are quoting only half of it.

Mr. MOORE: Whatever the further report was, those are the words which were alleged to be defamatory. That man was fined £10, and it seems to me that the fine was excessive and that there was a certain amount of political spleen in the matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I am really amazed at the attitude adopted to-night by a responsible member of this Chamber such as the Leader of the Opposition. It is simply astounding that a man in the position of the hon. member should bring the courts of justice—(Opposition laughter).

Mr. BRAND: Injustice!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Into the arena of party politics. Here is an hon. member who, ten minutes ago, received this screed from one of his supporters—a screed from the "Mackay Mercury," locally known as the "Mackay Muckery"—getting up and making these astounding statements. I am not conversant with the case, and am not here to pass judgment on it. The Leader of the Opposition is not in possession of the facts and is not competent to judge. I want to hurl back in the teeth of the Leader of the Opposition the dirty insinuation he made that the police magistrate in Mackay was influenced in his judgment by this party. Since I have been Attorney-General—and that is seven years—no police magistrate has received any suggestion from this party as to how he should act. Every magistrate has had a free and untrammelled right to do as he thought fit. I have had to stand up to a good deal of criticism from the press and elsewhere because of certain decisions from different police magistrates, but, in spite of that criticism, I believe in the main the decisions of the police magistrates have been sound. I have sufficient confidence in Mr. Gallagher, the Police Magistrate at Mackay, to believe that, when all the facts in this case have been investigated, his decision will be found to have been sound.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is a man with a long and meritorious service.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I desire to say quite frankly that, so far as I can judge in connection with Mr. Gallagher's association and record, no man can accuse him of ever being a Labour man. I do not say that to the discredit of the man, but now that the question of politics has been raised in connection with the courts of justice—a base thing for the Leader of the Opposition to do—I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Gallagher has never been associated with the Labour party or regarded as a supporter of that party.

Mr. KELSO: Has he ever been a supporter of the National party?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not prepared to say that.

Mr. KELSO: Then you are judging without being in possession of the facts of the case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not stupid enough to judge the case without having the facts. I am quite prepared to

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make an inquiry, and the Leader of the Opposition would have been wise had he asked me to make an inquiry and made no further comment. It is astounding that the Leader of the Opposition should rise, after five minutes' consideration of a screed that appeared in the provincial press, and suggest that the Government have been guilty of political interference with justice, by influencing a police magistrate. The hon. member would have been fired out on his head from some Parliaments for making such a gross charge.

Mr. MORGAN: Don't get excited.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not prepared to judge the case without knowing the facts, and until the contrary has been proved I am prepared to support the decision of the police magistrate, who is in a responsible position. No person would be allowed to make an attack on a judge under cover of the Estimates, and he should not be permitted to make an attack on a police magistrate. I am surprised at the Leader of the Opposition for doing such a thing.

[9.30 p.m.]

No wonder his party are in opposition, and, so long as men in that position adopt such despicable methods, so long will they remain in opposition.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Mr. Cooper—

Mr. HYNES: Are you sorry?

Mr. MOORE: Sorry! What for? The Attorney-General only proved what I have said, that no political candidate will have the right to reply to interjectors. He is placed in the position that, if he is holding a meeting, no matter how much he is interrupted or what insults are hurled at him, if he replies, he will be liable to be taken to court for a harmless interjection and fined. It is not right that a member of Parliament should be placed in such a position. We all know what we have to put up with at political meetings. We know that a certain amount of license is allowed to people to interject, and I certainly think a candidate should not be placed in such a position.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: This is a most serious thing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is a most scandalous charge.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss the rights of candidates under this vote.

Mr. MOORE: The position is a most serious one. I brought this up with a very definite purpose of ventilating what I consider to be a wrong. I have here a definite case, and I am perfectly prepared to accept the definite printed statement which appears in a responsible paper.

Mr. HYNES: An irresponsible paper.

Mr. MOORE: The mere fact of the Attorney-General getting up and calling it a "Muckery" does not prove that the paper is bad.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It does not prove that it is right.

Mr. MOORE: This is a responsible paper, and I am perfectly willing to accept what is printed in it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are deciding the case on a printed report.

Mr. MOORE: I am prepared to take what is printed in this paper as the record of the court, because I know how careful newspapers have to be.

Item (Courts of Petty Sessions) agreed to.

#### ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

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

“That £14,621 be granted for ‘Electoral Registration.’”

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I have a matter that I wish to bring forward in regard to a happening at the last elections. The day after the elections two lady voters in my electorate were notified that they had not recorded their votes, and they were asked for an explanation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That case is really sub judice, as a prosecution may follow.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not wish to bring it before the Committee, and the only reason I am bringing the matter forward is that it is three months now since the incident occurred, and I have not yet been informed as to what has happened in that case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I can tell you what has happened.

Mr. MORGAN: I am satisfied so long as the matter is being fully investigated, but I think I should have received some information from the department as to how things are going.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I should like to inform the hon. member that, when we received his letters, we immediately took the matter up and wrote to the man concerned to make inquiries. The person who was charged by the ladies referred to was absent through illness, and it took some time to get a letter through. Now we have received a reply from that individual with which we are not by any means satisfied, and we have sent back again to the returning officer for a further report from him, and instructing him to interview the ladies mentioned and get statements from them. When these come to hand we shall be in a position to decide the matter. The hon. member for *Murilla*, if he so desires, can see the papers in connection with the matter in the department at any time, but I advise him to allow the matter to stand at this stage, because it may yet lead to a prosecution.

Mr. MORGAN: Thank you very much. I don't want to go any further.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I would like to ask the Minister if he has any evidence of any plural voting at the last election, and, if so, whether he intends to take action with regard to it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I have no definite evidence of plural voting. The only evidence I have is that in a surprisingly small number of cases returning officers gave the usual returns to the effect that certain electors appeared to have voted twice, but it does not follow from that that they have done so; in fact, from the inquiries made all the evidence goes to show that it was an error on the part of the poll clerks in

checking off the wrong names. On that evidence we could not sue anybody. The number of votes affected in regard to the whole of the State is surprisingly small.

Mr. CLAYTON: Thank you.

Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*): It would be very interesting to discuss for a few minutes the question of the representation, or want of representation, as regards the rolls. I find that the enrolment of the electors on 9th April, 1926, was 478,302, and the number of adults in Queensland on 31st March, 1926, was 472,171. The number on the Commonwealth roll on 30th April, 1926, was 449,061. It will be noticed that there is a great disparity between the number on the Commonwealth roll in April this year, 449,061, as compared with the number on the roll in Queensland at practically about the same time—9th April, 1926—namely, 478,302.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know the reason for that, of course. A large number of people cannot get on the Federal roll because they have not lived sufficiently long in any one place.

Mr. KELSO: The figures show that at the 1926 election the enrolment exceeded the total number of adults in Queensland by 6,131, which is rather anomalous. The main cause of this trouble probably is the fact that the Elections Act of 1915, section 32 (3), provides that an objection to enrolment on the ground that an elector does not live in the district cannot succeed unless it also shows that the person objected to—firstly, does not live in Queensland, and secondly, has obtained enrolment for some other district. It is very difficult to prove the first ground, and also the second, because very often a person uses a different name to get on the roll. I would like to emphasise the distribution of the electors. We know that after the election the Attorney-General published a statement in the press which was no doubt satisfactory from the point of view of the Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was never challenged, and you cannot challenge it now. You may criticise it, but you cannot challenge it.

Mr. KELSO: I want to deal with the matter as far as possible without any heat. The Electoral Districts Act of 1910 provides for a quota, as hon. members know, of one-seventy-second of the total enrolment, and also a margin of one-fifth above and below the quota. When the Act was brought into operation it was intended that an advantage should be given to the country electorates—that is to say, all city electorates were to be above the quota, and country electorates were to be below the quota. The rolls for the 1926 election disclose the official quota to be 6,643.

We find the following result:—

Above the quota—

Opposition	... 20 out of 29 seats.
Government	... 18 out of 43 seats.

Below the quota—

Opposition	... 9 seats.
Government	... 25 seats.

I am pointing out a disparity which I think should be rectified in the near future, and I want to impress on the Attorney-General that he should move in this connection.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You might not like my move.

Mr. KELSO: We want the thing done according to the Elections Act. Allowing for

*Mr. Kelso.]*

the statutory margin, we get the following result:—

Above the maximum—		
Opposition ...	...	10
Government ...	...	3
Below the minimum—		
Opposition ...	...	1
Government ...	...	12
		26

In April last there were twenty-six electorates, over one-third of the total, outside the legal statutory limits. If the Attorney-General does not think the time is ripe for action, let him consider those figures.

But let me quote some more figures to prove my argument. The average number of electors was as follows:—

Opposition electorates ...	...	7,328
Government electorates ...	...	6,180
Difference per seat ...	...	1,148

Now let us take the polling figures, allowing for the few Independent candidates and counting their votes for the party they declared for, because it is pretty well known which party an Independent would vote for. In the sixty-three contested seats—this is the true test which shows the will of the people—the following was the result:—

	Votes.	Seats.
Opposition ...	189,830	26
Government ...	186,706	37

So that, while the Opposition secured a majority of 3,124 votes, the Government secured a majority of eleven seats. Is that not a sufficient anomaly to warrant some action? Allowing for the other nine seats proportionately to the results at the last contested election, the figures still leave a majority for the Opposition. (Government laughter.) I can remember the sort of cock-a-hoop way in which the Attorney-General put in the papers a statement that the Labour party got a majority at the last election.

Now let me quote the individual figures. As I have said, the total for Labour was 186,706 votes, and they got forty-three seats.

Mr. WEIR: How many unopposed?

Mr. KELSO: Never mind how many were unopposed. (Government laughter.) The true test is to be found in the contested seats, where electors had a chance to show exactly what they wanted. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, if the other seats were treated in the same way, the balance would be still greater in favour of our side. The Attorney-General knows as well as anybody else that, at election time, if you have a majority and more seats are contested, the tendency is to make your majority bigger. The Opposition got 189,830 votes, but only twenty-nine seats. Is not such an unequal distribution of seats disgraceful?

I do not know what your practice is Mr. Cooper, but I have some statistics that I would like inserted in "Hansard" without being read.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to read his statistics.

Mr. KELSO: I have no objection to reading them. These are the figures—

[Mr. Kelso.

## ELECTIONS, 1926.

Results in the sixty-three contested electorates, allowing the few Independent candidates' votes to the party declared for—

	Labour Votes.	Opposition Votes.
Albert ...	2,152	4,736
Aubigny ...	1,700	3,877
Balonne ...	2,271	1,721
Bowen ...	3,273	2,410
Bremer ...	3,888	1,988
Brisbane ...	2,723	1,832
Bulimba ...	5,512	3,663
Bundaberg ...	4,158	2,844
Buranda ...	3,971	2,619
Burnett ...	2,283	3,763
Burrum ...	2,713	3,311
Cairns ...	4,544	2,302
Carnarvon	2,607	3,054
Charters Towers ...	2,251	1,365
Chillagoe ...	2,537	1,222
Cook ...	2,422	1,487
Cunningham	1,779	3,974
Dalby ...	1,842	3,529
Eacham ...	2,965	2,794
East Toowoomba ...	2,369	3,827
Enoggera ...	3,463	5,485
Fitzroy ...	3,787	2,699
Flinders ...	1,342	695
Fortitude Valley ...	3,862	2,286
Gympie ...	2,795	2,108
Herbert ...	3,796	2,827
Ipswich ...	3,702	2,880
Ithaca ...	4,401	2,747
Kennedy ...	3,122	3,099
Kelvin Grove ...	3,882	3,267
Keppel ...	3,351	2,404
Kurilpa ...	2,861	3,556
Leichhardt	2,565	1,613
Lockyer ...	1,442	3,922
Logan ...	4,304	4,970
Mackay ...	3,448	1,883
Maranoa ...	2,514	2,072
Maree ...	3,467	3,395
Maryborough	3,628	2,490
Merthyr ...	3,666	3,448
Mirani ...	2,690	2,936
Mt. Morgan	2,581	1,310
Mundingburra ...	4,174	1,465
Murilla ...	1,934	2,573
Murrumba	1,699	4,326
Nanango ...	2,066	3,910
Normanby	1,826	2,389
Nundah ...	3,353	4,860
Oxley ...	3,592	5,479
Queenton ...	2,069	1,635
Port Curtis	2,945	2,769
Rockhampton ...	3,038	1,473
Rosewood	3,422	2,518
Sandgate ...	3,185	4,739
South Brisbane ...	3,006	2,907
Stanley ...	2,171	3,699
Toowong ...	2,583	5,488
Toowoomba	3,816	2,911
Townsville	2,903	1,617
Warwick ...	2,708	3,261
Wide Bay	1,567	4,392
Windsor ...	3,193	4,468
Wynnum ...	2,777	4,456
Total votes	186,706	189,830
Seats	37	26

Let me make a few contrasts to prove my argument. The following table shows the number of electors on the various electorates

represented by the Government and the Opposition:—

GOVERNMENT.		No. on Roll.
Brisbane	...	5,907
South Brisbane	...	6,759
Paddington	...	6,849
Ithaca	...	7,880
Kelvin Grove	...	7,845

OPPOSITION.		No. on Roll.
Logan	...	9,965
Windsor	...	8,417
Toowong	...	8,967
Oxley	...	9,903
Sandgate	...	8,842

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What does this prove?

Mr. KELSO: It proves that in many electorates represented by hon. members opposite the number of electors was far less than the

number in electorates represented by members of the Opposition. In many cases the maximum allowance of 20 per cent. above the quota was exceeded in the electorates represented by the Opposition—

GOVERNMENT.		No. on Roll.
Ipswich	...	7,153
Rockhampton	...	5,322
Townsville	...	5,301
Mackay	...	6,044
Gympie	...	5,307
Bowen	...	6,401
Balonne	...	5,116
Barcoo	...	5,786
Bremer	...	6,308
Burke	...	4,278
Charters Towers	...	4,123
Chillagoe	...	4,722
Cook	...	4,594
Flinders	...	2,730
Gregory	...	3,914
Leichhardt	...	5,028
Maranoa	...	5,373
Mitchell	...	4,973
Queenton	...	4,337
Warrego	...	4,931

OPPOSITION.		No. on Roll.
Nundah	...	8,938
Enoggera	...	9,679
Toombul	...	8,023
Mirani	...	6,425
Nanango	...	7,033
Cooroora	...	8,529
Albert	...	7,748
Burnett	...	6,763
Burrum	...	6,785
Carnarvon	...	6,494
Dalby	...	6,292
Cunningham	...	6,285
Aubigny	...	6,062
Fassifern	...	6,710
Normanby	...	4,820
Stanley	...	6,596
Murrumba	...	6,935
Murilla	...	5,399
Lockyer	...	5,757
Wide Bay	...	6,732

Hon. members will have an opportunity of perusing this table at their leisure. They will see that the Labour party have so fixed the electorates that in many instances they represent electorates containing many less voters than electorates represented by members of the Opposition.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: How did we get here?

Mr. KEER: By gerrymandering the rolls.

Mr. KELSO: I have already shown that on the total number of votes cast at the recent election we had a majority of votes.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN said: Under the provisions of Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 29th July and 12th October, I shall now leave the chair, and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

The House adjourned at 9.57 p.m.