

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER, 1927

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER, 1927.

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

QUESTIONS.**COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF KINBOMBI STATE SCHOOL.**

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

“1. What was the cost of the construction of the Kinbombi State School?”

“2. What are the dimensions of this school?”

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

“1. £665 2s. 4d., including furniture.

“2. The dimensions are twenty-nine (29) feet ten (10) inches by twenty-six (26) feet ten (10) inches.”

ANAKIE GEM FIELD—SALES AND GOVERNMENT BUYING MONOPOLY.

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

“1. What were the total recorded sales of precious stones from the Anakie field for each of the years 1909 to 1921, inclusive?”

"2. In what year did the Government monopoly of buying come into operation, and what has been the amount of purchases and sales respectively in each year under the Government scheme?"

"3. On what date did the Government cease buying, and is the prohibition of private buying still in force?"

"4. If so, what are the Government's intentions in this matter?"

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

"1. Production (including sales); no record of actual sales:—

	£
1909	23,116
1910	21,200
1911	24,393
1912	40,016
1913	43,292
1914	15,800
1915	600
1916	14,733
1917	14,208
1918	16,591
1919	42,883
1920	65,831
1921	45,524"

"2. The year 1921.

Year.	Purchases.			Sales.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1920-21-22 ..	34,650	19	7	38,285	13	6
1922-23 ..	20,230	19	7	Nil		
1923-24 ..	14,342	6	10	14,840	6	7
1924-25 ..	28,777	10	10	8,321	18	5
1925-26 ..	24,001	13	2	18,687	16	8
1926-27 ..	Nil			15	10	3

"3. 27th March, 1926; yes.

"4. Matter under consideration."

QUANTITIES AND VALUES OF COMMONWEALTH PRODUCE AND MANUFACTURES CONSUMED IN QUEENSLAND SUGAR DISTRICTS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Premier—

"With a view of indicating to residents in other parts of Australia the benefit accruing to all through the successful carrying on of the Queensland sugar industry, will he cause the necessary steps to be taken for the collection of information as to the quantities and value of the produce and manufactured articles from other portions of the Commonwealth that are consumed in our sugar districts?"

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

"No records are kept from which it would be possible to obtain the information asked for."

RELIEF OF CATTLE GRAZERS IN DROUGHT-STRICKEN AREAS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. As suggested in recent correspondence between us on the subject, are any steps being taken to ascertain the most effective way in which to relieve those cattle graziers who have suffered serious loss owing to drought conditions?"

"2. If so, what are they?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Maackay*) replied—

"1 and 2. The intentions of the Government on this matter will be announced by the Premier in due course."

CIRCULATION OF PREMIER'S SPEECH ON SOUTH JOHNSTONE STRIKE AND SUSPENSION OF RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Can he inform the House at whose expense a copy of his speech, of 6th September, on the strike situation is now being broadcast throughout Queensland?"

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

"At my own expense." (Laughter.)

PAPERS.

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

Report from the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers for the year ended 30th June, 1927.

Sixteenth Annual Report of the University of Queensland for the year 1926.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Amendment to Regulation 23 of By-law No. 212, under section 134 of the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1926.

Amendment rescinding clause No. 37 of By-law No. 212, relative to employment, etc., in the railway service under section 134 of the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1926.

RECIPROCAL ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENTS BILL.

INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to facilitate the reciprocal enforcement of judgments and awards in the State of Queensland and in the United Kingdom and other parts of His Majesty's Dominions or territories under His Majesty's protection, and for other purposes."

Question put and passed.

MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to further amend the Mining Acts in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—SECOND ALLOTTED DAY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Maskay*): Before proceeding to deal with various matters which have arisen in this debate, I wish to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on the able manner in which they applied themselves to their subject.

The Speech as a whole and the policy outlined in it are an indication of and give a good deal of information with regard to the present position in Queensland. The disastrous drought, which has continued for a long period, has seriously affected the finances of the State, and is affecting every industry in the State. These results go to show how important primary production is to Queensland, and how bad conditions in any one industry affect all interests in the community. It is necessary for us as a State and as a Government to apply ourselves to these difficulties with care, and, if possible, to devise some method of dealing with them, or at least of mitigating the losses that result from them. An indication of the serious effect on the State is the reduction in exports last year, which amounted to approximately £12,000,000. The withdrawal of that sum from circulation has a serious effect on every one in the State. It means that there is so much less purchasing power in the community, and it affects industry in countless different ways, it closes avenues for employment, and prevents the extension of industry.

I mention these things to indicate the necessity that Parliament and the Government should seriously consider these difficulties, and that the people themselves should fully understand them. It will be necessary to investigate closely every item of expenditure, and to devise ways and means of carrying on the functions of the State within the capacity of the State. Consequently, no matter how we may regret it, it will be necessary to delay for at least a period some of the necessary measures of social reform which would cost a good deal of money. These things cannot be undertaken at the present time, and any impartial investigator must realise that. What is required is a serious and close attention to affairs, with a view to maintaining those standards and conditions that have been built up as a result of the legislation and administration of the past twelve years.

The Leader of the Opposition, in the course of his speech, dealt at length with the industrial position at South Johnstone and with industrial matters generally. No one would seek to under-estimate the importance of industrial conditions to any State. If wealth production is going to expand, or if we are to endeavour to increase the prosperity of the people, it is necessary, so far as is possible, to devise ways and means whereby industry will be maintained and industrial operations carried out as free from interruption as possible. There were certain indications in the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition that showed that he has not made himself fully acquainted with the position. His outline of the genesis of the trouble at South Johnstone indicated faulty information. His statement with regard to certain incidents that occurred in that area also indicates that he did not make himself

acquainted with the facts. I followed very closely the industrial position in Queensland, and, so far as it was possible, as Acting Premier at the time I endeavoured to prevent industrial trouble occurring, and where it did occur I endeavoured to have it settled, or at least localised, so far as it was possible. In connection with the sugar industry, that is of tremendous importance, because under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government, apart altogether from any other economic consideration, it is necessary that we maintain a continuous supply of sugar for the rest of the people of Australia; and consequently the Government of Queensland had at all times to have before its mind the necessity of preventing a general spread of industrial trouble involving other sugar-mills of the State, and thereby affecting to some extent the terms of the agreement. In connection with industrial relations, it must always be borne in mind that there is more than one factor in industry, and that wise men in controlling business and industries generally endeavour to secure the co-operation of all the units necessary to carry on those industries.

In the sugar industry the only trouble of an important character that has taken place was in the South Johnstone area, and that was at the change-over from State control to co-operative control. I want to emphasise that at the same period other sugar-mills were taken over exactly under the same conditions without any difficulty resulting; and, if a little more discretion had been used on the part of those who assumed control of the South Johnstone mill, many of their difficulties would never have arisen. For months prior to the new company taking over that organisation statements of various kinds were in circulation all over North Queensland. From Atherton on the Tableland down to Bundaberg you could hear the intentions of the new directorate being discussed. Whatever those intentions might have been, or however justified they might have been, it is never a good thing to be always talking about what people intend to do. I am satisfied that, if the new company had met the men in a more friendly attitude in the beginning when they took over the mill, and said, for example, that they desired under the new control to secure the full co-operation of all to make the enterprise a success, better conditions would have been established, and at least a better understanding brought about. In my own district, when the North Eton mill was taken over, the chairman of directors carried on the entire staff for whom there was work available. They were met in a friendly manner, and their co-operation sought. The result was that no difficulty eventuated. In effect, he said, "We are taking over this mill, and desire to make it a success as a co-operative venture, and to make it a success we desire the co-operation of everyone engaged in the industry. In short, if the staff give us a fair deal, we in turn are prepared to give them the best deal that we can." That attitude of mind was shown at the North Eton mill and at the Farleigh mill. In the case of the Farleigh mill under co-operative control, by discretion and by the wise exercise of authority, the directorate of that enterprise is making a greater success of the mill and getting a better return than was the case under private enterprise in the past.

Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

I wish to allude more particularly to statements made by the Leader of the Opposition, based on newspaper statements in the early stages of the dispute at South Johnstone. I personally have been attacked in the press in connection with the activities of the Government in that respect. I am not at all concerned about that, but I draw attention to it because of the fact that certain statements were circulated throughout Australia which gave the people of Australia an entirely wrong idea of what the position was in that part of Queensland. Certain things took place at South Johnstone that were deplorable. Certain things took place that no one would attempt to justify. We must remember, however, that the local conditions in that area are different to those prevailing in almost any other part of Queensland; and we know also that the police in that area had a very difficult task to perform. I say as a member of the Government that the police carried out their duty with tact and discretion, and with the fullest appreciation of the public interest. I say, further, that the attacks which were made on the Government in that respect were not due to any dereliction on the part of the Government from their duty, and were not due to any dereliction on the part of the police in the carrying out of their duty; but were due to the fact that our critics desired, not that the police should exercise their functions in a proper manner in protecting life and property and in maintaining law and order, but with a desire on their part that the police should have been used against the men who were participating in the strike. That, basically, is the true reason we were attacked. Our opponents were not so anxious that law and order should be maintained or that the police should do their duty, as they were anxious that the police should be used as an instrument of the Government to bludgeon and baton the men back to work under conditions that they were not prepared to accept. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. MAXWELL: That is untrue.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is entirely the position. No one knows better than the hon. member for Toowong that that is the desire which animates some of the people who are supporters of him and his party. The Leader of the Opposition quoted from the daily press a statement having reference to the activities of the police in that area. We secured a report from the Police Department relative to a statement in Brisbane papers alleging that Sergeant Tuohy had asked strikers to give safe passage to a man leaving the South Johnstone mill for Innisfail. This is Sergeant Tuohy's report, dated 20th July, 1927:—

"I beg to report that there is no truth whatever in the report published in the Brisbane papers alleging that I asked the strikers to give a safe passage to a man leaving the mill for Innisfail. I have not asked the men on strike at South Johnstone at any time to give a safe passage to any man leaving the South Johnstone mill.

"Police duty has, and is, being performed impartially, and all persons entitled to and desiring police protection afforded it."

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.

This report was minuted by Mr. Brosnan, Chief Inspector of Police, who was at Innisfail at the time, as follows:—

"Forwarded in continuation of my telegram to you this morning. Police are doing excellent work at South Johnstone, and Sergeant Tuohy, with Constable Selby, figure prominently in that direction . . . any traducers to the contrary notwithstanding."

Yet we have a member of Parliament in the important position of the Leader of the Opposition quoting a statement from the press affecting the integrity and administration of the Police Department without endeavouring to verify the facts. Had the Leader of the Opposition called at my office, I would have been prepared to let him see the official documents affecting the position. Can he not realise that the inference to be drawn from his remarks is a serious reflection on the administration of the police of this State, and have an important bearing on the carrying out of the law of this State? I venture to suggest that before making statements of that kind members of the Opposition should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the facts. I have said often that the statements appearing in the press at that time were exaggerated, that being due not so much to the reports from the reporters on the spot as to the manner in which the information was set up and headlined in the local press. I venture to say that the articles based on those distortions were more calculated to provoke trouble in Queensland than any other form of activity. A section of the Brisbane press which particularly supports the Opposition never fails to misrepresent the position if by so doing it can in any way reflect upon the Government of to-day. (Opposition dissent.) I am putting forward this position clearly and definitely, and I say that people charged with responsibility should know better than to foment difficulties by exaggerations under conditions such as I have quoted.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Do you suggest that the photographs were faked?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In further emphasis of what I have stated, I wish to quote from a letter received by Mr. Short, General Manager, Bureau of Central Sugar Mills, from Mr. Gillan, manager of the South Johnstone Co-operative Milling Association, Limited, South Johnstone. Hon. members will know that, in compliance with the provisions of certain Acts of Parliament, the managements of the various sugar-mills in Queensland are required to forward reports of their operations to the Government, and the letter which I am about to quote was received under those circumstances. It reads—

"We are forwarding to-day our up-to-date chemical sheet, and appreciate very much your forbearance in this matter.

"The newspapers have reported that we are working two ten-hour shifts, and also making detrimental comparisons regarding previous work at this mill. Both statements are incorrect.

"I take it for granted you will ignore such newspaper reports, or refer them to me for explanation."

The statements of the Police Department and the mill management which I have quoted prove definitely that public opinion was being whipped up, and an atmosphere created by certain journalists in Queensland who had

purposes of their own to serve. Reference is often made to inflammatory speeches on the part of certain individuals, but I venture to say that some of the leading articles that appear in such journals as the Brisbane "Telegraph" are more dangerous to the maintenance of industrial peace than anything else that can be done. As one having considerable experience in industrial matters, I am satisfied that the circulation of many of the statements that I have refuted did more to intensify the bitterness and prolong the trouble at South Johnstone than any other cause that I can mention.

[11 a.m.]

A further testimony is a statement made by Mr. Donald Mackinnon, an ex-Minister in the State of Victoria, and also until recently Australian High Commissioner in the United States of America. Mr. Mackinnon, who has never at any time been connected with the Labour Party, and who is a man of undoubted probity and character, writing to the Melbourne "Argus" had many interesting comments to make. So intense and difficult was the situation created by the press statements to which I have alluded that Senator Crawford, a member of the Federal Ministry, found it necessary to make a statement in Melbourne to alleviate the alarm that had been created in public opinion; and it was following on that that Mr. Mackinnon said this—

"I am glad to see Senator Crawford's official statement this morning with regard to the conditions at the South Johnstone mill. It will serve to clear away some misapprehension in the minds of the public of the Southern States. I returned from a winter holiday in the Innisfail district last week. The sugar belt, from Townsville to Cairns, so far from being a scene of wild lawlessness and anarchy, as some would have us believe, is at the moment the most heartening part of Australia that any Australian can look upon. Nowhere can the same rural energy be seen—the fertile land oozing wealth, the busy farmers breaking in their fields and renewing their crops, the cancutters slashing down their abundant harvest, the fussy tramway engines dragging long lines of canal-laden trolleys through the fields to the nearest mill, where, working twenty-four hours a day with three shifts, elaborate machinery and contented workers are squeezing out Australia's sugar. Our country can nowhere show the same spectacle of man-directed energy. Nowhere in the world is the white man handling tropical production with such success. As Senator Crawford says, South Johnstone mill is only one among many; it is the only mill that is having trouble."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Proceeding further, Mr. MacKinnon says—

"As for lawlessness, except as herein-after mentioned, one saw no evidence of it, less than one would expect in a community which contains a large foreign element, and in which racial animosity could be easily excited. The trouble arises from the uncertainty in the delimitation of the boundary lines of justifiable picketing. Australia is not the only country which is worked by the scope of legitimate picketing."

Mr. MacKinnon made this further interesting statement—

"The railways on the North Coast line are well run; they are punctual, comfortable to sleep in, and the civility and attention of the railway staff and the pains they take to assist travellers are unequalled in any part of the world. I have pleasure in recording my personal experience in this feature, because it is so much in conflict with popular impression even as found in the Brisbane press. There is a big Australian responsibility on those who are building up this part of our country. It is our vulnerable frontier, and we must be watchful lest, through misconception, we do them an injustice and discourage them in their important responsibility."

A statement clear and definite from a man who had been right through the sugar districts of the State, an impartial observer, and one free from any political bias.

It is necessary to emphasise these quotations that I have made to indicate the difficulty that exists in any part of Australia in dealing with an industrial situation. When public opinion is aroused by statements not based on the facts, and in other cases upon distortions of the facts, the public verdict is liable to be given on impressions rather than upon facts. These are things that should be discounted in every possible way, because, when industrial disturbances arise, it is necessary that we should have a clear view of the situation, and so enable us to make up our minds entirely upon the facts as they exist; without passion, without prejudice, and without being based on the impressions of others. Now, the Leader of the Opposition, in the course of his speech, also expressed disappointment at the settlement of the recent industrial trouble so far as it affected the railways. It would be difficult to understand anyone being disappointed at the satisfactory culmination of an industrial dispute which, if it had continued for an indefinite period, would have seriously affected this State. I say it would be difficult to understand that, were it not for the fact that people must realise that there is a widespread difference between the attitude of the Opposition and the attitude of the Labour Party towards these matters. The Leader of the Opposition was disappointed that the powers of the unions had not been to some extent destroyed, and he is disappointed also because it is not proposed to introduce penal legislation following upon the industrial disturbance. In that connection I would like to call his attention to the futility of taking punitive action of that kind. If Governments and parties set out on a punitive expedition with a view to punishing people in certain directions further than is just and equitable, they are liable to establish new difficulties greater than those they seek to overcome.

In connection with picketing and all those things which were referred to in his speech, does the hon. gentleman know that those powers have been in operation since the 1870 Trade Union Act was passed in the British Houses of Parliament? Does he know that that form of activity exists in almost every part of the world? What is required is to endeavour so far as possible to limit the possibility of both strikes and lockouts, and to have industrial disputes settled on the basis of justice and equity.

Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

Those things do not always prevail. Some people at present—I have no doubt that many of the members of the Opposition subscribe to the idea—are liable to say that, because strikes take place in Queensland and in Australia, industrial arbitration has failed. I point out that that is not so. There is no evidence at all to support that contention, because, while we realise that strikes do take place in Australia, the public mind is focussed on them or upon failure to observe awards or refusal to accept them, to the entire neglect of the hundreds of awards which are observed and the thousands of workers who continue industrial operations throughout the year, accepting in the fullest detail everything laid down by the Arbitration Court.

There is no intention or desire on the part of the Government to penalise unionism in this State. While it may be necessary for the Government sometimes to come into conflict with industrial organisations who represent their employees—and it is necessary at all times for the Government to protect the public interest—that does not mean that the Government intend to hand over the unions to the tender mercies of the enemies of labour, who have been enemies of progress right throughout the ages. Industries unionism has played a very important part in the building up of civilisation. It plays a very important part in the life of Australia to-day, and therefore a very useful and necessary part; and it will continue to play such a part in social organisation.

It is not my intention to hold a post-mortem examination over any of the various phases of the dispute in the railway service. It is not my intention to refer to victories of either side. I want to say that the settlement effected between the Premier and the unions concerned was a victory for common sense and those who exercised it on both sides. It also indicates that the Labour movement has within its own organisation genius enough to solve its own problems as they arise, without interference or help from any outside organisation.

In dealing with industrial matters, it is well, however, to remember that at all times there have been contending schools of thought as to the form of activity in which the Labour movement should adopt. Years ago, when I commenced to take an interest and an active part in the Labour movement, an attitude of mind or a school of thought existed which believed in a form of revolutionary syndicalism. Revolutionary syndicalism had a European origin, and was due entirely to the causes and conditions which obtained in the place of its origin. The people who espoused that method may have had justification for it, because they may have had no other means of giving effect to their desires. The point I am wishing to make, however, is this—that the platform and constitution of the Australian Labour Party are the living expression of the genius of the Australian Labour people, and set out entirely and completely the desires and methods of our people. Because of that it has accomplished more than any Labour Party in any other part of the world. Although many of our methods may not be as spectacular as some people would like them to be, the test of time will show that the policy and methods adopted by the Australian Labour Party as a result of the experience and knowledge of Australian

Labour men is the best policy and constitution for the Australian Labour movement.

Syndicalism, to which I have referred, is now commonly known as Communism. I know that some people will say that there are differences. I understand those differences. The Communists in Queensland and Australia are a small but noisy minority, who at all times are carrying on a policy of intrigue with a view to securing control of the internal organisation of the various unions. It is necessary that the rank and file of the organisations should know these things, and should take an intelligent part in the administration of their own organisations, and so prevent the power of their unions being used to their permanent hurt. I say definitely that in a country like Australia anyone who advocates Communism is advocating a policy of despair, and is advocating something not only against the best interests of the country but against the best interests of the Australian Labour movement. That has been recognised to some extent when two Federal Labour conferences, representative of the whole of Australia, and the recent conference of the Queensland Labour Party at Southport, laid down in unmistakable terms the attitude of the Labour Party towards these things. After all is said and done, their claim is a claim that force can secure for them permanent reforms. I am one of those who, as the result of close and careful study of the whole position, believe that an attempt to use force, whilst it might secure temporary advantages, in the long run does not improve permanently the social system of any country. In that connection, I wish to quote from a book by Professor Harold Laski in which he makes a critical and scientific examination of Communism. I am quoting from a recent copy of the "Socialists' Review," an interesting production which it would pay hon. members to read. In dealing with Communism, Professor Laski says—

"The resort to violence, even if it be successful, means trusting the officials who control the application of violence. It does not mean liberty; it does not mean equality; and it does not mean justice. It means the despotic application of power by men whose intentions, however admirable, are the creatures of circumstances. The chance that the transformation of values so necessary to the attainment of justice will take place as a result of blood and iron is a very tenuous one. The barbarian invasions of Rome did not produce a great epoch of enlightenment; they produced the dark ages. The Thirty Years War impeded constructive effort in Germany until the threshold of the nineteenth century. The idealism of 1914 has perished before the greater strength of the destructive force released in the struggle. This is why it is permissible to doubt whether the method of violence is ever the midwife of justice. That wrong can be wiped out with wrong is a gospel to which we are not entitled to rest until we despair utterly of civilisation, and when we have resorted to it, it is possible that there will be no civilisation of which to despair.

" . . . Once the floodgates are opened, none can surely prophesy who will emerge from the disaster as leader. That is the risk men run when they desert

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

the path of reason and choose to prove for themselves by force, not their desire for truth but the truth of their desires."

That sums up very clearly and definitely my view with regard to Communism. All those who have made a careful study of the position have come to the conclusion that the activities and methods of the Australian Labour Party are the only activities and methods that bring about permanent advantages to the people they represent, and increase the liberty and happiness of the people of the country. Whatever might be said by the Leader of the Opposition with regard to this party, and whatever might be his disappointment in regard to the settlement of the recent industrial dispute, I have this to say:—No matter what the difficulties of the Labour Party might be, either now or at any future time, we will meet those difficulties as they arise in accordance with the principles I have just quoted.

The policy of Labour is calculated to improve the conditions of the people and increase the sum total of human happiness.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The sum total of the objections of the members of the Opposition is, as I say, because the power of the State was not exercised in a manner which would be to the disadvantage of labour and the disintegration of industrial unionism.

I come now to other features of Government policy that are of extreme importance. Reference has been made in the course of debate by various speakers, chiefly by the hon. member for Normanby, to the falling off of production, of the failure to do this, that, and the next thing. I realise to the full the difficult situation in the State and the difficult period we are going through and have yet to face; but I deplore very strongly the attitude of mind of members of the Opposition who always paint a doleful picture, and would lead people to believe that we were on the verge not of stagnation only but of bankruptcy in this State. While we realise that it is necessary to study our difficulties and endeavour to understand some of our failures, that is no reason why we should become pessimistic about Queensland. In various ways Queensland is carrying on her industries in a manner creditable to all engaged in them. We talk of efficiency. Take the sugar industry. The only part of the world where that industry is carried out by white labour and carried out successfully is in Australia. A ton of sugar is made out of less cane in Queensland than in any part of the world to-day. (Hear, hear!)

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

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): I beg to move—

"That the Secretary for Agriculture be allowed an extension of time in order to conclude his speech."

The SPEAKER: Is it the desire of hon. members that the Secretary for Agriculture be allowed an extension of time to conclude his speech?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I thank hon. members for their courtesy.

That efficient state of our sugar industry is very largely due to improvements which are the result of the activities of various departments. The Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations is continually carrying on research work with a view to improving the yield from sugar. The bureau has the entire confidence of the sugar-grower, with the result that improvements have been effected in methods of cultivation of a very far-reaching character. As a result, the sugar-mills in this State during the last few years have been built up until the result of their work compares more than favourably with similar factories in other countries of the world. Many of the advantages and improvements effected in the sugar industry are the result of the policy initiated by this Government in 1915, when an agreement was entered into between the then Premier, the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, and the Federal Prime Minister, who at that time was Mr. Fisher. From that date up to the present time various agreements have been entered into between the State and Federal Governments which have been of advantage to this industry, and also of advantage to the whole Commonwealth. That is a point which hon. members always ought to emphasise when dealing with the sugar industry. The protection given has not only helped the sugar industry, but has been beneficial to Australia as a whole. We, as a Government, have always taken the initiative in these matters, and we stand for a continuation of that policy. We, as a State Government, are in favour of the continuation of the sugar embargo, and will do everything possible to secure a renewal of it from the Federal Government.

The cattle industry was also mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, and in that connection I have received several deputations. The cattle industry of Queensland is in a most difficult position. Suggestions have been made from time to time in the matter of land tenure or remissions of rent; but, in my opinion, something more definite and far-reaching than that is required. The whole industry requires a complete reorganisation of an economic character, because, even if the land were given away, at the present time the cattle could not be bred and travelled to the meatworks at the price now offering. These matters are engaging the serious attention of the Government; and, as I say, a complete economic reorganisation is required if this industry is to be placed on a proper footing. I also would emphasise that, if and when that is done, the cattle industry of Queensland shall be built up and maintained as a great asset to the State. Having regard to the cattle areas of Australia and to the production in various parts of the world, it appears to me that there is ample evidence to indicate that, if the cattle industry is organised on a proper basis, then a bright future is in store for all concerned.

Another point emphasised in the Governor's Speech, and one which will be the subject of a Bill at a later stage, is the financial agreement with the Commonwealth Government. I had the honour to represent this State at various conferences held in connection with that matter, and I wish to say definitely that from the point of view of the Commonwealth of Australia, of which we are all a part, that agreement is quite satisfactory. We must remember—and this was the attitude of mind adopted by all the representatives at those conferences—that,

Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

while it is our duty primarily to represent our States and to see that no agreement is entered into to the disadvantage of the State we represent, we are all Australian citizens, and if a policy is formulated which, whilst being fair to the States, is also a sound Commonwealth policy, then our efforts should be directed to that end. Speaking generally, I say that was done. I commend the attention of Parliament to the agreement entered into, which I believe to be the best agreement that could be obtained under the circumstances, and which will be of advantage to Australia as a whole. Facts also have to be remembered in that regard. This Government claimed—and I think everyone who has examined the position will agree with the position—that the States had a moral right to the continuation of the per capita payments. I raised that point at the first conference, and we did not give way on our attitude with regard to that. The fact, however, remained that the Commonwealth Parliament had already legislated the per capita payments out of existence; that is to say, at the end of the financial year no further payments were to be made, and there was no further obligation statutory or otherwise on the Commonwealth Government to continue those payments. A recognition of those facts will show that the agreement entered into is something in lieu of the per capita payments, and, while over a period of years they will be to the financial advantage of the Commonwealth, the States have the advantage that for fifty-eight years there will be an assured financial policy instead of the position under the old condition of the Commonwealth Parliament being able at any time to abolish the per capita payments without any compensation to the States. In other words, stability of finance between the States and the Commonwealth is assured for a period of fifty-eight years; and, speaking generally, I am satisfied that the agree-

ment is of advantage to the States, whilst at the same time being a sound Australian policy.

Dealing with trade generally, I would like to call attention to the fact that over a four-year period ended 30th June, 1926, the adverse trade balance for the Commonwealth amounted to £33,227,923, whilst during the same period Queensland showed a favourable trading balance of no less than £32,242,090. During that same period New South Wales and Victoria showed adverse trade balances of £43,259,445 and £62,807,684 respectively, as compared with Queensland's favourable balance of £32,242,090.

All these things go to indicate that, while we have our difficulties and while we have our problems, we should not lose sight of the successes that have been accomplished. In

addition to that, it is well to [11.30 a.m.] bear in mind that Queensland is the third manufacturing State of the Commonwealth, and, furthermore, that our output per employee is the highest of any State of the Commonwealth, as is indicated by the following table:—

	Output per employee.
	£
Queensland	1,005
New South Wales	963
Victoria	767
South Australia	838
Western Australia	640
Tasmania	713

In addition to that, I wish to claim that the conditions of labour, the remuneration of labour, and the cost of living are more favourable to Queensland citizens than those of any other State. Let me give some of the index figures with regard to wages. They are very interesting, because they are an all-absorbing subject to those who are concerned with them:—

THE BASIC WAGE.

Capital City.	Index Number Food, Groceries, and Housing— All Houses for quarter ended 30th June, 1927.	Basic Wage necessary to equal £4 5s. at Brisbane.	Difference of equivalent rates in favour of Queensland Basic Wage.	Basic Wage at present applying.
Brisbane	1570	£ s. d. 4 5 0	£ s. d.	£ s. d. 4 5 0
Sydney	1803	4 17 7	0 12 7	*4 5 0
Melbourne	1754	4 15 0	0 10 0	4 7 0
Adelaide	1737	4 14 0	0 9 0	4 5 6
Perth	1612	4 7 3	0 2 3	4 5 0

* Man and wife.

In dealing with the basic wage, it is well to follow closely the following figures:—

1. The basic wage of £4 5s. was fixed by the court in March, 1921, on an index figure of 1637 for December, 1920.
2. The basic wage of £4 5s. was reduced by the court on 1st March, 1922, on an index figure of 1444.
3. In September, 1925, Parliament enacted in its entirety the 1921 basic wage finding of Chief Justice McCawley, which was fixed on an index figure of 1637.

4. The latest cost of living figures for the quarter ended 30th June, 1927, in respect of food, clothing, and rent—namely, 1570—indicate that, having regard to the index figure of 1637—on which Chief Justice McCawley's basic wage declaration of £4 5s. was based—the standard of living has improved since then to the extent of at least 3s. 6d., in addition to having a higher purchasing power than any other State.

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

I have endeavoured to deal with some of the main points that are of interest in this debate. I have shown that under difficult circumstances the Government are carrying out their duty to the people of this State. We intend to continue that policy, and it is to be hoped that the difficult situation that we are now going through as the result of the adverse conditions due to the drought shall not be unduly prolonged, and that the people of Queensland shall soon be blessed with a return to bounteous seasons.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): A French writer once said "He who excuses himself accuses himself"; and what we have listened to from the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat indicates that the Government are responsible for the state of anarchy that recently prevailed in one very important centre in Queensland. Could anything much worse than the condition of things that prevailed at South Johnstone for a period of fourteen weeks have been found anywhere? There was a sugar-mill trying to carry out its functions in accordance with the law, but, because of an illegal strike, those who were working in the mill had to submit to insult, and in some cases to violence. The drivers of the locomotives were stoned off their trains.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Where?

Mr. SWAYNE: In Innisfail. I have it from an eye-witness there, as well as from newspaper reports. Furthermore, the farmers in endeavouring to harvest their crops were subjected to insults and threats as well as to violence. I do not think anything could be more significant, in this connection than the utterances of the industrial magistrate. Mr. Aitken says:—

"It does not redound to the credit of this district that such industrial unrest should go on."

Mr. C. J. RYAN: There is nothing in that statement.

Mr. SWAYNE: At any rate, we know that those who were carrying on what the Minister has pointed out is one of the most important industries in the State were hampered and subjected to violence. I know that is so from those who were there, and I have seen pictures which prove that these things were done to persons who were guilty of nothing worse than attempting to carry out their peaceful avocations. I know of an instance where men had to take refuge in a farmer's house, covered with blood and in a state of abject fright. I have photographs—I know that we cannot have them printed in "Hansard"—of one man being pursued by a dozen, his shirt torn off his back, of men being pulled off trains, and of a train of cane trucks with a policeman on duty at the rear guarding them. Some of these trucks were capsized and the cane upset. These are the conditions that have been going on for about fourteen weeks, yet the Minister who has just spoken had the hardihood to say that the Government had not the means of preventing them. He said he had no power under the Industrial Arbitration Act, but, if that is so, the Government certainly have power under the Criminal Code, section 534 of which provides—

"Any person who—

(1) By violence to the person or property of another, or by threats or

intimidation of any kind, or by besetting the house or place of work of another, or by following another in a disorderly manner in a public highway, or by molesting, or in any way obstructing, another by any physical act in the pursuit of his lawful vocation—

(a) Compels or attempts to compel any person employed in any manufacture, trade, business, or occupation, to depart from his employment, or to return his work before it is finished; or

(b) Prevents any person who is not employed from accepting employment from any other person; or

(3) By violence to the person or property of another, or by threats or intimidation of any kind, or by molesting or in any way obstructing another, compels, or endeavours to compel, any person carrying on any manufacture, trade, or business, to make any alteration in his mode of carrying it on, or to limit the number of his apprentices, or the number or description of his journeymen, workmen, or servants;

is guilty of an offence, and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment with hard labour for three months."

There is no doubt that these things did prevail in the district which has been referred to, and, although these penal powers were in the hands of the Government of the State of Queensland, and although the Executive knew that these things were going on in an industry for which they profess to have such a solicitude, they allowed them to continue. I think I am quite justified in describing the Minister's speech, so far as South Johnstone is concerned, as an abject apology for the inaction of the Government in the face of a very serious strike. We know that things in Queensland are not as they should be. Unemployment is more rife at present than at any previous time; yet Queensland is one of the richest countries in the world. We know that for some years past public borrowing has kept things going in Queensland; but it looks as though the State will not be able always to obtain the wherewithal from that source. We know that in any case the only sound way to make good progress and repair the wastage is by the introduction of private capital; but what inducement is there to anybody to put money into secondary industries or to establish factories for the purpose of working up our natural resources when such things are allowed and connived at—I think I am justified in using that word—by the Government of the country?

We know that South Johnstone has been the centre of trouble for many years. I am not now going to quote newspaper extracts but official documents, from which we find that for a term of years the mill at South Johnstone has been a hotbed of extremism. The Minister in his speech said that there had been similar trouble at certain other mills, and he quoted Farleigh and North Eton as purchased by the farmers without such troubles arising; and I may say that, as representing those mills, I am indignant that any comparison should be made between the mill employees at those places and the South Johnstone mill. The South Johnstone mill has been notorious for many

Mr. Swayne.]

years, and in proof of that statement I intend to quote official documents. The General Manager of the Government Central Sugar Mills, Mr. Short, who was quoted by the Minister, as far back as 1921 used these words regarding the operations of the South Johnstone mill—

“This year’s record industrially was one of almost continual trouble. During the first sixteen weeks of crushing the fitters would not do any Sunday work or overtime, which caused considerable inconvenience.

“... the overhaul and alterations were seriously interfered with by the men going on strike and remaining out for a period of eleven weeks.”

In 1922 the same gentleman says—

“Approximately five weeks were lost during the crushing season owing to a strike which commenced amongst the cane-cutters. Owing to the above delay, crushing was unduly prolonged, with disastrous results.”

In 1923 the same gentleman says—

“For the second time in the short history of the South Johnstone mill waterside trouble at Mourilyan Harbour held up some thousands of tons of that mill’s sugar for some months, and, apart from the loss (estimated to amount to over £6,300), due to deterioration, the interest charged on the consequent overdraft cost approximately £500 monthly.”

In 1924 the same gentleman says—

“Unfortunately, the full advantage was not derived by the South Johnstone mill owing to an overtime strike which militated against good work, prolonged the season, and resulted in a great financial loss to the farmers and to the mill.”

In 1925 the same gentleman says—

“The dislocation of transport was responsible for deterioration of stored sugar; sweating in some consignments was serious, net titre figures as low as 87 per cent. having been recorded. Some sugar was also damaged owing to faulty tarpaulins allowing rain to penetrate to the sugar.”

I now desire to quote from the “Courier,” and hon. members opposite have taken great unctio to their souls recently in quoting the “Courier.” Last January the “Courier” reported this—

“The Government sugar-mill at South Johnstone is ably maintaining its reputation as a trouble centre. For nearly a fortnight there has been no work at that factory, where 1,800 tons of raw sugar are lying awaiting removal to the port for shipment.”

The hon. member for Herbert endeavoured to show that the South Johnstone mill had been a financial success, but the Auditor-General in his report for 1926 says—

“It will be noted that a sum of £27,299 8s. 4d. has been paid off the loan indebtedness of the Government-controlled mills, but as they all made losses, the repayments merely increased the overdrafts of the working accounts, and no real reduction has been effected, the liability simply being transferred from Loan Fund to Trust Fund (Working Account).”

[Mr. Swayne.

He says that between June, 1925, and June, 1926, the South Johnstone mill had increased its indebtedness by over £24,000. The Auditor-General also stated in 1924—

“Industrial trouble was again experienced, with the result that mill work and financial results were detrimentally affected.”

On the same page he also states—

“The financial position of the Government-controlled mills in their relationship to the Treasury is generally unsatisfactory, and it cannot reasonably be expected that the Treasury should continue to carry the losses made.”

On page 9, in referring to the South Johnstone mill, he says—

“The financial result was a loss of £43,142 14s. 4d., which includes £22,274 14s. 3d. redemption instalment on account of loan from Treasury.”

The hon. member for Herbert tried to persuade the House to believe that everything was in a glowing condition. The farmers realised that their homes were in the South Johnstone area, that the position was hopeless, that they were tied to the district and unable to leave, as are the South Johnstone friends of the hon. member for Eacham, and they decided that some action was necessary. When the farmers had contracted a liability of £400,000 for the purchase of the mill, it is very natural that on the change of control they should seek to bring about a change in the conditions which had militated against the success of the mill in the past. In view of the record of the employees in that mill, was it not very natural that a change should be desired in some respects?

Furthermore, in regard to all this nonsense and talk about married men, I might say that at the beginning of this year, while the mill was yet under Government control, a strike was declared over the list of employees for work in the slack season. It was alleged that the Government manager of the mill had given preference in that respect to married men. Yet hon. members opposite get up and mouth all kinds of silly utterances about the poor married man! But on this occasion the demand was partly on behalf of single men. The strike committee on that occasion successfully defied the Australian Workers’ Union, which had eventually to knuckle down to the strike committee controlling this affair. After some persuasion, the strike was declared off in February. The trouble, therefore, in January of this year, was because the Government manager gave preference to married men. What I have said will show that there was a need for a change in the management of the mill; and it is just as well that capitalists who contemplate investing money in enterprise in Queensland should know if, on this important point there is to be interference with the owner of a farm or factory as to whom he shall employ; and whether, in exercising that right, he is to be hindered by strikes which are practically connived at by the Government, or, at any rate, are allowed to proceed without interference on their part. If an investor decides to invest in any works or undertaking, he is entitled to engage the most capable men he can select, and not be interfered with in that selection, as the South

Johnstone mill management were interfered with. There is nothing more detrimental to the progress and prosperity of the State than such a policy; and the present results of the policy in Queensland are largely attributable to hon. members opposite. If any harm befalls Queensland as a result of the industrial position, then the blame must rest with the Government who have been in power since 1915. Hon. members opposite state in reply to that criticism that there are industrial troubles in other parts of the world. Supposing there are, we have had in Queensland a party in power for the last twelve years who are supposed to legislate to overcome such a state of affairs, yet all they have to say is that strikes abound in other parts of the world. In making comparison with our conditions and conditions in other parts of the world I doubt whether, taking population into consideration, and barring Russia, any other country shows out so badly as Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a slander on the State you live in.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is a reflection on the Government who have held office for so many years. Hon. members who represent Northern electorates should hold the scales evenly, and do justice to both sections of the community. I have endeavoured to show that there was every justification for the management of the South Johnstone mill doing what they did. Yet I find that the hon. member for Eacham, in addressing himself to this question, said—

"The South Johnstone management staged a fight, and deliberately set about to create it. Now that they have got themselves into a mess they are endeavouring to drag the whole State into it for the purpose of saving their own faces."

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Quite right.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not think that one hon. member will dare say outside what he said on the floor of this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair, not the hon. member for Eacham.

Mr. SWAYNE: I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member also stated:—

"There is another important point: The management of the South Johnstone mill deliberately gave false evidence."

Mr. C. J. RYAN: That is quite true.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: That is not true. The court said that it was an honest mistake. It is a cowardly thing on the part of any hon. member of this House to abuse the great privilege we have here and take advantage of it.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: It was admitted by the Board of Trade.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: It was stated by the industrial magistrate that it was an honest mistake. The hon. gentleman accused the manager of deliberately giving false evidence.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: Which has been proved.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have repeatedly asked the hon. member for Eacham to refrain from interjecting.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member goes on to make a personal attack on one of the directors, and then proceeds—

"That man disagreed with methods of arbitration and supported the philosophy of Proudhon and men of that type, who declared that 'property is theft.'"

Why, many of the strikers declared that the strike was a war against capitalism! The hon. member goes on to say—

"That man is a positive menace. Recently speeches had been made in Queensland which, if made in any other part of the British Dominions, would be drastically dealt with."

Then the hon. member proceeds to quote from a report of what is alleged to have happened at a conference held in Mackay. He says—

"Mr. Moule implored the delegates to carry a resolution having the following effect:—All mills in Mackay and the North would be closed consistent with the ability of other mills operating to supply Australian requirements.

He quoted figures freely in support, and said a thorough canvass of all farmers should be made to recruit labour from farmers and their sons. He estimated this labour, supplemented by free labour, would be sufficient to operate the mills intended to be kept open. He further said that, with the large number of unemployed created, together with the thousands of men thrown out as the result of this policy, they would beat the workers to their knees.

As an ex-union official, he knew the workers sufficiently to realise that the consequent hardship would result in revolt against the officials and the Government; but the point was that the dispute must be forcibly extended to get these results. Employers would benefit throughout the sugar industry, because the law of supply and demand would operate free of restrictions like the Arbitration Courts. They could extend their operations, as the success of this policy would bring labour costs down with a run.

To an interjector, "What about the awards," Mr. Moule replied that other speakers would deal with those aspects, but that all that the employers needed to do was to refuse to observe the award, and the court would be powerless and soon a thing of the past.

A further interjection was made, "What about the Southern consumers; have you considered these in your scheme?"

Mr. Moule replied: "The Southern consumers' opinions are moulded by the newspapers, who speak for the big employers, and we are fighting the cause of all employers, so why consider the Southern consumers?"

Mr. Innes (Sarina) strongly supported.

The proposals of the Innisfail delegate were defeated mainly by those representing the mill areas that the scheme proposed to keep open.

The conference decided to use the Farmers' Defence Fund to pay the cost of working the South Johnstone mill.

Mr. Swayne.]

Lists are to be circulated amongst employers, inviting subscriptions to assist the 'South Johnstone growers.'

"There is a man who is prepared to pull down the whole structure for the purpose of saving himself. I am satisfied that there is not an employers' association in Queensland game enough to come out openly and endorse what Mr. Moule has said. It is evident that Mr. Moule is anxious to extend the strike. It is evident, too, that there are other directors similarly placed. Mr. Gilmore is also a militant member. He understands the working-class movement fairly well. I repeat, Mr. Moule at a recent meeting of the Growers' Council said that he had led several strikes, and that he knew what to do with the workers. I want the people of Queensland—and I address myself particularly to the workers—to recognise their responsibility in this matter. I feel quite certain that it is the desire of the management at South Johnstone to create an extension of the present trouble in order to save themselves from the mistakes they have made; but I do not think the workers in Queensland are foolish enough to be led into that trap."

These are most serious charges to make.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must know that quotations from relevant documents are permissible, but the hon. member's speech for the last twenty-five minutes has consisted almost wholly of quotations.

Mr. SWAYNE: I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Secretary for Agriculture also quoted extracts freely. In order that I may put my case fully it is necessary to quote what the hon. member for Eacham said in this Chamber. I now wish to refer to an apology from the newspaper that the hon. member quoted from.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: What newspaper did I quote from?

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. gentleman spoke on the 24th August.

[12 noon]

The "Daily Standard" of 18th August, 1927, had this to say:—

"In our issue of the 4th instant there was published, under the heading 'Anti-Union Scheme,' what purported to be an account of a meeting of the Cane Growers' Council at Mackay. In the report reference was made to alleged statements by Mr. A. Moule, a director representing the Innisfail farmers.

"We are informed by Mr. A. Moule that the alleged report is a series of untruths and that no resolution such as that referred to in the report was ever suggested at the meeting.

"We accept Mr. A. Moule's statement that the matter contained in the report was untrue, and we withdraw the report and apologise to Mr. A. Moule for its publication."

If Mr. Ryan is a man, he would do the same thing, or say them outside.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I did not quote from the "Standard."

Mr. SWAYNE: At any rate, it is reported in the "Standard."

[Mr. Swayne.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: From a more authentic source.

Mr. KING: Say you are sorry.

Mr. FRY: We will use that. You said the "Standard" is not authentic.

Mr. C. J. RYAN: I did not say that.

Mr. SWAYNE: Some say that the South Johnstone position was only an unimportant episode in the situation, but I think it will be realised that the treatment accorded to the South Johnstone mill management by organised Labour was not what it should have been, and is likely to recur anywhere at any time. The Australian Workers' Union is in a most peculiar position, because, first of all, the Australian Workers' Union tried to quell the strike, and then it afterwards endorsed the strike. It not only did that, but its representative in my district compelled the workers there to contribute to what was an illegal strike. That, again, is a most serious feature of the position—that men who did not believe in direct action—who believed in constitutional methods—should be compelled by force under a threat of starvation—because that is what it meant, as no unionist would work with them again if they did not contribute—to contribute towards an illegal strike. That is a most peculiar position to be in. It bears out the point that I am making, that there is a very grave omission in the Governors' Speech, inasmuch as there is no reference whatsoever to amending legislation in regard to the industrial position. It seems to me that where there is arbitration, and where people say that they believe in constitutional methods of dealing with all these troubles, organisations have no more right to take the law into their own hands and resort to violence than an individual has. If the law is wrong, Parliament—which is elected by everyone in Queensland over twenty-one years of age—is competent to set right the wrong; but certainly the law that Parliament makes to deal with the question should be obeyed, and that has not been done.

In regard to the utterances of the Leader of the Opposition, to which the Secretary for Agriculture took such great exception, after all what did the Leader of the Opposition do but urge obedience to the law, and that steps should be taken to prevent a recurrence of the state of things we had at South Johnstone recently? I have here a quotation from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and I would like to ask those who read "Hansard" what objection can be taken to such utterances as these. Mr. Moore said:—

"I want to express my satisfaction at the termination of the industrial dispute which has been going on in Queensland for the past week, though I am a little disappointed that we have not got something more definite in the terms of settlement. It seems to me that we are rather in the position that a union can still declare any commodity 'black,' and public servants and public transport unions can be drawn into it."

Is not that correct? Again he says—

"Before the Premier left for England, he stated that the weakness of Labour lay in the lack of discipline in the unions."

That is correct. Again, he used these words—
"the lack of cohesion amongst them, and their ignorance of economics."

Certainly that is correct. The Leader of the Opposition continued:—

"I think the hon. gentleman might have gone further, and said that the arrogance and contempt which some of the leaders of these organisations have for constitutional authority also contributes to the weakness of the movement.

"There is another factor which, to my mind, also militates extremely against industrial peace in this State, and that is the sapineness of the Government in enforcing the awards of the Board of Trade and Arbitration and in seeing that the laws of this State are obeyed, together with the apparent inability of the unions to secure discipline within their own ranks. There must be some method by which a small section can be prevented from taking control out of the hands of the large organisations, and by which the Government will be able to protect the rights of the community when our laws are broken."

Again, speaking with regard to the position at the mill, the hon. gentleman said:—

"The directors of the mill were faced with the position of placing the mill in a satisfactory financial position in order to meet their obligations to the Government and to the canegrowers."

Further on he said:—

"Mr. Justice Webb stated that the findings of the industrial magistrate were supported by evidence, and he fully agreed with them."

Clearly the Leader of the Opposition was justified in taking exception to some of the statements which have been made on the other side. Then we have the fact that a ballot was taken—and I have one of the ballot-papers here—as to whether Mr. Justice Webb's judgment should be observed or not. Let me read it:—

"BALLOT-PAPER.

"Are you in favour of accepting the judgment of Judge Webb re the South Johnstone Mill Dispute?"

"YES

"NO

"If in favour place a X in the square opposite the word 'Yes.'

"If against place a X in the square opposite the word 'No.'"

Could greater contempt be shown for a tribunal than that? The Board of Trade went to the greatest trouble in an endeavour to settle the dispute. They were most conscientious in the matter—I am inclined to think they were weak myself—but, at any rate, nobody can say that they acted with any lack of interest. Yet, when the board made an order, these strikers had the temerity to take a vote as to whether it should be accepted or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Did you take a vote as to whether the Dickson Award should be observed by the farmers or not?

Mr. SWAYNE: The Minister can show nothing to indicate that I did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know you did not, but you advised them not to abide by it.

Mr. SWAYNE: I advised them to go on growing cane. Nobody can say that I did not. I think that question has been brought up before by the hon. member for Townsville, and I have replied to it. I think we all realise that there is need for legislation on this subject. It should be provided that, the board having given a decision, anyone who acts in compliance with it shall be protected from insults or violence. I would like to say that the men employed at South Johnstone were unionists—members of the Australian Workers' Union, or whatever union was operating in the calling concerned. They were not "scabs" in that they did belong to a union; and the only effect of the strike could be that they would be displaced to make room for another set of unionists. I say that where the law has been adhered to and its terms have been carried out people who use words such as "scab" or "blackleg," in regard to the men who are carrying out that law, should be dealt with and the law amended so that that can be done. If I am working in compliance with any law, I am entitled to the protection of the law.

There is another matter to which I should like to refer before I sit down; but before I do so I should just like to say that the utterances of the hon. member for Herbert and the Secretary for Agriculture with regard to the prosperity of the South Johnstone mill are not borne out by facts. What I am about to say brought to my mind the fact that the glowing accounts given by those gentlemen of the prosperity of that mill are not supported by the Auditor-General. The point I wish to make now is that it is time that some safeguard should be provided against the huge losses which periodically occur in our primary industries.

I suppose that I have been fifty years working on the land in the pastoral and farming industries, and it is high time that something was done to guard against the losses which do occur in Queensland from time to time such as we have been experiencing during the last year or two as a result of the drought. I suppose that we may say that Queensland has lost between 5,000,000 and 8,000,000 sheep, and the drought has not yet ended. We here in Australia lay claim to a continent, and it may be quite open to the rest of the world to say to us, "You are claiming the big continent, and, without questioning your right to do so, at the same time we certainly think that you should justify your claim by taking more care of what will be one of the principal sources of the food supply of the world."

Queensland is essentially the cattle State of the Commonwealth, but at times we have scarcely a fat bullock left. We must guard against that, because the population of the world is growing at a far greater rate than our edible live stock. The question is: What can be done to stabilise our stock supplies and avoid these recurring losses? Recently I travelled down from the North by car and on my way visited a Peak Downs station. The work that was being carried on there was a revelation to me. The manager had been in charge since 1912, and, with the exception of a break of three years, during which he was absent, he had cultivated 160 acres of wheat. He did not do so for the purpose of using the grain, but for the purpose of making wheaten hay. We know that the climate and the rainfall at Peak

Mr. Swayne.]

Downs are not suitable for the successful cultivation of wheat for the grain, but for hay it is. This station carries about 35,000 sheep, and the manager was able successfully to weather a couple of droughts with merely normal losses, simply because he had his own wheaten chaff. This fodder, which would have cost £15 to £17 per ton, is made on the station at a little over £2 per ton, and, not only was he able to save his stock, but he was able to do it at a very low cost. The same lessees own other stations in far Western Queensland, and not only was sufficient wheat grown on this Peak Downs station to meet the requirements on that property, but sufficient was grown to allow of the fodder being sent to the other stations, and at least to save the stud stock on those properties. I know that what can be done in one district may not be done in another, but what has been done on the Peak Downs is an object lesson regarding what can be done to avert stock losses. Some fifty years ago I was on a cattle station about 30 or 40 miles from where this gentleman is carrying on his business. It is contended that the Peak Downs country is suitable for growing wheat only, but in the same district on another type of soil not very far away other crops can be grown. I think that more should be done in this direction.

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

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): I join with other hon. members who have spoken in congratulating the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply upon the able manner in which they handled their subject. The Speech delivered by the Governor covers many activities of the past, and refers to many activities that will be undertaken by the Government in the very near future.

A good deal of comment has been made by hon. members opposite in connection with the recent industrial trouble. I do not intend to hold any post-mortem examination on the dispute in question; but I seriously hope that out of this dispute will be evolved some body or council which will have more responsibility, and will be recognised by both the industrial and the political wings of Labour in this State, so that in future there will be a lesser opportunity of such a state of affairs being brought about. Already many of our union leaders have expressed their intention of moving in that direction. When such a body is eventually appointed it is to be hoped that it will be composed of common-sense persons, who will do everything possible to abolish the indiscriminate system of involving such workers as those engaged in the transport system in disputes in which they are not concerned, and consequently into which they should not be drawn. I shall not deal with this question at any length, because there are many more important matters in the Governor's Speech that should be dealt with.

I intend to refer to remarks made in the Speech in connection with mining. The outlook for mining in Queensland is not too bright at the present time. The only bright spot on the horizon are the likely activities of the Russo-Asiatic Co. in the Mount Isa district. As a result of my reading I understand that such companies operate on a large scale, and I honestly believe they have a better chance of dealing with the huge

deposit of silver-lead ore that exists at Mount Isa than small local companies, which have been responsible for many of the mining slumps in Queensland. It is also very encouraging to note that the Mount Elliott Co., Ltd., in the Cloncurry district, realises that there is a possibility of dealing more efficiently with the huge deposits of copper ores existing in that district. It is to be sincerely hoped that the experiments now being made will lead to some system whereby a big reduction in costs will be brought about, and a consequent further development in the copper districts of Cloncurry.

Although gem mining has not been touched upon in the Governor's Speech, I desire to refer to the fact that since the operations of the sapphire pool were originated everything has not been plain sailing. We have naturally met with many of the difficulties that marketing organisations meet with when endeavouring to handle large quantities of a certain product on an overseas market. The Government have experienced many of the difficulties which other marketing organisations have had with products more saleable than sapphires. The result has been that since the operations of the pool on the sapphire field £97,225 worth of sapphires have been purchased from the sapphire mines. In 1921-22 £34,650 worth of sapphires were purchased, and £38,£35 was received from the stones disposed of. In 1923-24 the pool purchased £20,230 worth of sapphires from the miners, but was only able to dispose of £14,840 worth. There has been a gradual decrease up to the present time in the sales of sapphires. In the year 1924-25 the pool purchased £22,001 worth of sapphires and was able to dispose of only £18,000 worth, while for the year 1926-27 the pool was only able to dispose of £15,000 worth. That gives some idea of the difficulties which have to be faced overseas. Our selling agent advises that the whole or part of the difficulties he has met with has resulted from the fluctuation of the French and Continental currencies, particularly to the extent to which French currency depreciated, thereby affecting the exchange rates between England and France, as a result of which the value of sapphires fell to the extent of £2 per oz. on first-grade stones. The selling agent also complained that much of the grading done on this side has been faulty, with the result that a good deal of culling has been necessary on the other side before it is possible for him to submit the gems to clients willing to purchase.

Mr. MOORE: That means bad buying.

Mr. FOLEY: That is so. Bad buying is partly responsible for the position. I might mention that the Mines Department has been totally dependent upon men who were considered to have expert knowledge in grading sapphires.

Mr. MOORE: Do you mean bad buying?

Mr. FOLEY: Bad buying is partly responsible; but I might also mention that the Mines Department has been totally dependent upon men who are considered to have expert knowledge in the grading of sapphires to see that good value was received for the money the Government were paying. Unfortunately, according to the reports of our selling agent, these men have not given the value to the Government that was due. The Premier made it his business during his

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

recent visit overseas to inquire thoroughly into the marketing of our sapphires. The result of his investigations was that we shall probably have to suffer a loss on the sapphires that we have in hand on the other side of the world, and that buying operations on this side will have to be restricted until much of the surplus we have now on hand is disposed of overseas. That is one of the greatest difficulties with which our selling agent has been faced, because from the time he started operations he had to contend with an enormous quantity of sapphires sent from Australia, and although the figures I have quoted show that our selling agent kept pace with production to the point at which the exchange rate began to operate, still he found it impossible to deal with the surplus gems which he took over on his appointment as sole selling agent. If the Premier insists upon adopting what he terms "strict business methods" in regard to this particular pool, then the outlook for those on the field is not too bright. The miners on the field had already suffered a holdup for over eighteen months when no stone was purchased by the Government.

Mr. MOORE: Other people have been purchasing.

Mr. FOLEY: Yes, there may have been a small leakage in that direction; but the point I want to make is that the Government should consider the adoption of a system whereby with the money obtained from the sale of gems overseas gems may be purchased from the miners at a price which will guarantee the Government against future loss and at the same time may assist in recouping past losses. Failing the adoption of such a system, I would like to see some scheme formulated which will prevent the leakage to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred. It is well known that there have been illicit buyers operating on the sapphire fields during the time the pool has been in operation. These buyers have been paying for picked or choice sapphires prices much higher than the Government pay for average-quality parcels. The result is that this leakage has continued, and, notwithstanding my suggestion to the effect that a special price for special grades should be adopted, nothing has been done in that connection. We should do something to prevent the leakage that is going on at the present time by giving assistance to the men on the field, and I ask that full consideration be given to the suggestion which I have put forward.

Mr. MOORE: Don't you know that an offer has been made to take all the gems held by the Government at the price the Government gave for them?

Mr. FOLEY: We have had different representations made to the Secretary for Mines with regard to the purchase of sapphires. We have had offers from Germany. I myself have communicated to the Premier offers that have been made from Germany. We have also had an offer from an alleged [12.30 p.m.] gem buyer from America; but, when it is all boiled down, there is no one in a better position to dispose of our gems than our present selling agents. No one will make a direct offer for the purchase of our gems, but they are all prepared to make an offer similar to the arrangements we are working under at the present time with Trefus Brothers in London; that is, they

will act as selling agents and leave it to luck as to how many they can dispose of on the European market. We have got an arrangement of that sort now. Recently a man by the name of Izer came from America and spoke as though he had millions of pounds behind him. He said that he could dispose of the whole of our sapphires if given a reasonable time in which to do it; but, when a concrete proposition was put to him, it was found that the millions he spoke of were not there. We then went so far as to offer this individual, who I think is the individual the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, large parcels of sapphires to the value of many thousands of pounds, and to place them in a bank in New York, provided he would put up a fidelity bond covering the value of the sapphires. So far he has not accepted that offer. It will, therefore, be seen that there is not much business behind him. I understand that since then a small company has been formed which has offered to take parcels of sapphires of a value of about £3,000 every three or four months, and promised to use every effort to dispose of them. After going into the matter fairly extensively, seeing that I was directly interested, I came to the conclusion that if Trefus Brothers, London—a firm with a capital of many millions of pounds and an organisation covering practically every part of the civilised world—cannot dispose of our sapphires, a small firm with a capital of a few thousand pounds will not be able to do any better. I sincerely hope that the suggestion I have made will be accepted by the Minister, as at least it will prevent absolute starvation and the abandonment of the mining camp at Ruby Vale. I trust that the very least the Government will do with the moneys in hand at present and the further moneys that may come to hand in the future from the sale of sapphires overseas will be to purchase the best grade of sapphires which are readily saleable at special prices, and so enable the miners to carry on until the Government are able to dispose of the huge stocks in hand at the present time. If nothing is done until the whole of present stocks are disposed of in Europe—which may take eighteen months or two years—there will be very few miners able to hang out except a few old-age pensioners, as already on the field they have suffered eighteen months of starvation.

I wish now to make reference to the progress that is being made in the coal industry. It is stated in His Excellency's Speech that the coal industry of the State is making satisfactory progress. In my electorate there is rather a fine area of coal-bearing country, and the progress being made in that part of Queensland is only sufficient to provide one or two days' work per week for the mines operating there. I find also that very little coal is being exported. As a matter of fact, practically in every mining centre in the State the employees working in the mining industry are working short time. That shows that there are too many mines operating in Queensland at the present time to supply local requirements, and the only hope of the workers in the coalmining industry getting anything near full time and a decent remuneration for their services, so that they will be able to rear their families in comfort the same as other workers, is to build up an export trade. I maintain that, as we have had difficulties in the marketing of a few thousand pounds' worth of sapphires and in every other marketing organisation we have

Mr. Foley.]

established, so we shall encounter greater difficulties in the marketing of the coal produced by the State. We have in Blair Athol alone an area of about 5 square miles containing a seam of coal averaging 65 feet thick, which could be mined at less cost than the coal in any other district in Queensland. Notwithstanding the low cost of production and the favourable export freight rates which the Government are giving, however, the Blair Athol people have not been able to export 1,000 tons during the currency of the concession. The same remark applies to many other coal-producing areas closer to the coast. Even Bowen, with its favourable deposit of high-quality coal practically right on the coast, has exported practically nothing in comparison with its production for local consumption. These conditions do not apply to other countries in the world, and in my opinion the whole solution lies in getting some large company, such as the Russo-Asiatic Company, which is going to operate at Mount Isa, to take the thing in hand and put the coal on the market—practically force it into use by dumping it on the markets of the world and establishing a trade by that means. How could one expect a little company like the Blair Athol Company, with a capital of a few thousand pounds behind it, to do anything like that? It requires an organisation like the American Coal Export Company, with millions of pounds at its disposal. It has its own railways and ships to carry its coal, and a perfect organisation or system of agencies in the various coal markets of the globe. We cannot expect to get anywhere unless our coal is handled on similar lines. We must have capital behind our mining concerns. We must produce our coal at a minimum cost, and, in addition, we must have a big organisation with its own boats, and be prepared to dump the article on the world and establish markets in that way before we shall be able to do anything in the direction of getting what is worth being called an export trade.

Let me take Blair Athol as an illustration for another proposition. I do not wish to seem parochial in referring to this place; but it has a deposit which is eminently suitable for mining on a large scale—more suitable than any other coal deposit in the State. It is such a deposit of coal that, if it existed in America, for instance, it would be mined by stripping the overburden—which is only 60 feet in thickness—with steam shovels, thus getting a clear face of coal 65 feet deep. To establish the necessary plant at Blair Athol would probably run into something not much less than £250,000, if it is to be done effectively; and there is no Australian or Queensland company that is prepared to take on such a gamble as to establish such a plant and force the coal on the markets of the world. I contend—and I maintain I am logical in my remarks—that, unless you have the capital to enable you to go into the matter on a big scale, and unless you are prepared to dump your article on the markets of the world where other coals are already established, you have no chance of success. I make these remarks with the idea of preventing anybody from being misled into thinking that our coal industry is in a satisfactory state. It is not; and I am afraid it will not be until some company with large capital gets hold of the industry and is prepared to work on the lines I have suggested.

[Mr. Foley.

Mr. KING: Are you not up against the capitalists?

Mr. FOLEY: We are living in a capitalistic world, and so long as that is so we have to work along capitalistic lines.

Mr. KING: Why are you not honest on the hustings?

Mr. FOLEY: I have been honest, and my party has been honest in this respect.

I desire now to refer to the disastrous effects of the drought at present prevailing throughout Queensland. It is becoming more apparent to the average individual who has not given much thought to the question that a drought has very serious effects on the economic conditions of this country; and that is being felt throughout Queensland, and particularly in the capital, where hundreds of employees are being dismissed, and all are beginning to realise the importance of the pastoral industry to this State. Of course, there are many thinking men who have already realised the extent to which the State is dependent on the pastoral industry; but the value of the industry has been driven home more of late to those unthinking persons who have not bothered to consider the great part which the pastoral industry plays in our community. The drought has had a very serious effect on the finances of the State and on the finances of private businesses. The question asked is: What steps are to be taken to mitigate the effects of drought in the future? We know that it is not possible to prevent the occurrences of droughts, but very little has been done in that direction in Queensland, notwithstanding that we have passed through very many droughts and at a very great loss. It is high time that something was done to mitigate the effects of drought. The Dawson Valley irrigation area will play a very big part in assisting to alleviate the effects of drought in the future. If some scheme were established, much good could be done. I understand that it is very likely that at no distant date a scheme for storing suitable fodder for sheep will be inaugurated so that it will be ready in time of drought. This fodder will then be railed to the drought stricken areas of the State, instead of being imported at an exorbitant cost from New South Wales or carried by our railways at a loss. During the present drought many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent in purchasing fodder for starving stock, and the railway deficit is largely attributable to the carriage of this fodder and stock at concession rates—rates unprofitable to the Railway Department—in order to assist those in the drought stricken areas. By the inauguration of a scheme for the storage of fodder in the Dawson Valley area there is a possibility of this expenditure being considerably reduced. The Government should give careful consideration to the utilisation of every irrigable spot in this State as near as possible to the pastoral areas. If fodder were stored at Theodore it would be necessary in times of drought to cart that fodder from that centre by rail to Rockhampton. Then the fodder would be railed from Rockhampton to Longreach and Barcaldine to the Western districts where it was required. I consider that the Government should determine every irrigable site as close as possible to the pastoral areas. No doubt the Dawson Valley area will serve that district very well, and much better than can be done by

carting fodder from New South Wales. I raise this matter because of a place close to Emerald which is really in the heart of the Central-western pastoral area. There is an irrigable site known as Nogoia Gap which has been pointed out to the irrigation authorities for a considerable number of years. No attempt has been made by any Government to attempt to utilise those possibilities for drought combative purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Has any report ever been prepared upon it?

Mr. FOLEY: A report was presented upon the scheme many years ago. I maintain that such sites, although not on such a large scale as the Dawson irrigation scheme, are quite large enough to establish a considerable number of settlers, and produce sufficient fodder in good times by irrigation to feed all the sheep in Queensland if necessary. Yet we shall probably have the spectacle at some later date when a drought is raging of large reserves of fodder being stored up at Theodore and in the district, and then carted hundreds of miles to drought affected areas, when the whole fodder required could be grown and stored practically on the spot, if investigation and attention were paid to such phases of the matter as I have alluded to. The site for that scheme would be right in the heart of a pastoral area in the Central-West. I do not desire to be charged with advocating the establishment of an irrigation scheme close to pastoral areas simply because the site happens to be in my electorate. I offer the suggestion in good faith, and particularly because I happen to know not only the site but the facilities offering.

We shall be called upon during the session to give attention to the report of the Land Settlement Advisory Board. I regret that I have not more time to deal with that report; but I assume that at a later date a Bill based on the recommendations of the board will be introduced, when we shall have a better opportunity to deal with the matter. I have perused the report, which is a very comprehensive one. It is a very frank one, made by men who have previously been officers of the Lands Department. The board has shattered many of the old ideas prevalent in regard to land settlement and administration. Its members have even gone to the extent of practically condemning themselves as members of the administrative branch of the Lands Department by pointing out that the policy of the department in the past has been faulty and needs drastic reorganisation in the future in the interests of land settlement.

One of the most important matters dealt with is the question of the living area. Another is the extension of leases. I believe that an extension of leases, as a principle, is a very unsound one. It is recommended that extensions shall be granted to lessees of many leases which have expired and of many leases about to expire on the ground that they have suffered heavily during the drought. The point I wish to make to back up my objection is that, if we as a Government once establish that principle, we shall be faced with the same question on the occasion of future droughts, and shall be under an obligation, once having conceded the principle, of giving further extensions of leases to leases that it is recommended to extend. As a result, there will be no possible chance of that land

becoming available to the Crown for intending settlers. It is on those grounds that I base my objection. I wish to make it quite clear that this proposal will not have my support. The recommendations with regard to the living areas have upset the ideas of many men engaged in the pastoral industry. I have come in contact with many such men, but, notwithstanding the fact that many men, when asked point-blank a blunt question on the matter, will tell you that a much smaller area than that recommended is sufficient to make a living from, I am compelled by the logic and facts presented by the board with their recommendations to agree that the area specified by them is about the minimum which can be given to land settlers in the future with safety.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I wish to join with other hon. members in the cordial expressions of welcome which this State extended to His Excellency the Governor, and also in the other sentiments which are expressed in the Address in Reply.

Apart from the personal references of His Excellency in expressing thanks for the reception accorded to him, and also his remarks in reference to the recent visit to this State of the Duke and Duchess of York, I find very little in the Address about which to be elated. There are one or two paragraphs in the Governor's Speech which will require a good deal of consideration, and there are some paragraphs which will call from everyone some favourable comment and endorsement; but it must be borne in mind that the Governor's Speech is usually a carefully prepared statement of the Government, giving an account of their stewardship, and commenting on the broad economic situation of the State, drawing attention to the events of the year, and forecasting their future activities and anticipations. From that standpoint the Speech is disappointing.

Let us consider the big things that should occupy this Parliament during the session. The economic position of Queensland is a subject standing out in silhouette as one requiring careful and serious consideration. Attention must then be given to the future prospects of the State. However, before we can go into a careful consideration of these matters, we must look back over the road along which the State has travelled. For the past fifteen years the Labour Government have had an unrestricted opportunity of demonstrating to the people of Queensland and to the world at large the glorious advantages of their policy for the socialisation of industry. They started off under the most favourable conditions, with an outlook where every prospect was pleasing, and where there was every encouragement for success. There was plenty of money in the Treasury; there was a million pounds in the Trust Funds; whatever State enterprises were being undertaken were in a sound condition. Such were the favourable conditions under which the Labour Party assumed office twelve years ago. What is the position to-day? Industrial depression is everywhere present; disrupting influences are at work; and a period of financial stress is being experienced; yet the Government came into office under conditions which could not have been more favourable in any other part of the world.

The Government have blamed the drought for almost every evil that has beset them;

Mr. Fry.]

they have found some means of linking up every obstacle that came in their way with the shortage of water from the heavens.

Never on one occasion have they [2 p.m.] looked inwardly and found in themselves the reason for their own incompetency. We hear very nice addresses given by the Secretary for Agriculture. For instance, I have a copy of one here, and I shall give him the credit of saying that his speech on that occasion was one of very high standard and one of which I approve. He said this—

“To maintain the high standard of living that has been set in Australia in those industries which were the subject of international competition it was necessary that they should have the highest standard of efficiency and production.”

With that we all agree; but I will take the opportunity before I sit down of showing the incapacity of the Government to bring this position about. The policy of the Government is set out in a red covered book issued by the Queensland Labour Government in 1918 under the caption “Socialism at Work.” Here we have a vision of an independent glorious prosperity. In chapter 2, page 7, of this book we are told—

“The Government adopted the day-labour system in carrying out public works as a means for securing economy and increasing efficiency. Abnormal conditions arising from the war, and, in a lesser degree shrinkage of production resulting from the 1915-1916 drought—”

Bear in mind drought every time!

“had forced upon the State Government the choice of three alternatives.”

Now pay attention to this—

“Taxation might have been increased till reaching breaking point, beyond which the people could not pay.”

Is that not the case to-day? I challenge the Government to deny it. It goes on—

“Loans might have been piled to a crushing mountain of debt for the shoulders of posterity;—”

Is that not the case to-day? Again I challenge the Government to deny it—

“or the State might engage in industry, and by that means honourably earn, for the whole of the people, profit which previously found its way into the pockets of a numerically small class of the community. Desiring to lighten rather than to increase the burden of taxation, and determined to enter into no obligations which the country could not be regarded safely as able to meet, the Queensland Labour Government naturally adopted the policy of launching upon State enterprises—”

Now listen to this—this is where the virtue is going to come in. This is what they hoped to achieve—

“to retain for the State the profit previously accruing to private enterprise, add to the revenue and render taxation and borrowing increasingly unnecessary.”

Mr. HYNES: What is wrong with that policy?

Mr. FRY: I will tell the hon. member. Let us go a little further. This policy was going to secure greater economy. It was

[Mr. Fry.

going to retain for the State the profits previously accruing to private enterprise, and show how cattle stations and the meat trade could be managed. In that regard let us turn to page 39, paragraphs (3) and (4). This is what this book says in regard to State cattle stations and the meat trade—

“(3) To increase the stability of the export trade by making supplies more regular, which may be effected by fighting drought through the unified and systematic control of numerous cattle stations (though the Government has not committed itself to promises of entering the export trade, the steps now being taken happen to lay the foundation of such a policy being embarked on at any date when a Government deems it advisable to do so); and

“(4) To increase the stock-carrying capacity of the land included within the sphere of the State's enterprise, and therefore the remunerativeness of the business—an end which may be reached by including within the operation of one managing head country on which weather fluctuations, differences of soil, and other natural variations, may balance one another.”

What is the position of the State stations to-day? They have made enormous losses. They have accomplished nothing they set out to do, and the Government are prepared to welcome with open arms anybody who will take the responsibility from their shoulders.

Let me quote a little further. The Government were going to show how the mining industry could be made to succeed and bring great prosperity to Queensland. This book says—

“The control of the public administration of Queensland by the Labour Party has been followed by preparation for a vigorous policy of mining enterprise by the Government. In its capacity as the largest consumer of coal in the State, the Administration resolved on initiating the policy of supplying its own needs. This, it is contended, will not only save to the public exchequer the amounts which previously represented the profits made by private mineowners in supplying the public requirements, but will also achieve a further saving through increased efficiency and organisation, planned to better meet particular requirements.

“In entering into the business, the State will base its operations on a large scale, which, in itself, must make for both efficiency and economy.”

I could go through this book and quote paragraph after paragraph in similar strain. The outlook was a good one, but the results were failure. They were going to show how they could run the railways and save £10,000 a year. (Government laughter.) A committee of the brains of the Labour Party appointed by the Caucus inquired into the railways, and said that it could be done, and the Government intended to do it, but they found they could not do it.

The Government were going to take over the fish industry, and so organise it that good cheap fish would be available for the

people, and wasteful organisation would be saved. Did they do it?

THE SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Yes.

Mr. FRY: Where? The Queensland Government found when they started that they had to send boatloads of fish down the bay and dump it the same as anyone else.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Shocking!

Mr. FRY: Deny it if they can! And how did they save wasteful organisation? They promised improved methods, but they had to adopt the same methods which they said private enterprise was using. They took over the fish industry to avoid those methods; but they followed in the footsteps of private enterprise once more.

They also told us how they were going to run the shipping industry. It is indeed true that they made failures of all these things, but you will find no mention of it in the Governor's Speech. The truth is that the following statement, by no less a person than the leader of the party, the Premier himself, is nearer to the point. It appeared in the Queensland papers and in the "London Times"—

"One of the greatest obstacles to development in Queensland is the influence of a small but noisy section of extremist leaders who are utterly without regard for the problem of developing industries upon which the welfare of the State depends. Recently a few of those men defied the Arbitration Court and flouted its awards and declared Government works 'black.' Mr. McCormack advised them, threatened them, taunted them, but all without result. Finally he declared that the weakness of Labour lies in its lack of discipline, its lack of cohesion, and its ignorance of economics."

It is necessary to keep in view the socialisation of industry policy of the Government when dealing with the economic position of Queensland, and I must first of all find out where the administration starts, how it is carried on, and what we can hope for in the future. What are the results of that policy? First of all, the State control of the public service has resulted in inefficiency reigning where efficiency previously was to be found. The same trading concerns, which have been established under the most favourable and preferential conditions which the State gives, have been fuddled.

Mr. BRUCE: What do you know about "fuddled?"

Mr. FRY: Look up the dictionary! It means exactly what I have said it means. Private industry has been crippled by taxation imposed for Government purposes. The deficiencies in State enterprises have been made good by taxation imposed on private industries that have been making good.

Let me now deal with the mining industry. In Queensland the mining industry has declined to a dangerous extent, 1927 being probably the most disastrous year in the mining industry. Millions of pounds of the money of the State have been sunk in these unprofitable State ventures, the biggest portion of the money being lost beyond recovery. On examining the Government policy and administration there can be only one conclusion—that it reveals a state of helpless

optimism—helplessness so far as the Government are concerned, and optimism so far as their supporters are concerned. Recently, when the Tariff Board visited Queensland, there was an advocacy for a bounty on copper. If I am not mistaken, I believe I have heard the Secretary for Mines stressing the need for a bounty on copper, but I failed to notice that any steps were taken by the Government to place the case of a bounty on copper effectively before the Tariff Board. Certainly the Government were represented before the board, but the person who should have been there to state the case for the Government in connection with State mining undertakings was the Secretary for Mines himself, who has had control of the department for many years and fully comprehended the policy of the Government. Was he there to advocate a bounty on copper? Were the Government effectively represented? No, Sir! The only reason that I can advance for the Government not endeavouring to place the case for a bounty on copper effectively before the Tariff Board is that they might have been asked for information as to the dealings by the Government in copper.

Mr. HYNES: Where were you? You were on the other side of the world.

Mr. FRY: Perhaps the Government knew that it might lead to awkward disclosures—disclosures that would be very hard to explain. From what has transpired recently we know that Chillagoe will not stand a thorough investigation. That was the reason why the Government were not strongly represented before the Tariff Board. They were afraid of the scandals that would inevitably be revealed to the public. A matter of that kind so seriously affecting Government policy should have been handled by the person most able to attend to the matter—the Secretary for Mines. The policy of the Government has seriously hampered private enterprise, thereby creating large bodies of unemployed. To 30th June, 1926, the loss on State enterprises was £803,181, uncharged interest £97,042, or a total of £900,223. The loss on miscellaneous State enterprises not included in the above figures was £55,388, uncharged interest £14,802, or a total of £70,190. To 30th June, 1926, the loss on the Government mining ventures was £804,251, uncharged interest £315,847, or a total loss of £1,120,098. Over the past twelve years the loss on the railways has been £16,000,000. Here we have a loss of £16,000,000 on railways in connection with which the Government undertook to save £10,000 per annum. All these matters must be taken seriously into consideration if we are to deal wisely with the economic situation in Queensland.

Last year the Treasurer, in his Financial Statement, anticipated a deficit of £173,766. He also announced the introduction of certain financial measures to produce sufficient revenue to cover the estimated deficit. Those financial measures were introduced. They comprised an amendment of the Stamp Act and the Gift Duty Bill; but, notwithstanding this additional taxation, the finances have gone from bad to worse. Last year the Treasurer received £287,340 more from taxation than was expected, yet the financial year closed with an actual deficit of £343,160. In view of this state of affairs, is it reasonable to expect Parliament to take the Government seriously when they set out to excuse the difficult position they find themselves in?

Mr. Fry.]

The Government are trying by every means in their power to side-track the whole issue. The Governor's Speech lacks information on essential matters upon which the State should be informed.

Mr. FOLEY: You are putting forward a purely lopsided case.

Mr. FRY: We can only put up a case for truth and right, which the hon. member evidently does not understand. I am attempting to put up that case, and give it for the benefit of the House. Hon. members on this side are not held down by some "whip" under threat of expulsion from the party if we disagree with the Government. We are free from that sort of discipline and are able to express ourselves according to our convictions. Apart from that, we have the ability to criticise the Government and give the country the truth about it, which the hon. member is not permitted to do.

Mr. FOLEY: You are leaving a lot of things unsaid.

Mr. FRY: The Government do not know where they stand financially. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether they can say to-day just where they stand politically. They are not certain of the position of certain supporters sitting behind them. The Government might make a protest for the sake of appearances to the public; nevertheless, the fact remains that they do not know where their position is, either in the House or out of it. I would sooner keep the Government in power, in order that they might carry out their policy to the end, for there is only one end to it, and that is disaster for the party they represent.

The PREMIER: You are a great patriot when you desire to see the State meet with disaster in order to get square with your political opponents.

Mr. FRY: I want to see the time come, and come speedily, when a change of Government will take place, and when we shall have a Government in power which will bring Queensland to that state of prosperity which we all desire and know it is possible for her to reach, knowing how richly she is endowed. I, like many other people, am tired of the fuddling and politically drunken methods of the Government, who are floundering about like a ship without a rudder on a rock-bound coast. (Government laughter.) I might go further than that, and say that the Government are like a ship without a rudder drifting about in shallow water, with every man wanting to be the captain and desiring, when the captain does speak, to throw him overboard. How can a State go on to prosperity under such conditions? The Government have been given a heritage to protect, which they are not doing. They have lost control of themselves and their party, and are hopelessly lost. I would like to see the Government take charge of the affairs of the government of the State and rule as a Government should. I have quoted from "Socialism at Work" to show what the policy of the Government has been. They have religiously followed that policy year after year, until to-day they do not know where they stand. (Government laughter.) Let us finish the rot. Are the Government aware that there is a Communist movement to bring about their downfall? The Premier must know of that movement. I was told by

[*Mr. Fry.*

one member of the Communist Party that the Communists were going to do so.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh! (Laughter).

Mr. FRY: They are in the Government Party, and the Government do not know where they are. My informant said that the Labour Party as it exists to-day must drift into second place, and that the Communist Party must be the real opposition to British Governments.

The PREMIER: Who told you that?

Mr. HANLON: The Nationalist Party said something similar to that some time ago.

Mr. FRY: The Nationalist Party are generally right in what they say. I am telling the Premier that the Government do not know where they are. All credit to the Premier for taking the part he did in upholding the Government of the country; but, I repeat, the Government do not know where they are, and the country do not know where they are to-day. We are here to try to help the Government to control this country in the best interests of all concerned, and we are going to do this.

The PREMIER: You say we do not know where we are. What is the good of knowing where we are if we are not there? (Laughter.)

Mr. FRY: I hope "Hansard" will take that interjection. It will show the intelligence of the hon. gentleman.

I should like to know if the Premier will make a statement on the fact of the Russo-Asiatic Consolidated Company, Limited, acquiring a share interest in Mount Isa. I should like him to enlighten hon. members as to the owners of those shares, and how much interest he took in the floating of the company, if any at all.

The PREMIER: That is a dirty, scurvy statement.

Mr. FRY: I will take it back if I am wrong.

The PREMIER: I do not want you to take it back. It is a dirty, scurvy statement.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: I am prepared to apologise to the Premier now if I am wrong.

The PREMIER: I will pull your nose, if necessary.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. FRY: I merely asked if the Premier would give the House information on this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in imputing motives against the honesty of the Premier.

Mr. FRY: I am not. This appeared in English papers.

The PREMIER: Where did it appear?

Mr. FRY: In the London "Star."

The PREMIER: You are a liar; you never saw it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call upon the Premier to withdraw.

The PREMIER: I withdraw the assertion in deference to the Chair; but, speaking to a point of order, if any hon. member can get up in this House and defame Ministers as the hon. member is in the habit of doing, then I shall be obliged, as Leader of the

House, to take such action as will keep that member out of this House. There is no other hon. member in the habit of doing this kind of thing. If an hon. member is to be permitted to make such a statement as was made by the hon. member for Kurilpa, under the pretext that, if I am not guilty, I can deny it, and that statement goes forth to the world, then there is no security in Parliament at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! The remarks of the hon. member for Kurilpa really amounted to an imputation of improper motives. The hon. member is prone to do that, and, if he continues, I shall take such steps as the Premier indicated, and shall ask the House to deal with the hon. member.

Mr. FRY: I had no intention of imputing improper motives. I, as a representative of the people in this House, desired information with regard to the decision of the Russo-Asiatic Consolidated Company, Limited, to acquire a considerable share interest in Mount Isa on account of its interesting developments.

The Governor's Speech goes on to say—

"It would appear to indicate that British capital is willing and indeed anxious to invest capital in this State in the mining industry, which for years has been starving from lack of interest by concerns capable of undertaking schemes involving big expenditure. It is apparent that not only local investors, but the financial world generally, recognise and appreciate the magnitude of the field and the value of its ore deposits."

If I had any opportunity to boom Mount Isa in Queensland or elsewhere, I would do so; and it is interesting to me to know just how far we can depend upon the capital developing these fields, because this Parliament and this country must bear the expense of railways. I impute no improper motives to anyone; it was not my intention to do so.

The PREMIER: Why did you ask that question?

Mr. FRY: As I told the hon. gentleman, I wanted information. The point I want to get down to is this: I want to help this State to prosper. The economic position of the State is such that it requires the best brains for the development of the State, and, if the Premier was offended, then, as I told him, I am willing to apologise.

The PREMIER: You are a dirty scavenger. [2.30 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: I feel very strongly on the matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I have no doubt the hon. gentleman does, but I would point out that the expression "dirty scavenger" as applied to an hon. member is entirely unparliamentary and out of order, and I would ask the hon. gentleman to withdraw the expression.

The PREMIER: In deference to you, sir, I withdraw.

Mr. FRY: Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! I shall not allow the hon. member to continue on those lines.

The PREMIER (to Mr. Fry): I will walk over and deal with you presently.

Mr. FRY: I have been criticising the policy of the Government and the administration of the Government; and I can assure hon. members that whatever I have said here has been said in the best interests of the people.

Let us go a little further—into the agricultural industry. I say here that agriculture is and must be the mainstay of Queensland for years, therefore it is essential that agricultural enterprise should be encouraged and raised to the highest standard of efficiency. The reason for that is that world competition is very great, and every possible effort must be made to meet the competition of other countries in the world's markets. Queensland and Australia are living under conditions which are approaching the ideal. No other people in the world are living under conditions such as we are living under. There is no chance of our competing against the world in secondary industries, but there is every chance of our competing against the world in primary industries.

Mr. PETERSON: Because the farmers are sweated.

Mr. FRY: We can develop our agricultural industries so that they can compete successfully in the world. Queensland demands the best production from her soils; Australia demands it, and the world needs the best that we can produce. There is an under-current of disruption in this country which is going to place this country in a vortex of trouble; and we must, as a Parliament, help the Government so to control affairs that they will be able to bring about that state of prosperity which is desired. Agriculture is the only means by which we can achieve that. As I said previously, there is an under-current and an influence in political matters that is going to bring down the Government of this State as well as the Governments of other States, if it is at all possible to do so. These people have set out to destroy British Imperialism. They have tried to fight British Imperialism at the seat of the British Government. They are fighting British Imperialism in every British Dominion, and wherever a strike occurs they use that strike in an attempt to destroy constitutional government. I am not going to talk about the South Johnstone strike or the railway strike; but at this stage I say, whoever agrees or disagrees with me, that the Premier did very wrong in discharging every member of the railway service in his idea of controlling the position. Nevertheless, we have to accept the Government's attitude. I support the Government in their fight for constitutional methods, and, if the Government and the Premier think that what they did was the right thing, then I am with them. Anyhow, I have a right to a private opinion, and I have a right to express it here.

Now I come to the question of celotex. According to the press, the Premier had something to say about celotex. That is a matter about which I would like to have some information, because, if it is at all possible to make it a profitable industry without endangering our timber trade, it will be a good thing; but it is not going to help us very much if it is going to destroy our timber trade.

Mr. Fry.]

The dental clinic that is travelling about Queensland is doing very valuable service, and a service which will benefit the whole community. Nobody can deny that teeth are a very valuable aid to digestion and health. Without proper aids to digestion, the community itself cannot be healthy, and on the health of the community depends our prosperity to a great extent.

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

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): It is very interesting to know from the hon. member who has just resumed his seat that there are two parties who are endeavouring to bring about the downfall of the Government—the Communist Party and the party opposite. There can be nothing but complete understanding in the minds of the community as to what this party and the other party stand for. One has only to listen to speeches which carry us nowhere, such as that just delivered by the hon. member for Kurilpa—a speech absolutely devoid of any suggestion of progress—to understand why this party are on these benches. If we regard the hon. member's speech as representing the views of the party to which he belongs, it is obvious that a party with a constructive programme must hold the reins of government.

When we met last year we were unfortunately in the middle of a most severe drought. We hoped that the wet season would eventuate. Unfortunately, we have not yet experienced the rain which we so badly need in Central Queensland and in other parts of the State. Consequently we meet to-day with gloom and depression hanging over the community. It was generally understood that there was some financial disability in the West, but I venture to say that to-day every messenger boy in Brisbane realises that the welfare of the community in Brisbane and every other town in this State of ours depends primarily upon the pastoral industries—the wealth-producing industries of our State. Hence it is obvious that we are dealing and will be dealing this session with a question of such far-reaching importance that it is impossible to estimate just where the ramifications of this position really extend. If hon. members will reflect for one moment, and, if as a result of that reflection, they will realise that the Central-Western areas of Queensland cannot be utilised for any other purpose but the production of wool—they have no agricultural future, and the cattle market is so uncertain that we cannot regard it as an actual producing asset—they will appreciate the importance of the sheep industry. If you eliminate the production of wool in Queensland, you eliminate the most valuable industry you have in the State—the only industry that is responsible for our solvency in the long run. Possibly this State is up against it to-day.

It is suggested by hon. members opposite that the finances are in a pretty parlous condition. They pause there. The inference they would like to convey is that the finances are in a very parlous state owing to the administration of the Government. A moment's reflection will indicate that, when we have signs of depression such as we have at present, when our revenue-producing sources are cut off, there can be no prosperity in the State. The whole thing

[*Mr. Fry.*

primarily hinges on the success of our wool areas, and, when we eliminate the income from those areas, we eliminate not only the taxation which the Government would get, but also the money which would be in circulation if the wool normally sold had been available for disposal. Hence it is obvious that, no matter how we may talk round this question, in the final analysis this Parliament is faced during this session with very important decisions, on which hinge the well-being or otherwise of the pastoral industry to-day. It is obvious that, when we discuss these matters at certain detail later on, hon. members opposite will adopt the attitude that the pastoralist is the one who must be considered. We on this side take up the stand that the whole of the community must be considered, and we are prepared to do those things which will be beneficial to the majority of the people in the Western areas of the State, and by doing those things we are going to benefit the entire State so far as its main industry is concerned. For a number of years an agitation has emanated from the political masters of many of those who sat and still sit in opposition, to enable them so to arrange matters that they would gain control of many of the big pastoral areas which are now available for closer settlement in Central Queensland.

We all know that the basis of a deputation that went to England on one occasion was to embarrass and try to force this Government into such a position that it would be constrained to grant an extension of lease in respect of certain big areas that were falling due in Central Queensland. This project is not dead. It is mentioned in influential pastoral circles, not only in the metropolis, but throughout the length and breadth of pastoral Queensland. The question asked is, Is it possible again to get an extension of these big leaseholds that are now falling due to the Crown? That is the main issue. I know that certain hon. gentlemen were taken out into the Central-West some few months ago. Personally, I was very pleased that hon. members from both sides of the House were enabled to make a trip through the drought stricken areas of the West in order that they might see just what was to be seen in those areas. It was indeed sad that many of them should see the West for the first time under those conditions. I would just like to suggest to those hon. members who went West that they take the opportunity of going out when the seasons have improved, when the normal conditions that ordinarily prevail in the West are in evidence. I crossed quite a lot of the country that many of the hon. gentlemen who went out traversed. It is true that there was not a blade of grass for hundreds and hundreds of square miles, nor were there many sheep. I remember that we pulled up at one place that ordinarily carried 30,000 to 35,000 sheep, and we got a photograph of the sole survivor—a little puddy lamb at the homestead. But that does not represent the pastoral industry. That represents one phase of the pastoral industry—the pastoral industry at its worst. In 1924 the pastoral industry was at its best. There is a medium between those two extremes—the bountiful season of 1924 and the sadly depressed season that they are experiencing in the West at the present time. There might or might not have been a motive in taking certain hon gentlemen

through those Western areas; but I know, and many of them know, that the fundamental idea lying beneath a good deal of the propaganda being conducted at the present time in regard to the pastoral question is the endeavour to obtain an extension of the leases of many of the big holdings that are now falling due to the Crown.

Mr. MAXWELL: You know that the position is pretty serious.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman says that I know that the position is pretty serious. I have a much more intimate knowledge of the pastoral industry than the hon. gentleman.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are not showing it.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman spent four days in the Central-West, and now he is going to try to tell us how the pastoral industry should be conducted.

Mr. MAXWELL: Don't anticipate.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am not going to tell the hon. gentleman how a house should be painted; and I do not expect him, at this juncture at least, to try to put into my mouth arguments that I am not going to use. He suggests that I do not appreciate the gravity of the situation. I do appreciate the gravity of the situation, and I know that the situation is as grave as it possibly can be. When I see men whom I have been associated with half my life—good fellows, married men—wandering about the various towns of the Central-West unable to obtain employment, then it is obvious that the position is critical indeed. We want to try to overcome those things. However, the hon. gentleman suggests that I do not appreciate the seriousness of the position. Again let me say that it is the small man—the selector—who is the principal sufferer as a result of these conditions that have overtaken them at the present time. The big companies with their big reserves have been enabled to carry over the dry period. In any case, if we come to a question of equity, a question of morality, or a question of justice, it is obvious that these people who took up these big aggregations and these big areas took them up knowing the conditions of the contract. The conditions of the contract were, in essence, to hold the land by paying certain rentals for a certain period. They knew that droughts were inevitable. They knew the vicissitudes of the industry a good deal better than even the hon. member for Toowong. They recognised that, and were prepared to take those risks. They were business risks. To-day, because they are in the throes of a drought, is it any reason why this House should turn round and give them further extensions of leases that they took up in good faith for a limited period only? The argument cannot be sustained on the ground of either equity or justice. I am totally and irrevocably opposed to the extension of leases to the big pastoral holdings. In saying that I know that I am voicing the opinion, not only of those hon. members who represent pastoral constituencies, but of 95 per cent. of the people of Queensland. One of the most sacred hopes of the people of Western Queensland is that, sooner or later, they will be able to gain access to a block, take up a selection, go off the labour market, grow a few sheep, and develop along lines they desire. The position of the small selector is infinitely different from that of the big

pastoral company. There is no doubt that the small selector has been very grievously wounded by the drought that has overtaken him; and I hope this House will evolve some scheme whereby the small man may obtain assistance which will enable him to restock and put the land to its full economic use and value.

Associated with this question is a question to which I personally attach a good deal of importance. That is the question of railway communication. I would like to compliment the Secretary for Railways on progressing with that very vital link, the Longreach to Winton connection. I am pleased to see that, in spite of the falling revenue, the Minister has vision enough to realise that the construction of this line is one of primary necessity to the welfare of the pastoral areas of Queensland. I had the good fortune to be present with the Minister when he opened a further section of this railway 40 miles from Winton. I have no reason to believe that any alteration of policy in this connection will be permitted, and I am confident that it will be constructed to its logical destination—Winton—and will succeed in linking two of the big systems running through the pastoral areas of Queensland.

There is yet a third system which one must mention. While the Northern and Central systems will be connected on completion of the Longreach-Winton line, there still remains a gap in our railway systems, and that is the line from Blackall to Charleville, about which so much has been heard. The Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, made a tour of Central-western Queensland recently. Of course, the question on the tip of everyone's tongue in the West, from the youngest to the oldest inhabitant, was, What is the Federal Government prepared to do to help us to get out of the very critical situation in which we find ourselves? At Barcaldine Mr. Bruce made some attacks on the taxation of the State, but Mr. Clark, one of the leading pastoralists of Queensland, administered a crushing public rebuke to Mr. Bruce when he pointed out to him that it was the incidence of Federal taxation, and not State taxation, which was the main factor in preventing the rehabilitation of the pastoral industry.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not say it was the main factor.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is what he said.

Mr. TAYLOR: He said it was a factor.

Mr. BULCOCK: He said it was the main factor. I followed his speech at Barcaldine very closely. The fact remains that one of the leading pastoralists publicly rebuked Mr. Bruce in consequence of the incidence of Federal taxation being so much sterner than the incidence of State taxation. Mr. Bruce was asked if he were prepared to do anything in regard to the construction of the Blackall-Charleville line. Mr. Bruce professed to be unable to do anything in this regard, as he professed, I might say in passing, in regard to every other big question of public importance which was brought before his notice during his tour of this State. It seems to me that the only thing Mr. Bruce accomplished for the welfare of Queensland, if one may term it such, was to give holidays to the children in the various towns he visited.

Mr. TAYLOR: Don't be small. Try to be big.

Mr. Bulcock.]

Mr. BULCOCK: Mr. Bruce did not rise to any occasion.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did so.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member knows perfectly well that Mr. Bruce did absolutely nothing to justify his tour through Queensland. Let me turn to a point. What encouragement, from a Federal point of view, did he offer to the construction of the Blackall-Charleville line? I hope that hon. members will not suggest that I am using the parish pump in this connection. The Blackall-Charleville line is a line that transcends party politics at the present juncture. We have two main railway systems in this State which will soon be connected, while the third system will not be connected thereto. Then, if the pastoralists find it necessary or expedient to shift stock from the vicinity of Longreach or Barcaldine to pasturages in the vicinity of Charleville, they will have to truck their stock from a point of embarkation through Rockhampton, Brisbane, and Toowoomba on to their destination.

Mr. MOORE: Is that not a State matter?

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman may ask that question; but apparently a lot of people thought Mr. Bruce might be able to do something in the matter, and he confessed his inability to do so. As Mr. Bruce has confessed his inability to do so, then essentially the matter becomes a State one, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition. It has been said that this line would not be used except when concession rates prevailed; but, supposing the line were built and concession rates were applied to it, it would be used for the conveyance of stock from the northern and central areas of our State; and even if full freightage were paid, the cost would still be less than the rates which have to be paid on the reduced basis from Longreach to Charleville.

It has been stated also that the State cannot carry sufficient rolling-stock in normal seasons to provide ample supply for abnormal seasons such as drought periods. It is obvious, therefore, that, when stock has to be moved right round by the coast, the trucks can only make a certain number of trips, and that number is infinitely less than could be made were a connection made between Charleville and Blackall. I believe that the line will have to be built eventually. It would be one of the best forms of drought insurance that we could have. We hear the city man and the impractical man talking about the conservation of the natural pasturages of the West; but the fact that it has not been done by the practical sheepmen of the West indicates that it cannot be done successfully; and, therefore, will have to be put on one side when any projects are under consideration for the conservation of fodder supplies in Queensland.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is the best thing you have said yet.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am glad the hon. member agrees with some of my statements.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: But your Government turned down the line.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman suggests that this Government turned down the line. Let me remind him that an inquiry based upon the necessity for this line was held by a commission appointed by this Government. That fact indicates that the

Government realise their responsibilities in that particular direction. As a matter of fact, the line had been turned down by previous Governments.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It was turned down by this Government only the other day.

Mr. BULCOCK: It has not been turned down.

No doubt we shall hear a good deal of criticism in regard to the finances of the State during the coming session. It frequently happens that people having their opponents at a disadvantage want to punch while the punching is good; and no doubt that spirit will actuate the Opposition during the present session. There

[3 p.m.] is this to be remembered, however. In times past when droughts overtook the State certain things were done by the Government then in power that will not be done by this Government. One was the infliction of a poll tax. Hon. members will remember that during the big drought of 1901-1902 a poll tax was instituted.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What about the water-hole tax? (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: A poll tax was instituted—they do not like it—by the Government in power in 1901-1902. That Government was an anti-Labour Government. A Labour Government will not do that sort of thing to meet the situation. Another thing that was done in 1902, when an anti-Labour Government was in power, was to retrench one fetting gang in every four on the lines of our State, thereby making the railways unsafe for traffic. They compelled the public to travel over unsafe lines, and in the end they were compelled to employ more men in order to restore the lines to a sound, safe, working condition. That is a thing that this Government is not likely to do. I want to say in all seriousness that I believe that this State can only weather the gale, can only get through the dark clouds that are gathering at the present time, by a steadfast devotion to the welfare of the State. I believe that, if we are going to be torn and “biffed” and battered, if we are going to be drawn off the track, and if we are going to do those things that the Tories would do, then there is very little hope for the future.

Mr. SIZER: You have done all those things.

Mr. BULCOCK: I believe that, with a sane Labour Government in power, the best will be done for the people and the community generally, and the outcome of the present vicissitudes will be that, when the drought is finally broken up, we shall be able to go forward with the legislative programme that we have enunciated from time to time.

There is another matter associated with the pastoral industry with which I should like to deal. I am to some degree in accord with those who say there is grave danger of a diminution of the quality of our flocks in consequence of the break-up of our bigger holdings. I am not entirely convinced that that is so. I believe that there is some danger, but I do not believe it is a danger that cannot be overcome; nor would I regard it as being an argument in favour of the retention by the present holders of the blocks that they already hold; but I believe that this pastoral industry of ours is far too

[Mr. Bulcock.]

valuable to be sacrificed. Our pastoral industry requires careful guidance. I can see the rocks ahead of us. It is just possible that Africa may become a severe competitor in the wool markets of the world, and, if she does, then we may lose our supremacy in respect of certain wool counts, the production of which gives us a wool supremacy in certain markets of the world to-day. The Government will have seriously to consider the question of the preservation of the present existing wool standards, and, if possible, the production of a higher standard than we have at the present time. I believe also that the time is ripe for some more scientific investigation to be undertaken in regard to some of the pathological problems surrounding wool and sheep production in the State. Other States have gone in for elaborate research machinery in regard to the problems associated with the production of wool and sheep. In Victoria they have quite elaborate institutions for research along those particular lines. The Commonwealth Bureau of Science and Industry is doing some very valuable work in regard to these matters also; but I would like to point out that here in Queensland we have not got a single experiment station devoted to the question of the production of sheep or wool, or any scientific study of the pathological problems surrounding wool. It is obvious that the losses from fly alone in a normal season are prodigious. Nobody has yet succeeded in estimating the volume or the cost which such losses represent to the community. Probably they run into millions of pounds—I am referring to the losses which accrue from the prevalence of the fly in the sheep areas alone. Certain research has been made into these matters, but nothing has finally been achieved. We all know that the use of arsenic is questionable. It is detrimental to the man who is compelled to use it, and it is certainly detrimental to the man who shears the sheep which have been sprayed with arsenic. Another matter into which investigation might be made is fodder conservation; another is the collection of very valuable information which is now available concerning the effects of artificial feeding. Before this drought very few people knew anything about artificial feeding. To-day people are beginning to discover that the question requires very careful investigation.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is absolutely necessary.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member misunderstands me. I mean that many people started out in the beginning of artificial feeding, and fed their flocks at a cost greater than was justified. They found out afterwards that they could well have substituted other forms of food, possibly cheaper forms, and got better results. A good deal of data is now available. Information has been gained by practical men during this drought in the artificial feeding of sheep. It is certain that a similar position is going to occur again; yet nobody to-day can say what is the best mixture or the best balanced ration to be fed to sheep, and whether it is economical to give them a full ration which will merely keep them alive. These are questions intimately bound up with the prosperity of the sheep industry, and I think the time is ripe when the Government might well consider the establishment of a sheep experimental station in Central Queensland.

Mr. TAYLOR: Have they not made an offer to the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. BULCOCK: I am not going to say that it should be entirely a charge on the State. I believe that it should be a charge on the Commonwealth and the State, and I believe that if there is any sincerity in this matter, and while we have areas of land available which could be utilised in this regard, such as the Saltern Creek lands—hon. members who know the Saltern Creek country know that there is no better pastoral country in Queensland than that self-same country—then, if we do not do something in this direction, we cannot say that we have done the best we could for the industries of the State. When the Government offered the best block in Central Queensland to the Federal Government for the establishment of such an experimental farm, I understand that they turned it down. The Federal Government say that they are the friends of the farmers in this respect, but we are the Government who have done what we can.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think you are correct. I do not think the Federal Government turned it down.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am informed that the Federal Government have turned the project down. If my information is incorrect, I shall be more than pleased to know it, because I think that to a very great extent the future of wool and of our pastoral industry is bound up with research work into the problems which surround that industry. If the Federal Government will not do a fair thing and a right thing for the preservation of the primary and paramount industry of Australia, I hope this Government will be able to show them the way they should have gone by undertaking the duty—a duty which is essentially a duty to be undertaken by both State and Federal Governments. I am sure that, if this Government did undertake the duty and showed what could be done and should be done in this regard, the co-operation of the Bureau of Science and Industry would not be withheld in collecting certain data and in engaging in certain research work in the matters to which I have referred.

Before I conclude, I want to say that since we last met the dental clinic has gone out into the West, and I think we ought to pay a tribute—I personally pay my tribute—to the Department of Public Instruction for the inauguration of that service. Unfortunately, there are not many dentists in the West—I can mention a dozen places where they are absent—nevertheless the children in the West have a right to have their teeth properly attended to. I am more than gratified with the institution of that travelling dental clinic, and I hope that the Minister will long allow it to remain in the western areas of our State, where it is doing such very excellent work for the people of those areas. I consider it is one of the best moves by the Department of Public Instruction of recent years, and I certainly desire to add my meed of commendation to the Minister and his officers who were responsible for the institution of this service.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): At the outset I desire to express my pleasure at the appointment of Sir John Goodwin as Governor of Queensland. I feel sure that, when His Excellency has gained a knowledge of the State and its resources, he will emulate his predecessor, and, when he returns to the

Mr. Logan.]

hometown, he will become another great ambassador for the State of Queensland.

The hon. member for Barcoo has referred largely to the pastoral industry. I agree with him to a very large extent, because I know full well that any decrease in our exports by the diminution of the wool supply will mean a very disastrous blow to Queensland. Speaking earlier in the debate, the Secretary for Agriculture stated that the loss in exports from Queensland for this year would be approximately £12,000,000. I realise full well what that loss will mean to Queensland, and I readily realise that the decrease in circulation of the proceeds from those exports will mean a considerable amount of trouble to the State. Whilst, perhaps, the drought has been responsible for a considerable amount of the trouble in the pastoral industry, still to a certain extent the Government have not extended to that industry all that it might have done. I wish hon. members on both sides to understand thoroughly that I have no ulterior motive behind the remarks I am about to make, and I sincerely hope that they will endeavour to deduce from my remarks that which I desire to impart. In this House I represent one of the finest agricultural districts in the State of Queensland, and I know that the district is capable of producing fodder for a big portion of the State, if the district is properly treated and cared for. It seems extraordinary to me that at the present time in the Lockyer district we have not one single scheme for the conservation of fodder to encourage the farmers to produce a surplus of that commodity which is so much needed in pastoral districts as feed for starving stock. I have on different occasions made inquiries as to whether or not the Lockyer Creek could be weired for irrigation purposes, and I have been astounded to ascertain on each occasion that the Irrigation Commissioner has no control over Lockyer Creek, as the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board has control over that area. On looking up the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Act I find that is not altogether correct, and the Government would be well advised to endeavour, through the Irrigation Department, to do something which would encourage greater production of fodder in the Lockyer district for use in other parts of the State. I intend to quote some figures in connection with the town in which I live—Forest Hill—to give hon. members some idea of what the soil can produce without water, and to indicate how the crops can be kept growing with a little irrigation. We have passed through abnormal seasons, but with a little water we could produce very heavy quantities of fodder which could be made available for use by pastoralists and other people throughout the State. The figures supplied to me by the station-master at Forest Hill from the records of the station show that for twelve months ended 31st July of this year, although only four to five months of the period were normal because of the drought, 8,411 tons of produce were despatched, bringing in £7,057 in revenue to the Railway Department. The biggest month during that period was May, in which 1,772 tons of goods were handled, bringing in £1,141. In the first week in August more than 600 tons of produce left Forest Hill for various parts of Queensland. I have quoted those figures to show what a little centre

like Forest Hill alone can produce during seasons that are not the best.

If some irrigation system existed in the Lockyer district, the farmers there could have increased their output three or four fold. I am not discussing this matter from a Forest Hill point of view, but from the point of view of Lockyer and other centres which would benefit to the same degree as Forest Hill. The Government have expressed themselves as desirous of helping the farmer, and this is one direction in which that help can be given. If one quarter of that sum expended on fodder outside the State were expended in the construction of weirs on Lockyer Creek, it would obviate the need for that fodder being brought over the border.

Mr. COLLINS: Remember you criticised the Lakerman irrigation scheme very severely.

Mr. LOGAN: The hon. gentleman is not sincere in his endeavour to help these people who require fodder. All fodder requirements for our drought stricken areas can be produced in the Lockyer district if facilities for water are made. I had the opportunity of visiting the Theodore area, and I have no desire to decry the land in that area. I believe that under irrigation reasonable crops can be produced there; but from my knowledge of soil I am rather doubtful whether lucerne-growing will be a success on that soil. I am of opinion that, when the ground has been planted with lucerne and irrigated and there has been a good downfall of rain, the tap roots of the lucerne will rot owing to the nature of the soil. It has been proved in the Lockyer district that the ground can take all the water that may be applied to it without the crops of lucerne being affected. A much larger crop than is produced at present can be grown if the farmers are given a chance. The Government are not developing those areas in the sense that they should be developed. I am aware that the farmers do not desire at the present time to create a surplus of lucerne or any other commodity, because it would render the crop unprofitable to grow, and, consequently, not worth their while to grow it, because there is no market for the surplus. Nevertheless, from the experience of my visit to the West, I am convinced that by some system of co-operation between the pastoralists and the producers in the Lockyer, it is possible to grow all the fodder required in that area if some scheme of finance assuring the growers of a payable price for their commodity were evolved by the pastoralists. The scheme is a big one, but it is worth while considering. I believe that such a scheme could be evolved with advantage to the producer and consumer. For many years the Government have given consideration to water conservation for the regular production of crops and financing the farmers under a rural credit scheme, but up to the present nothing has been done. In view of the recurring droughts in Queensland, some endeavour should be made in the direction I have pointed out in the district which I have the pleasure to represent.

I would just like to mention, in passing, that I have been told that the Irrigation Commissioner has no power to enter upon any water conservation scheme in the Lockyer district because of the restrictions in the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Acts Amendment Act of 1921.

[Mr. Logan.]

Section 3 of this Act shows that the Lockyer district does not come within the operations of this Act, consequently it is reasonable that the Government should do something on the watercourses I have mentioned. Section 3 reads—

“Section 7 of the principal Act is repealed, and the following section is inserted in lieu thereof:—

(7) The district of the board shall be the area comprised within the boundaries for the time being of the undermentioned electoral districts (or part thereof), the boundaries whereof (with the exception of those districts the boundaries whereof remained unaltered) were duly proclaimed in the ‘Gazette’ dated the first day of August, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one, grouped into the undermentioned divisions of the district, that is to say:—

Brisbane division of the district—

Brisbane,
Fortitude Valley,
Merthyr, and
Paddington.

South Brisbane division of the district—

Bulimba,
Buranda,
Kurilpa,
Marce,
Oxley,
South Brisbane, and
Wynnum, electoral division of
Logan.

Western division of the district—

Enoggera,
Fassifern,
Ithaca, and
Toowong.

Northern division of the district—

Murrumba,
Nundah,
Stanley,
Toombul, and
Windsor.

The said district shall be called the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage District, and this Act shall extend and apply thereto.”

There is no mention in that of the Lockyer, and I put it to the Government that, if they are desirous of helping the pastoralists who have been in difficulties, it is their duty to establish a properly irrigated area in the Lockyer district. By this means a fodder supply would be available in times of stress, and it seems to me that the Government are showing neglect in not formulating some such scheme. We have passed through a severe drought, and, so far as my district is concerned, it was found necessary to buy fodder from over the border, as lucerne was not grown by the farmers in excess of their own personal requirements. I ask the Government to take this matter seriously in hand, not only in the interests of the people of Lockyer, but in the interests of the people of Queensland, with a view to fodder being available in times of necessity.

I desire to refer to another matter in which the Government have not dealt fairly with the people of my electorate. I have no desire to wield the parish pump, but certain things have been turned down by

the Government to which I must take strong exception in the interests of the people whom I represent. Some two or three years ago an attempt was made by the people of Laidley to acquire electric light, and some difficulty was experienced in getting the Government to guarantee a loan. The amount of capital involved was £8,000 or £9,000, and it was found that the tax on the people of the benefited area, added to the rates they were already paying, was more than they could carry. At a later period a private company offered to install a lighting scheme for the whole of the Lockyer district, the amount of money required for that scheme being approximately £30,000. We approached the Secretary for Public Works, and a fortnight before doing so I gave the hon. gentleman a copy of the agreement in connection with the matter, in order that he might obtain the advice of his electrical experts on the proposal. When a deputation approached the Minister they were met with a refusal of assistance, the hon. gentleman stating that it was against the policy of the Government to allow private companies to operate.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Shame!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no shame about it.

Mr. LOGAN: The action of the Government on that occasion showed a disinclination to encourage the introduction of new money into the State, because the company I am referring to was a New South Wales one which was operating in many places in that State. As a matter of fact, it extended an invitation to the Minister to inspect some of its enterprises, but I do not know whether the hon. gentleman accepted the invitation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have enough worry with the private companies that are now operating.

Mr. LOGAN: A private company was prepared to expend approximately £30,000, and to give a guarantee to the Government that only local labour would be employed, that a prospectus would be issued in the district, and, if the local people were prepared to take up shares in the company, they would be given an opportunity to do so. I am

sorry to say there was a good [3.30 p.m.] deal of unemployment existing at the time, as there is to-day. That company was prepared to light the towns in the Lockyer district at the low rate of 11d. per unit for lighting, and at a considerably lower rate than that for power and other purposes. The Minister and his engineer agreed that it was a good offer. Personally, while the deputation was waiting on the Minister, I asked the engineer if he could see any objection to that agreement, and he had to admit that there was nothing wrong with it. I want to quote an eminent gentleman on the attitude of the Government in this matter. At a later date Archbishop Duhig visited Laidley, and he had this to say in connection with the same scheme as reported in the “Laidley Herald” of 26th March last—

“In commenting on local matters, the Archbishop expressed surprise that the electric light scheme recently put forward to serve Laidley, Forest Hill, and Gatton had not been entertained by the Minister, on the ground that it was against the policy of the Government to permit

Mr. Logan.]

private companies to control public utilities. Such a decision only added to the disadvantages of country life, which was sufficiently dull and drab without depriving it of such a convenience by strictly adhering to the party's policy.

"The circumstances made all the difference. In conclusion, His Grace said he hoped the difficulties would be overcome so that the towns mentioned might be decently lighted and thus add generally to the comfort of living."

I mention these things because the present Government are always claiming that they have advanced the interests of every district in the State; and I want to say that in my district we have received no advantages whatever. Here you have a private company with new money prepared to come from another State and expend it in the district, employ only local labour, adhere to any conditions within reason which the Government like to lay down; yet the Government, because of their hard-and-fast policy, turn it down.

There are several other questions to which one might refer. One is the very burning question of main roads. I do not know why it is, but so far we have not had one foot of main road laid down in the Laidley Shire, and I would like to remind the Minister that the people in that area contribute very largely to the motor tax. The Secretary for Public Works has some knowledge of what the roads are, as recently he visited the district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They are not roads at all; they are only tracks.

Mr. LOGAN: The roads are in a very bad state, and I complain that nothing has been done by the Main Roads Commissioner in the Laidley Shire. I enter my emphatic protest against the attitude of the Main Roads Commissioner in not giving the Laidley people some consideration. The road between Brisbane and Toowoomba runs through the Laidley Shire, and practically every vehicle that goes to Toowoomba from Brisbane must go through the Lockyer district. The roads in that district have not received any consideration, and I sincerely hope that during the coming year the Minister will suggest to the Main Roads Commissioner that he should give some consideration to the roads in that area. Naturally, those who are in a position to do so have gone in for up to date methods of conveyance. There are quite a number of motor trucks coming into the district, and I hope that the Minister will note what I have said, and will help us in some way to get some of the roads attended to.

Referring again to the irrigation of the Lockyer, I would seriously urge the Government to consider the proposal that has been made. I am quite confident that with irrigation we could produce in that district practically all the fodder required for the State during drought time. At the present time, because of the lack of water and to some extent the exhaustion of the soil owing to the length of time lucerne has been grown, the lucerne has not grown as vigorously as it did when the land was virgin soil, and to-day it requires some assistance, and water would help us considerably. The soil will take all the water you are likely to give it. Not only would the farmers on the banks of the creek be able to irrigate, but, as the banks of the creek are higher than the land on either side, it is

[Mr. Logan.

possible to bring the water quite long distances on to the flat country. I am sorry that the Secretary for Agriculture was not here when I mentioned that scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I received a deputation on the subject.

Mr. LOGAN: That was a water supply scheme for the town. I have been advocating this other scheme for irrigation purposes, and I am satisfied that it could be made to serve a very large area. If the Minister and the Government would give serious consideration to the suggestion I have made I am satisfied they would not find a better scheme from any point of view, and, for the sake of the whole district and the State generally, it would be a good scheme for the Government to investigate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you speaking of the scheme that we should bring under the migration agreement?

Mr. LOGAN: I am not. The people in that locality have been having a bad time through the drought. I quite realise what is being done in the Theodore district, and I know the conditions of the people in need of fodder adjacent to that area. I sincerely hope that it proves to be a success.

I have nothing to say in regard to the strike. There are others better able to say what should be said than I, and I merely wish to say that I decidedly hope that the trouble has terminated—not for a short time, but for a long period. It has been a source of great regret to me and many others that these industrial troubles continually arise.

Mr. COLLINS interjected.

Mr. LOGAN: The hon. member who has just interjected, unfortunately, does not seem to appreciate the other fellow's point of view. Personally, I would like to say that I appreciate the worker's point of view as well as the other man's point of view, and, if anything is needed in this country it is co-operation between labour and capital.

Mr. COLLINS: They made enough capital out of the war.

Mr. LOGAN: Until hon. members get down to a serious realisation of the needs of both sides of this question, we cannot have co-operation and real progress. Personally, I believe in holding the scales of justice with an even hand so that everybody has an equal chance.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Chillagoe*): Before addressing myself to the question before the House, I take the opportunity of congratulating the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, and also the hon. member for Balonne upon being elected to this Chamber. I also take the opportunity of congratulating His Excellency the Governor on his appointment to the high office he holds in this State. Although I do not subscribe to the method of the appointment, still he holds the office, and I am prepared to say that he will be an acquisition to the State, more especially on account of his high training in the medical profession and the great interest he has taken in cancer research.

There are several members on both sides of this Chamber who up to the present time have been unable on account of illness to attend this session, but I hope it will not be long before they are well enough to take their places here again. (Hear, hear!)

I listened with pleasure to the portion of the Governor's Speech dealing with the Government policy in regard to the health of the children of the State. His Excellency stated that, in 1926, 41,000 were medically examined, and the departmental dentists examined 42,000 children. I am satisfied that every hon. member will be pleased with the policy which the Government have pursued in safeguarding the health of the children; but the mention of the subject brings to my mind the belief that the Government should go a little further in this direction, particularly in the case of children whose male parents are suffering from that dreaded disease, miner's phthisis. When one calls to mind the assistance which the Government have given to the injured workers in the State under the workers' compensation system, then it seems to me that the amount of money given in cases where the breadwinner is suffering from miner's phthisis is insufficient, as the children are suffering from a handicap. They are brought into the world at a disadvantage compared with the children whose parents are more healthy. This means that larger sums of money have to be expended on food and clothing for the more unfortunate children to give them an equal chance with those born in better circumstances. Last session the Workers' Compensation Act was amended so that a single man could receive £2 15s. per week and a married man with a family up to £4 5s. per week when injured; but a sufferer from miner's phthisis receives only £1 per week—in many instances only 10s.—and that applies also to the married men. Again, the total amount of compensation payable to a person suffering from miner's phthisis is £450, whereas the amount payable to an injured worker under the general scheme is £750 for permanent incapacitation. The amount paid under the general scheme is paid in a lump sum, but in the case of miner's phthisis the amount is paid by weekly instalments. I hope the Government will see their way clear to rectify the anomaly, and place the sufferers from miner's phthisis on exactly the same footing as others injured in industry. That is the least we can do for those who have risked their life and limbs in the mining industry of the State. We cannot expect any great change in the policy of the Government in that direction on account of the present financial stringency; but I sincerely hope that the Government will see their way clear to extend further assistance to these unfortunate families by placing the injured breadwinner under the general scheme of workers' compensation. Such workers have absolutely earned the right to be placed on the same footing as any other injured worker. We must bear in mind that most of these men who are stricken with miner's phthisis are men who were born in our country, or at least have been many years working in the industry in Queensland; but under the general scheme of compensation a worker need be only twelve months or less in our country to be entitled to full compensation as an injured worker.

I wish to congratulate the Secretary for Public Lands on the generous and business-like way in which he met the needs of the returned soldiers on the Atherton Tableland. During the past twelve months many matters have been brought under my notice, including the claim by some of the settlers that they had less than a living area. These facts were placed before the Minister by myself,

and I desire to express to him my gratification and the gratification of the settlers for the manner in which he dealt with the matter. In every instance the hon. gentleman endeavoured to rectify any trouble that existed, and to my knowledge in all cases he has allowed the settlers to acquire additional areas in order to make good.

At the present time a maize pool is in existence on the Atherton Tableland, and as a result of that pool the growers of maize are enjoying a greater measure of prosperity than would otherwise have been the case. The farmers in that area have become reconciled to the system of pooling, and during my last visit to that portion of the electorate they expressed a wish that maizegrowers in other parts of the State should also adopt the system of pooling.

That brings me to the enormous expense incurred by pastoralists during the drought in purchasing maize to keep their sheep alive. The prices that were paid ranged from £20 to £30 per ton; but I venture to say that not many of the growers received much more than £8 to £10 a ton on an average. In Atherton, where the pool is in existence, the crop for last year averaged to the grower £12 10s. per ton.

Mr. PETERSON: The reason why such a high price was obtained for maize was the drought in Western Queensland, and not on account of any act of the pool.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Maizegrowers in the South sold their maize in those areas, and it was necessary that the demands of the South should be met. These facts go to show that a scheme not only for the conservation of fodder but for a pooling system is absolutely necessary in Queensland. I agree with previous speakers that the facilities for the storage of fodder, not only in Queensland but in other parts of Australia, are totally inadequate. This is a problem we must face, as a scheme of fodder conservation would be one of the greatest insurances possible against drought.

While a policy of linking up railway systems is desirable, a fodder conservation scheme for Australia will tend more to solve some of her great problems due to drought than those links in the railway system. I suggest that the Government should take up this matter with the Commonwealth Government and other State Governments. The cost of such a scheme could be paid for by the woolgrowers of Australia being asked to contribute a premium of, say, ½d. per lb. on the wool sold.

I would also call the attention of the Secretary for Public Lands to the necessity, now that the mining industry of North Queensland—with the exception of tin—is at such a low ebb, of throwing open lands in that part of the State to enable the people to settle thereon. I would specially refer to that tract of land at the back of Herberston running right along to the Evelyn Scrub in the Ravenshoe district. I would also call attention to six holdings in the centre of the agricultural district in the Evelyn Scrub, which are now held by the Forestry Department. Five of these six blocks are denuded of timber, and, from what I can understand from officers of the Forestry Department, this area is too small for the purpose of reafforestation for which it was intended. I understand it requires amending legislation in order that these lands may revert to the

Mr. O'Keefe.]

Crown. I hope that the Minister will take the necessary steps to make these lands available to the people in the district. A butter factory has been established at Ravenshoe, but the number of suppliers is insufficient to make it a profitable concern. If this land were thrown open for selection, it would be applied for, and the position in regard to this factory and the district generally would to a certain extent be relieved. In order to show what maizegrowing has meant to Australia, it is only necessary to point out that in 1923-24, 2,500,000 bushels of maize were imported into Australia. The price paid was 4s. per bushel, so that the price paid amounted to about £500,000. During 1924-25, some months after the importation of this maize, 2,500,000 bushels were exported from Australia. The price obtained for this maize was about 4s. per bushel, yet during that period large numbers of stock, which represented millions in the assets of the State, were lost through drought in the Western districts. That goes to prove that some system of storage is necessary in order to save the great losses which occur from time to time. When it is considered that, in many instances, the farmers sell their crop at prices less than cost of production, and that the consumers, who are the big and small sheepmen of the State, have to pay from 8s. to 10s. per bushel for that fodder in times of stress, then it is apparent that there is something wrong. The time is opportune for this and other State Governments to collaborate with the Commonwealth Government in an endeavour to provide an adequate storage for drought fodder as an insurance against the enormous losses which are suffered in times of drought.

Mr. MOORE: The maizegrower got as much as 11s. 6d. per bushel last year under the pool.

Mr. O'KEEFE: We will blame the pool then. As I say, a system of storage of fodder to prevent losses in times of drought is absolutely essential. The money for such a scheme can be contributed by the wool-growers, and in this connection an imposition of 4d. per lb. on wool grown in Australia would be found sufficient for the initial expenses of the scheme.

Reference has been made in the Governor's Speech to the destruction of prickly-pear and the distribution of the cochineal insect. I had the pleasure recently of visiting with the Secretary for Railways and the hon. member for Barcoo a pear-infested area in the Emerald district, and what we saw there of the splendid work of both the cochineal insect and the worm leaves no doubt in my mind as to the final result. Wonderful progress has been made, despite the short period of time that the insects have been in the district. This matter brings to my mind the fact that, whilst enormous losses in sheep are being sustained not only in Queensland but in New South Wales by reason of droughts, other countries are using prickly-pear as fodder for stock. Whilst we are destroying the pear, we are at the same time destroying what I may call a fodder, and thousands of sheep are starving for the want of something to eat. A Southern newspaper recently gave prominence to the position of the stockowners of Texas, United States of America, where an experiment began twelve years ago in the direction of using pear as a fodder in times of drought. That experiment was so successful that the

policy of utilising pear for feeding stock has resulted in practically no losses being sustained in the last ten years, although Texas during that time has passed through three severe droughts.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: That is spineless pear.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The particular instance I am quoting does not refer to spineless pear. Not only have they successfully gone through these periods of drought, but the average carrying capacity has in many instances been increased by 50 per cent. Many of the Texas farmers do nothing else but cultivate pear for conservation purposes. The pear is so grown that a blowpipe can be used to destroy the prickle. I remember in 1902 I was travelling with starving stock in the Central district, and we were feeding these sheep for months and months on prickly-pear. What was our great trouble? The hon. member for Normanby will know, as many of the sheep were fed in his own electorate and around Rockhampton, that the great trouble was on account of the prickle.

[4 p.m.] If it were not for the prickle, the pear would be good fodder, and the sheep would have been able to last through the drought without any great losses. But whilst the prickle was there, we had no chance of continually feeding the sheep on the pear. I realise the great loss that Queensland is suffering at the present time on account of the drought in the West.

No one realises the position better than hon. members of this Chamber, and I was very much interested in the report of the Land Settlement Advisory Board in connection with our Western lands. We shall have an opportunity of debating this subject at a later date, but I am satisfied that the report very largely is a good one. It contains valuable information in regard to what should constitute a living area, and I, for one, do not want to be misled in any way as to the area selectors in the Western sheep district should be given. We have had a sorry experience all over Queensland in connection with the settlement of returned soldiers on too small an area. During the last twelve months the Minister has been rectifying the mistake that was made on the Atherton Tableland. To-day the returned soldiers there have a sufficient area to enable them to make a decent living, and they are all satisfied. So, when the Government are launching out to cut up the vast areas falling due, they should accept the recommendation of the Land Settlement Advisory Board in regard to the size of the holdings so that no mistake will be made.

I regret very much that the Government so far have not given any information in regard to what they intend to do with the great smelting plant at Chillagoe. It is now some seven or eight months since the closure of the Chillagoe works, which brought about stagnation in the district. As a result, hundreds of families are now on the bread line awaiting the decision of the Government as to what they intend to do. I know what they promised.

Mr. MAXWELL: They did not keep their word.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am not going to shield them in regard to those promises. The Secretary for Mines and the Premier travelled throughout the electorate during the elections and told those people that, if

[Mr. O'Keefe.

they supported the Government candidate—that is myself—the previous policy with regard to Chillagoe would be continued. As we all know, the works were continued for a few months; but, on account of certain things that occurred, the whole thing was held up until a report was placed before members of this Chamber. We have had an opportunity of perusing that report, and I do not suppose there is one member of this House but will agree that it is a very bad report. It exposed certain things that should never have happened there.

Mr. MAXWELL: Then the Leader of the Opposition was right?

Mr. O'KEEFE: I want to point out that no blame can be attached to the mining industry on account of the disclosures contained in that report. If the manager of the State smelters saw fit to draw up a tariff that was detrimental to the interests of the State works there, then it rested with the Government to see that he refrained from putting that tariff into operation. The report points out that under the 60-40 tariff it was costing the State 60s. per ton to treat the ore, while they were only getting a return of 14s. 6d. for it. If that is so, there was something radically wrong. I do not think the men in that district wanted a tariff of that description. There were only a few who were getting any benefit out of it. What the local people up there require are facilities for smelting their ore. In 1920 the Government saw fit to take over the machinery, and to-day the men in the silver-lead industry are left absolutely stranded, having no sort of smelter in the North of Queensland—or in the South either, for that matter.

Mr. COLLINS: What do you suggest?

Mr. O'KEEFE: I say candidly, although I represent the electorate, that it is impossible to carry on smelting operations at the present time on account of the low market prices. Nobody in Queensland can produce and smelt lead when the market price is only £21 or £22 a ton. At Broken Hill, where they have every facility and up-to-date machinery for treating the ore supplied, it costs them in the vicinity of £20 per ton, and it is absolutely impossible to carry on operations with the plant we have in Chillagoe. Unless we can get in the vicinity of £28 or £30 per ton, we cannot produce lead in Queensland. When the Government decided to close Chillagoe, the market value was £28 up to £30 per ton. The excuse that is made now is the state of the market. I will not take that as an excuse. A definite promise was made to these people by the Premier, who himself only last week emphasised the point to the members on this side that he made definite promises to the people of Queensland that no outside union would govern the country—and I stand behind him so far as that is concerned—and, if that is sound in that case, then I say it is up to the hon. gentleman to make good his promise to the people of Chillagoe, and that the least the Government can do is to purchase the ores which are already at grass and treat them. They can please themselves as to what they do afterwards. But they left those people stranded without one day's notice. I see that the mover of this Address in Reply, the hon. member for Rockhampton, made a complaint against the Lake's Creek meatworks management for doing the same thing—and I say it is

not different at all from what the Government have done to the people of Chillagoe; and the least they should do now is to make good this promise and give them a "clean-up." There are men who are absolutely dependent on this industry, who have been waiting for the last seven months for the Government to get this report and bring the plant down to a certain standard, so that it would not be called upon to bear the large losses which the State has shouldered in the last few years, and to give them some facilities to treat their ores. I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Premier did make a definite statement on this question. Speaking of the Chillagoe position last November, as reported on page 1631 of "Hansard," he said—

"There is a big district there with, no doubt, unlimited metal resources, but whether they are in payable quantities or not I do not know. The policy of providing a means of smelting by running the smelters for a short period of the year and giving the ore fiddler or miner an opportunity of developing small shows, which may eventually turn out big ones, will be pursued by the Government; but it must be done with the enterprise running as it should run as a small concern without any great loss to the taxpayer.

"Mr. O'Keefe: That is all we want.

"The PREMIER: That is as far as I am prepared to go."

I say that was a definite statement, irrespective of the promises which were made on the platform during the by-election. The least the Government can do, seeing that they took the business over from private enterprise, is to give these men a "clean-up." They have no right to leave them stranded with their families. Even if they lose money, that is a duty they owe to that portion of the State and the taxpayers of the State, and they can adopt another course afterwards.

The Auditor-General in his report last year stated in regard to Chillagoe that a certain asset was not there. That was one of the things that brought about this inquiry. On the floor of this House I stated that I did not believe it, although it came from the Auditor-General. I had my own opinion about the Girofla mine, and I made it my business to visit that mine a few months ago. I make the definite statement on the floor of this Chamber that the very ore-body purchased by the Government still exists in the Girofla mine. I saw it fully 20 feet wide and as long, and you could put a pick into any part of that stope, where I am told by men working in the industry who have had a very long experience the ore is 20 per cent.

Mr. TAYLOR: Do you say that the Auditor-General said that it did not exist?

Mr. O'KEEFE: Yes. He said that certain assets did not exist, and that is why I claim that he did not know, because he had not visited the place in order to secure that information. The ore-body still exists there, and I would like to know the reason it has not been mined. I would like to know why the Government closed up the whole industry merely because there was something wrong with the management. The men in the mine to-day have no tenure over the mine, but are

Mr. O'Keefe.]

simply working there at the will of the Government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are making a very serious charge against the Auditor-General.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am not making a serious charge against him at all. I am saying that, when he made a report to this House, he said that these assets did not exist. I say that they do exist, and I invite any investigation by the Secretary for Mines into the matter, and, if he wishes to visit the district, I am prepared to accompany him and show him what I have seen, in order to back up my statement to-day.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That can be proved only by results.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The results are there in the hoppers. There are 300 to 400 tons of ore taken out of this stope that I have mentioned lying in the hoppers to-day awaiting treatment. There was a great rush to the Western districts to see how the big chap was getting on with his wool; but why did not hon. members go to see how the little chap was getting on in the mining industry? In 1924 the Auditor-General in his report drew the attention of Parliament to what the continuation of the policy of smelting at Chillagoe meant to the district. That was a wise recommendation, and I cannot understand why the whole industry should suffer because somebody who was placed in charge did the wrong thing. The fact remains that that ore-body exists to-day, and, according to reports on various parcels taken out, it will average 14 per cent. That is what the books would show, although the men working there claim that it is 20 per cent. ore. For the sake of argument, I am prepared to say that the ore is 14 per cent. ore; but why was that mine carried on for years under State control and this ore-body not worked? That is what I want to know, and I want to know, with that ore-body existing to-day, what prevents the Government from continuing the policy of smelting ores for these people in a small way? No one has asked, and I have never advocated since I have been a member of this House, that the Government should lose large sums of money on Chillagoe. No reasonable man, whether he be a member of Parliament or not, would do so. Business is business. But there are men up there to-day who are quite prepared to pay the full charge of smelting and railage on ore if the Government will come to their assistance.

Mr. COLLINS: Is the plant up-to-date?

Mr. O'KEEFE: The Minister tells me that it is not up-to-date, but I know that there is sufficient machinery to make it up-to-date in a small way for the benefit of the district and to the satisfaction of all. If the Government decide definitely that they will not reopen Chillagoe, then I ask that they make available portions of that plant to the people who are working in that district.

Mr. MOORE: They cannot do that.

Mr. O'KEEFE: They can do that. There is nothing that cannot be done.

Mr. MOORE: The Secretary for Mines was annoyed when I suggested it. He "flew off the handle."

Mr. O'KEEFE: Then we shall give him an opportunity of "flying off the handle" again. So long as he does the right thing, it does not matter who "flies off the handle." The

[Mr. O'Keefe.

hon. gentleman "flew off the handle" when he was going round the Chillagoe electorate looking for the seat.

Mr. MOORE: I was giving you encouragement.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Even the hon. member's friend the "Courier" is going for him to-day.

Mr. MOORE: What about the "Standard" going for you? (Laughter.)

Mr. O'KEEFE: There is sufficient machinery at Chillagoe to meet the requirements of the district without incurring any loss to the State. If the Government have decided to do no further work at Chillagoe, then they can allow that machinery to be taken to different parts of the district. There are hundreds of tons of ore awaiting treatment at Mungana right at the seat of mining. The least thing that the Government can do in that event is to send a small furnace there in order that this ore can be treated. I had the pleasure of seeing at that centre two new mines being opened up and worked at Redcap. The ore being mined is of a high grade.

Mr. MOORE: Is that one of the mines the Government bought?

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am sorry that it was not one of them. The ore is not sufficiently high grade to be sent out of Queensland for treatment. The same position exists at Irvinebank. A large parcel of high-grade ore has been placed on the tramline there to be sent away to be smelted. If the Government do not intend to engage in further smelting operations at Chillagoe, this ore will be sent out of the State, and already negotiations are being finalised in Brisbane to this end. That is a nice state of affairs! We advocate that our raw products should be treated and manufactured in this State; yet here is an instance where miners are compelled to send ore out of the State for treatment at great loss, not only to the State, but to the workers as well.

I would direct attention to the fact that, notwithstanding the Government have incurred large losses at Chillagoe, and more than they really should have done, in mining and smelting operations, a considerable amount of money has been collected by the State there from the mining industry.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They want it all.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The prospects of mining to-day in North Queensland have never looked so bright. With a view to dredging for tin in the future, companies are prospecting for tin all over the Herberton mining field, in the Mount Molloy district, and at Mount Carbine. The inspector of mines at Mareeba showed me samples of tin won from those districts, and I have not the slightest doubt what the future results will be.

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

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The speech of the hon. member for Chillagoe seems to confirm the impression I have had in my mind that this, the second session of the twenty-fourth Parliament of Queensland, will go down in history as the session of Parliament when congratulations and commendations were sung, and when many condemnations were uttered. That will be the

noted fact of the history of the time. Never, certainly during my experience in Parliament, and never outside for that matter, have we found more confirmation of the statement I have just made. Who can call to mind hon. members on the other side exercising a free hand, not only in congratulating, but in condemning, the Government? After a speech such as we have just listened to, one naturally asks what ails the Government? We on this side can readily answer that question, because there are many diseases which have been inherited by the Government, now in a state of decrepitude, which need attention to a marked extent. However, I am very pleased to join in some of the congratulations and commendations. I congratulate the mover and seconder on the way they handled their subject-matter. Hon. members will agree with me that their task was a difficult one, but it seemed to me that their acrobatic style seemed to aid the hon. member for Eacham in particular, who certainly achieved a very fine end and purpose. At any rate, he was worth listening to. We are not concerned so much with the differences of opinion on the opposite side of the House. It is amusing sometimes to see that they exist. I suppose they know that they are quite genuine. Hon. members who have expressed themselves seemingly believe what they said; but it is a pity that on a certain occasion they did not divide the House so that the country might have known where they were. Never in history—and indeed not alone so far as this House is concerned—has the fact that I have mentioned been so marked the world over. Notice has been taken; commendations have been made; congratulations extended; so that I think I may fairly come to the conclusion which I have drawn.

At 4.25 p.m.,

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

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I support them further in the congratulations extended on the appointment of the Governor. Even in that connection hon. members on the other side were acrobatic. They had scarcely expressed their pleasure at the appointment and had scarcely completed their reference to Sir Matthew Nathan when they linked the matter up in some fashion or other with the appointment of local Governors. They came to the conclusion finally that, when these men returned to Britain after their term of office, they served the country as ambassadors. That is what members on this side of the House have been saying all along; and it is pleasing to find hon. members on the Government side, when they speak from the bottom of their hearts, indicate that they are somewhat in accord with our idea that the right thing for the country is the appointment of Governors from abroad, in that it is the only link that many people have with the motherland.

It is only right to go a little further in the way of congratulations, and I do so sincerely when I congratulate the Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon. William Lennon, on the pleasing and acceptable dignity which he displayed on a very special occasion recently—the same may be said of the Government, the members of which rose to that occasion—the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York. I can assure them that, generally speaking,

their attitude was universally appreciated. (Hear, hear!)

Congratulations are also due to the Government in connection with the Land Settlement Advisory Board, the report of which body has recently been presented to Parliament. I am not quite sure that the report will be quite in keeping with the opinions of hon. members on the other side, but it certainly does endorse the views of hon. members on this side. The report will show the Government that they have not been acting too wisely in their past legislation in connection with the pastoral industry and in their treatment of pastoralists generally. The report may not be satisfying to the Government in that respect; but, at any rate, they are to be commended for having initiated the board which has produced a report of such a high character.

Proceeding a step further, I congratulate the Government on the news now to hand regarding the operations of the oil bore at Roma. The information is most gratifying, and one can only hope that the optimism of the Secretary for Mines will be fully realised. I suggest to the Minister concerned that, if oil in payable quantities is discovered, the proceeds therefrom, after providing for the cost of production and refunding amounts paid by the Treasury, might be earmarked in payment of the public debt.

[4.30 p.m.] I can quite conceive that, if we strike oil at all, it will be a mighty thing for Queensland. It is not a big stretch of the imagination to believe that Queensland might indeed have her debt paid in that way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We send a million a year to America for oil.

Mr. PETERSON: And a large amount for timber, too.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The amount is simply enormous, and no gold mine either at Mount Morgan or anywhere else will equal what the discovery of oil in Queensland would mean to the State.

I congratulate the Government again in connection with the settlement of the strike. I am not going to say too much on this question; but I do say that we are glad that it is at an end. Personally, I do not think it should ever have arisen. It had no right to be a disturbing factor in connection with our life at South Johnstone for the best part of three months before action was taken. We recognise that immediately the trouble spread action was taken. That we have got out of the trouble is something. The matter may have been staged fairly well for the public and for the world generally, and a very fine thing may have been done; but I for one claim that there was no need for the position to have reached the extreme stage that it did, and I doubt if the Government were wise in dismissing the whole of the railway servants at that juncture as they did. I make bold to say that, if the railwaymen had had indicated to them that certain things would obtain on a given day if those ready to accept those conditions turned up to their work, the men would have been loyal to the Government, and there would have been no stoppage of the service whatsoever. I know that I am not on the inside of things; but, having a fair knowledge of the railwaymen from the highest to the lowest, I believe the whole of the railway servants of Queensland are a fine body of men, and I object to those

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

men being dismissed and being made "black," as it were. The great majority of those men never had an opportunity given them to say whether they would turn up to their duty or not. That opportunity should have been given, and they need not have been branded. You do not help to create an efficient and satisfied service by treating men in that way. It was a very great blunder in any way to alienate the sympathies of the railwaymen at this juncture. An opportunity to continue duty should have been given to those men. The loyal men of the service certainly would have turned up and done their duty, as naturally would have been expected of them. I maintain, further, that the men who signed on and did not afterwards withdraw their signatures should have been treated from the date they signed on as servants of the Government. By so doing the Government even now will bring honour upon themselves, and will help to rectify the wrong that was done to a very fine body of men as a result of the general dismissal of the whole of the railway servants of Queensland. Again I say I was not behind the scenes, and I am not acquainted with every move that has taken place; but it certainly appears to me, looking at it from a business point of view, that, in order to preserve the best possible feeling between employer and employee, what I have indicated would have been the right thing to do. Knowing the disparity of opinion which exists in these matters, one cannot understand altogether how the Premier has come to agree with hon. members on this side. We are out all the time for constitutional government; we are out to rule. I maintain that the Government of the country should own itself, just as an individual should own himself, and this Government has not been owning itself. We have only to cast our memories back to the events of the past to realise that. The Government has not owned or controlled things as it should have done, and all these unions and organisations of unions and affiliations of unions are largely the creation of the Government. Ministers themselves have made the trouble they have met; but apparently they have seen the error of their ways and have put their foot down, saying, "This is to go on no longer; we are going to rule." It is not only something that is going to be felt in Queensland, but something that is going to be world wide in its influence, and I commend them for it. I hope they will not retract one inch. This is not only the feeling of the Premier. I am sure every member on this side of the Chamber was glad to understand that it was not the Premier's decision alone but that the Government as a whole were in it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You were never in any doubt about that, were you?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: There was some doubt about it, because no action was taken till the Premier returned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When did it occur?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That doubt has been dissipated, and the Premier must be relieved in that connection. The hon. gentleman laid it down in these words—

"The Government is determined that the instruction of the Commissioner for Railways must be carried out by our railway employees, and persistence of

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

the Australian Railways Union in defying those instructions can only bring disaster to all concerned."

That is only what has been said in other places. Mr. J. H. Thomas, in addressing the railwaymen in England, said the very same thing. At the National Union of Railwaymen Conference he reminded the people of the numerous difficulties ahead in these words—

"It was no good approaching these in a sectional selfish spirit. There was no doubt of the serious condition of the country. Labour must play a big part in building industries, development, welfare, and social life. I do not propose to allow my policy or the policy of the National Union of Railwaymen to be dictated to or influenced by outside bodies whatever, whether they are called the minority movement of this country or the saviours of any other country. The railways are capable of doing their own business in their own way, and I intend to lead in that direction."

There you have a man many thousands of miles away holding similar sentiments to those held by hon. members on the other side taking a similar stand in regard to the course of action which should be followed.

It is extraordinary to notice that in the Governor's Speech there is just a slight reference to finance and the fact that the deficit for the year is so large. Before dealing with the question in any way, I must say that it strikes me as singular that it should take the Government so long as twelve years to realise the blunders they have made. I am referring now specifically to the blunders made in the encouragement of outside organisations, which have posed as superior to the Government and which have exercised their influence against them. How the Government could remain oblivious to the position and the injury done by their actions must baffle all of us. It has baffled us for a long time.

Queensland has produced on the Labour side some strong men; but how is it that these strong men should have taken longer to see the error of a certain force of action than has been the case with others in the South. I refer to men like Mr. W. M. Hughes, M.H.R., the late Mr. Kidston, Senator Pearce, Sir Joseph Cook, and many others. They were no time in realising the fact that the track they were trying to travel was the wrong one, but our people have taken twelve years to realise the mistake.

Mr. HARTLEY: It took £25,000 to convince Mr. Hughes that he was on the wrong track.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He was on the right track long before receiving the £25,000. People like Mr. Hughes and Mr. Holman found that they had to yield to the circumstances which responsibility involved. Let us hope that we have not seen the end of these changes, and that the recommendations of the Land Settlement Advisory Board will be carried out. If they are, then there will be a big change in comparison with past administration, though we are getting used to it. You see a turn of the tide in connection with State enterprises and things of that kind—the undoing of things.

The hon. member for Chillagoe just now dwelt largely on the question of the Chillagoe smelters. The fact that nothing is being done now really suggests that something that

was done was all wrong, and there has been a complete change in the matter. All these things are evidence that during the past twelve years regard to the people's patrimony has not been considered as it should have been. Experiments, extravagance, and inability to grip and handle matters of finance are evidenced at every turn. We were told by Ministers opposite in the early days, "Finance is the test of government." I remember seeing how the pamphlet in which they propounded that doctrine was broadcast throughout the land by the leaders of the party. It is true that finance is the test of government. It is correct to say that the right and just handling of money is the basis of all modern government, and no Government is going to last long that does not act with that kind of inspiration. From the very jump, since Labour came into power, the finances of the country commenced to go to pieces, and every year down to the present time has confirmed my statement that the position of the finances is the result of their maladministration. The late Auditor-General confirms my statement. I know that he seemingly wearied somewhat towards the end of his term. He allowed facts to speak for themselves, and did not expand his thoughts in any particular direction. I suppose he imagined that reiterating the truth should be sufficient for anyone who had the mind to read.

The Governor in his opening Speech said that the deficit of £343,166 was the result of the effects of the drought on railway receipts. Inspection shows that there is no reason why there should be this deficiency. The revenue for last year was £548,069 greater than the revenue for 1926. Taxation increased by £398,000; estimates were exceeded by £287,340; and the interest received from local authorities was £167,753 in excess of the amount received in 1926. The deficit was caused by the absence of the exercise of that control that secures efficiency and economy, as promised by the Treasurer. It is marvellous how the country has stood the ever-growing expenditure and the ever-increasing revenue. Whatever be the amount of revenue, it makes no difference. Always more is wanted. In 1914-15 the revenue received was £7,202,658. Why, the railway receipts alone exceed that amount to-day. The general revenue for last year totalled £16,490,953, or £548,069 in excess of the previous year's. This was spent, in addition to £343,166, so that the total amount of the expenditure was £391,235 more than the previous year. To realise the incidence of our position as taxpayers, it is only necessary to say that the revenue per capita and the expenditure per capita is as follows:—

	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1914-15	10 12 10	10 12 9
1926-27	18 6 1	18 13 10

I find that the gross expenditure of the Liberal Government for the twelve years ended 1914-15 totalled £62,609,916. The gross expenditure of the present Government for the twelve years ended 30th June last totals no less a sum than £146,368,210, or an increase of £83,758,294. That is an astounding assertion! What on earth could have

become of that money? We know that the money has been expended, but to trace it would be an impossibility. It must be realised that, in order to obtain that huge sum of money, a levy had to be made on our people, which has burdened them to a degree that it has cut out enterprise to a very large extent. The figures are appalling when they are looked into. For the twelve years ended 30th June, 1915, the previous Government levied in taxation £7,713,988, whilst the present Government, in their twelve years, have raked in no less a sum than £37,350,296. How the people have stood up to it—and they will not stand up to it much longer, as many have not stood up to it already—I do not know.

Mr. COLLINS: You have stood up to it all right.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. member appears to have the belief that the people are doing all right; but the fact is that the people are doing all wrong, and numbers to-day are out of employment because capital has been attacked to the extent it has, and industries which either would have been continued or established, in consequence of high taxation do not exist to-day. No country will stand the high taxation, which has increased from £1 8s. 2d. per capita in 1914-15 to £5 2s. 1d. per capita at the present time.

At 4.51 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We seem to be oblivious to the fact that our debt in the same time has almost doubled, for, while in 1915 it stood at £56,869,000, it is now about £108,000,000. It would have been very much more if the conditions which obtained in older times obtained to-day. In previous years local authorities obtained all their loans from the Government. The Brisbane City Council has had loaned to it from private sources no less a sum than £9,000,000. Had the local authorities access to the same source for getting loan money as obtained in the days prior to the advent of this Government, what would the public debt be to-day? In order to realise the true public debt of Queensland, one would have to make inquiries as to loans secured by local authorities in different directions. It would then be found that during the last twelve years the public debt of Queensland would have very much more than doubled. One of the astounding facts met with in this matter is that the sum of £4,625,000 has been expended by this Government in enterprises of one kind and another, including Chillagoe, of course. Had the amount spent by this Government on State enterprises been invested at 5 per cent compound interest, it would have paid off in fifty-one years the whole of the public debt existing in Queensland at the date of this Government's accession to office. When we come to consider all the aspects of the question, it will be found that at least three-quarters of the amount I have mentioned will be lost. Realising these facts, one can appreciate what a wise arrangement has been entered into by the Deputy Premier on behalf of this Government with the Commonwealth Government for the management of all public debts accruing in the future. I commend the Government for agreeing to the statesmanlike proposal of the Bruce-Page Government on this question.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Turning to the railway position, I desire to refer to the report of the Commissioner for Railways for 1926. The report for this year is not yet available, but for my purpose the 1926 report is ample to show at a glance the history of this department. From 1906 to 1915 the railways paid their way, there being a net profit of £48,651 in the year 1914-15.

Since that time a loss has been registered in every year, the amount varying from £508,000 in 1915-16 to approximately £2,000,000 in 1927, the aggregate losses amounting to £16,000,000. The loss is not due to a falling off in receipts. The following table will indicate how the railways have gone to the bad since 1915:—

	1914-15.	1925-26.	Increase.	Decrease.
Total receipts	£3,832,008	£7,437,090	£3,605,087	..
Net earnings	£1,430,324	£977,298	..	£453,026
Percentage earnings	4.33 per cent.	1.086 per cent.	..	2.524 per cent.
Earnings per train mile	6s. 4½d.	11s. 6½d.	5s. 2d.	..
Working expenses	£2,401,679	£6,459,972	£4,058,293	..
Miles open for traffic	4,838	6,240	1,402	..
Capital cost	£35,464,770	£54,111,970	£18,647,200	..
Passengers carried	13,131,512	13,541,236	409,724	..
Goods traffic	4,544,881 tons	5,106,386 tons	561,505 tons	..

Taking into consideration the extra length of line opened, practically speaking there has been a decrease in what we have been able to carry.

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

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 5 p.m.