

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 15 AUGUST 1928

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

WEDNESDAY, 15 AUGUST, 1928.

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

QUESTIONS.

CONCESSIONS TO SMALL PRIMARY PRODUCERS.

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL (*Dalby*) asked the Premier—

“In view of the fact that the Government, per medium of the Land Advisory Board, has granted concessions and relief to the sheep industry, and as, apparently, similar relief is to be granted to the cattle industry as a result of the recent Commission's report, what steps does his Government intend to take to relieve the position of the smaller primary producers whose remuneration is not equivalent to the basic wage, and whose families, in most cases, work for nothing?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), for the PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

“This question is in the nature of an attempt at political propaganda rather than a serious desire to elicit information beneficial to the classes of persons concerned. The Government's policy of agricultural co-operation is devised and operated in a manner calculated to secure better results to the producers of this State, and I suggest that the honourable member use any influence he may be possessed of to help us extend this policy.”

DIPPING OF CATTLE AND TICK DESTRUCTION.

Mr. W. A. RUSSELL (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“I. If, as stated in a report which has been published by the Bureau of Science and Industry, that anything less than two dippings with an interval of ten days, in a solution of 8 lb. of arsenic to 400 gallons of water, is ineffective to destroy all ticks, in cattle, why does the Queensland Government allow an interval of eighteen days to elapse between the dippings in the Southern Queensland area?”

"2. Is not this action the result of restrictions being continued on settlers in all the cleansing and buffer areas, owing to the fact that permanent cleansing up of these areas does not progress?"

"3. If the conditions that are imposed by the New South Wales Government have to be recognised by our settlers—much to their disadvantage—will the Queensland Government recommend the Federal Government taking control of the tick question?"

"4. Failing recommending Federal control, will the Queensland Government take such action to clean up the tick areas as recommended by the Beef Industry Commission's report?"

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

"1 and 2. The Government is aware of the requirements necessary to protect stockowners in the tick-infested areas in this State, but apparently the honourable member is unaware of the distinction between the measures to be adopted in respect of the movement of stock from tick-infested areas to clean country, and those necessary for the eradication of the cattle tick in other areas where cleansing operations are in progress.

"3 and 4. Conditions imposed by the New South Wales Government apply only to stock movements from this State to New South Wales. Those are now the subject of negotiations between the respective Governments."

COST OF COMPLETING AND FURNISHING TREASURY BUILDING.

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

"1. What was the cost of completing the Treasury block?"

"2. What was the cost of furnishing same?"

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

"1 and 2. The completed cost of the new section of the Treasury Buildings, including furnishing, is £137,816 15s. 6d. Separate costs for the building and furnishing respectively are being dissected, and will be available at a later date."

SUBSIDY TO STEAMERS TRADING TO COOKTOWN AND PORT DOUGLAS.

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

"1. Are any vessels trading on the Queensland coast subsidised for trading to the ports of Cooktown and Port Douglas?"

"2. If so—(a) what line of steamers; (b) what subsidy; (c) for what period?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), for The TREASURER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

"1 and 2. A subsidy, at the rate of £5,000 per annum, is paid to Messrs. John Burke Limited for maintaining a regular steamship service between the

port of Brisbane and the ports of Normanton and Burketown (via Cooktown, Flinders Island, and Thursday Island). The agreement under which the subsidy is paid is for a period of five years from 18th November, 1926."

EXTENSIONS TO BRISBANE GENERAL HOSPITAL.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"In reference to the extensions to the General Hospital where, on 3rd August, the first new wing was opened and the commencement of the second wing was embarked upon, will he state—

"1. As regards the first wing—(a) Was the construction undertaken by the Public Works Department on the day-labour principle? (b) What was—(a) the estimated time for completion, (b) the actual time taken? (c) What was—(a) the estimated cost, (b) the actual cost?"

"2. As regards the second wing—(a) Has the construction been let under contract? (b) If so—(a) to whom, (b) at what figure, (c) under what time limit?"

"3. In what material respect as regards construction do these two wings differ, and the estimated cost of such difference?"

"4. Why was a departure made in the Government's policy of day-labour?"

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

"1. (a) Yes. (b)—(a) This department does not fix a time limit, but carries out its work as expeditiously as possible. (b) The actual time taken was three years two months. (c)—(a) £63,963 5s. (b) £64,632 17s. 9d. Excess due to variation of Building Trades Award.

"2, 3, and 4. I am unable to answer these questions as the Public Works Department is not building the second wing. I would suggest that the hon. member seek this information from the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board."

GOVERNMENT MOTOR CARS AND TRUCKS.

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

"1. How many motor cars and trucks has the Government in commission?"

"2. Of the quantity, how many are of British manufacture?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), for The PREMIER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

"1. 315.

"2. 157. Note.—Ford vehicles are included as British manufacture."

SALE OF KEEROONGOOLOO STATE STATION.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"1. Referring to the statement by Mr. J. Barr (late General Manager of State Stations), that 'he had nothing whatever to do with the fixing of the price or the

guaranteeing of the numbers of stock' in connection with the sale in November last of Keeroongooloo State Station, who conducted the negotiations for this sale, and who was responsible for the finalising of the agreement on behalf of the Government?

"2. What are the numbers of stock agreed upon (subject to bangtail muster as stated in his answer on 1st August), and what prices per head for each class of stock?

"3. On what grounds does he justify the sale of this station at a price £41,000 less than the original purchasing price?

"4. Will he lay upon the table of the House the papers relating to this sale, and also a copy of the agreement?"

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

"1. The Commissioner for Trade, in conjunction with the late general manager.

"2. The numbers of stock agreed upon were those certified to by the late general manager for the auction sale of 5th April, 1927—namely, males, 12,081; females, 7,291; total 19,372. Horses, 595.

"3. The sale price agreed upon is considered a fair price in comparison with purchase price, taking into account the market value of cattle properties in 1919 and 1927.

"4. The transaction has not yet been completed; the agreement is between the vendors and purchasers."

QUEENSLAND TRADE BALANCE.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"Seeing that he denies the reply given by the Premier (Hon. W. McCormack) to Mr. T. R. Roberts, hon. member for East Toowoomba, that figures were not available to demonstrate the trade balance relating to Queensland, will he lay upon the table of the House such information as he may have?"

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

"The figures given by me were compiled from authentic records of the Department of Agriculture by the Registrar-General, and supplied by that gentleman to me."

Mr. MAXWELL: Will the hon. gentleman lay them on the table of the House?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are on the table of the House in "Hansard."

STOCK FOODS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirable-

ness of introducing a Bill to amend the Stock Foods Act of 1919 in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), for the TREASURER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): 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 amend the Land Tax Act of 1915 by extending the operation of the super land tax until the close of the financial year ending the thirtieth day of June, 1929."

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Question stated—

"That the following Address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the Third Session of the Twenty-fourth Parliament of Queensland:—

"May it please Your Excellency,—

"We, His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

"The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration, and it will be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State"—

On which Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) had moved—

"That the question be amended by the addition of the following words:—

'but we desire to inform Your Excellency that the Government does not possess the confidence of this House.'

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): At the outset I desire to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, and particularly to congratulate the hon. member for Mitchell on his election to this House. I feel sure that he will prove a very worthy successor to our late esteemed colleague, John Payne. Despite the fact that a very large number of Labour voters usually resident in the Mitchell electorate were absent during the recent by-election, the district proved its faith and confidence in this Government by returning Mr. Bow with a substantial majority. It is significant that

Mr. Wright.]

the people of the Mitchell electorate recognizing that the Government have done something to stabilise the great woollen industry of Queensland. The Royal Commission which was appointed, probably as the result of the attention given to this great question by hon. members on both sides of the House, has done much for the wool industry. It is worthy of mention that, if the great wool experts of Queensland and the hon. member for Toombul and the hon. member for Nundah did anything at all to assist in the campaign during the by-election, it was in the direction of returning Mr. Bow. One can visualise Major McLeod, their own candidate, saying, as has been said by their other candidates, "Save me from my friends."

I desire also to express my appreciation of His Excellency the Governor in his earnest efforts to become acquainted as fully as possible with the difficulties and problems confronting the industries of the State to-day. Recently it was my pleasure to accompany His Excellency on a visit to one of the largest industries in the Bulimba electorate; and I very much appreciate his active interest on that occasion. I feel sure that the experience His Excellency will gain during his period of office as Governor of Queensland will prove invaluable to this State for many years to come.

I desire to touch upon a matter to which the hon. member for Murilla gave some attention yesterday. Just here I should like to express my pleasure that the hon. member has regained his former good health, and, irrespective of his political fate, I hope that he will long retain his present state of good health. The hon. member was very unfair in his criticism of the employees in the meat treatment works. Any person listening to the speech delivered by the hon. member yesterday would conclude that the whole of the difficulties besetting this industry to-day are a result of the actions of the employees in the meat treatment works.

Everyone who has studied the question at all knows that the actual wages paid to the employees in the treatment works are a very minor factor indeed in the problems and difficulties confronting the industry. I am quite prepared to admit that the wages are good, but that is because of the seasonal nature of the industry.

It is recognised by everyone, and it is a fact, that the adjustment of the general working conditions and the wages paid to the workers in the industry are in the hands of an impartial tribunal. I am not one of those who are prepared to ridicule that tribunal, because I believe it is the finest court of its kind in the world to-day. Both sides are allowed to appoint representatives to appear before it. These representatives place the case of their respective principals before the presiding judge. It ill becomes any hon. member in this Chamber to ridicule that court in any sense at all. I myself have certain views upon it, as I do not claim that it is perfect; but, as I have said, it is the best system we know of in the world at the present time. Consequently it ought at all times to be respected, and less ridicule of its operations should be heard from hon. members opposite. The decisions given by the court mean a good deal to the industries of the State.

Both the hon. member for Murilla and the Leader of the Opposition made reference to

[Mr. Wright.

a small statement appearing in the report of the Beef Cattle Industry Commission in connection with the slaughtering costs. The report prints the view of some meat companies that they are forced to engage too much labour, and that this percentage varies from 25 per cent. upwards. Before I could accept such a statement I would require it to be thoroughly investigated. I do not know that it is a sound statement, and upon investigation I think it will be found to be absolutely ridiculous and wrong. I got into communication with Mr. Munro, Brisbane district secretary of the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union—a gentleman who is in a position to know something about the employees in the industry—and he informed me that at the present time there are proportionately less men employed in the meat treatment works than in 1922. He gave me a definite instance where a company in my electorate, which treats 280 head of cattle per day, in 1922 employed a freezing gang composed of sixty-six men, whereas to-day the same work is being done by a gang of fifty-one men—a decrease of fifteen. Nevertheless, in spite of this fact, which can be verified—the information is authentic—we have companies making such a statement before the Beef Cattle Industry Commission. I notice that the members of the Commission did not make any definite recommendation in respect of that statement. They were not prepared to make a recommendation on the matter, and simply printed the statement as made to them. Again, the yard gangs—that is, the ordinary cleaning-up gangs—have been reduced by the meat companies to an absolute minimum. Only a few years ago all the leading hands in the meatworks were employed all the year round, irrespective of the duration of the slaughtering season. They were retained during the off season to do necessary repair work. The whole of these men, notwithstanding that they are experts in their own line of work, are thrown upon the labour market immediately the operating season at the meatworks ends. To that extent there is a saving in working costs. For a meat company to state that it is forced to employ 25 per cent. surplus labour is, to my mind, a reflection on the management of that company.

One of the greatest difficulties in the meat industry is the fixed expense, which is exceedingly high, due to the long periods of idleness. In this connection, Australis is in a much less favourable position than its greatest rival, Argentina, where operations at the meatworks extend over practically the whole of the year. Hence administrative charges, depreciation charges, and all overhead charges are greater here than in Argentina.

The Beef Cattle Industry Commission had something to say on the question of export industrial costs. On the question of the comparative advantage of competitive countries, it had this to say—

"The position, however, serves to illustrate the comparative advantage of competitive countries operating more nearly upon a continuous basis, carrying little or no fixed expense for long idle periods. In comparison with such competitive countries, the fixed expense of the industry of this country must be relatively high, particularly in years when the killing is small"

Then, on the question of the increased operative expense, we find this statement—

“Operative expense is made up chiefly of labour and supplies. According to figures submitted to us, meatworks wages represent slightly less than 50 per cent. of the total fixed and operative expense.”

Mr. Bowen, who is the industrial representative of the meat-exporting companies of Queensland, made a statement in the Arbitration Court in 1922 to the effect that the slaughtering cost in the meatworks worked out at approximately 2d. per 100 lb. of beef. Yet the hon. member for Murilla would have the people in the country believe that the meat industry can be saved by a cut in the wages of workers employed in the treatment works. Anyone who has studied this question recognises that the wages paid to the employees represent a very small factor; and, when one considers the seasonal nature of the industry in which these people are employed, one must agree that the wages paid at present are not too high. Certainly there are numbers of men engaged in tally or contract work—much on the same basis as canecutters and shearers—who earn good wages during the season. That leads me to another reference of the Commission as to the restriction of the number of cattle to be killed; and I suggest that, if there is to be no restriction in that regard, then the wages of those tally men will be even higher than they are at present, seeing that the greater number of cattle killed will represent a corresponding increase in their wages.

Mr. EDWARDS: What do these men earn?

Mr. WRIGHT: In some sections of the industry men earn up to £9 and £10 per week; and, if the hon. gentleman has ever seen these men working, he will know that they are some of the fastest workers in Queensland to-day. The trouble with the industry is that it is seasonal—just like the canecutting and shearing industries—but, when the work is available at the meatworks, it is a case of going while the going is good. As I say, one of the difficulties of the meat industry of Australia is its seasonal nature, and, in face of the fact that killing operations are not conducted all the year round, it is ridiculous to expect that operative costs here should be on the same level as the costs in a country where continuous operations prevail.

It is ridiculous for the hon. member for Murilla to try to base an argument for the salvation of the meat industry on the question of a cut in the wages paid to employees.

A full page in the report of the [11 a.m.] Commission is devoted to what the Commission considers is required to be done to place this industry on a better footing, and, strange to say, the question of industrial costs is not mentioned. What is mentioned is co-operation with the Commonwealth, and Commonwealth assistance to the industry. Those who are really anxious to assist this great industry are much more concerned with getting the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government and the assistance of the Commonwealth Government than they are in getting a cut in the wages of the employees. On page 61 of the report the Commission, under the heading—

“Generally what action should be taken by the Government to co-operate

with the Commonwealth in organising and developing the export trade in the surplus-producing areas,”

has this to say—

“The State becomes. . . specifically concerned in the following matters:—

(a) The populating of the State, and the utilising to the best advantage of those Crown lands which are more suited for cattle-raising than for any other purpose;

(b) Financial consideration—Crown rents, railway revenue, income tax, etc.;

(c) Co-operating with the Commonwealth in maintaining an exportable surplus, and therefore, in adverse seasons, an adequate supply of meat at reasonable prices for the people of the Commonwealth;

(d) The influence which the price of meat has upon the determination of the basic wage;

(e) Hygienic treatment and distribution of meat to consumers within the State;

(f) The securing of the most profitable utilisation of by-products.”

In the opinion of the Commissioners, those are matters that should be considered in any attempt to place this industry on a better footing. The Commission also suggests that the Commonwealth is specifically concerned in the following matters:—

“(a) Co-operation in having utilised to full advantage the lands of the Commonwealth, including Northern Australia, from the standpoint of Australian production;

“(b) Increasing the population of the Commonwealth as rapidly as possible, consistent with maintaining a fair remuneration and a reasonable standard of living.”

That is what members of this party stand for in connection with the great migration question—

“Increasing the population of the Commonwealth as rapidly as possible, consistent with maintaining a fair remuneration and a reasonable standard of living.”

That is our policy in a nutshell. The report of the Commission continues—

“(c) The development of Australian ‘key’ industries and the building of an adequate export trade as part of the National policy of the Commonwealth;

“(d) The maintenance of an adequate supply of meat for the present and future requirements of the Commonwealth, with due regard to the producer and a fair price to the consumer.”

There is nothing wrong with that; but there is nothing said about the wages of the employees in the meat industry. Everybody who is interested in this question recognises that, no matter what the condition of the industry may be, it will always be necessary to pay a fair and reasonable rate of wages to the workers who have to slaughter the cattle. I have never heard anyone interested

Mr. Wright.]

in the industry say very much regarding the actual wages paid. I mention those facts to show that the hon. member for Murilla is only using very cheap stuff, which is not likely to do much good in placing this industry on the sound footing which every member in this Chamber desires.

The Leader of the Opposition used the same paragraph for a very different reason. Out of the Commission's report, which contains something like seventy pages of valuable information, he took out one of the least important matters to try to prove to the people of this State that the workers of Queensland generally are inefficient and lazy.

Mr. MAXWELL: He never said anything of the kind.

Mr. WRIGHT: He did not use those actual words, but the inference was there.

Mr. MAXWELL: Why do you misrepresent him?

Mr. WRIGHT: If the hon. member will follow the speech of the Leader of the Opposition in moving the motion of no confidence, he will see that he quoted the paragraph I have mentioned about surplus labour, and also mentioned the cost of certain Government schools and buildings to try to prove to the people of Queensland that the workers generally were inefficient and lazy. I have heard people say that the Leader of the Opposition is inefficient—I am not prepared to believe it—and I have also heard them say that he is lazy.

Mr. KING: What! Lazy?

Mr. WRIGHT: I have heard people pass the remark, and I have read press articles as to the inefficiency of the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition generally. (Opposition dissent.) One hon. member during this debate read an article from some newspaper on the inefficiency, not only of the Leader of the Opposition, but of the Opposition generally. Personally, I have no fault to find with the Leader of the Opposition, who is a gentleman for whom I have a good deal of admiration, and who, I think, will admirably fill for a long time to come the position of Leader of the Opposition.

I am prepared to admit that there are probably some workers who are not prepared to give a fair return for the wages they receive, and that throughout the world there has always been a certain number of people who are prepared to loaf. That, however, is not the position of affairs generally; and it is an insult to our Queensland workers to apply to them the charge, which I strongly resent, because there is no truth in it. Apart from the fact that it is made for the purpose of obtaining some political kudos, I believe that it does the State a good deal of harm. I have travelled a good deal in the Commonwealth, and have heard depreciatory remarks in the other States regarding the efficiency of the average Queensland workman; but the remarks have only come from people who have visited Queensland, or from some Queenslanders who have visited other portions of the Commonwealth and gone out of their way to insult our Queensland workers.

In reply to the arguments stressed by the Leader of the Opposition, I quote from the "Daily Mail" of 8th August, a speech made by a gentleman in Sydney, Mr. John Young, a director of Lewis Berger and Company,

[Mr. Wright.

dealing with the efficiency of the Australian worker generally—

"FINE TYPE.

"AUSTRALIAN WORKER.

"Director's Tribute.

"Sydney, Tuesday.—'Our seventeen years' experience in Australia has proved to us that the Australian workman is the finest type in the world; he is very intelligent, conscientious, and steady,' declared Mr. John Young, a director of Lewis Berger and Sons, Limited, at Rhodes to-day, when he welcomed a party of sixty members of the English-speaking Union on a visit of inspection to the factory.

"The factory was claimed to be the largest of its kind in the Commonwealth. The raw materials used were practically all made in Australia, and there were three hundred employees."

A real good Australian—a better Australian than the Leader of the Opposition, who takes the opportunity during the launching of a no-confidence amendment in this debate to insult generally the whole of our Queensland workers by insinuating that there is a lack of efficiency amongst them!

Mr. MOORE: I only quoted the Registrar-General's figures.

Mr. WRIGHT: I listened very attentively to the hon. gentleman, and it is not my practice to try to twist anything another hon. member says. I want to be fair in my criticism, as I expect the hon. member and his colleagues on the other side to be fair in criticising me. So long as I am here and hear things said which are based on unsound grounds and which are unfair, I shall not sit quiet and allow insults to be offered to anybody, even if the Leader of the Opposition thinks that some political kudos is to be gained thereby.

I think the Secretary for Railways quoted some portion of a speech made by Mr. Urquhart, the representative of the Russo-Asiatic Corporation, as to the general efficiency of our Queensland workers. At the annual meeting of that company recently the same gentleman made some other remarks which I propose to quote.

Mr. MOORE: What did the Premier say at the Townsville Labour Convention—that they could not get social service?

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member can quote what he likes. I intend to quote Mr. Urquhart as to labour conditions in Queensland. The section of the article I want to read is this—

"ATTITUDE OF LABOUR.

"We sought and took advantage of every opportunity in Queensland to meet political and Labour leaders; we mixed and conversed with the men and with trade union officials, and, finally, we attended public meetings called by the representatives of the principal trade unions concerned. At these meetings we held free and frank discussion; we were shown every consideration, and the greatest good feeling prevailed.

"Resolutions framed in generous terms were passed by unanimous vote at these meetings, expressing approval of our efforts in the development of the Mount Isa mining field, pointing out its great economic importance to the State, and warmly supporting our appeal to the

Government for a reduction of railway freights.

"We saw for ourselves with much pleasure that the relations between the staff and workers at the mine were most cordial. Wherever it is possible, mining work is carried on by piece-work or contract."

Exactly the same method as is used in many sections of the meatworks trade. Mr. Urquhart went on to say—

"And our experience is that costs at Mount Isa compare favourably with costs for similar work in America. I can frankly say that any vestige of doubt which may have been in my mind as to the attitude of Labour has been fully and finally removed."

We have advanced that argument for years.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is just what members on your side do not advocate.

Mr. WRIGHT: That method of working has been used for years in the mining industry and the shearing industry, and, as the hon. member knows, in practically all the seasonal industries in the State.

The Leader of the Opposition and many other hon. members opposite based their arguments to a very large extent upon the question of taxation, which they asserted had been the cause of the present unemployment; but the Premier has very ably refuted many of the arguments put forward, pointing out that taxation was only one of the factors, and only a minor factor, in the cause of unemployment. I wish to make some comparison between taxation in Queensland and taxation in one of the other States controlled by an anti-Labour Government; and I submit this information for the enlightenment of the people generally, and particularly for the benefit of hon. members opposite. My authority for these figures in connection with South Australia are taken from the South Australian "Hansard," No. 2, 1928, and the figures have not been challenged. They were put into "Hansard" by Mr. Hill, who is Leader of the Labour Party in South Australia. This taxation has been imposed by Mr. Butler, the anti-Labour Premier of South Australia. These are the figures—

	Queensland.	South Australia.
Exemptions—		
General exemptions ..	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Child	250 0 0	100 0 0
Wife	50 0 0	30 0 0
Married man with wife and 3 children	50 0 0	30 0 0
	400 0 0	220 0 0
Taxation—		
Single person, male or female—		
Gross income £100 per annum	Nil	2 5 0
Gross income £150 per annum	Nil	2 18 6
Gross income £210 per annum	Nil	4 14 9
Married man, wife, and 3 children—		
Gross income £230 per annum	Nil	1 0 0
Gross income £300 per annum.	Nil	(Minimum) 2 5 0
Gross income £350 per annum	Nil	3 16 5
Gross income £400 per annum	Nil	5 10 7
Gross income £450 per annum	£ s. d.	7 7 5
Gross income £500 per annum	0 6 7	7 7 5
	2 3 2	9 6 8

According to that table a man with a wife and three children would require to earn an income of £400 before paying any taxation in Queensland, whereas the exemption in South Australia is only £220.

Mr. MOORE: That taxation was imposed by a Labour Government nine years ago—long before Mr. Butler came into office.

Mr. WRIGHT: I refer the hon. gentleman to the South Australian "Hansard." This taxation was not imposed by a Labour Government, but was reduced by them. If the Leader of the Opposition will investigate the matter, he will find that the general exemption was considerably reduced by Mr. Butler last year. The Opposition are very quiet at this particular juncture. What do they think of the action of their colleagues in South Australia in increasing taxation on the workers there? To sum up the position in regard to taxation in South Australia, I desire to quote the following extract from a speech made by Mr. Hill in the South Australian Parliament on the Address in Reply, which I have taken from "Hansard," No. 2, 1928, page 59—

"The Premier in his policy speech"—

This is very interesting, as he was referring to the statements made by Mr. Butler on the hustings during the election at which he was returned as Premier—

"said that taxation was becoming a menace to industry and an unbearable burden to the public, and threatened to increase the cost of living and make for unemployment and distress. All his supporters definitely promised to reduce taxation, yet in one year the Government will raise in increased taxation and charges £1,350,000. It brings 53,000 new taxpayers within the taxable amount, all of which are low-wage earners."

The Leader of the Opposition a few moments ago interjected that the Labour Government there had brought these taxpayers under the taxation laws, and I would now refer him to this statement—

"With the £1 minimum tax, reduced exemptions, these 53,000 new taxpayers will contribute £176,000 annually in increased taxation. Mere boys and girls without any vote will be called upon to pay taxation. South Australia's land tax payers number 122,000, income tax payers approximately 150,000. Per ratio of the population there are more people who pay taxation in this State than in any other State, and the taxation per head of the community amounts now to approximately £6 13s. The recent increases have added over 25s. per head of the population, which is now far higher than in any other State in the Commonwealth."

Mr. MOORE: Taxation is having the same effect here in regard to unemployment.

Mr. WRIGHT: Mr. Butler promised to reduce taxation as a means to increasing employment. He made that statement in very definite terms. In fact, the terms were similar to those which have been stated in this Chamber by the Leader of the Opposition. Notwithstanding the statements made by Mr. Butler that high taxation was the cause of increased unemployment yet, in actual practice as Premier of South Australia, he has increased the number of taxpayers by over 30,000, and has actually imposed taxation on boys and girls who are

Mr. Wright.]

not old enough to become enfranchised. What is the good of taking notice of the election promises made by the Leader of the Opposition and his followers? I am quite satisfied that the people of this State will take particular note of the work that has been done by Mr. Butler, and, after thoroughly investigating the position there, they will see how foolish it would be to return the Opposition to the Treasury benches in Queensland. I predict that Mr. Butler's reign as Premier of South Australia will be a short one, and certainly that it will not last longer than the duration of the present Parliament.

Taxation in Queensland is based upon a much more equitable system than that obtaining elsewhere, seeing that, generally speaking, our taxation is paid by those best able to pay it.

The Premier had also something to say regarding the dismissal of Government employees in Queensland. Whilst I cannot recollect any general statements made by hon. members opposite in this House with regard to the retrenchment of Government employees in Queensland, I do know that there has been a good deal of talk throughout the State—and without any foundation whatsoever—about the Government having entered upon a general policy of retrenchment in the public service. In his definite statement backed up by figures showing the number of persons employed by the Queensland Government on various dates, the Premier showed clearly that the Government, by refraining from any general policy of retrenchment amongst Government employees, have done their best to ease the labour market during the period of depression that we have just experienced.

In contrast with that, let me deal with the action of Mr. Butler, the Premier of South Australia. Taking Mr. Butler's own figures, appearing in the South Australian "Hansard," we find that, whereas there were 26,220 employees in the Government service of South Australia on 31st March, 1927, just after Mr. Butler assumed office, there were only 22,284 of such employees on 31st March, 1928. In other words, Mr. Butler has been responsible for a deflation in the public service of his State to the extent of 3,936 employees in twelve months; and, if we may believe press reports, there has been a further reduction since. I hope that Government servants in Queensland will take particular note of the actions of the anti-Labour Premier of South Australia.

Mr. MOORE: Your own Premier put 3,800 men off the railways after the 1926 elections.

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr. WRIGHT: That is not true. I am perfectly satisfied with the Premier's statement, backed up as it was by authentic figures, showing that the Government have done their best to ease the labour market during the period of depression. The Government are to be congratulated on standing by their employees in the manner which I have indicated. No other Government in Australia to-day have done more for their employees than the Queensland Labour Government have done; and I am satisfied that all Government employees, if they have not previously done so, will support this Government when they appeal to the people at the next election.

[Mr. Wright.

The Leader of the Opposition, to a large extent, ridiculed the fact that the Treasurer finished last financial year with a surplus. I would point out that South Australia finished the year with a deficit of £277,000, notwithstanding that taxation in that State has been increased to the extent of £1,300,000 odd, and that 4,000 Government employees have been retrenched. Consequently our record compares more than favourably with that of South Australia, which is governed by a Tory type of Government. A comparison with that State is fairer than a comparison with any of the other States, because the conditions in that State are somewhat similar to those in Queensland, and the population is only slightly lower than ours.

At 11.32 a.m.,

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

Mr. WRIGHT: I should like to come now a little nearer home, and review the actions of the Brisbane City Council, which certainly is anti-Labour. Notwithstanding the fact that the council has received a largely increased revenue through increased valuations and increased rates during the last twelve months, it has thrown hundreds of workers out of employment in the Brisbane area and has been one of the greatest factors in creating the depression within the city confines. This is recognised by the business community of the city. In addition to making local authority taxation a burden, it has aggravated the position by retrenchment wherever possible. His worship the mayor, addressing the City Mission recently in connection with unemployment, said—

"There was never a time when citizens might practise more self-sacrifice than at present towards the less fortunate who are out of work. He was aware Mr. Grimes had met with many sad cases during the year. As mayor he was trying to provide employment. As announced to a meeting of the City Council the previous day, in view of the unemployment in the city, it had been decided to strain the financial resources of the council a little by providing additional work on the roads."

In view of the fact that the council has been responsible for placing hundreds on the labour market of Brisbane during the last twelve months, it is rather late in the day at this stage of the proceedings to state—

"There never was a time when citizens might practise more self-sacrifice and do what they possibly could to relieve the position."

It is a fact that the council has recently arranged for a loan of £75,000 for road work, and I give it credit for it; but it is also admitted that the money arranged for will not increase employment in the city services, but will keep employed some of the men who evidently would otherwise have been placed on the labour market before now. As one who lives in the outer suburbs, I say that the City Council has fallen down on its job. The outer suburbs generally were never in a worse state than at present. I give the council full credit for building some good main roads, but there is ample scope for the employment of a large number of men on work which would benefit the community very much. The City Council could help very much more than it has done by giving

employment to many of our workers instead of going in for retrenchment.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It will mean increased taxation.

Mr. WRIGHT: The greatest argument against increased taxation in the suburb in which I live is that taxation has been increased 100 per cent. and even 200 per cent. with very little benefit to the residents.

Mr. KELSO: That is the result of the bad legislation passed by the Government.

Mr. WRIGHT: When the hon. member for Burke was criticising the actions of the Brisbane City Council one member opposite—I think it was the hon. member for Toowong—said the area was too large.

Mr. KELSO: It is not a question of area; it is a question of taxation.

Mr. WRIGHT: The members of the Opposition and those associated with them are so short-sighted as to think that a small area of 381 square miles is too large for a council of twenty-one members to administer.

Mr. KELSO: It is the largest city area in the world.

Mr. WRIGHT: Quite so. If that is the extent of their wisdom and knowledge—that the city of Brisbane is too large an area to be controlled properly under municipal government with the unlimited powers the council possess—how on earth are they going to govern the State of Queensland successfully if they ever get on the Treasury benches? I presume that we are to infer from the statements they have made that the Government of Queensland, with its vast territory, is too big a job for them; and I agree with them that it is too big a job for them. When an Opposition member tells me that the area of the city of Brisbane is too large to be effectively governed and controlled, I would throw that argument back in his teeth. As I told the people at election time, they condemn themselves from their own mouths. If they have not got the capacity to govern an area of 381 square miles, how can we have confidence in them to run this great State of Queensland?

Mr. MAXWELL: The Government could not run the Water and Sewerage Board.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Government did the right thing with the Water and Sewerage Board. The water and sewerage service of the city is the people's business; and those who are acting for the people of the city are the members of the City Council, and it is their duty to give the people of Brisbane a suitable and effective water supply.

The action of the City Council in regard to the ferry service has caused a good deal of hostility and done a good deal of damage to the district I represent, and also that represented by Mr. Speaker. I make no apology for bringing this matter before the people of Queensland. The Tory council, the anti-Labour council, in the election pamphlets issued when they were appealing to the people for their suffrages, made certain very definite promises, one of which was that there should be free ferries for main highways only. It was the Labour council of the city of Brisbane which first brought in the policy of free ferries, which I submit is a sound one. The Jolly council carried out the policy of free ferries for the first three years. During the last election campaign

anti-Labour candidates definitely stated that they would provide free ferries for main highways only; but what has happened? Within a few months of their return they have absolutely repudiated their own election speeches, and have placed a super tax on the people of the Maree and Bulimba electorates for the use of what is nothing more than a national highway. That is absolutely wrong in principle; it is unjust and unfair taxation; and it is placing a super tax on the whole of these people, who have had their local authority rates and taxes increased in some cases by more than 200 per cent. during the last two or three years.

Mr. KELSO: You should say that to the City Council electors.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am the judge as to where I shall bring this matter up. I am the representative of the Bulimba electorate. It is my business to place the facts before the people through this Chamber, and I will not ask the hon. member for Nundah or anyone else for permission to do so. I am quite big enough and old enough to think for myself. That is our experience of a Tory council, and, if the people of Queensland are to be guided by the actions of such a body in first of all breaking a very definite pledge made during the election campaign not only to the people of Bulimba and Maree, but also to the people of all the city, then they certainly will not tolerate hon. members opposite and put them on these benches. The City Council has repudiated a very definite promise, with the result that a very serious set-back has been administered to both the districts I have mentioned. It is a matter which will be very considerably discussed in them at some future period, for they are very strongly hostile to it. I, with others, approached the City Council on several occasions, but received absolutely no satisfaction. It was pointed out that aldermen had repudiated their own election promises, and the mayor's reply, in effect, was, "Who cares?" He said, "If you had a referendum of the people of Brisbane, only the people of Bulimba and Maree would support free ferries." That may be so, but that does not vitiate the principle. I hold that the ferries constitute part of a highway which means the very lifeblood of those districts, especially Bulimba and a large portion of Maree, and that it is only a proper policy that an up-to-date ferry crossing should be maintained. Whether it be a bridge or a movable bridge in the shape of a ferry boat, these main highways should be maintained without extra taxation to the people of the districts immediately concerned.

Mr. KELSO interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is not the Government's job, and I would remind the hon. member that in his district and that of the hon. member for Windsor during the last two or three years quite costly bridges have been undertaken by the City Council at the cost of the ratepayers of the city generally.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Has not a costly road been made in Bulimba?

Mr. WRIGHT: I quite agree that a costly road has been built through portions of the Bulimba electorate, largely for the benefit of the electors of the hon. member who interjects—although I have no argument against

Mr. Wright.]

that—but I would remind the hon. gentleman that we did not place a gateway across the road at the boundary between the Bulimba and Wynnum electorates and collect a toll from the users of the road. The hon. gentleman would not agree to that being done on that main road, and I believe that he does not agree with the policy of the council as to their ferries, because he is one of the members opposite who know just what it means to have proper up-to-date service in that direction. I mention this matter to show the people generally what reliance can be placed upon the promises of the Opposition. The mayor said that the people of Brisbane would turn me down if there were a referendum, and I quite agree that they would, but that does not justify their act of repudiation. The aldermen of the City Council overlook the fact that the people of Windsor and Nundah have had bridges built, portion of the cost of which has to be borne by the electors of Maree and Bulimba, who conscientiously think that it is a sound principle that this roadway to the city should be given to the people and charged to the community generally. It is a community service, and should be a community charge. I do not wish to labour the question, but I am glad to have had the opportunity of mentioning here a matter which affects the electorate of the Speaker and myself. Indeed, we shall take every opportunity, both here and outside, of voicing our belief that the right thing should be done—that is, to restore to the district the free ferry service, making it a charge on the general revenue of the city.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The voice that we have heard crying in the wilderness was not far from the truth. Not only is the charge one that can be directed to the hon. member for Leichhardt, but it is a charge that is general in its application, and might well fall upon every member of the Government. Every possible economic law has been broken by the Government instead of their governing according to the true canons of economic law, and the result is just what we anticipated—on every hand there is room for a charge against the Government that on account of the conditions they have imposed Queensland is suffering from the uneconomic administration of its affairs. That can be readily proved. We all understand fairly well that the Government came into office practically destitute of any real true knowledge of economics, and with one exception I think, no business men in their ranks, and had to learn everything. They commenced experimenting in this direction, that direction, and the other direction, until to-day, the experiments having failed, we find that Queensland is in a very sorry position.

I had forgotten to extend that courtesy which I think should be extended to hon. members who for the first time or on any occasion move and second the motion in connection with the Address in Reply. I do compliment the hon. member for Mitchell and the hon. member for Balonne on the way in which they managed their task. It is a fairly difficult matter to speak for the first time in Parliament—it is difficult to speak at any time, if one is nervous at all—consequently one readily extends to a man who enjoys the confidence of his electors congratulations on his efforts. I think the hon. member for Balonne has given good evidence that in the days to come he will be a good debater.

[*Mr. Wright.*

I have a good deal of sympathy for His Excellency in what is contained in his Opening Speech in these words—

“Although even now I am acquainted with but a comparatively small portion of the State, yet my earlier impressions as to its amazing natural resources and future possibilities are more than fully realised.”

In connection with our various industries—wool, beef, cotton, maize, dairying, and all the others—we are at one with hon. members opposite—not to discount one bit the possibilities and the potentialities of our land, but to magnify them. The question then arises—What is the matter with a land of opportunity so great, so extensive, and so bountiful as Queensland, that the position is as it is to-day? There must be a reason for it; and in supporting the motion of no confidence I say emphatically that it is because the Government, during their long term of office, have failed completely to make use of the wealth and the material resources of Queensland. That reason will be found at every turn.

I am sorry that the Secretary for Railways is not present in the Chamber. He delivered himself yesterday on every possible question in every department that can be conceived of, but omitted to deal with questions affecting his own department. We can readily understand that the resources of Queensland are not being developed; and, if the hon. gentleman would only look at the figures supplied by his own department, he would find irrefutable evidence that the State is not developing as it should. Figures have been given during this Parliament which would seem to indicate that our various industries are in a state of very high development and prosperity. What has become of the goods? There is no doubt that values are very different to what they were in other years; but the fact is that we are not producing the quantity we did in other years. If hon. members will turn up the tables furnished by the Commissioner for Railways, they will find the facts I relate. I shall go back a year or two in order to show that under other conditions—conditions when other people were responsible—there was a growth in the tonnage carried on the railways which was altogether in excess of what was carried during the last twelve years, or even to-day. For instance, in 1910-11 the tonnage of goods and livestock carried amounted to 3,295,293 tons. By 1915 the tonnage had increased by 1,249,588 tons, and, if departmental tonnage is added, by 1,675,580 tons. In the following twelve years the tonnage carried by the department, not including departmental tonnage, decreased by 229,368 tons. It can be readily understood why the hon. gentleman when speaking yesterday did not indicate why his railways could not pay, because how is it possible for the railways to pay unless they have the goods to carry? The cause of that is the attitude of the Government in the early days of their administration. It is true they are trying to retrace their steps in some directions, but it is too late.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, no! Remember the old proverb, “It is never too late to mend.”

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Any hon. member who was in this House in the early days of their administration knows what spirit

acted hon. members on the Government benches when they seized this article, that article, and the other, while one who watched their taxation proposals can readily understand the feeling they created in the rural community. We have not got over that feeling to-day, and the result is that we have not been producing to the extent we did in other days. The fact is that, notwithstanding that railway mileage has increased and that railway expenditure has been greater, less goods and fewer passengers are being carried now in comparison with previous years. In 1914-15, when the railway mileage was 4,838, the number of passengers carried was 13,131,512, whereas in 1926-27 the number had decreased to 12,307,062. That shows that some adverse influence must be operating. Possibly the men in the country have not a sufficient revenue return to enable them to travel to the same extent as previously. No doubt the Secretary for Railways will have something to say by and by—he may be reserving himself—but he certainly has something which will require some explanation.

To show that we have not been governed economically, I need only mention the Premier's own statement the other day, when, speaking with regard to the railways, he said that he could reduce taxation by £1,000,000 if the railways could be made to pay. The hon. gentleman was quite right in that statement. The best brains are required to tackle this problem, because there is a burden on the people of Queensland greater than they are able to bear. One would have thought that, with an increase in railway freights and fares amounting to approximately 113 per cent., the working expenses and interest on capital in connection with the railways would have been met. Nothing of the kind. Speaking as I am for the people in the country—it is the country people who are paying this increase of 113 per cent., because the city people are escaping—I would draw attention to the fact that there is an excess railway charge, which is really indirect taxation, seeing that railway earnings have increased by about £3,500,000 in round figures since 1914-15. I do not say that it would be possible to run the railways on the conditions obtaining in other days. The conditions are different; but at the same time an increase of 113 per cent. is too great, and, if that were halved, it might be somewhere about right. In addition to the £16,000,000 odd which the railways have lost during the past thirteen years, we must consider the losses which have come about as a result of indirect taxation. I really did not intend dealing with this aspect of the matter just now, but there can be no getting away from the fact that the country has not been economically governed. It is matters of that kind to which the Secretary for Railways should direct his attention. What do we want with figures that stretch from here to Denmark, instead of facts that have to do with the very lifeblood of our land?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have you not read what the Minister for Railways in New Zealand said recently? That gentleman pointed out that in New Zealand, where there is a Tory Government, the people would have to use the railways or they would be closed down—that they could not have both motor cars and railways.

MR. G. P. BARNES: I cannot answer that question, but I wish to prove that the Govern-

ment during their long term of office have failed completely to make proper use of the wealth and material resources of this State. That is why the railways

[12 noon] are in their present position. If, in conjunction with railway development, there had been encouragement to the man on the land, if the Government had not wiped out every little bit of equity that the farmer had in his land by stupid legislation, we would have had such a condition of things to-day that, instead of the country being starved of revenue, it would have been full of revenue, and the people would have been enjoying great prosperity. Think of this fair land in the making with opportunities such as have been outlined in the Governor's Speech! Think of a country like this being so shackled as the result of extravagant expenditure and mismanagement that you have to listen to cries such as we hear everywhere from unemployed! Of course there always will be unemployed among us, but there is no need for us to have an army of unemployed.

The various Acts of this Government have been far from economical. Take the rural award. That is creating unemployment. In the sugar areas it may be possible to pay the workers the big wages demanded, but I defy any man to pay these big wages on the farms on the Darling Downs. The result is unemployment. Not only that but the sons of farmers are flocking to the cities because the fathers' properties have become of less value. Such cases constantly come before me. Every member of Parliament, I am sure, every week of his life has, coming to him from the farm, someone who desires to get into the police force, into the railways, on to the trams, or into the State Insurance Office—anywhere but on the farm—simply because of the discouragement brought about by the conditions that have been imposed directly and indirectly under the administration of the Government. For the life of me I cannot understand why, in a land abounding with opportunities, in a land in the making, there should be stagnation and unemployment. Hungry men in a land of opportunity! Who is to blame? It is no use comparing ourselves with other States. We have quite enough to do to look after our own affairs. It is no use saying the other fellows are worse than we are. It is no use saying there are thousands of unemployed in the other States.

I say without fear of contradiction that there is no need for unemployment in this State. The fact is we have been living beyond our means in many directions, and the country has been brought to its present state as the result of mismanagement and a misconception and misrealisation of the functions of government. For thirteen years all the maxims of economics have been broken.

The Premier, the Secretary for Agriculture, and others on the other side during this session of Parliament have talked incessantly about economics. The economics practised by them have proved too costly and injurious. Economics is said to be the science of the useful application of the wealth and of material resources of a country. Judged in the light of that definition, how do the Government stand? Where are they to-day? Am I not right in saying that they have broken every canon of economics? J. B. Say's definition makes it the source of the production, distribution, and consumption of

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

wealth. Adam Smith lays down maxims which have been briefly described as the maxims of equality, certainty, convenience, and economy. Equality is defined as contribution according to the respective ability and revenue enjoyed under the protection of the State. Taxes must fall equally. Adam Smith further says taxes may break the canon of economy by restraint of trade and production, and by causing unnecessary vexation. Where do the Government stand in regard to a charge like that? They stand wanting—they have broken the canon, there is no doubt about that. John Stuart Mill says that the increase of farmers' rent—and a farmer's rent can be increased directly and indirectly—is always contemporary with a decrease in the productive powers of agriculture, and comes with loss and distress in its train. These are the authorities who have spoken in the days that have been, and their conclusions are right to-day. Ricardo adopts and extols as a golden maxim "That the very best of all plans of finance is to spend little, and the best of all taxes is that which is of the least amount." National production is fostered by attracting workmen from other countries, and by lightening the burden on struggling industries.

Mr. COLLINS: Quote the modern economists.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am going to quote modern economists. We need not go outside the House to find modern economists. A great deal that I have said has been said by the Premier with regard to unemployment to-day. He says that it is due partially to economic factors, but not altogether. He quoted a statement made by those who had studied economics. He mentioned that taxation was a cause of unemployment. There are different ways of reaching unemployment; there is action and reaction in everything in this life. As I proved in my earlier remarks, we have been making for reaction all along the line. The first act of this Government was to bludgeon this, that, and the other measure through the House, and it has had a disastrous effect upon the country. Certain things have been brought about for which we blame the Government—not because it is politics to do so—but we blame them because they have brought about the dire results we see to-day, and because they have broken the economic law.

Mr. COLLINS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the economic law?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: A treatise of dry science.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Does the hon. gentleman say that economic law should have no place here to-day? I will read what one of the experts of this House says; and I believe that this hon. gentleman, although he is one of those who made us pay dearly for our knowledge, has learned the fallacy of many of the principles he used to enunciate. In thirteen years the prosecution of those principles has added over £50,000,000 to the public debt of the State—thanks to the irresponsible members who try to run this concern and that concern on socialistic principles. The Secretary for Agriculture—a man who I admit does a lot of thinking—speaking on this Address in Reply, said this:—

"If a co-operative organisation, a State enterprise, or a joint stock com-

pany violates any economic law, then it will meet with lack of success, no matter in what way it is owned or controlled. If any industry is carrying a greater burden than properly it should be called upon to carry, then difficulty naturally results."

The hon. gentleman knows that that is absolutely correct. He is a "Daniel come to judgment." The difficulty to-day is that the hon. gentleman cannot see the wisdom of putting into effect these truths of economics as we understand them; yet he states them on this very Address in Reply. There is no getting away, for instance, from the fact that there is a burden of taxation. We have had figures given to us this morning in regard to it, but they do not cut any ice. The fact is that Queensland, which in 1915 had only a taxation burden of £1 8s. per head of population, now carries one of £5 2s. 1d. The percentage increases in the various States since 1915 have been—

	Per cent.
Victoria	166
Western Australia	170
Tasmania	199
New South Wales	210
Queensland	264

We all know that it is foolish to say that taxation is not causing unemployment. It is. I am not going over the figures which have been given here day by day regarding our factories, for instance. We cannot get away from the fact that we have fewer factories than we had. We cannot get away from the fact that a couple of thousand men who used to be employed in our factories are not now employed in them—they have gone elsewhere. It is regrettable; but there it is, and it is due to excessive taxation. The Premier may be right when he states that men who have made a lifelong study of economics have not been able to put their fingers on the cause, but to-day there is clear evidence that what he suggests is a negligible factor in causing unemployment is really the prime factor.

The other day, at the annual meeting of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, the chairman said—

"There are increasing indications that the existing heavy taxation and Arbitration Court awards are becoming burdensome to commerce and industry. It is to be hoped, therefore, that endeavours will be made by Australian Governments to balance accounts by bringing expenditure within income rather than by seeking increase of income in order to meet expenditure as further additions to these burdens must accentuate the depression existing in many of our industries in the Commonwealth and tend to increase unemployment."

There is a banking finding. I have another. It is necessary to take recent utterances, because in every age you will have to introduce new ideas and values of economics, and we are out to do it because taxation is a cause of unemployment. Mr. Kent, addressing the members of the United Graziers' Association on Friday last, said—

"The history of recent years has shown that as regards all the primary industries in Australia there are only two courses open to the legislature. They are very heavy taxation (stagnation and unemployment), light taxation

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

(progress and prosperity). It is, therefore, self-evident, that as far as the worker is concerned—and he constitutes the major portion of the community—his interests are against heavy taxation of the primary producer, for it is upon the success and prosperity of the primary production of the State that the success or otherwise of all our secondary industries depend.

I have an authority from the other side of the world in Philip Snowden, who I am sure will be accepted by the other side as an authority on the question of whether taxation does or does not influence enterprise. This article is headed—

“TAXATION AND TRADE.

“What is considered the most interesting article on the report of the Colwyn Committee on British taxation and trade is from the pen of Mr. Philip Snowden, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the British Labour Government. Referring to the minority report, Mr. Snowden said it did not recommend the adoption of the capital levy unless it could be accepted with general good will, and he made the apt comment that, ‘as that is not likely to happen, the prospects of a capital levy are not very hopeful.’ Mr. Snowden thinks that other causes than high taxation have been responsible for bad trade, and he mentioned in particular the dislocation of oversea markets. He also considers that the committee was probably right in asserting that the one adverse effect of high taxation has been to lessen the sums available for saving for new capital enterprises. If that is so, the city editor of the ‘Times’ remarks, it is a very serious objection to high taxation; for it is certain that this country not only needs at the present moment the rehabilitation of its old-established industries, which have now to meet the competition of other countries with their minds set on self-containment, but it also urgently needs new industries to absorb those for whom employment cannot be found in the older trades. Obviously, if high taxation checks the development of new enterprise, it is a main cause of the perpetuation of the stagnation which results in more than a million persons being out of employment. It is a sound principle that any measures which encourage the development of industry are bound to result in increased sums being paid into the Treasury through various forms of taxation.”

We are groaning under the weight of taxation and unemployment to-day, and the people outside should be so informed. All is due to the imposition by this Government of taxation beyond the power of the public to bear.

At 12.20 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Even the Premier agrees with this to a large extent, for in 1924 when Secretary for Public Lands, in speaking on the Address in Reply, he said—

“Then it may be argued that we should increase general taxation. There is certainly no other way. It is easy enough to say that we should increase

taxation. It is a very popular thing to get up and say, ‘Tax the other fellow,’ but there is a point at which taxation becomes so heavy that, instead of bettering the position, it actually makes it worse for the very men you wish to benefit. (Opposition cheers.) I will give an illustration. Every man who has surplus money after paying for his own immediate needs and those of his family invests the rest of it in industry, if he does not put it into Government securities. That is a truism. If we take that money from him, he cannot invest it in industry. No doubt the hon. member for Fitzroy can quote many instances where taxation does not have that effect, but I am giving an instance of where it does. If we take that money out of industry to pay an increase in wages, what will be the effect and who will suffer? That is a reasonable question.

“Opposition Members: The worker.

“The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Employment will suffer, or at least we think it will. The hon. member for Fitzroy may be right. I am giving my opinion. I think that, if taxation gets to a certain stage—and it is fairly high in Queensland—

“Mr. Weir: What is that stage?

“The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is 10s. in the £1 in some instances.

“Mr. Weir: Is that the danger zone?

“The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is the danger zone for employment.”

Mr. ROBERTS: Who said that?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The present Premier of Queensland, and since that time extra taxation has been imposed, especially the increased stamp duties. It runs into some hundreds of thousands of pounds, notwithstanding the fact that the Premier on that occasion thought the people of Queensland had come to the end of their tether as far as taxation was concerned, for, if it was increased any further, it was going to interfere with employment. Such was the way the hon. gentleman pronounced himself on the matter then. It confirms to a nicety just what we feel and say—that taxation is not the only factor, but it is the main cause of the vast amount of unemployment existing to-day. If hon. members on the other side were in business they would realise it: they would understand that the present position is attributable to the excessive taxation.

There are things in connection with the uneconomic conduct of affairs of the State by the Government which one does not like. I shall quote from the report of the Auditor-General, which was tabled in this House last year, in relation to the credit balances. He pointed out this very significant fact. The Loan Fund credit balance up to 30th June, 1927, was £5,235,513, and the net credit of all the funds on the same date was £1,363,654 only. It is obvious that the Loan Fund is carrying accumulated deficits of the Consolidated Revenue and certain Trust Funds overdrafts to the extent of £3,371,869.

On taking the quarterly balances I find that things have not improved. Summing up the position of the balance of accounts at 31st March, 1928, the Loan Fund credit was

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

£5,306,735, but there was a revenue debit of £1,975,440, a trust debit of £527,022, which makes a total of £2,502,462, or a net balance of £2,804,273.

Loan funds are being manipulated in order to carry on the affairs of State—we could not balance at all to-day were it not for the fact that money is taken out of loan—and, in addition to that loan manipulation, we find that £1,328,096 has been written off Trust and debited to Loan. Other amounts have been likewise treated, totalling in all approximately £1,500,000. A number of these amounts are the direct result of the uneconomic conduct of enterprises by the Government. Will this state of affairs bear a solitary glance? Money is borrowed and put into State enterprises, enormous losses are made, and these losses, when made, find their way to Trust Accounts, and finally are transferred to Loan Account. That position is wrong; it cannot last. An explanation is needed. Nowadays we never hear State enterprises mentioned by hon. members on the other side, neither are the finances of the country referred to by those hon. members. But these are the things that concern the people, and for which the people are paying all too dearly. Just look at the position of the State enterprises! Without going into detail I find that, apart from the railway refreshment rooms, the Babinda State hotel, and the State butcher shops, every other enterprise shows a fearful loss, until now the accumulated losses total £2,041,309. The uncharged interest alone totals £577,876, making a loss of £2,619,185 when all things are considered. I mention this fact because there has been a tendency to lose sight of these enterprises, and a failure to realise that economic law, as pointed out by the Secretary for Agriculture, has been violated.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: If you violate a law, you must pay the penalty.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We know what the penalty is, and we know it is the man in the street and the man who cries from the gallery of this House—the unemployed—who are paying as the result of the breaking of this economic law. I have put it in as tersely a way as I can.

The hon. member for Bowen is not in his seat at present, but we find him speaking about various matters affecting his district. No doubt Bowen does not suffer at his hands from a want of glorification, but there can be no doubt that the Inkerman irrigation scheme has been a bad business.

[12.30 p.m.]

According to the Auditor-General's Report for 1922-23, page 50, the original estimated cost of the Inkerman irrigation works was £131,000 to irrigate 18,000 acres. The actual cost, according to the Auditor-General's report of 30th June, 1927, was £483,101, of which £163,344 has been written off and the area irrigated was only 4,763 acres. The Auditor-General in his report for 1920-21 remarked—

"It might be mentioned that the contract for cylinders was let on 1st September, 1917, fourteen months subsequent to the framing of the estimate. It has not been possible to obtain the actual cost of sinking any one well, as no proper costing system has been introduced."

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

Mr. J. Szalla (consulting engineer to the scheme) in a press statement had this to say of the carrying on of this work—

"The first difficulty was the deliberate wasting of time and money Some of the employees spent time in fishing, playing cards, and in a word, loafing, and supplied incorrect information to account for wasted time Very indefinite information was supplied as to the size of motors needed, and in two cases he had to wait eighteen months before any information was given him. He recommended that iron poles should be used instead of wooden ones, which might be attacked by pests. The wooden poles were erected, however, and eleven months later it was found necessary to take out eighty-six poles, which had been partly or wholly destroyed by white ants. . . . The greatest difficulty which he encountered was the Government's lethargy regarding the matter. . . . He predicted that within a brief time, the great majority of the already ordered open vertical motors for the wells would have to be replaced by totally enclosed motors. . . . He had originally urged the installation of enclosed motors," etc.

Mr. FERRICKS: Despite all that, one year's cane crop would pay the whole cost, and, without irrigation, in some years there would not be a ton of cane grown.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes, but the Government have proceeded on wrong lines. They did not even bother to get a true estimate of the cost of the work that was to be done, and certainly it was not followed up in a businesslike way. Although irrigation was necessary for the development of the industry in that district, surely there was no necessity to lose some hundreds of thousands of pounds of the country's money? That could have been avoided. If the men had been properly disciplined, they would not have wasted their time as indicated, and would not have done the things they did as disclosed in these reports. The blame rests on the shoulders of the Government. The Government have been lax in this respect. The Auditor-General in his report for 1922-23 said—

"The great discrepancy between the estimated cost and actual cost of the works to date has, I understand, been dealt with in a report to the Government by the Commissioner of Irrigation, and, after allowing for an increase in prices of machinery, plant, etc., he states that there has been a certain amount of unjustifiable and unnecessary expenditure from which any benefit is unlikely.

"WORKING RESULTS.

"Area irrigated—

	Acres.
1922-23	2,500
1923-24	4,037
1924-25	4,383
1925-26	4,748
1926-27	4,763

"Financial.—No interest was charged to 30th June, 1925, and as previously shown, £163,344 was written off capital cost. The results since then are stated in the Auditor-General's report for 1926-27 as follow:—

The loss for the year 1926-27 was £15,860, and the accumulated losses at 30th June, 1927, amount to £26,644 18s. 8d., although £12,832 15s. interest

charges have been deferred and are to be met during the next three years. No depreciation has been provided for, and no capital repayments are being made to Treasury, and it is evident that the scheme cannot meet these charges.

The outstanding water rates at 30th June, 1927, amounted to £20,828 11s. 2d., of which £14,530 was on account of the rate levied for the year 1926-27."

The result of bungling and extravagance is clearly shown by the foregoing facts and figures. Instead of 13,000 acres being irrigated, thus lessening the financial burden on each farmer, the total area in 1926-27 was only 4,763 acres. And, if the same rate of increase takes place in future years as in 1926-27, the irrigated area of 13,000 acres originally proposed will not be reached until the financial year of 2769-70. In addition, there is no hope of the farmers ever making redemption payments, and very little prospect of their being able to pay the rates required to meet operating costs and interest. We have much food for thought in connection with these various enterprises, which burden the whole community, and as a result are making for unemployment. In all these directions there is abundant evidence that economic law, as stated by the man who interjected from the gallery the other day, has not been understood by the Government, and it is their neglect of the rare opportunities which they have had to develop the country, and their waste of the country's finances which has tightened things up to-day. Instead of money going into productive work, the pockets of the Treasury are tied up, and it is impossible to do anything at all to alleviate distress and give employment to the men who are the bone and sinew of the land.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. D. A. Gledson, *Ipswich*): I desire to say something on the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition. Before doing so, I would like, with other hon. members, to express my regret at the passing away since last session of the late hon. member for Mitchell, Mr. John Payne, who was a member of this House for many years and who had endeared himself to members on both sides of the Chamber. (Hear, hear!) I also desire to express my regret at the death of the late hon. member for Stanley, Mr. F. L. Nott, whose informative speeches in this Chamber were listened to with great attention. (Hear, hear!) I congratulate the hon. member for Mitchell, Mr. Bow, on his election for that constituency. If the hon. member carries on his work as member for Mitchell as well as he has acted in other capacities, he will prove an ideal member. There is only one thing wrong with the hon. member for Stanley, who has been elected in place of the late Mr. Nott, and that is that he is on the wrong side of the House. If he had been on this side he could have proved an ideal member too, and done some good for the country.

We have had some biblical quotations this morning, but the hon. member for Warwick spoke from the Book of Lamentations rather than from the Book of Daniel—he gave us a regular jeremiad. Right through the whole of his speech there was nothing

but a lamentation in regard to this fair country, running it down, and trying to prove how bad it is. (Opposition dissent.) The only claim that he made was for relief from taxation. The hon. member is not concerned with relieving from taxation the men whom he was talking about in his play to the gallery—for that is all he has been doing—because those men would be only too pleased to pay the taxation if they were able to earn the incomes which would render them liable to it. The hon. member was pleading all the time for the man who has a big income, who is getting thousands of pounds out of the country.

We have had a lecture on economics from the hon. member, who went back hundreds of years to rake up doctrines for the purpose. But we have to remember what we are dealing with this morning.

Mr. WARREN interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It is sometimes a good thing to let the people know just what sort of men we have on the Opposition side—Jeremiahs and croakers, men who are continually whining about their own State and trying to run it down. Since the hon. member for Murrumba wants to hark back to that question, let me say again that we have had nothing but gloom from members on the Opposition side, because they think that they will get some political advantage out of that attitude—not because they think they will do any good. What we want in this Parliament is men who will try to advance their State in the eyes of the people of the world—not men who think that they may be able to gain some advantage by running it down and saying that we are the most heavily taxed people in the world, and that our taxation is so great that there is nothing left for industry or employment—when all the while they are talking with their tongues in their cheeks and know that these things are absolutely untrue.

The hon. member for Bulimba this morning has given hon. members opposite some facts and figures with reference to some of the other States, showing the comparative levels of taxation, and showing that the bulk of the people of Queensland pay practically no direct taxation at all in the shape of income tax. That is a fact which hon. members opposite do not talk about, and their omission shows that they are out to benefit one class only—the man who is drawing a big income and paying high taxation in income tax and stamp and probate duties. That is the class of people they represent, the class they are really all the time crying about, the class to whom they are endeavouring to bring an advantage whilst at the same time they pretend that they are concerned about the worker. It is just as well for us to know where hon. members opposite are. The workers have known it for a long time, and I feel sure that they know it just as well to-day as they have in the past.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: They will know at election time.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They have always known me at election time, and they will know me just the same next election. Before the last election the hon. member for Windsor and the hon. member for Toowong, who are interjecting, went up into the Ipswich electorate and then came back and said the Opposition were

Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

going to win the Ipswich seat. The result of their visit was that my majority increased by 300 votes. I did not think it possible to increase my majority, but I am inclined to believe that, if those hon. members go up to Ipswich this time, my majority will be increased by 600.

In dealing with matters which have been raised in this debate, and in regard to which I shall give a few figures later, I want to point out first of all that it is our duty to do what we can—not to make the position worse, but to improve it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The first essential is to change the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I know that the first, second, and last essential of the Opposition is to change the Government. That is all they think about. They care not about improving the position of Queensland. Put them over here and everything in the garden will be rosy! The people of Australia have tried that remedy in the other States; but, fortunately, in Queensland we have a very intelligent type who have not fallen to the wiles of the Opposition in that regard, and understand the barrenness of the statements made by the Opposition from the platform, in this House, and wherever they go, and have judged them at their true value by keeping them in opposition for thirteen years, and, from the trend of events, are likely to keep them in opposition for another thirteen years at least.

Quite a lot of statistics have been quoted from the Commonwealth "Year Book," but hon. members opposite quote those figures to suit their own arguments, and in so doing endeavour to mislead the people into believing that there is more unemployment in Queensland than in any of the other States. I desire to submit figures showing the percentage of unemployed unionists in the various States, the figures for 1914 being obtained from the Commonwealth "Year Book" for 1914, and the figures for 1928 from the "Quarterly Survey of Australian Statistics," Bulletin No. 112 for the second quarter of 1928, the latest figures available:—

	1914.	1928.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
New South Wales	6.9	10.9
Victoria	14.1	12.2
Queensland	17.7	7.1
South Australia	13.8	16.1
Western Australia	8.3	9.5
Tasmania	18.3	10.7

Yet we are accused of having caused all the unemployment. Everybody knows that the main factor actuating a business man in the employment of labour is whether he can make a profit by the employment of such labour. That is the sole factor operating in his mind; yet hon. members opposite try to delude the people into believing that they are very much concerned about the unemployed.

The hon. member for Bulimba pointed out that the Nationalist City Council had an opportunity of dealing with this matter and of showing some practical sympathy in a time of depression. The members of the Nationalist Council set about dismissing men in a wholesale fashion when they should

have made some provision for employment until the depression had passed away and all the unemployed workers were able once more to be absorbed in private enterprise.

Mr. TAYLOR: Your Government sacked them by thousands.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: My Government have done nothing of the sort; the hon. member for Windsor knows that is not correct.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is absolutely correct.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The figures show they have done nothing of the sort.

Mr. MAXWELL: They "deflated" them; they did not "sack" them.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The Government adopted a policy of absorbing every man who could be absorbed and in providing work for him. The Government went out of their way to instruct every officer to absorb every man that it was possible to absorb and keep him in useful employment. That is the difference between the policy of the Nationalists when they get into power and have the opportunity of carrying their promises into effect and the policy of a Labour Government. Hon. members opposite talk about what they would do, and, when they have the opportunity, they do just the opposite. What we want in our public life are men who, after promising certain things on the floor of this House, will endeavour to carry those promises into effect when the opportunity comes their way. I have figures which refute the suggestion made by the hon. member for Windsor. In 1914—the last year when the Nationalist Government were in power—2,490 employees were engaged in the public service, and 18,510 in the Railway Department, making a total of 27,000. The wages paid to them were £3,860,628. Hon. members opposite say that we have dismissed men. What are the facts? The report of the Public Service Commissioner for the year ended 30th June, 1928, which was laid upon the table of the House yesterday, shows that at the close of the financial year there were in the public service and the Railway Department 38,743 employees, as against 27,000 in 1914, while the total wages paid have increased to £10,278,455.

Mr. MAXWELL: You never gave them those wages. The Arbitration Court gave them those wages. (Government laughter.) You claim everything. You even claim credit for the birth rate. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I remember sitting in this House last session and listening to a speech delivered by the hon. member for Oxley, who said that, when the Opposition were returned to power, they would flood this country with an extra 500,000 people, and break down the artificial conditions created by the Board of Trade and Arbitration. That is to say, if the Board of Trade and Arbitration gave these conditions, a position would be created which would break them down.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is untrue.

Mr. KELSO: Who said that?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. FOLEY: And the Opposition never protested.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order.

[Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: That is what is in the minds of the Opposition. One day they get up and say, "We won't break down the artificial conditions," and then next day they say, "You did not give them these conditions, the Arbitration Court gave them these things." Who created the Board of Trade and Arbitration?

Mr. MAXWELL: The Denham Government gave the workers the Industrial Arbitration Court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Industrial Peace Act!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member for Toowong must be like Rip Van Winkle. He must have been lying in the Toowong cemetery and is not acquainted with what has happened since 1914.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are taking the credit for something you are not entitled to.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I hope the hon. member will wake up some day, when he will find out who established the Board of Trade and Arbitration.

We also find members of the Opposition displaying a lot of interest in the unemployed.

Mr. KELSO: More than you do.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: They say, "What are you doing for the unemployed?" Hon. members opposite claim to be sympathetically inclined to the unemployed, yet I remember these same hon. members, when an endeavour was made to pass a measure having for its object the provision of sustenance to unemployed persons, saying that we were introducing a "Loafers' Paradise Bill," and that men would leave their jobs in order to draw sustenance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We had to move the closure thirty times when the Unemployed Workers Insurance Bill was being considered.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Hon. members opposite got their friends in the Upper House practically to defeat that Bill. Eventually this Government was responsible for the passing of a measure aimed at alleviating some of the suffering due to unemployment. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to say that that legislation was the means of creating a "loafers' paradise"; but, if these gentlemen had gone through the mill and known what it meant to be unemployed, they would probably have a little more sympathy for those people whom they call loafers.

Mr. MAXWELL: We never called them loafers.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It is a different matter for hon. members with nice fat billets and everything at hand to say that sort of thing; but, if they had gone through the trials of unemployment they might show a little more sympathy.

Mr. KELSO: You are refusing them the right to work for the payment received.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Now we know where the hon. member for Nundah stands—"Don't give them the sustenance! Make them work for it."

Mr. KELSO: They want to work.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It is all very well to say that, but the sustenance payment is made for the purpose of helping the unemployed a little during the time that they are, unfortunately unemployed.

Let me show what has been done along these lines, despite the strenuous opposition of hon. members opposite to the measure becoming law. We have been hearing lately that hon. members opposite are the creators of the "White Australia" policy; and directly we may expect them to claim credit for the legislation to which I have referred.

Mr. MORGAN: You will have to use the pick and shovel again after the next election.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Members of the Opposition would no doubt like to see me back on the pick and shovel; but I would remind those hon. members that I am doing my job now in the interests of the workers whom I represent, who are satisfied with my using my ability in this House instead of going back to the pick and shovel. If I have to go back to anything, then I hope I shall be able to do it honestly and fairly.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The following are the figures regarding the amount that has been paid away in sustenance in an attempt to alleviate the unemployment position; and I would remind hon. members that no Nationalist Government has ever done, or will probably ever do, anything along these lines.

PAYMENTS FROM UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND.

Year ended—	£	s.	d.
30th June, 1924	149,109	5	9
30th June, 1925	188,011	6	5
30th June, 1926	223,228	7	4
30th June, 1927	340,933	1	8
30th June, 1928	390,336	13	4
Total	£1,291,618	14	6

Mr. KING: A shocking commentary on your legislation.

[2 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: In order to dispel some of the gloom introduced by hon. members on the other side, I wish to point out that the Government are facing the situation squarely, and have officers going round the country endeavouring to ascertain the causes of unemployment, and also to ascertain remedies in order to make the conditions of the workers in Queensland better than they are at the present time. Although it can honestly be said that the statisticians show that there is less unemployment here than in any other countries, that does not get the man who is unemployed very far. We certainly have a percentage of unemployed in Queensland, and that percentage should be catered for. The officers who have gone round the country exploring the reasons for unemployment point out that we can help the position if we endeavour to do so. I ask hon. members opposite if they and their friends will help us to improve the position by using goods manufactured in our own State in preference to imported goods.

Mr. MORGAN: You should lead the way.

Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I am leading the way. The clothes I have on were made in Ipswich. I always use local goods where possible. The hon. member for Murilla should also be satisfied to use the clothes made from wool grown in his own district and manufactured here.

Mr. MORGAN: I am thoroughly satisfied with the goods manufactured here.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: If the hon. member is satisfied, I would like to see him wearing them. At the present time he is not doing so. I know the clothes the hon. member is wearing were not manufactured in Ipswich. Boots are manufactured in Queensland from hides grown and tanned here, and the boots made here are just as good as those that are imported. Members of the Opposition get up in this House and talk, but they refuse to carry out what they preach. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also should show a better example.

Mr. KING: I do not own an American motor car.

Mr. HANLON: You did a few weeks back.

Mr. KING: I did not. I own a British car.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I did not know that there were any motor cars manufactured in Queensland. If there are, I have yet to learn of it. So far as I am concerned, I shall always use the article that is manufactured here. Government officers who go round the country have pointed out that the big increase in the importations into Australia has had a lot to do with the present depression in Australia. The increase in importations into Australia is clearly shown in the following table, culled from figures given by the Commonwealth Statistician:—

Year ended—	£
30th June, 1924 ...	1,433,754
30th June, 1925 ...	2,252,986
30th June, 1926 ...	2,828,890
30th June, 1927 ...	4,313,477

That shows some of the avenues which could be explored in Queensland if we were to use our own manufactures instead of imported articles.

The Commonwealth Nationalist Government have not been free from blame in accentuating the position with regard to unemployment. They embarked on a policy of direct taxation and entering into competition with the States. They took a certain amount of money from the people of Queensland and other States, and said they were going to use some of this money to provide employment by carrying on works in the States. They had a surplus, and remitted taxation, not on the lower-paid men but on the higher paid; they relieved big income taxpayers, and after doing that, they turned round and said, "We cannot find you any money to carry on the Kyogle railway." In consequence of that a certain number of men had to be dismissed from that railway. The Queensland Government came to the rescue, and found money to carry on that work, which should have been done by the Commonwealth; the work was re-started, and a number of men were kept employed there.

Another thing the Commonwealth Government promised to do was to erect Commonwealth buildings in Brisbane as well as in

other States; and they went round to different departments to obtain tenants for those buildings. They agreed to go on with the work, and all preparations were made to go on with the buildings in Anzac Square. The Commonwealth Government then said, "We have to remit this taxation in regard to the bigger people, and cannot go on with that work." The work was, therefore, stopped. If this had not happened, there would have been hundreds of men employed on that work to-day. These are some of the things that are responsible for unemployment at the present time.

The position in Queensland to-day is not so gloomy as hon. members opposite try to make out. The following paragraph appeared in the "Daily Mail" of 3rd August instant—

"TRADE—QUEENSLAND.

"PROSPECTS OF REVIVAL.

"Heavy increases in production of primary products, in direct exports, and in investments through the Brisbane Stock Exchange, were recorded by Queensland in the year ended 30th June. In addition, large sums of money from outside the State were put into Queensland enterprises."

Does that bear out the gloomy predictions of hon. members opposite? Again in the "Daily Mail" of the same date it was stated—

FINANCIAL RESOURCES—QUEENSLAND.

"The assurance was given last week by the Chairman of the Associated Banks of Queensland that the banks have ample funds for financing sound business, and the subscriptions to the Commonwealth loan now being raised within Australia decidedly support the view that money for sound investment is not so relatively scarce in Australia as in London."

Mr. MOORE: Quite true—and sound, too.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition is a judge of what is sound. These are not isolated cases. I have another cutting from the "Daily Mail"—

"More Business. Position Impregnable. Queensland Trustees. Taxation Burdens."

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Are you going to quote it all?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: When I quote anything, I do quote it all. I do not pick out what suits me. When I quote figures I quote them as they are, and do not try to twist them, as the Leader of the Opposition did when he twisted the figures of the Secretary for Agriculture.

Mr. MOORE: I did not twist anything.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Then he turns round and says he made a mistake. That sort of thing was accentuated by the hon. member for Normanby yesterday, who used the same figures over and over again. But the people of Queensland know the tactics of the Opposition. They know that first one of them makes a statement; when it is contradicted, somebody else repeats the statement and says, "That statement was made," and in this way, one after the other, they seek to gull

the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland have found them out, however, and that is the reason why they remain where they are. Now they are trying by their interjections to prevent this quotation from getting into "Hansard"—

"The business of the company shows an all-round expansion, and the value of new business vested in the company last year greatly exceeds that of the previous year. At present the value of assets vested in the company in a fiduciary capacity is computed at £7,958,794, being an increase of £627,558 over the figures of last year."

That is a statement made by the chairman of the board of directors of the Queensland Trustees Limited, Mr. R. J. Archibald, a member of the Nationalist Party.

Mr. KING: Money made out of dead persons' estates.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: He goes on to speak about their investments in Government securities. They have confidence in the Government. They do not predict ruin, as do hon. members opposite. They have complete confidence in the Government, and they have shown that confidence by investing in Government securities £2,198,542 out of their total funds of £7,000,000. That is a large sum for one company to invest, and it shows complete confidence in the Government of the country, and proves that they take no notice of the croakers of the Opposition. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. MAXWELL: Read what Mr. Archibald said.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I will read it to the hon. member—

"Speaking generally, the business of the company showed an all-round expansion. The value of new business vested in the company last year greatly exceeded that of the preceding year, whilst the number of wills that had been deposited with or notified to the company passed all previous records. In that connection it was worthy of note that, out of the large number of testate estates in which the company applied for probate last year, less than one-half of such testators had notified the company of its appointment. The safe deposit continued to be well patronised. The capital of the company had been increased by £37,875."

I could go on quoting indefinitely statements from the press of hon. members opposite and members of their own party as to the prosperity of Queensland.

Mr. KERR: You should read what Mr. Archibald said about you when he stood for Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I could also quote what the people did. They gave him the "boot."

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The Secretary for Agriculture very ably dealt with the position of Queensland in respect of the trade balances, and attempts have been made by the hon. member for Toombul to dispute his statements and discredit his arguments. I suppose the more imports there are the better it is for the hon. member and his business. I take it

that he was speaking from an importer's point of view.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Oh, no!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The Queensland Labour Government speak from the point of view of the people of Queensland—the people who are the producers—the people who give us the raw material of this State. They are not concerned about the importation of articles into this State for the purpose of making profit, as the hon. member for Toombul is.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: What about the locomotives the Government imported from Great Britain?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The value of overseas imports into Australia last year was £148,116,549, or £23 15s. 1d. per capita, whilst for Queensland the figures are—total value £11,759,111, or £13 1s. 7d. per capita.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Those figures are not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I shall now give the only interstate figures available regarding trade balances. For the year 1926, goods to the value of £26,437 came to Queensland from Western Australia, whilst Queensland exported to that State goods to the value of £86,023, or nearly four times the value. The only interstate figures available show that Queensland has a very satisfactory trade balance.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Quote the other States.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: These indisputable figures, compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician, show the value of exports by the different States last year:—

	£
New South Wales	51,000,000
Victoria	31,000,000
Queensland	21,000,000
South Australia	17,000,000
Western Australia	15,000,000
Tasmania	3,000,000
Northern Territory	29,265

Figures dealing with the trade balance were quoted by the Secretary for Agriculture, and, although the Opposition have attempted to disprove them, they have not been successful.

Queensland is also in a good position from the point of view of population.

Mr. EDWARDS: Then, why not give the people work?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I have the figures showing the population of Queensland, and during the term of the Labour Government the increase has not been less than any other State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. SIZER: Why did you increase the contributions to the unemployment insurance fund?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: To give the workers the benefit of what they are entitled to get out of industry.

Mr. KERR: You found the 3d. per week contribution by the employees not sufficient.

Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: This is an excerpt from the press:—

“MAY BE 20,000.

“INCREASED ENROLMENT.

“Federal Officer's View.

“On present indications, it is possible that at the redistribution of seats following the census of 1931, Queensland will gain a seat in the House of Representatives at the expense of South Australia.

“This statement was made by Mr. V. F. Turner, Commonwealth electoral officer for Queensland, when interviewed yesterday regarding the increase in the number of electors on the Federal rolls.

“The actual enrolment in Queensland at the last elections was 440,851, and at the present time it is close on 454,000, making an increase of 14,000. With the approach of another election it is predicted that the increase will reach the 20,000 mark.

“Queensland's population is increasing more rapidly than that of any of the other States, and thus it can be seen that Queensland has a good chance of gaining another seat at the next redistribution.

“If this does occur, it will be the second seat Queensland has gained since federation.”

The last census taken in 1921 showed that the proportion of householders who were the owners of their own homes was higher in Queensland, both with respect to the whole of the State and to the capital city, than in any other State or capital city in the Commonwealth. The figures in this respect, which I now give, have undoubtedly improved since then—

	1911.	1921.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
Queensland	64.23	66.41
Western Australia	64.50	63.05
South Australia	54.41	59.33
Victoria	54.65	57.5
Tasmania	50.05	52.70
New South Wales	49.87	50.28

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Those figures indicate the prosperous condition of the workers.

I now want to deal with the cost of living figures. We have been accused of having done nothing for the workers, but since we have been in power the position of the workers, according to the cost of living figures, Queensland is the cheapest State in which to live in the whole of the Commonwealth. It is difficult to understand how this has been brought about, but we have only to look to the legislation and administration of the Government and the establishment of the Price Fixing Department to realise why Queensland to-day is the cheapest State to live in, and why the workers enjoy the highest wages and shortest hours as compared with those existing in any other State in the Commonwealth. The following are the latest figures taken from the “Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics” in respect of food,

groceries, and house rent for the quarter ended 30th June last—

	£	s.	d.
“Queensland	4	5	0
Western Australia	4	10	2
South Australia	4	14	0
Victoria	4	14	5
New South Wales	4	19	5”

That shows that the figures for Queensland under Labour administration are the lowest, being 5s. 2d. lower than the second lowest State—Western Australia.

The following particulars show the amounts necessary to purchase in each capital city, at 30th June, 1920, and 30th June, 1923, respectively, the same amount of food, groceries, and rent (all houses), which could be obtained for £1 in 1911, in the six capitals cities regarded as a whole:—

	June, 1920.	June, 1923.
	£	£
	s.	s.
	d.	d.
Brisbane	1 13 0	1 11 10
Sydney	1 16 5	1 17 1
Melbourne	1 15 2	1 15 3
Adelaide	1 15 1	1 15 2
Perth	1 13 1	1 13 9
Hobart	1 15 8	1 13 4

The Commonwealth Government also set out to determine what was the basic wage in the various capital cities of the Commonwealth, based on the cost of living figures, and the figures determined upon for the last quarter, June, 1923, are—

	Per week.
	£
	s.
	d.
“Brisbane	3 19 6
Perth	4 4 0
Melbourne	4 7 6
Adelaide	4 7 6
Sydney	4 12 0”

Those figures show Brisbane to be in a better position than any other city in the Commonwealth. It must be remembered also that the figures do not take all the facts of Queensland into consideration, because they are based on the basic wage of £4 5s., and we know that marginal differences exist so far as the Central and Northern portions of this State are concerned. For example, the following figures show the parity existing in the districts named:—

District.	Weekly Wage.	Parity.
	£	£
	s.	s.
	d.	d.
Brisbane	4 5 0	..
Mackay	4 10 6	0 5 6
South-Western District	4 12 4	0 7 4
Northern Division—		
Eastern District	4 15 0	0 10 0
Western District	5 2 4	0 17 4

Further, on the Commonwealth figures, the basic wage of £4 5s. in Queensland is equal to £4 19s. 5d. in New South Wales, £4 14s. 5d. in Victoria, £4 14s. in South Australia, and £4 10s. 2d. in Western Australia. The favourable position of this State is due to the legislation and administration of a Labour Government.

Many references have been made by members of the Opposition—notably the hon. member for Oxley—to the conditions of the workers in Queensland. These hon. members say that the only way to deal with the

[Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

position is to break down the artificial conditions at present existing. Now, how would they break down those so-called artificial conditions? The Opposition say the only thing to do is to do away with the Arbitration Court.

Mr. KING: The Opposition do not say so.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Well, members of the Opposition do. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. KING: What members of the Opposition say that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will give you the names, if you want them.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: The hon. member for Oxley said that, if he had his way—

Mr. KING: You said "members." Who are they?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Evidently the Opposition do not now believe in breaking down those artificial conditions, nevertheless we have their statements on that matter. Let us consider the attitude adopted by a Nationalist Government in New South Wales. In its issue of the 9th instant, the "Daily Standard" contained this extract—

"Replying to a deputation of officials of the railway workers' branch of the Australian Workers' Union, who complained of great unemployment amongst members of that union, the Premier (Mr. Bavin) said yesterday afternoon that the Government intended to introduce legislation during next session to enable farmers to employ labour without having to adhere to existing award restrictions.

"Mr. Bavin contended that country employment was a real avenue for absorbing men out of work, but there were a great many restrictions that made it hard for men to get work in rural occupations. One time a farmer could give a man food and lodgings, and a few 'bob' to go on with, and thus help many men out of a difficulty; but now that could not be done. While he did not want to see any man working for less than the ordinary wage rate, he recognised that human nature could not be altered, and at present work could not be found for men unless some of the existing award conditions were altered.

"In effect, Mr. Bavin declared that some of the awards would have to be watered down, and the general keynote of his speech was lower wages and free-and-easy conditions for squatters in the employment of labour."

[2.30 p.m.]

There you have the statement of the Premier of New South Wales—an anti-Labour Premier. That is the attitude adopted by members of the Opposition and their Nationalist friends when they get into power, and, if the workers of Queensland were so foolish as to give them an opportunity of getting upon the Treasury benches here, we need not have the slightest doubt but that they would follow the example of their mates in the other States of the Commonwealth.

I am glad to say that something is being done to improve the position of the coal industry of this State, and that an endeavour is being made by the employers and employees—both miners and coal workers and those

engaged in the handling of coal at the port of Brisbane—to place the industry on a better footing. For a long time the coal industry has been carried on in a haphazard way—just drifting along. If they got the trade, well and good, but, if they did not get the trade, "Well, it does not matter." An endeavour is being made to secure increased orders and increased consumption of coal, and also to secure oversea orders. But directly they got a Nationalist Premier in South Australia, what did he do? He hunted round the world to see where he could get cheap coal, and, having got cheap coal, he imported it into his State, thereby depriving the miners and coal workers of Australia of work. That shows the Nationalist Party in its true colours. The Premier of South Australia is importing cheap coal, brought out as ballast, to break down the conditions obtained by the miners of Australia after years of fighting. Members of the Opposition sit idly by and ask, "Why don't you reduce the price of coal?" Coal cannot be produced in the Ipswich district at a lower price than at the present time. In the early days coal could be produced much cheaper because it was obtained near the surface. A good deal of it was obtained without machinery, and it was mined by the workers and put in the trucks with nothing but hand labour and no further expense. At the present time machinery has to be employed to sink shafts and haul the coal a considerable distance underground, and there are other expenses in connection with dewatering and such things. Under the circumstances coal cannot be produced as cheaply as it was in other days. If members of the Nationalist Party attempt to import coal because the local article is too dear, they will crush out the industry in Australia, and, if the time comes when they cannot get coal, it will be their own fault.

Mr. CLAYTON: Did you not get locomotives from overseas? What are you talking about?

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: I have not time to go into the whole of the figures, as my time has almost expired. I hope that our efforts will be successful, and that we shall be able to build up in Queensland a trade which will keep the men on these fields in decent comfort. The miners get the coal and put it into skips, which are brought from the bottom of the shaft, and the wages in the Ipswich district are only 5s. 9d. per ton for that work. I do not see how it is possible for them to work for a farthing a ton less than they are getting now, because they are not getting enough to keep themselves in the necessary comforts of life. If they were only to get sufficient bunkering trade in the port of Brisbane to carry the ships from here to the next port of call, we would have sufficient coal taken away to keep the whole of our miners in Queensland in regular employment.

In conclusion I hope that members of the Opposition will leave their gloomy ideas behind them, and not bring them into the House. I trust that they will endeavour to show that Queensland is a State with great potentialities, and that all it wants is the co-operation of all those engaged in industry to enable industry to go ahead. If that is done, work will be found for those who are anxiously waiting and willing to work, and who are prepared to go anywhere for work at the present time. That can only be done

Hon. D. A. Gledson.]

by having industries put on a proper footing and working along right lines. We should leave political questions out altogether. If Opposition members are going to keep men idle until there is a change of Government—we see what has happened with their own party in power in the National Parliament for a number of years, in which sphere they have not so far done anything to improve the conditions in regard to employment. Let me appeal to them as one man to another to leave all this talk about “blue ruin” and running down Queensland, and to behave as public men and statesmen should do, and say our country is the best in the world, and all we want is men who have confidence in the country to carry on its affairs.

Mr. GRIMSTONE (*Stanley*), who was received with Opposition cheers, said: This being my first appearance, I would like to say that I regard the privilege of speaking in this Chamber as a great honour. (Hear, hear!) I have very high ideals in connection with this Chamber, and a very high conception of the responsibility and duties of members composing the Chamber. It shall ever be my aim to endeavour to live up to these ideals, and to assist to maintain the best traditions of this House. (Hear, hear!)

I have listened with the greatest interest to the various speeches made in this debate. There is one feature which, to my mind, has been outstanding in all the speeches of Government members—that is the note of what I may call glorification which each one of them struck in connection with the surplus which was exhibited at the end of the financial year. It is quite easy for me to understand that the exhibition of a surplus would certainly give hon. members opposite a strange thrill indeed, as it is something quite foreign to them. I can quite easily understand how, when they were sponsoring a surplus instead of the usual heavy deficit, it must have thrilled them.

But, while it is a matter of congratulation for Queensland that the accounts of our State have been squared, still I cannot commend the Treasurer upon the methods by which he has achieved that surplus. Normally, a surplus should be an indication of sound and careful administration; but, when we examine the figures, we find that such has not been the case this year. We have had the Treasurer for quite a considerable time actively preaching the doctrine of economy—a very laudable sentiment—but from one who gives expression to such sentiments we naturally expect that he is going to practise the doctrines he is preaching throughout the country. How has he practised them? We find that, although last year's expenditure was a record, he has this year even exceeded that amount and spent an additional £216,600. It certainly seems to be a case of “Don't do as I do, but do as I tell you.”

When we look at the revenue we find somewhat similar figures. We discover that the Treasurer had a record revenue last financial year, the total of the previous year having been exceeded by £570,282, but of that amount it is very regrettable to notice that no less than £475,742 came from increased taxation. The increase in income tax alone was £261,335, that amount being twenty-five times greater in itself than the surplus which the Treasurer succeeded in showing on the 30th June.

During this debate I have heard the Commonwealth Government mentioned repeatedly

[*Hon. D. A. Gledson.*

and frequently blamed by hon. members opposite; but there is one thing that the Commonwealth Government are doing which it is a great pity our State Government are not doing—that is, reducing direct taxation. (Hear, hear!) In the last six years the Commonwealth Government have reduced direct taxation by no less a sum than £9,000,000.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about their indirect taxation?

Mr. GRIMSTONE: Their indirect taxation has been reduced by £1,500,000. (Hear, hear!) Commonwealth taxation last year was only a bare 8 per cent. above the 1915-16 figures. Let us compare the figures for the State and see how they show up in contrast with those of the Commonwealth. In 1914-15 the total amount received in direct taxation by the Queensland Treasurer was £954,457, whereas in 1927-28 it had risen to £4,978,082, an increase in direct taxation of over £4,000,000, equal to 421 per cent. The Commonwealth Government do not require any defence of mine. Their excellent record is their own defence, and I mention the matter merely because during the debate I have heard them blamed for this and blamed for that. If the State Government were to follow the lead given by the Commonwealth Government, and make substantial reductions in their direct taxation, they would be conferring a lasting and long-awaited benefit on the community generally.

It is distressing indeed that Queensland has such an unenviable record in regard to unemployment. Here we have a country which we are all proud to say is the finest on God's earth—we say it is “God's own country”—yet this young country is crying out for development, and we find unemployment in it which is practically a record in the history of the State. There should be no unemployment in a State which is crying out for development. (Hear, hear!) Is it not a very serious reflection on the Government in power that we should find such things in a State like this? It is the duty of the Opposition to criticise the Government for their maladministration in this matter, and show them where they have failed, and I hope that before I sit down I shall at least have given them some ideas that they will find fruitful. To me the attitude adopted by the majority of Government members in dealing with this most important question has been very surprising. Not one of them was prepared to accept even a part of the responsibility for this present state of affairs. They are very expert in shifting it to this body or that body or some other body. But let us imagine hon. members opposite sitting on this side of the House. Can we not hear their thunderous declamation and condemnation of the Government sitting in power?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

Mr. GRIMSTONE: And I say they would be doing right to blame the Government. That is what we are doing. We are blaming them for their ineptitude in tackling this most important question.

I think it would be most fitting for me to quote the memorable speech delivered by the hon. member for Bowen on the selfsame question a few years ago—

“He regretted very much that they had to distribute outdoor relief in a State like Queensland.”

(Laughter.) I agree with that statement. But the hon. member did not stop there. He said further—

“He was convinced that so long as they had production for gain instead of production for use, so long would they have to give outdoor relief. How could they right the wrongs of centuries in less than a session of Parliament? It was impossible for them to do it. They were going step by step, and if, after they had been in power for three years, the same number of persons had to get relief, it would then be the duty of the Opposition to criticise it.”

(Laughter.) What greater condemnation of any Administration could you get than that out of the mouth of one of its strongest and most rabid supporters? I quite freely admit that high taxation is not the sole cause of unemployment, but it is a most important factor in connection with it. This ever-increasing and ever-soaring taxation destroys the confidence of the investing public, and, if you destroy confidence, you are not going to induce people to invest money in industry. We require this money in industry, but with this ever-soaring taxation there can be only one result, and that is the unfortunate stagnation that we have to-day, with its consequent unemployment. That that is so is clearly shown by the statistics showing the increase in factories for the period 1914-27—

	Increase.
New South Wales	2,957
Victoria	2,040
South Australia	484
Western Australia	429
Tasmania	162
Queensland	81

These figures show the increase in the number of employes per 10,000 of the population for the period 1910 to 1914—

	Increase.
Queensland	67
Victoria	35
Western Australia	24
New South Wales	15
	Decrease.
South Australia	62
Tasmania	72

Unfortunately, the period 1914-27 shows a complete turnover in the case of Queensland. Where we formerly led with an increase of sixty-seven, we now come a very bad last with a decrease of 107. These are the figures showing the increase for the period I have mentioned—

	Increase.
New South Wales	137
South Australia	116
Victoria	97
Tasmania	61
	Decrease.
Western Australia	1
Queensland	107

These figures show the increase in the number of factories over the past three years—1924-25 to 1926-27—

	Increase.
New South Wales	320
Victoria	265
South Australia	96
Tasmania	92
Western Australia	28
	Decrease.
Queensland	13

These figures show the increase in the number of employees engaged in the factories—

	Increase.
New South Wales	17,409
South Australia	3,611
Victoria	7,401
Tasmania	696
	Decrease.
Queensland	769
Western Australia	1,334

The figures show that the trend is the wrong way in Queensland, and that, if we do not have an increase in the number of factories, we cannot provide a sufficiency of employment which is so absolutely essential to our country. An outstanding feature is the alarming decrease in the number of factories, and it cannot be too emphatically stressed that, with a decrease in the number of factories, there can be only one result—an increase in unemployment. I strongly contend that is direct evidence of the effect of high and excessive taxation upon industry generally. If this money were allowed to remain in industry, it would give industry a chance to expand, and with that expansion we would enjoy the natural result of increased employment. It would give a chance for the establishment of new industries, and it is absolutely essential that we must have new industries, particularly secondary industries.

When we come to consider that in the last three years the enormous sum of over £1,000,000 was taken from the pockets of the people in increased taxation, we wonder that Queensland is not in a worse position than she is in to-day. That fact alone speaks volumes for the wonderful recuperative powers of this glorious land of ours. My suggestion towards relieving this position which confronts us—because the position cannot be solved merely by a stroke of the pen—is to make available immediately suitable agricultural land on advantageous conditions—perhaps something on the lines of the old Homestead Act—at a very low rent, and, most important of all, let it be settled on a freehold tenure.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIMSTONE: That is one suggestion, and the other suggestion is substantially to reduce the present excessive taxation in order to restore the confidence of the people and give them a chance to expand the present industries and so build them up that they will be able to supply the increased population which will keep pace with their expansion; and that will also encourage the establishment of secondary industries whereby a local market will be provided for our primary products, for we all realise that the local market is the best.

While on the question of land settlement, let me quote from the Policy Speech delivered at Balcaldine in 1915 by the late Hon. T. J. Ryan. This quotation struck me as being very apt.

“In Queensland’s huge territory it would be thought that no person bona fide desirous of obtaining land on which to carry on grazing or agricultural pursuits, or to make a home, would be unable to obtain suitable land for these objects. But abundant proof is shown by the large number of disappointed applicants for Crown blocks that, under the regime of ‘Liberalism’ there has been a gross insufficiency of suitable land made available to meet the genuine demand for settlement.”

Mr. Grimstone.]

We shall see how that has actually worked out. During 1912, 1913, and 1914—the last three years of Liberalism—as quoted, a total of 22,551,894 acres of land was selected in Queensland against surrenders totalling 4,834,281, making a net increase in land selection for that period of 17,717,613 acres. That was during the time when the late Mr. Ryan said that not sufficient land was being made available for the people to go on.

Let us now see what has happened in the last three years of Labour administration, when everything in the garden was going to be lovely. During 1924, 1925, and 1926 the total amount of land selected was 11,294,522 acres—just one-half the area selected in the last three years of Liberalism—while the surrenders in that term amounted to 9,069,745 acres, leaving a net increase for the three years of 2,224,777 acres.

Mr. KERR: What a tragedy!

Mr. GRIMSTONE: Those figures show that the net increase in the amount of land selected in the last three years the Liberal Government were in office was eight times that in the last three years of Labour administration, notwithstanding the statement in 1915 that a sufficient amount of land was not being made available to meet the demands for settlement. It is most remarkable that in 1926 the actual amount of land surrendered exceeded the amount of land selected by 675,000 acres. It will be noticed that in the 1912, 1913, 1914 period the total amount of surrenders was only 21 per cent. of the total area selected, whereas in the 1924, 1925, 1926 period the total area surrendered as compared with the area selected was 80 per cent. There is a definite land hunger in this State, and there are thousands and thousands of acres awaiting the developer. Why is it that this land is not being made use of? What is necessary for suitable and successful land settlement? In my opinion, the first essential is suitable and satisfactory land; and, secondly, that satisfactory conditions should prevail for those people who go on the land.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIMSTONE: That, unfortunately, is what they are not getting at the present time, and that is why our land settlement is declining.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Land settlement is not declining.

Mr. GRIMSTONE: The quoted figures speak for themselves. Referring to primary industries, it is gratifying to find that the great fundamental truth that the general prosperity of the State is dependent upon the prosperity of the primary producers is at last being realised to a greater extent. When we consider that of the total wealth production of our State at least three-quarters is derived from primary industries, which are responsible for practically the whole of our exports, we realise more than ever the necessity for the encouragement and fostering of these industries. Considered also in conjunction with the fact of our decline in mining and manufacturing, we realise how dependent we are upon the production from the land for the creation of our wealth and the maintenance of our standard of living. These primary industries do not ask for spoon-feeding, but they do ask, may they have a right to demand that they be given the opportunity of working out their own destiny without harassing

[Mr. Grimstone.

restrictions. On the contrary, they are entitled to expect every assistance.

The Premier has stated that the Labour Government have done much for the primary producers. Let us analyse that position. We find that the Government have raised taxation to a greater extent than any other Government, and the Premier has admitted that "in the last analysis the great bulk of taxation falls upon the great bulk of the people." This is particularly true in the case of the primary producers, who cannot pass taxation on in the way that many other sections do. Further, the Labour Government have imposed land taxation; have introduced the iniquitous hospitals tax; have abolished freehold; have introduced a Water Act, although, as the result of the great outcry throughout the country, the tax provisions of that measure were suspended; have increased fares and freights by from 50 per cent. to 100 per cent.; have brought in price-fixing; have increased stamp duties; and, last, but not least, have imposed a rural award upon the primary industries. The Labour Government have been responsible for everything that would increase the cost to the primary producer rather than for measures which would be of practical benefit in securing for the producer a better price for his product. If the Labour Government have done so well for the man on the land, why is it there has been such an enormous falling off in land settlement, and such an exodus to the cities and towns?

Another of our great industries—the timber industry—is, unfortunately, also in a state of depression. Many theories have been advanced for that state of affairs. One statement is that the depression is due to the fact that the Commonwealth Government will not impose a sufficiently high protective duty. Ever this cry of "Protective duties!" At best a protective tariff is merely a temporary measure. What we want to do is to get down to bedrock—to reduce production costs by securing greater efficiency. It has been said that when we talk about reduced costs we mean reduced wages, but we would reduce the costs of production by increased efficiency and not by reduced wages. There is something wrong with our position when timber can be transported from the other side of the world and landed on our shores at a price lower than that at which we can market our local timber. Those in control of [3 p.m.] that industry are the ones who are to blame. If we look into the question of our locally-grown timber, we find that the Government controlling it are exacting an excessively high royalty. Let us reduce that royalty. Why should the Government desire to make such a tremendous profit on a tree—a tree that they did not put there.

Mr. HANLON: Whose tree is it?

Mr. GRIMSTONE: It certainly was not put there in our time. The tree was there before we came here; and it is being exploited, if one may be allowed to use that term. If the Government reduced this excessive royalty which has very far-reaching effects, the present depression in the timber industry would disappear. The Government controlling the industry fixes a high royalty, and then fixes the price of the finished article; and the margin between the two is so small that there is not sufficient profit in the industry to enable the miller to carry on the industry satisfactorily. Unfortunately

throughout the State there are numbers of sawmills closed down, with the consequent increase in unemployment. I strongly urge a reduction of that excessive royalty.

There is no thinking man to-day but will subscribe most heartily to a policy of reafforestation; but I contend that suitable areas for reafforestation must be fixed before definitely allocating lands to that purpose. I intend to speak with special reference to the forestry reserve at the head of the Brisbane Valley known as the Yarraman area, as I am very conversant with matters there. In that area between 70,000 and 80,000 acres are tied up as a forest reserve, and I say calmly and deliberately that the land there is not suitable for the growth of pine. My reason for saying that is that, if the land were suitable for the growth of pine, one would be able to go through those scrubs to-day and find pine in all stages of growth as a result of the seed-fall that has taken place in years gone by; but we do not find it. If you go through these forests it is quite a rare thing to find any young pine timber. I advocate strongly that the Government should release a very large part of that area for the purpose of selection. Adjacent to that area we have a railway that is languishing for traffic. That railway leads right into a deep-sea port, and nothing could be better suited for successful land settlement than that area; yet we cannot get it because it is tied up for reafforestation purposes. I strongly advocate the throwing open of that land for selection.

There is another matter I wish to bring up in connection with forestry. We have heard, not only in the Chamber during the course of this debate, but for years past, that there is only one party that stands for the welfare and protection of the workers. That is said to be the Labour Party. I am going to show how the Labour Party is looking after its workers up in the district to which I have just referred. Since the advent of the Forestry Department in the timber activities of that area, there has been a gradual reduction in the rates which the timber workers were getting. In the days of the old Queensland Pine Company the rate paid for the haulage of timber a distance of 5 miles was 4s. The man working to-day for the Forestry Department hauls 9 miles, and the rate he gets is 2s. 9d. That is under a Government that claims to stand for the protection and rights of the worker. Under the old Queensland Pine Company the cutter went into the scrubs and was paid every fortnight by the milling company for whatever work he had done during that time. The milling company made itself responsible for the payment every fortnight, but a man does not get his payment every fortnight now. He is lucky if he gets his money every six weeks. Under the present system he has to look to the teamster—the hauler—for his payment for cutting the timber. The teamster does not get it inside a month or six weeks, and the cutter has to wait that time also for his payment. The Government are neglecting their duty in allowing that sort of thing. I would ask the Minister to investigate the matter, and see that the men who are doing the work get their pay with less delay, and at more satisfactory rates.

I also strongly advocate the reversion to stumpage sales. The Forestry Department should get out of its timber activities and sell its timber by the stumpage method as in

days gone by, the timber buyers being responsible for the carting of the timber from the scrub. This would give better results, and better working conditions for the teamsters and fellers.

There is another harsh restriction which the contractors have imposed upon them. Of course, we would quite expect that they would have to pay a deposit on their contract. Among many other conditions, clause 22 of the agreement with the Forestry Department provides—

“The board may at any time suspend this agreement without any compensation whatsoever to the contractor.”

I always understood that a contract to be recognised in law had to be fair and equitable for both sides, but that apparently does not apply in this case.

I notice from the Governor's Speech that it is the intention of the Government to establish intermediate schools in the various centres of population. I would strongly urge the cause of the country child. I hope that, when the Government build those schools, they will not make them close preserves for the city children. There is only one satisfactory way whereby those schools can be used by the country child, and that is by making provision for accommodation in conjunction with the schools. The country child should have an opportunity of participating in the benefits derived from these schools. The lack of accommodation has been the greatest drawback to our State system of high schools. The State high schools are excellently staffed, but they are not completely fulfilling their function because the country children have not reasonable opportunities of taking advantage of them. If there is any money available, I would advocate the building of hostels in conjunction with the high schools before we establish intermediary schools. We have heard quite a good deal of what the Government have done with regard to this question of education, and I would further draw attention to the question of altering the amount of salary at which a man is able to secure the scholarship allowance. The maximum amount is at present £221, and I ask how any man on the basic wage can send his child to a secondary school for education? It is a matter of impossibility. I strongly urge that the minimum amount should be raised at least to £300.

Just a word also in connection with the establishment of an ophthalmic hospital. Of course, anyone reading the newspapers would be forgiven for concluding that this was the first occasion on which anything of the kind had been done for the treatment of the eyes of the children in our schools, but I remember that away back somewhere about fifteen or sixteen years ago—I cannot remember which Minister was responsible—a similar move was made. Although we did not have a hospital, we had a very excellent ophthalmic surgeon travelling through the country districts, and a wonderful amount of good was achieved for the children suffering from eye diseases. Then what has become of the first-aid outfits that were supplied to the various schools? What became of the contributions that were made to the various hospitals? I trust that it is not intended to wipe out the whole of the equipment outside and concentrate on the Brisbane ophthalmic hospital. I hope the Government are going to put this system in operation throughout the State, because one

Mr. Grimstone.]

hospital cannot possibly—unfortunately so—treat the whole of the patients, for we have too many children suffering from these diseases.

I bring these matters before the Minister, and I ask him to give them serious consideration, and particularly I ask him that the first-aid system in the various schools shall not be abolished altogether.

I thank hon. members for the very kind attention they have given me during my first speech in this Chamber.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): I desire to congratulate the hon. member for Mitchell on his election to this Chamber. (Hear, hear!) He has had a long and honourable career of work on behalf of the workers, which I think he will reproduce as a member of this House. I regret, however, the circumstances which occasioned his entry into this Chamber in the loss of our old friend John Payne. He was one of the old pioneers who did his work faithfully and well in the early struggles of Labour, and led them to triumph. Unfortunately in these modern times the inclination is to eulogise people after they have passed away, without giving them during their lifetime the credit that is due to them.

I also desire to congratulate the new member for Stanley on his excellent speech. (Hear, hear!) His has been the best speech we have heard from the Opposition benches during this debate. Opposition members must feel like that old prospector who for many long years had looked for even the colour of gold, and who had suddenly fallen on a nugget. The monotonous manner in which we have won by-election after by-election and the failure of the Opposition to get any accession of able representatives were taken into consideration by this party, with the result that we did not contest the Stanley, and their ranks have been improved tremendously. (Laughter.) As the hon. member spoke I could see the admiration that was actuating hon. members opposite. I could almost read their thoughts, "I wish I could speak like the new member for Stanley." (Laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: Perhaps you thought so yourself.

Mr. BRUCE: Probably a little, too. We have heard the same members here for years, talking, talking, talking, and bringing nothing forward—and I congratulate them upon their find just as I congratulate the hon. member for Stanley on his able address.

I wish to commend the work of the Commissioner for Railways and those associated with him on the conduct of the recent Reso tour of Queensland. Such tours are of wonderful value to Queensland both from the point of view of the money expended by the visitors whilst they are here, and by reason of the education derived and the knowledge gained by the visitors of the wonderful State in which we live. In travelling in the other States it is remarkable to find the absolute ignorance as to the conditions operating in Queensland. Any money spent in the direction of allowing Southern visitors to know exactly the possibilities of Queensland is money well spent. I understand that these tours are to be continued with the object of allowing visitors to view the most interesting parts of the State; but I wish

[*Mr. Grimstone.*

to draw the attention of the Commissioner for Railways to the fact that on a previous occasion very important parts of the Kennedy electorate were overlooked. First of all, there is the sugar-growing centre of Ayr, which is in the unique position of being the only place where sugar is grown entirely by irrigation. In this centre nature has provided water at a depth of from 15 feet to 25 feet, and thousands of pounds have been expended on machinery by the sugar-growers in that district in order to produce their cane. It might be especially interesting for visitors from Southern States to know that quite a large amount of that machinery is produced in States from which they come—a further argument in favour of the continuation of the embargo in favour of the sugar industry. The visitors from the South visited Townsville—a wonderful centre of business activity in the North—a city which is probably unique as a Northern business centre. After visiting Ayr, these tourists could travel by rail from Townsville through Ingham, which is a district quite different from the Ayr district. Whereas irrigation is necessary in the Ayr and Burdekin districts, nature seems to have regulated the rainfall in the Ingham district. In that district there is no necessity to irrigate, and there is no pumping, the rainfall being ideal for the production of cane. There are two very big mills operating in the Ingham district under the wonderful organisation, we all must admit, of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. These mills are turning out a record crushing for Queensland at the present time, and a record over their past crushings. It is interesting to note that under a 44-hour week system, the company is creating records that were never equalled under the 48-hour system. Getting back to the Ingham district, there are places like Upperton and Trebonne of interest to Southern visitors. They are noted for tropical fruits, variety of vegetation, and scenic beauty. It is necessary that these visitors should not be rushed straight through the districts along the railway, but should be allowed to alight and view some of the wonderful things that exist in North Queensland—something beyond the view from a railway carriage window. From Ingham they may travel either by motor car or the tramway of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company down to Halifax—a town noted for its tropical fruit and for hospitality that is certainly unrivalled. It is a town that has taken a great part in the early history of the development of North Queensland. Sport in the shooting season is excellent, and the fishing at all times is excellent.

Further, there is no necessity to go northward by the coastal steamers, for motor boats can be secured at Halifax to take visitors into the Hinchinbrook Channel to explore the numerous islands in detail. Tourists can spend a day or two, or even a week or two, on the little islands in the Channel, and obtain intimate knowledge of them. Passing out of the river they pass Lucinda Point, where the Colonial Sugar Refinery ships its molasses and sugar from its mills on the Herbert River. The buildings erected by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to provide accommodation for its workers would also be of interest to Southern tourists.

I desire to draw the attention of those having charge of the Tourist Bureau

to the necessity for some improvement in its location. It is at present situated alongside the Central Railway Station. It is almost impossible for the stranger to find it, whilst one can obtain at the Central Railway Station almost all the information he requires from the bureau. The Tourist Bureau should be situated right in the centre of the city—in Queen street for preference. Visitors to Melbourne and Sydney can obtain all the information they require from the Tourist Bureaux which are situated in the main streets of those cities. They are also able to book fares by boat or train, and have placed at their disposal all the information they desire, permitting them to know exactly what to do and where to go. Our system here is fifty years behind the times. The Tourist Bureau should be housed in an up-to-date building in Queen street in order to attract the attention of the people. It should have on hand information not only with respect to the southern portion of this State, but also with respect to the northern portion of this State. I am making no complaint against the officers of the bureau, for I understand that they are capable and efficient, but our bureau is altogether behind the times, and is about in the position of Noah's Ark with respect to the necessities of the State.

We shall hear a great deal about the sugar industry during the forthcoming Federal campaign. A tremendous impetus was given to the sugar industry by our Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. That is admitted by all those brought into touch with the industry, but from personal observation and discussions with those engaged in the industry I have come to the conclusion that that Act can be amended with benefit to those concerned.

We have recently heard quite a lot of the application of scientific methods to all farming products. Every public man and every scientist, whenever the opportunity presents itself to speak through the press, emphasises the necessity for the application of more scientific methods to production. I agree with these views. To-day there is a factor in sugar production which is overlooked, and which, if scientifically handled, would increase our crop tremendously. It is admitted that any crop, whether it be sugar, market garden produce, timber, etc., must be matured to be at its best. The sugar crop to-day is handled in a haphazard way. The sugar-cane is paid for on an individual analysis, and is harvested irrespective of any standard of maturity. In order to make this clearer to you, Mr. Speaker, and to hon. members, I will take, for example, two blocks of cane.

Block No. 1, on analysis, is found to be matured, and shows a c.c.s. of, say, 13 per cent. That cane, being matured, would deteriorate if not crushed immediately. On the other hand, block No. 2, on analysis, shows a c.c.s. of 14 per cent, but is immature, and, if left standing for a time, would improve possibly to as high as 16 per cent. It will be noted that block No. 2, although still immature, shows a higher c.c.s. than block No. 1. Naturally the farmer, who wants to get the best return from the mill as quickly as possible, and has not the scientific data to tell him if the cane is mature or not, would send No. 2 cane into the mill first. The result would be a loss of sugar on the first block owing to deterioration through its not being crushed immediately, and a loss of sugar on the second

block owing to its having been crushed before it had reached maturity. In the aggregate this would make a difference to our sugar crop of, possibly, hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling. What is wanted is scientific data and scientific development, and I suggest that the representative of the sugar-growers on the Central Cane Prices Board should make representations to the Secretary for Agriculture with the object of having inserted in the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act a clause providing that all necessary scientific data shall be made available to farmers, so that the enormous loss at present taking place will be prevented. It must be remembered that the sugar is there to be harvested, but that, through lack of scientific knowledge, much unnecessary loss takes place. Cane farmers should be supplied with analyses of their cane, both as to maturity and as to c.c.s., so that they may harvest the cane under the best conditions.

Quite a considerable amount of propaganda has been made out of the fact that the Bruce-Page Government have continued the sugar embargo. Credit can always be given for anything that is of original thought or inspiration, but the Bruce-Page Government in continuing the sugar embargo—I emphasise the word "continuing"—are merely carrying on what was introduced originally by the Fisher-Ryan Government. It is a very fine compliment to the statesmanship of the Labour leaders of that time that the Bruce-Page Government should have continued the sugar embargo. The unfortunate thing about the last renewal of the sugar agreement is that Mr. Bruce reserved to himself the power to review the industry, and if, from his point of view, the industry became too prosperous, the fixed price for sugar might be lowered or the embargo discontinued. That, I say, is unfortunate, in view of the recent utterances of Sir Benjamin Morgan, who, I gather from his statements in the press, is desirous of fostering Empire trade. That gentleman has said that he believes that, if we can supply sufficient sugar, provision will be made in the next Imperial Budget whereby full protection will be extended to Queensland sugar. That is a matter of vital importance to this State, inasmuch as it means that our sugar industry can be extended profitably, but until we have a more definite assurance from the Prime Minister than his statement on the last renewal of the sugar agreement, he offers nothing to the people of Queensland.

We must have a definite assurance [3.30 p.m.] that the embargo will be continued, and that no alteration of the conditions will be made, if the farmers are to extend their operations in an endeavour to supply sugar to the Empire and other Dominions.

I do not think it is necessary to reread the article written by Sir Leonard Raws. Men like Sir Leonard Raws and others, assisted by Mrs. Glencross, of Victoria, are continually attacking the sugar industry. If Sir Leonard Raws had his way, he would reduce the sugar farmers of Queensland to the standard of the peasants of Europe. He would exploit them solely in the interests of the moneyed class, although allegedly speaking in the interests of the consumer. There is no doubt that Sir Leonard Raws would be connected with businesses that would also be exploiting the consumers. While he would be getting sugar at the lowest price from the sugar-grower, he would be charging the highest price possible to

Mr. Bruce.]

those consuming sugar. It is necessary for the Labour Government and the sugar-growers to maintain an increasingly careful watch on individuals of this kind and on propaganda of this kind. The sugar industry has some good champions because, when this statement and other statements have been made, they have been ably replied to by those who represent the sugar industry.

The question of a "White Australia" has been introduced, and no doubt will be introduced again. In the "Brisbane Courier" of 28th June, 1923, the following appeared:—

"COLOUR PROBLEM.
"AUSTRALIA'S POSITION.
"Vigorous Policy Needed.

"No patriotic Britisher who has studied the colour question in South Africa or America can wish to see Australia other than white, but a mere wish, accompanied by a policy of masterly inactivity, leads nowhere. What is now required is a vigorous policy, backed up by the people, to ensure that the wish will be fulfilled and the country kept white.

"These views are expressed by Lieut.-Colonel Eldred Pottinger, D.S.O., F.R.G.S., in a compilation of a thoughtful series of 'Talks' on the general situation in Asia, delivered from the 3LO Studio, Melbourne."

A little further on Lieut.-Colonel Pottinger says—

"Most Australians believe that trade reciprocity with the old country would strengthen the bonds of Empire. I go further, and strongly favour interreciprocity between all the component parts of the Empire; but it is difficult to convince the English working man of the benefits of such a scheme. As in Australia, the labouring classes have never been taught to take a broad view of Empire problems; they consider them solely from an individual standpoint.

"APATHY TOWARDS MIGRATION.

"The old country, in spite of the heavy burden of taxation, is lending Australia thirty-four million sterling, at a nominal rate of interest, to enable her to fill up some of her empty spaces and keep Australia white."

Do I understand that the handling of that £34,000,000 has been placed in the care of the gentleman called Mr. Gepp? The empty spaces of Australia are so wide and so great that for months Mr. Gepp has been lost, and nothing definite has come from Mr. Gepp and his commission. They went about the country telling the people what they already knew—that there was in Queensland a prosperous sugar industry, that Mount Morgan would pay if the gold and copper were there, and that sort of stunt; but, so far as the £34,000,000 is concerned, it is still well and truly where it was before except for a few thousands that have been spent by Mr. Gepp and his commission. This gentleman who will not have a "Black Australia"—this gentleman who must protect the "White Australia" policy—gives a solution later on, although it is absolutely impossible to understand his outlook.

The "Brisbane Courier" article continues—

"A COMMISSION RECOMMENDED.
"The limits of the world's population, owing to the scarcity of available lands,
[Mr. Bruce.

will be a matter of serious concern to our grandchildren. Are we justified in letting matters drift till the situation becomes too acute to be dealt with on peaceful lines, or are we going to try and cope with the difficulties now? The problem of the best means of dealing with the Northern Territories is of such magnitude that a special commission should be appointed to consider the details of the various solutions that have been suggested, which are—"

Here is the solution of the "White Australia" problem suggested by Colonel Pottinger—

"(1) For Australia to administer the Territory as a Crown Colony, inhabited by British Asiatic subjects, the dividing line between the Territory and States to be a Customs barrier, and no Asiatic to pass the boundary under severe penalties."

"(2) To hand over the Territory to a chartered company for a period of years, with permission to develop it with indentured coloured labour. The company to be responsible that no Asiatics are passed into the States, and at the end of the chartered period to repatriate all coloured labourers and their descendants, and to hand back the Territory to the Commonwealth."

Then No. 3—

"(3) To allow present occupiers and station-holders to employ indentured labour for a fixed period of years, conditional on their repatriation."

There is only one gleam of reason in the whole of that proposition. One of the reasons Lieut.-Colonel Pottinger gives for these proposals is the lack of any Federal policy for the development of the Northern Territory. When we get men who start with the statement—

"No patriotic Britisher who has studied the colour question in South Africa or America can wish to see Australia other than white,"

and who then deliberately suggests the introduction of Asiatics, what can we think? The introduction of Chinese and Asiatics into Africa was worse than their own colour problem, yet Lieut.-Colonel Pottinger suggests indentured labour for North Australia. The idea of the modern successor of the old South Sea Bubble Company was a system of exploiting coloured labour to run the Northern Territory. They would go back to the old black labour days when the kanaka was first brought here. We hear quite a lot of criticism of Joek Garden and his pan-Pacific ideals, but what about a man like Lieut.-Colonel Pottinger? Is he not a greater danger to the country than Garden? Hon. members opposite do not indulge in any criticism of Lieut.-Colonel Pottinger.

I have a serious charge to make against hon. members of the Opposition.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: This is comic opera.

Mr. BRUCE: This is not comic opera. It is revolution. In the "Telegraph" of 12th June last this appeared—

"APPEAL TO ELECTORS.

"Mr. Russell stated that the Opposition would be able to guarantee sane administration. He exhorted those

present to shake off their political apathy and to work with all their might and throw off the burden of the present Government.

"A RURAL REVOLT"

"A vote of thanks to the speakers was moved by Mr. Griffiths.

"I feel so strongly about the matter that I would like to raise the standard of a rural revolt in Queensland," said Mr. E. H. Heale, who seconded the motion."

Not only are some of the Labour people associated with revolutionaries, but so also are members of the Opposition. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite do not say that the Leader of the Opposition while campaigning in the North was taking part in a comic opera. Of course he is not a comedian.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are the comedian.

MR. BRUCE: The "Telegraph" of 12th May, 1923, published this paragraph regarding the banks—

"Queensland is a State of great possibilities; its recovery is often thorough, sometimes marvellously so. The banks know this. It would seem that each institution is vying with the other in order to give striking emphasis to that fact. The new premises of the Banks of New South Wales and Australasia, the erection of the Commonwealth Bank in the city and at South Brisbane, the contemplated new National Bank in Queen street, and the enlargements and renovations to other chambers is all in the march of progress. Then, too, are the new commodious banks in the country towns. They provide the best answer to the critics who believe that the State is in a slough from which it will be impossible to extricate itself."

That reminds me of a Japanese university student who was asked what he thought of the economic system of Great Britain. He said he thought that it was a wonderful system, extracting the honey from the hives without disturbing the bees. These banks are where the money is put after it has been taken from the bees. After the workers have done the work, after they have extracted that money from the earth by the application of their labour, it is carefully extracted from them—extracted without disturbing the hives—and stored away. Of course, the people who extract it want them to continue working, and that money is placed in the banks to be held there and used to exploit them still further.

MR. TAYLOR: And then the bee dies. (Opposition laughter.)

MR. BRUCE: And then the bee dies! Just as the bee, when it is no more actual use in producing honey, is allowed to die, so the worker, when he is no longer wanted, is allowed to starve. No one can reasonably object to the introduction of up-to-date machinery. Up-to-date machinery is the finest thing in the world to reduce the cost of production; but, when the introduction of that machinery is used to make profits, is used to throw men on the labour market, evil results, although it is not the machinery that is wrong, but the use of it. That is exactly what is happening to-day. What is the use of talking about some great industry? You

may have an industry employing 1,000 people. A new machine is introduced, and 500 of them are thrown on the labour market. That is not due to taxation, but to the improvement of machinery. That machinery should be used for improving the conditions of the workers—to shortening their hours and making their work more congenial.

But not only is there the factor of machinery; we also have the production in Australia of money, which is taken to India, China, and Japan, so that it may be used in exploiting the starved coolies of those countries. Who is to say that, if profits were made here—if taxation were reduced, and the companies concerned thereby made more profits—there is anything to stop them from taking that money, which should be used in industry here, and investing it in industries—factories if you wish—in those other countries, and using the starved coolies there to make more profits and send their output to compete with us here in Australia? No, I say definitely that, if the Treasurer finds that the condition of the finances will allow of a reduction of taxation, he should take the money available and spend it directly in giving employment, through the Main Roads Commission or other public channels in building the roads which are necessary throughout the State to assist the farmer and to assist the workers. Who is to say that, if we do reduce taxation and the equivalent is given to the business concerns, the workers are going to get any of it? They will not get one penny more than the employers are compelled to pay them. The employers will hold on to it, and will not employ one man more than is necessary for the business, whether taxation is reduced or not. The Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Stanley Melbourne Bruce, recently reduced taxation to the extent of £2,000,000. We have heard quite a lot about American motor cars. If that £2,000,000, together with perhaps another £3,000,000, had been devoted by the Commonwealth Government to the establishment of a motor industry—I do not care whether they afterwards sold it to private enterprise—they could please themselves about that—for the production of Australian motor cars, and they then imposed a protective tariff to prevent any American or outside cars coming into Australia, much good would have been done. It is no use asking what car we ride in to-day. I do not own a car, but I often hear it asked, "Is your car an American car?" or some other car? No cars are manufactured in Australia to-day, and all the cars must be imported cars; but if, instead of handing the reduced taxation back to the wealthy people of the Commonwealth, Mr. Stanley Melbourne Bruce had devoted £5,000,000 to the establishment of a motor industry and an aeroplane industry, what a benefit it would have been to Australia! We have four seaplanes on the river now, and I congratulate the Prime Minister on bringing them to Australia. We need them here, but I wish to see them built here. We could have an industry to build aeroplanes, seaplanes, and motor cars. We have men like Hinkler and Kingsford-Smith, capable mechanics who could be placed in charge of the industry. We could then establish an industry of our own, and prevent millions of pounds going to America. Despite what arguments may be used, I am quite satisfied that there is not a member in this House, whether a member of this party or a member of the Opposition,

Mr. Bruce.]

who does not realise that the millions of pounds that we are sending to America in payment of motor cars, petrol, oil, etc., is the main reason for unemployment in Australia.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Chillagoe*): In adding my quota to the debate I wish to extend my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, and to congratulate the hon. member for Mitchell on being returned at the recent by-election. The very fact that he has been chosen by the people of that electorate refutes the statement of the hon. member for Murilla, who criticised the Government somewhat unjustifiably in connection with their land policy—claiming particularly that the Government had endeavoured to prevent the workers from selecting good sheep land, and especially the Saltern Creek country. It is fortunate that the by-election was conducted at the time the Saltern Creek land was being balloted for, as the result of the election is convincing proof that at least the workers in that electorate have confidence in the Government.

The Leader of the Opposition has moved an amendment expressing want of confidence in the Government, and he has offered some criticism dealing mainly with the question of unemployment in this State. I know that the hon. gentleman recognises that the problem is world-wide, and is not confined to Queensland. It is the aftermath of the war. Only yesterday I read in the press of thousands of young men being transferred from England to assist in the harvesting operations in Canada. Many of these men were formerly engaged in the mines in England, and they left England because of the lack of employment in their industry. It is wrong to place the blame for unemployment in Queensland entirely on the shoulders of the Government. We must acknowledge that we have passed through a world-wide war, which has left in its train many problems which every nation has been striving its utmost to solve.

One of the greatest impediments to the re-establishment of industry in the countries engaged in the war has been the war indemnities and war debts. If the war debts contracted by Great Britain, Germany, and the other countries involved in the great World War were cancelled, a great amount of money would be available for the re-establishment of industry, and the problem of unemployment would be almost wholly solved. Large numbers of people have been migrating to Australia. They have arrived here during times of depression, and have assisted to swell our unemployed ranks. Commonwealth statistics show that 40,000 names have been added to the Federal rolls in Queensland since the last Federal elections. That fact in itself shows that, in addition to the natural increase of population, people have been entering Queensland from the other States and overseas and competing with our own workers in industry.

One important factor that has been brought home to me since I have been resident in Brisbane which tends to accentuate the unemployment of men is the large number of women engaged in our various offices. We never see unemployed women marching through the streets of Brisbane; but we have seen numbers of unemployed men marching in procession and waiting on the Government to air their grievances. Why? During the war and since its conclusion women have been replacing men in various callings. The State is as much to blame

[Mr. Bruce.

in this respect as the private employer. To-day we have women in positions which should be held by men, who could set them free to attend to domestic work at home. While such a state of affairs continues, we must have men marching in processions and seeking employment throughout the State.

The Leader of the Opposition attributed the unemployed problem to the high taxation of the Government. I believe that taxation is causing unemployment, because during the war the Commonwealth Government, which hon. members opposite support, imposed a war-time tax on industry. That tax had the effect of closing mines in my electorate which had been in existence for thirty years. It had the effect of closing the Vulcan tin mine, which had been working for thirty-five years. Immediately the tax was imposed the directors of the company decided to pay the reserves held in the bank in dividends in order to escape the taxation; and since that date the company has ceased to exist. That goes to show that if the argument that high taxation brings about depression in trade is correct, then the Commonwealth Government have much to answer for.

In the course of his speech, the hon. member for Toombul made reference to the slump in timber. During his tour in North Queensland that hon. member addressed a meeting at Atherton, where he put the blame for the depression of the timber industry on the Atherton Tableland on the shoulders of the Cairns waterside workers. He said that if these people had continued at work and committed no breaches of the award, there would have been no depression in the timber industry to-day. I do not know if that was the hon. gentleman's first trip to North Queensland, but I wish to tell him that the employing classes there disobey the awards just as much as the Cairns waterside workers.

Mr. CLAYTON: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. O'KEEFE: To prove what I say, let me quote the following extract from a telegram sent by Mr. W. J. Dunstan, then Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, to the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and Senator Mullan, dated 4th September, 1916—

"Since Judge Dickson made his award sugar-growers have decided no more sugar will be cut and at the end of the week all mills will be closed down. Growers complain that they are unable to pay the award rates owing to price fixed by the Federal Government for sugar. They complain bitterly about the award and say it is impossible to pay rates. I wish to point out to the party through you and other members from Queensland that Dickson Award does not fix as high a minimum rate for sugar industry, which is only casual, as that fixed by other awards covering North and Mackay districts for permanent work, and that a Conservative municipal council such as Charters Towers has by conference fixed higher rates than given by Dickson and a 44-hour week which Dickson refused to grant in Sugar Award. Sugar Award is only reasonable and in conformity with wages paid by other industries."

If the hon. member for Toombul can put the blame for the slump in the timber trade in North Queensland upon the shoulders of the Cairns waterside workers, then this is a

specific instance where the employing classes threatened to close down the whole of the sugar industry because there was an award which was not to their liking.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The waterside workers there have ruined the timber industry in North Queensland.

Mr. O'KEEFE: For the hon. gentleman's information—I know he was speaking about maple—the reason why a slump has taken place in maple is because a “ring” operating in Sydney had increased the price of maple to £3 5s. per 100 feet in the log, at which price it is out of the reach of the people of Australia. In that way the opportunity is given for people in the South to invest their money overseas, and introduce articles produced by Pacific labour into Australia. Hon. gentlemen opposite are prone to praise the Commonwealth Government, and it is up to them to ask that Government to protect this particular industry.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: There is a big protection.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. O'KEEFE: The protection is not sufficient, and until the Commonwealth Government do their duty to the people of Australia we can expect to have unemployment. The following is an extract from the “Nambour Chronicle” of 2nd December, 1927—

“In the House of Representatives, on Thursday, 24th November, Mr. Pratten (Minister for Trade and Customs) outlined the Customs Tariff adjustment proposals of the Federal Government. The principal item which affects our district is the duty on timber, and the proposal is to reduce the tariff on ‘Oregon for underground mining purposes’ and increase the tariff on ‘Oregon undressed.’ Until the new proposals receive Parliamentary sanction they will not come into operation, and as Queensland is vitally concerned in the timber question, it is to be hoped that our representatives in the Federal Parliament will do their utmost to prevent foreign timber continuing to oust our own production from the markets of Australia.”

Further on it says—

“In conversation with one of our leading townsmen, who has recently returned from a holiday in the Southern States, we were told that the building trade was apparently very brisk down there, but it was all foreign timber that was being used, while our sawmills were more or less idle. The United States claims to produce twenty-two billion cubic feet of lumber annually, which, put into English terms of numeration, means twenty-two thousand million—and as 40 cubic feet are a ton of shipping, it follows that their production is about five hundred and fifty million tons of lumber per annum. Of this the Commonwealth (including other foreign timber) imported last year about five hundred million super feet, which, on the same basis of calculation would be equal to more than one million tons. This would provide loading for nearly a ship a day for the Commonwealth. A short time ago Senator Sir Thomas Glasgow admitted that a sum of £5,000,000 had been spent on timber imports, and that the value of our exports was only twenty-four

per cent. of that amount. The simple deduction is that the people of Australia have paid away in twelve months £3,800,000 for timber, of which a large part could be produced here, and meanwhile our sawmills are idle.”

It further says—

“Recently one of our townsmen was on a holiday, and at Southport saw a fairly considerable wooden erection being built, of which the studs, and all the frame, were Oregon. If you ask the builder, he says, ‘It is what the architect specifies,’ and so probably this profession has something to answer for in this furore for foreign timber.”

If the business people of the State continue to specify foreign timber, then they have no reason to complain about the Labour Government of Queensland in connection with unemployment.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL interjected.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The hon. member for Toombul recently saw fit to go through my electorate where he made some very rash statements. It is the people with whom the hon. member is connected who have crippled the whole of the timber trade in North Queensland, and that is well recognised by the people in North Queensland who are trying to make a living out of that industry. It is also recognised by them that they appealed to the Forestry Department to fix the price of maple at 32s. per 100 super feet. Just imagine the employing class of North Queensland stooping to ask the Labour Government to fix the price of any commodity whatever! But that is what they did, and the people of North Queensland are satisfied that that is a very fair price.

During the visit of the Leader of the Opposition to North Queensland he told the farmers at Atherton that, if he were returned to power and became the head of the Government, he would give them a freehold tenure. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman how, in justice to the country, he could give the present leasehold tenants a freehold tenure and relieve them of their obligations to the State? If the hon. member had a piece of land under freehold tenure up there, how much more grain would he grow, or how much more milk would he get from his cows pastured on land under that particular tenure, than on a leasehold?

Mr. MOORE: But he could borrow money on it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You can borrow money under the present tenure. One of the organisers of the hon. gentleman's party, Mr. Macdonald, who has been travelling through the Eacham and Chillagoe electorates, wrote to me last year. He had a certain area as a returned soldier, which he considered was not a living area. He asked me, as the member for the district, to get the Agricultural Bank to finance him in order to enable him to buy some freehold land. It is strange that Mr. Macdonald did not go to some of the private banking concerns and purchase a freehold. Why should he come to the Labour Government, when he at that time was touring North Queensland and agitating against Labour administration. It is strange that he had to come to the Agricultural Bank, controlled by a Labour Government, to get financial assistance. That shows that a small man has no hope of getting freehold,

Mr. O'Keefe.]

and the only chance he has of getting on the land is under the perpetual leasehold tenure.

Mr. CLAYTON: Did he get finance?

Mr. O'KEEFE: He got finance. The Agricultural Bank came to his assistance, as it comes to the assistance of every person, irrespective of what his political opinions are.

Mr. CLAYTON: Did he get what he asked for?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. O'KEEFE: He got what he wanted. The only way the working man has a chance of getting on the land is by taking up a perpetual leasehold, because he has no hope of buying a freehold. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition what is wrong with the Government being the owners of the land and leasing it to the people? In years past, before the perpetual leasehold tenure came into operation, the people whom hon. members opposite support were the owners of the land under a freehold tenure. In the Atherton district these freeholders let the land to Chinamen on lease. It was good enough for them to be the freehold owners, but they did not work the land, they let it to Chinamen. The Government, in settling the returned men on the land, had to pay high prices to resume land which was being held and cultivated by Chinamen on the Atherton Tableland. That only goes to prove that the perpetual leasehold tenure is the best for the people in the long run.

Mr. CLAYTON: You own freehold, and preach leasehold.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. O'KEEFE: I would like to refer to the hon. member for Mirani who, when speaking on the land question during this debate, made reference to what the Secretary for Agriculture had said. He is reported in the morning newspaper of 2nd instant as saying—

“Although the Minister for Agriculture and Stock had boasted of the State's agricultural progress, it was a fact that the area under cultivation had fallen from 1,059,401 acres in 1915 to 941,783 acres, after thirteen years of Labour rule, in 1926.”

The hon. member would be very interesting from his own point of view if he did not distort the facts of the case he is presenting, and would stick to the truth. The facts are these. In the first instance it should be pointed out that the latest figures available are for the year 1926, being those contained in the 1927 report of the Registrar-General on this matter. The hon. member for Mirani would have one believe that the figure 941,783 quoted by him was that for 1928, whereas, in fact, it is the figure for 1926. Yesterday the hon. member for Normanby made the same statement as the hon. member for Mirani. I have obtained extracts from tables appearing in the report of the Registrar-General which show—

- (a) The total extent of land under cultivation;
- (b) Land in fallow lying idle, etc.; and
- (c) The total extent of land under crop, in each case for the years 1914, 1915, 1925, and 1926.

It will be noted from those figures that the total of (b) and (c) equals the figures given

[Mr. O'Keefe.

as (a), the total extent of land under cultivation. If comparisons are to be made, the same basis should be taken throughout. Hon. members will agree that it is not correct to compare figures in (a) with those in (c) for the reason that the basis of comparison is not the same. I would like the House to have those figures to show them how the truth can be misrepresented. The figures in regard to the land held under cultivation during the periods quoted are the most interesting, because it is there that the figures have been twisted—

	Total land under crop.	Land in fallow, lying idle, etc.	Total extent of land under cultivation.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1914 ..	792,568	188,650	981,218
1915 ..	729,588	329,813	1,059,401
1925 ..	1,133,765	207,353	1,241,118
1926 ..	941,783	346,735	1,288,518

From those figures it will be noted that the hon. member for Mirani quoted, in the first instance, the area under cultivation in 1915—1,059,401 acres—and compared those figures with the area under crop in 1926—941,783 acres. He, in fact, represented these to be the figures for 1928. An analysis of the figures I have given discloses that the area under cultivation has increased from 981,218 acres in 1914 to 1,288,518 acres in 1926, and from 1,059,401 acres in 1915 to 1,288,518 acres in 1926, and not 941,783 acres, as stated by the hon. member. The figures also show that the area under crop has increased from 729,588 acres in 1915 to 941,783 acres in 1926. The area under crop has increased from 729,588 in 1915 to 941,783 acres in 1926. That is the true position of land under cultivation, and the figures contradict the figures quoted by the hon. member for Mirani, supported by the hon. member for Normanby.

I now desire to make some reference to the mining industry. I deplore the stagnation in that industry, not only in my own electorate, but throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. During the past two years or more some of the largest mining companies operating in Australia have had to cease operations, some entirely, and others partially, and the only reason that can be advanced for such action is the slump in the metal market. Mount Morgan—a great mining centre for many years—ceased operations about twelve months ago; and Broken Hill has had to close down its works to a very large extent, all for the simple reason that the ore-bodies that now exist are not of a payable nature, and cannot be successfully operated on present world prices. Until such time as lead prices are restored we cannot expect to see the Chillagoe works in operation, but in the meantime I trust the Government will make preparations for a restart when the market is more favourable. I hold that by the expenditure of about £1,200 one of the lead furnaces at Chillagoe could be reduced from its present capacity of 120 tons to 70 tons a day, and by that small expenditure facilities would be provided for the smelting of about 10,000 tons, which can be readily secured—most of it is already on the surface—and the employees in the industry would be materially assisted.

I regret to relate that even at Irvinebank there is a party of miners at present shipping

their ore across the sea to London for treatment. That should not be. We should have some facilities in Queensland, or at least in Australia, where ore could be treated, instead of our ore products being sent to other countries. At the present time the small resident population of the Chillagoe district is ekeing out a means of livelihood by fluorspar mining, and on behalf of my electorate I extend to the Secretary for Railways appreciation for the concession he has granted the working miners in the matter of freight on their fluorspar, which enables them to make a living. Fluorspar is not a very valuable commodity, but with the assistance of the Railway Department the men are in a position to earn a little, and are not compelled to seek unemployment sustenance.

From time to time we hear hon. members opposite and their friends outside complaining that the workers do not give adequate service in Queensland. I am very much interested in a new proposition in the Chillagoe electorate in a tin-dredging plant now established at Mount Garnet. It is the first of its type—a very fine piece of machinery, costing somewhere in the vicinity of £80,000 to erect and place in working order. When opening the show at Herberton last year I made reference to the matter, appealing both to the employing class and working class to co-operate with a view to making a success of this venture.

This company is prepared to bring foreign money into our district, and every assistance should be given to make the venture a payable one. The "Cairns Post" was good enough to publish my remarks and, as a result, I received a letter from a gentleman in Melbourne. I desire to place this letter on record in order to show what the employing classes in other States consider our labour in North Queensland is worth. The letter, which is dated from Collins street, Melbourne, reads:—

"J. O'Keefe, Esq., M.L.A.,
"Parliament House,
"Brisbane.

"Dear Sir,—I read the enclosed clipping from the Melbourne 'Argus' with great interest. I believe that in North Queensland you have a wonderfully rich tinfield that must come into its own provided that labour will co-operate with the capitalist in producing this result. The Southern capitalist is nervous of putting his money into Queensland"—

I would like to know what is the reason of their nervousness?

Mr. CLAYTON: Bad government.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That nervousness is produced by hon. members opposite always crying "stinking fish."

Mr. CLAYTON: Look at your own benches for the cause.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The letter proceeds—

"The Southern capitalist is nervous of putting his money into Queensland mining ventures—considers that the Queensland worker has the Moscow taint."

The basis of such allegations against the workers of Queensland emanates from the Opposition benches, from where we are always hearing this sort of "tripe." Naturally the local Tory newspapers print it, and it circulates through the Southern newspapers,

and has the effect of making capital shy. The letter goes on—

"I confess that I had the same opinion before I went to Queensland about four years ago, but I had not been there long before I changed my ideas. I am responsible for the flotation of a Melbourne company to work a tin-dredging area near Mount Garnet, and I hope and expect to demonstrate to the Melbourne tin investors that a dredge can be worked cheaper in North Queensland than in the Malay States. If we can get a dredge crew that will give us the same loyal service as the crew I had when testing this property by boring and shafting, then I am quite confident that our costs will be lower than in the East.

"Yours faithfully,

"BYRON MOORE."

Mr. COSTELLO: I received one of these letters, too.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That letter goes to show that the acid test has been put on the North Queensland miners and they have given satisfactory results. The point I wish to make is that, whilst our friends on the Opposition benches continue to decry our workers, we cannot have any other result but unemployment.

Mr. MAXWELL: We do not decry the worker. That is not true.

Mr. MOORE: How many men are employed on a dredge?

Mr. O'KEEFE: There are forty men employed on a dredge, in addition to whom many others are employed off the dredge. The most important feature to my mind is that the dredge is now commencing to dig itself in, or, in other words, is operating, and the eyes of many investors will be on the results of the work. I am given to understand that, if after two months' trial, operations prove successful, at least three other dredges will be installed in that locality.

Mr. COSTELLO: A change of Government would be the means of putting a few more in.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Another matter to which I draw attention is the charges made by local authorities in respect of these dredging areas. I commend to the Home Secretary the advisability of an amendment of the Act to permit the local authorities to charge less than the full amount during prospecting operations. After all, when we have foreign money coming into the mining industry, it is worth while protecting it. Under present conditions, however, the local authorities have no other option but to charge local authority tax to the maximum extent of the holdings of these prospecting companies. For example, a prospecting company which has acquired 400 acres on lease with which to commence prospecting for tin—and that work usually takes months and months—finds that it is required to pay local authority taxation, which is very high.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Twenty times the annual rent.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The annual rent charged by the Government is only 2s. 6d. per acre, which is cheap enough for anything, and, indeed, is a cheaper rental than that imposed on mining in other parts of the world. Yet the local authorities may charge twenty times the annual rent of the Government, and have

Mr. O'Keefe.]

no other option in the matter. In the case of the 400 acres to which I have referred the valuation would probably be £1,000, and, as we know that the rate of local authority tax is seldom less than 1s. in the £1, it will be realised that a hardship exists whilst the company or person is operating in the prospecting stage. I recommend an alteration to provide for assistance only whilst prospecting is in progress; once the production stage is reached then the full rate can be charged.

Reference was also made by hon. members opposite to the maize industry. In my opinion, something must be done to assist further those men engaged in maizegrowing on the Atherton Tableland, where, despite the fact that the department concerned has done everything possible to increase the areas, there is still need for more land. In course of conversation with the secretary of the Atherton branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia last month, the suggestion was made that, if the Government were prepared to place some of these men in other parts of the State, the opportunity would be availed of. That, of course, is only that gentleman's contention, and I am not satisfied that these men would avail themselves of the opportunity even if it were granted. I questioned him at the time as to the names of the men who would be prepared to go to other parts of the State in order that I could submit the matter to the department. The only name he gave was his own, and I am not at all satisfied that if he were asked to go to-morrow he would be willing to do so. Nevertheless, the Minister concerned should make an effort to give these people larger areas of land on which to carry on maizegrowing and mixed farming. Only in that way can they make a decent living. I suggest that the Minister should go into the matter to see how many men are prepared to settle on land in other portions of the State, because, if that were done, then the land vacated by those men could be utilised to increase the holdings of the remaining settlers.

Mr. CLAYTON: We will look after that after the next elections.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The hon. member would have done more had he traversed his electorate, where maizegrowing is carried on, and invited those engaged in the industry to vote for the proposal to establish a maize pool.

Mr. CLAYTON: I did.

Mr. O'KEEFE: If the hon. member did that, then he has done his duty, and I retract what I have said. Unless we have a Queensland-wide pool—indeed, that is not sufficient, it should be a Commonwealth-wide pool—it is useless the people trying to grow corn successfully in Queensland. We have decent protection in North Queensland owing to the fact that we have established a pool there. We created a good local market, but on account of no pool being in existence in Southern Queensland, the maizegrowers of the South send their maize up to the North to compete with the locally grown crop. I admit that the Southern growers have a little bit on the Atherton-grown maize in regard to quality, and that is the reason why the Southern growers are able to send their maize to the Atherton Tableland and compete with the local growers on the market that we have created for our own people up there. Seeing

[Mr. O'Keefe.

that these people have created a market, it is only right that the Southern growers should institute the pooling system in the South. I suggest that the Government should establish a compulsory pool in the South. There is nothing wrong with that. The Government could easily alter the Act in such a way that it would be necessary to have a one-third majority before establishing a pool instead of a two-thirds majority as at present.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Minister will not do that.

Mr. O'KEEFE: He will, because it will be the salvation of the maizegrowers of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As a matter of fact, some members of the Opposition have been carpeted for suggesting an amendment in that connection.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I wish to thank the Secretary for Railways for the assistance he has given to the maizegrowers in North Queensland in connection with concessions in freights to the various silos. He has done much to relieve the position during the last twelve months or two years, and I would like to bring before his notice the great success achieved in connection with the rail-motor service in North Queensland. I regret very much that we are losing the services of so able an officer of the Railway Department as Mr. Hooper, who was the superintendent at Cairns. He has done much to put this rail-motor service on a satisfactory basis, and I hope to see it extended. I suggest to the Minister that, as soon as possible, a rail-motor service should be established between Cairns and Ravenshoe. At the present time there is a daily goods train service to Ravenshoe, and it hauls behind it two passenger carriages. Very often there are only two or three passengers in these carriages, yet the engine has to haul the extra 40 tons the whole of that distance, and it takes the whole day to do it. I do not suggest that the service should be reduced in any way, as there is sufficient business for a daily goods train, but if the department instituted a rail-motor service for passengers and mails, there would be no fear of showing a loss. While travelling to Atherton a few weeks ago I met several tourists on the train. They got out at Atherton and took the branch line to Yungaburra, and returned to Cairns by road. At present the Government are losing that traffic, and I recommend the Minister to go into the matter with the object of establishing a road-motor service over the range connecting at Yungaburra with the rail-motor service. Such a service would be very beneficial to tourists, at least. I wrote to the Premier some time ago suggesting that the rail-motor should be at the disposal of tourists, leaving Cairns in the morning, pulling up at the Barron Falls until after lunch, then travelling to Mungana and Chillagoe, stopping the night at one of those places to enable the tourists to view the caves, more especially the new caves recently found at Mungana. The motor service could then leave for the Atherton Tableland in the afternoon of the following day, spend a day or so there, and return to Cairns via Yungaburra by the new road across the range.

I suggest that the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau should take charge of the caves at Mungana. Anyone who has visited the caves will agree with me that they are

equal to, if not better than, the Jenolan Caves in New South Wales, and are worth protecting. Some few years ago, when the Chillagoe caves were in their beauty, we had wilful destruction of specimens in those caves because there was no control exercised. People were so taken up with the beauty of the stalactites and stalagmites that they broke off pieces and took them away with them. That should never be allowed to happen in connection with the beautiful caves at Mungana. I would ask the Government to take over these caves, which at the present time are being protected by three or four men in the district but who are likely to leave the place at any time. One or two men could be employed by the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau to act as caretakers and to improve the caves, which will be a great asset to the State. I trust that the Government will not delay taking action in this matter. It would be hard to get anyone else to take the same interest in the caves as the four men I have mentioned have taken. They have put their hands into their own pockets to the extent of £100 to beautify the caves and give proper access to them. That amount should be refunded by the Government, who should take full control.

Another thing I would bring before the notice of the Secretary for Railways is the fact that there is no eating-house on the Cairns-Ravenshoe line. The train leaves Cairns in the morning at 7 o'clock, and travels the whole day to Ravenshoe. At many hotels one cannot get an early breakfast before leaving, and has to go without lunch, because, if the train is late in getting to Atherton, a passenger cannot get lunch there and has to go all day with a cup of tea and a scone at intervals. I hope the Minister will see if it is not possible to expedite the building of the new railway station at Tolga and have a restaurant on the platform. Tolga is most suitable for that purpose as it is at the junction with the Yungaburra line.

I would like to thank the Secretary for Mines for the great assistance he has given the miners in my electorate since the closing down of Chillagoe. On the last occasion I visited Chillagoe I held a meeting, at which the people expressed themselves as being reconciled to the closing of the works. They are sensible men, and they realise now that the heat of the business is over that it is impossible for the Government to carry on the mines under present conditions. A vote of confidence was accorded me as the member for the district, and also to the Government I am supporting. (Opposition laughter.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'KEEFE: The talk of the Leader of the Opposition on the Atherton Tableland about the closing of Chillagoe was all hot air, and the Opposition are not going to win Chillagoe from me. I thank the Secretary for Mines and the Secretary for Railways for the assistance they have given the people there, and for what they have done to assist the miners in my electorate during the last twelve months.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

Resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 4.41 p.m.