

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 16 OCTOBER 1931

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, Windsor) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTION.

NURSES' REGISTRATION BOARD AND NURSES' EXAMINATION FEES.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. How is the Nurses' Registration Board constituted?"

"2. In view of the enormous reductions in the payment of nurse-trainees, will consideration be given to reducing nurses' examination fees?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Norminby*) replied—

"1. In accordance with section 4 (1) of 'The Nurses and Masseurs Registration Act of 1923.'

"2. This is a matter for the board in the first instance. The hon. member's inquiry will be referred to the board."

SUPPLY.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

Question stated—

"That there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1931-32, a sum not exceeding £300 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor."

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [10.33]: When the House adjourned last night, I was pointing out the utter impossibility of keeping up the standard of living and wages and efficiency generally, which existed in the peak years after the war. To understand that, one has only to realise the enormous decrease which has taken place in the value of the products of the different industries in the State. I was showing last night the enormous decrease in value in connection with the pastoral industry, and also the enormous loss which has ensued from a revenue and taxation point of view. I desire further to show the falling off which has taken place in the prices of all primary products.

The following comparisons of prices obtainable for Queensland's principal exports will

give some idea of the extreme difficulties with which the present Government of Queensland have to contend. It will be noted that in all cases except one present prices are below the pre-war level:—

BUTTER.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	11.84
1920-21	...	...	...	27.29
1930-31	...	...	...	11.81
CHEESE.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	6.80
1920-21	...	...	...	12.93
1930-31	...	...	...	6.58
COPPER.				Per cwt.
				£
1914-15	...	...	...	3.17
1917-18	...	...	...	5.83
1930-31	...	...	...	2.15
LEAD.				Per cwt.
				£
1914-15	...	...	...	0.97
1919-20	...	...	...	1.70
1930-31	...	...	...	0.81
SILVER.				Per oz.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	24.72
1919-20	...	...	...	58.99
1930-31	...	...	...	19.05
FROZEN BEEF.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	4.00
1920-21	...	...	...	4.97
1930-31	...	...	...	3.50
MUTTON.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	3.91
1924-25	...	...	...	7.74
1930-31	...	...	...	2.94
LAMB.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	4.39
1918-19	...	...	...	10.68
1930-31	...	...	...	5.01
WOOL—GREASY.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	9.40
1924-25	...	...	...	26.50
1930-31	...	...	...	9.86
WOOL—SCOURED.				Per lb.
				<i>d.</i>
1914-15	...	...	...	13.20
1924-25	...	...	...	46.00
1930-31	...	...	...	14.76

On last year's wool production every 1d. per lb. drop in the value of wool meant a loss of over £550,000 to Queensland. Had the 1924-25 price been maintained, Queensland's wool clip last year would have brought in nearly £10,000,000 more than it actually realised. Those figures prove beyond doubt the difficulty the Government find themselves in; and they apply to every Government in the Commonwealth. The various Governments have to grapple with the position as they find it from day to day; and I maintain that our Government have done that in their handling of the finances of the State. If they continue on the lines they are following at present, and extend unemployment

relief to people out of work until we get some increase in the value of our products, all will be well with the State of Queensland. It must be admitted that all our people, whether industrial workers, primary producers, or business men, cannot expect to maintain the conditions that existed during the years when a large amount of borrowed money was available and there was a big revenue.

When the Labour Government were in power, they had an enormous amount of money at their disposal, but this they spent in a reckless, lavish fashion, regardless of their duty to provide for a time of depression such as exists to-day. The difficulties of to-day have been accentuated by the careless and reckless manner in which the finances of the country were managed during the Labour regime. During their reign of fourteen years they increased revenue expenditure by £9,702,746, or an average of £693,053 per annum. If care had been exercised over that period when funds were plentiful, the position to-day would have been much easier. In view of the failure of Labour, it is necessary for the present Government to deal with the existing problem from day to day in accordance with the amount of money available. It has been wrongly stated that the Government have imposed more irksome conditions upon the workers than upon other sections of the community.

Mr. A. JONES: If the awards must go, then pools must go, too.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member does not know anything about pools. The object of a pool is to enable farmers to market their products in the same way as a business man trades in his merchandise; and in this way no injury is done to anybody, but, on the contrary, the workers and other people in the State are assisted.

Mr. DUNLOP: Not by selling butter on a stabilisation basis.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Rockhampton is definitely opposed to pools.

Mr. KIRWAN: You require protection for the farmers, but you refuse protection for the workers.

Mr. EDWARDS: The table that I have quoted clearly indicates the serious decline in the prices ruling for primary products in comparison with those in operation a few years ago.

Mr. KIRWAN: How can a man on low wages pay high prices for goods?

Mr. EDWARDS: The high tariff wall raised by the Federal Labour Government has certainly not made for improvement in the conditions of the primary producers or of anybody else. If the primary producers and others are unable to purchase heavy commodities like wire and iron, which are so essential for the development of the country, then it follows that an enormous number of workers must be displaced from industry. Apropos of that question it is well that I should refer to this report which appears in the "Courier" of to-day—

"Perth, 15th October.

"The Primary Producers' Association, supported by the Pastoralists' Association, has decided to urge all farmers, graziers, and pastoralists to refrain from all developmental work involving the purchase of galvanised iron, wire-netting,

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fencing wire, galvanised iron piping, and farming and pastoral machinery, implements, and tools of trade. The reason given is that all applications made by the primary producers' organisations for relief from excessive Customs taxation have failed, and that the Federal Government apparently is determined to maintain its present inequitable policy, thereby adding materially to the cost of development of farming and pastoral properties. The organisations are confident of solid support for the boycott as a retaliation against the manufacturers constantly seeking further increases of the tariff, irrespective of the position of the consumers. It is claimed that the extra cost of developing and equipping a 1,000-acre farm in 1931 is about £1,400 higher than in 1913."

Under such conditions, how is it possible to develop a country or to give employment to the workers?

I am by no means a freetrader; but, unless we can manufacture at a reasonable cost articles now imported from overseas, permitting the country to be developed along sound lines, developmental work is curtailed because primary producers are hampered in their business through excessive costs, and Governments are called upon to expend thousands and thousands of pounds to keep the producers on the land and prevent a drift to the cities. That is one of the great difficulties Australia is facing. The Federal Government appear to have no interest in the development of the country by building up our primary industries. Their sole business appears to be to enforce a policy which is imposed on them by agitation through the voting strength of the large centres of population. We have only to look at the conditions of the pastoral industry, with its falling prices, and the wheat industry, in the Southern States, the value of which product is insufficient to pay the costs of harvesting, let alone the cost of cultivation. The position of the business man in the cities and towns is largely wrapped up in this subject. In fact, every person is affected. The Federal Government should first give every consideration to lessening the costs of production. Unless the costs of production can be reduced to such an extent that the primary producers can successfully compete on the world's markets and bring to Australia much needed wealth, it will be impossible for the primary producers to continue in their business for any length of time.

We are continually hearing from the Opposition of the conditions alleged to have been brought about by this Government. They forget the position they brought about in the State in connection with their policy of State enterprises. Last night I stated that I honestly believed that the late Government attempted by their policy to paralyse industry to such an extent as to make it possible to put their objective into operation. As the late Government proceeded with their policy, they found that the business methods adopted in these enterprises were so tragic that the people would not stand them. The number of State enterprises operated by the Labour Party was 111, and the total amount of public money invested in them was £5,110,728. I maintain that many hundreds of thousands of pounds were lost to the State

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in taxation thereby, because their policy of State enterprises eliminated many persons from business who had previously paid taxation.

Including uncharged interest, the losses on the State enterprises amounted to £4,013,244. Just imagine the incalculable benefit that sum would be to the people of this State—to the workers whom hon. members opposite are so prone to say that they alone represent—if that money were available now and were utilised wisely!

Notwithstanding the losses which I have mentioned, the Labour Governments increased the public debt of the State from £56,000,000 to £113,000,000 during their term of office. In the face of these facts, one wonders how any hon. member opposite now has the temerity to condemn the present Government for the good work they have done during the last two years in the face of most difficult conditions. Perhaps I can do no better than give comparative figures of the taxation per head of population during the last four years, as shown in these figures—

	Taxation per capita.		
	£ s. d.		
Labour Government.			
1927-28	5 10 9
1928-29	5 1 11
Moore Government.			
1929-30	4 12 4
1930-31	4 10 1

The figures are self-explanatory, and prove conclusively that, despite the difficulties facing the Government of maintaining the revenue receipts of previous years, they have actually reduced the taxation per head of the population.

My contention is that the development of the country can only be carried on successfully if harassing restrictions are removed. I care not what section of the community it may be; it must be apparent that, if restrictions are removed, and if confidence is given to people who have money to spend and to people who have the opportunity of developing the resources of the country, the wealth of the State will not be diminished, but will rather be considerably increased. It is vitally necessary that unnecessary costs should be removed.

Mr. FOLEY: What do you mean by reduction of costs?

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member must know that, if the pastoralist, the agriculturist, the dairy farmer, or the mineowner is set to work, and is harassed by unfair conditions, it will be impossible for him to pay high wages and at the same time develop the resources of the country in the interests of all sections. My argument is that the lower the cost—

Mr. FOLEY: You mean the lower the wages?

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, I have no hesitation in saying that, if the wages are lowered and the cost of production is decreased, the workers will be in a better position. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite may laugh, but it is surely obvious to them that, if the costs of production are lowered and the worker can get his commodities cheaper, then the worker's wage is more effective than if production costs are high.

More particularly does that apply to the family man. Even at the time when peak wages were being paid the man with the

large family was in greater difficulties than he had ever been in before. I do not fear contradiction of that statement. I admit that the single man receiving £4 or £5 a week was in paradise because in many cases he had no responsibilities; but, owing to the high costs in 1919 and 1920, the married man with a family found great difficulty in making ends meet. At that period, as I have pointed out, prices were double and treble what they are to-day, and, after all, the workers use all those products. The increased cost of these products also meant increased rent, increased cost of lighting, and an increase in the cost of everything else.

Mr. FOLEY: Increased wages mean increased production. That has been proved.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is something in that argument up to a point, but it does not follow that increased wages reduce the cost of production.

Mr. FOLEY: We increased production.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Labour Government increased production at an enormous cost to the community. Take the State enterprises as an instance. If the State enterprises had been forced to pay their way, what would have been the cost of beef supplied from the State stations? The Labour Government could not make the State stations pay; yet they asked the pastoralists to pay increased rents, increased railway rates, and an increased cost for killing his stock; yet they themselves failed to make the State stations pay. Can the hon. member not see the stupidity of arguing along those lines? No person is happier than the man who is in constant work and is able to provide his family with the necessities of life at a reasonable cost. Hon. members opposite must realise that in the peak years the high wages did not compensate the wage-earner for the high cost of goods. He was no better off, as it cost a considerable amount additional to keep his wife and family. In my opinion, it was a great mistake to pay single men such high wages. Many a young man was ruined as a result of the high wages paid. They took them to the racecourses in many instances; and they assisted in building up the picture shows, and spent most of their money on pleasure, and all are suffering as a result of this to-day. When the Labour Government were in power, if they had realised that it was necessary to carry on the business of the State on sound business lines in the interests of the community as a whole, the Government would not now be in such a parlous position; and our people would not be out of employment.

Mr. A. JONES: Do you suggest that the same treatment should be accorded to the wages of capital as to the wages of farmers?

Mr. EDWARDS: That is a socialistic argument which is impossible of application. Nobody knows that better than the hon. member, who comes from the West.

Mr. A. JONES: The cost of living is not being reduced in the West.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true, and the hon. member knows it. The price of beef and mutton, which was high in the peak years, has been greatly reduced.

Mr. A. JONES: It has not.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member knows that, while butter is 1s. 7d. per lb. now,

it was 1s. 11d. per lb. before. The same thing applies to boots and clothing bought by families living in the West. No hon. member would dare to go out into a pastoral district and say otherwise. The hon. member should realise that award rates could not be kept up under the existing conditions, and that the State would have to find a large amount of money, possibly for the next three or four years, to pay award rates, because the farmers could not earn enough to pay them. Unfortunately, that is where Labour has crippled the different industries in the manufacturing districts of the State. I have been asked by a leader of Labour whether, if it is right that the capitalist or the person who puts the money into a concern is allowed to withdraw it at any time, it is not just as right that workers should be able to withdraw their labour at any time. I said, "Yes, of course it is, but the difference is that you can withdraw £1,000 of capital from a manufacturing concern where you may be employing 100 men; perhaps you could put that money into the bank and you would do yourself no harm; on the other hand, while that manufacturing concern was going on all right, if those 100 men struck, they might not do the man with £1,000 much harm, although they might do a little harm; but look at the unfortunate position they place themselves and their families in under such conditions."

Mr. POLLOCK: But this party does not stand for strikes.

Mr. EDWARDS: Of course, the hon. member's party stands for strikes. It encourages strikes. The hon. member has actually organised and led strikes himself.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is true—before we had arbitration, but not since. We had nothing but strikes before we had arbitration.

Mr. EDWARDS: During the big railway strike, did not the party opposite put the Government into the position that they had to do exactly what the strikers wanted them to do? Had the Government not to sack every railway man for a week and lose an enormous amount of money, because the heads of the Government had to have time to get their breath, knowing the attitude of the men behind them? And then hon. members opposite will tell you they do not believe in strikes!

Mr. A. JONES: If you abolish awards, you have no alternative but strikes.

Mr. EDWARDS: Of course you have—you have the alternative to work. Personally I have worked my way up from nothing, and there were no awards when I commenced work. It must be clear to anyone that you cannot hold up industry in a country like this, and that you have to continue with the development of the country.

Mr. A. JONES: You have the "cow-cocky" outlook only.

Mr. EDWARDS: All I have to say is that it is the "cow-cocky" and others who pioneered this country who are keeping the hon. member in his position in this Parliament, and a remark such as the hon. member has made indicates the difficulties the Government are in.

The other day the hon. member beside him, the hon. member for Leichhardt, suggested that we should follow Russia's

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example—simply because he had read a book in the library, and he is, therefore, satisfied that it is essential that Queensland should adopt Soviet methods. I believe the hon. member is sincere. To some extent he has convinced hon. members of his own party; but the workers outside might well say, "Save us from our friends;" because, when conditions were good, it was they who had the opportunity of handling the finances on sound lines so that the progress of this country could continue and exportable products could be sent overseas at a profit to the primary producers. But Labour Governments grabbed all the money they could get, and spent it carelessly throughout the State, instead of using it in the gradual development of the country's resources in the interests of the people they are supposed to represent.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It is easy to be wise after the event.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member will not be wise even after the event. He is not even likely to know which horse won the Cup. (Laughter.)

We have a good deal to be proud of in Queensland to-day. I speak as a primary producer, a practical man on the land; and I realise that the land is the foundation of our wealth, and that it is from the land that the working man, and even every member of this Chamber, must get the wherewithal to live. We have a lot to be proud of in Queensland. We have a Government who are grappling with the position as they find it from day to day, and, when one considers the financial resources at our disposal, the difficulties which the Labour Government in the Federal Parliament are imposing on this State, the conditions that exist in New South Wales, and that we actually had to put our hands in our pockets and help to pay Mr. Lang's debts, we must realise that our Government have indeed done well. The primary producers have faith in this Government, and in the Premier particularly. They realise that at last they have a Premier who is conscientious and honest, and is giving them all help possible under trying conditions. I am convinced that the Government, in whom the primary producer has faith and trust, are preparing to take advantage of the rise in the value of primary products immediately it occurs; and I have no hesitation in saying that they are going to rise in value overseas.

Mr. KIRWAN: How can they rise when you are advocating the reduction of wages?

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member can see only the place where he lives—Brisbane. If he would go throughout the State, he would see that we cannot increase wages at present.

Wages were high in Victoria long before the advent of awards or Labour Governments. I remember that, when my father pioneered the land in Victoria long before awards were thought of, he had to pay 15s. and £1 per day for the labour he employed in cleaning wheat.

Mr. KIRWAN: Bunkum!

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member does not understand. He refuses to understand.

Mr. KIRWAN: I would not believe that talk.

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Mr. EDWARDS: Not many years ago the farmers on the Darling Downs paid up to £1 a day for labour when the wheat crop was ripe and ready for stripping. That amount was paid for labour employed in stacking when no award was in operation.

Mr. POLLOCK: Because award rates for other avocations were high.

Mr. EDWARDS. The hon. member for Gregory will admit that, if a pastoralist is doing well, and is anxious to carry out certain work to assist in the development of his holding, he is not afraid to pay a good wage, irrespective of the provisions of any award. The same thing applies to primary producers and manufacturers similarly situated. If they can be placed in a position of doing well with some hope and confidence, then they are not afraid to pay higher wages than the awards prescribe. That is the policy for which the Government stand, and the policy that the Government are trying to develop in this State. We are going to be successful, despite the endeavours of the Labour Party. That party may be anxious to impose on this State the conditions that obtain in Russia; they may be anxious to extend the tentacles of socialism in this State; they may be anxious to make another attempt to establish State enterprises; but the people of Queensland have awakened. They have decided to give the present Government solid support, and not only return them to office again, but assist them in the development of this wonderful country of ours.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) [11.12]: Amidst the discussion that is going on, one is faced with the question: What is fact and what is fancy? I have listened to the debate from both sides; and it is quite evident to me that an election is not far off, because the speeches that have been made in some directions have been with the idea of colouring, if not creating, an impression by suggestion. So far as real statesmanship is concerned, it seems to lose its force just the session before an election; and then it comes down to the old truth which has been recognised throughout the Parliaments of Australia. The first session after an election, get rid of your nasty work; the second session do nothing; the third session get ready for the elections. That is the sort of idea that impregnated the minds of Labour Governments in this State for a number of years. It goes on in every Parliament in Australia to-day, and is taking place now in the Federal Parliament. Throughout the length and breadth of Australia it is a question of what is fact and what is fancy in parliamentary debate.

Let us take the position as we find it to-day. When Mr. McCormack was Premier of this State, he foresaw the approach of the present conditions. Speaking in Rockhampton on 4th May, 1923, he said—

"We in Australia are passing, and will pass, through a very difficult time during the next few years."

We have now reached "the next few years," to which Mr. McCormack referred—years that he said would be difficult years. He also said on that occasion—

"To tell the people that everything in the garden is lovely is only misleading them."

That was the considered opinion in 1923 of Mr. McCormack—a gentleman who had

graced the Treasury benches under a Labour Government for a number of years, and one who had had an opportunity of viewing the situation from the inner workings of his own party, and also of viewing world affairs.

It must be remembered that, when a man occupying the position Mr. McCormack occupied uttered a warning of that kind, he spoke with an inner knowledge, obtainable only by men occupying such high positions. We find that he urged the people over a considerable period to live within their means. He also urged his own Government and other Governments to live within their means. He prophesied bad times ahead, and said—

“I have made enemies privately and in business because of my opinions on this matter.”

In the main, the present trouble is due to what transpired many years ago. The bad works or unpopular acts of a Government are very often due to the stupid policy of the previous Administration. The effect of the failure of the policy of an Administration may not be felt at the time of its operation; but, as time goes on, the truth becomes obvious. The late Government are largely responsible for the position we are in to-day, because we are now called upon to pay exorbitant rates of interest for money which they borrowed abroad. If that money had been used for the encouragement of new industries or strengthening the position of established industries, there would now be something to see for the expenditure. Unfortunately, the money was largely utilised in temporary works, which were called developmental works, with the object of consolidating the position of the Government at elections. In one instance it was expended for the purpose of supporting the questionable policy of Labour. Whilst Queensland was increasing her national debt by borrowing large sums of money—as hon. members know, the national debt of this State during the regime of Labour increased from approximately £56,000,000 to £112,000,000—money flowed into the country. Apparently Mr. McCormack was able to secure whatever money he asked for. When he asked for £9,000,000 he got £9,000,000; and when he asked for £8,000,000 he got that sum. Why?

Mr. DASH: Because the people had confidence in the Government.

Mr. FRY: Whilst this money was flowing into the country we had a trade depression and unemployment was growing. In fact, the condition of the country generally was growing worse and worse. The position we are in to-day developed in the midst of plenty under the direct control of Labour. The members of the Labour Party were absolute slaves to the Government of the day, whose word was law. The Government, with their majority in this Chamber, obtained whatever they desired, and enacted whatever legislation they liked. By this means they created an atmosphere of belief that all was well with the State. The position became such that Mr. McCormack had to disillusionise the minds of the people with regard to the belief that everything was all right, and prepare them for the crash that was inevitably coming.

It is not my purpose to traverse much of the detail which has been dealt with by other

hon. members; but I ask hon. members and the public to take a world-wide view of affairs. Great Britain, the United States of America, Germany, and other countries, like Australia, are in a state of flux. No one can say what the position will be ten years hence. We have a greater knowledge of matters parochial than of affairs international; nevertheless, the world-wide position must be carefully considered; and many ideas which have been expressed in this Parliament do not clarify the position or help the Government of the day.

In considering these matters, it is as well that we should seek the opinions of people who are living in other States of the Commonwealth. In August last I visited New South Wales and Victoria for the purpose of inquiring personally into the condition of affairs in those States. When I go to places for information, I like to get to the foundation of things, because I think that one must judge the foundation, whether it be of a building, an animal, or a policy. I sought information from people who should have been working in New South Wales and Victoria, but who were unfortunately unemployed. Most of these people were most anxious to come to Queensland; and that applied particularly to many New South Wales residents. At any of the border towns one could see large bodies of men constantly streaming over the border into Queensland. What is it that inspires men to leave Victoria and New South Wales, where there are Labour Governments, in order to come to Queensland, under a Government which members of the Labour Party condemn? The greatest evidence we have that people are running away from the Labour Governments who profess to be their particular friends is the large influx of people into Queensland from the Southern States. After all, the opinion of a Government can be fairly accurately gauged from the actions of the masses. But I need not necessarily seek the opinions of those people, for I can call in evidence an extract from the “Daily Standard” of 27th July last, which, under the caption of “Queensland First,” said—

“Queensland has not been affected by the depression to the same extent as other States. The business atmosphere here is much more cheerful.”

“This is the opinion of Mr. H. P. Brown, Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, who is passing through Brisbane on his way to Rockhampton, where he will attend the opening of the new broadcasting station.”

The “Daily Standard” wanted to get an opinion from a man who was not likely to be biased, so it went to a Federal public servant who was familiar with the conditions of the various States, and asked him to tell them candidly what was his impression of Queensland as compared with the other States, and he confirmed the opinion held by the working people in the other States that Queensland is the best State of the Commonwealth. The position of a State can only be good if it has good government. If the position in Queensland to-day is good, then it must be due to the actions of the Government. We know very well that an Administration can destroy the best of conditions, or it can improve them. Administrations are faced with all sorts of obstacles because they have to deal with

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democracy. They have to deal with individuals of varying temperaments and various standards of education, placed in different environment, each one viewing the situation from his own standpoint. Those who have nothing have no time for constitutional government. Their first thought is to get something for themselves. The first thought of those who are hungry is to get something to eat. What do they care for any form of government? What do they care about the wool industry or any other industry if they cannot get work in order that they may get food and clothing? The man who is without food, clothing, and shelter must be seriously considered, because he is the one who is least concerned about the maintenance of constitutional government. That is the point of view from which we or any other Government must consider the future. It would be a good thing for Australia to-day if all the political parties were fused into one and party politics abolished.

Mr. FOLEY: Do you think it would make any more work?

Mr. FRY: Yes. It is the lack of operation, it is the party bickering, it is the distrust engendered in the community by party politics that have caused almost all of our troubles to-day. I say this after having been connected with industrial matters all my life. I say it with a knowledge of the institutions which are working for the uplift of mankind; and I say it with a knowledge of the men who say, "If we are up, we are going to give a helping hand to the man who is down." With the abolition of the barriers of party politics we would get better results. Within ten years the Labour Party will go and the Nationalist Party will go, too.

Mr. PEASE: What will be the name and policy of the new party?

Mr. FRY: I shall deal by-and-by with the Lang Labour policy, and show that the Lang policy is actually the policy of the Opposition. I shall show the hypocrisy of party politics on that point, if necessary.

Dealing with the situation as we see it to-day, and continuing the theme with which I started—the condition of people without food and clothing—I propose to quote an extract from the Brisbane "Courier"; but, before doing so, I would point out that we were told the other night that, if the export prices of wool and wheat increase, our difficulties will be at an end, because Australian credit overseas will be enhanced. In the "Courier" of 4th December, 1930, there appeared an article from its Bradford correspondent headed "Deciding Factor," from which I take the following extract:—

"If wool is being steadily absorbed, growers will get their share of the benefits over a period of years. Natural forces—as expressed in terms of rain and grass—are probably the most potent in deciding the quantity of wool in any country in any particular season, but ultimately we must come back to the question of consumption, and if consumption increases, as the writer expects, prices will make their own recovery."

This writer tells us that, so far as the production of wool is concerned, the quantity depends on grass and area. We have nothing to do with the area or grass in the first place, except that we can assist production

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to the best of our ability. Nature provides the grass and natural conditions in order that wool may be produced to supply food and clothing. The manufacture of the wool depends upon every section of the community making conditions such that men can be employed under conditions which will be comfortable for them and for the general good of the State. At the same time it is unwise to be exporting wool all the time whilst not setting up plants in Queensland, where the product is grown, to manufacture the wool on the spot. Just as it is uneconomical to bring coal from a coal mine over long distances to electrical works situated in the city, so it would be far cheaper, and would make for the advancement of the State, if electrical works were built somewhere near coal mines, provided the water supply available at the spot was sufficient for that purpose.

Mr. PEASE: That is what they do in Russia.

Mr. BOW: Why don't your Government do it?

Mr. FRY: The other part of our problem is in connection with machinery. I dealt with the question of machinery and production when speaking in 1929 and 1930, as reported in "Hansard" for those years. I do not intend to go over that phase of the matter again; but the thought has occurred to me as to what is going to happen to the intellectual standard of our people in view of the increased use of machinery and mass production.

Civilisation as we know it has been brought about by the intellectual development of the people. We say that everyone shall be educated; and, in educating the people, we find some rise out of the mass and become inventors, scientists, or great leaders in industry, social reform, or some other sphere of modern life. With the development of machinery to a very high standard of perfection, men are displaced from industry. What is going to become of them, not only physically but also intellectually? Last year in the city two firms employing sixty employees amalgamated, and put in machinery, and thirty employees were discharged. What is going to happen to those thirty employees? They are not wanted in the industry in which they were engaged, because that industry is now employing more automatic machinery. If they cannot get food to nourish them, clothing to cover their bodies, or shelter to protect them from the weather, they must suffer; and with physical depreciation must come also mental depreciation. If some great statesman does not grapple with this problem of the world—particularly of Australia—we shall find that science, instead of benefiting humanity, will push it further back in the scale of civilisation.

At 11.38 a.m.,

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. FRY: In 1929 I raised the question of the gold standard. I then pointed out that its establishment created a tendency to purchase gold and to make it an idol, so that gold, instead of being a medium for the exchange of commodities, came to be regarded as a commodity itself. So the nations went after gold. The United States of America—on the gold standard—accumulated gold and captured much of the trade

of the world. France—not on the gold standard—also accumulated gold. The results we see in the following press cable:—

“(Australian Cable Service.)

“London, Wednesday, 30th September.
“The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. P. Snowden) informed Mr. J. Kirkwood, that the French war debt to Britain at the date of the funding of the agreement in 1926 was £600,000,000. The annuities hitherto paid were £43,625,000.”

Compare this cablegram—

“STILL HOARDING GOLD.

“(Australian Cable Service.)

“Paris, Friday.

“The Bank of France reached a new record yesterday with its gold reserve of £593,000,000.”

So that France, the country which Great Britain helped in the war—incidentally she went to protect herself—and for whom she incurred war debts, made an agreement with Great Britain to repay her war debt in small amounts spread over a very long period: but at the same time she is bleeding Britain of her gold.

France's indebtedness to Great Britain is £600,000,000, and the French gold reserve is £593,000,000—truly an extraordinary position. This morning's press informs us that the Governor of the German National Bank has stated that the bank is insolvent, which means that Germany is insolvent.

Hon. members opposite have referred to Russia; but Russia is in a similar position.

Mr. PEASE: Russia is unable to obtain sufficient farm workers.

Mr. FRY: Why ask us to emulate Russia? The position in Australia is bad; it is bad in France; it is bad in Great Britain; and, when we refer to Russia, we find that she, too, is in trouble. It is fitting at this stage that I should read this report—

“London, Wednesday.—The city editor of the London ‘Daily Mail’ says that it is believed Russia is nearing a financial crisis owing to her inability to meet American demands for the repayment of loans. The default, he says, means the end of the five-year plan. The newspaper adds that the Soviet is pursuing bankers all over the world in an attempt to obtain accommodation to tide it over the next few months and avoid a breakdown in the five-year plan.”

What might be described as a monetary war is being waged between Canada and the United States of America, Canada insisting that the United States shall take commodities in payment of debts, instead of gold. All these facts indicate that world affairs are definitely unsettled; and it would be a wise man who could exactly state the position ten years hence. Great Britain, the hub of the universe, surrounded by the leading nations of the world, was until recently governed by the official Labour Party, headed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. That gentleman found it impossible to retain office and carry out the programme to which he was committed. He realised that to do so would bring endless trouble. He and others in his party made overtures to other political parties in the British Parliament—not to

retain him in office, because he was in office—not with an eye to the elections because, from my knowledge of England, Scotland, and Wales, he could have won the elections. He did not seek an election, but he was imbued with the spirit of the nation—the spirit of the Empire—and he realised that his reputation would be besmirched for generations to come if a false step was taken. He realised that, if he carried out the policy upon which he was elected at the last election, Great Britain would suffer irretrievable disaster. The “Daily Standard” of 13th October has this to say on the matter—

“SWAPPING PARTIES; KEEPING OPINIONS.

“ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS OPENED IN BRITAIN.

“Premier faces voters.

“London, To-day.

“The Prime Minister (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) opened the election campaign at a crowded meeting at Seaham. He said he was standing as a Labour candidate, and would be a Labour man till death, though he had not and would not always follow the dictates of the caucus.

“He did not care a snap of the fingers for political excommunication. The national crisis gave men an opportunity of serving with other parties without changing their ultimate opinions.

“Some of the local organisations were determined to use the crisis for party ends. That was not playing the game, and was a denial of the very essence of national Government. The electors of those constituencies should ignore their executives, and vote for representatives of the Government, irrespective of party.”

What I am trying to point out is that throughout the world legislators are taking a statesmanlike view of the present position, and are dealing with it irrespective of party politics or of what the result of elections may be. We find it difficult in Queensland and in Australia to do so. That is perhaps accounted for by our isolation from the rest of the world. We are about four weeks' sail from the centre of the nation, and, therefore, not in close touch with affairs in Europe, as we should be. If we endeavour to discover why Labour is so much opposed to co-operation, or to suggesting a remedy to overcome the present difficulties, we find that it is because Labour has no policy. Mr. McCormack told us repeatedly in this Chamber that Labour has no remedy for unemployment. Mr. McCormack, as I have said, had the privilege of being in the inner circles of the party opposite for a number of years, and therefore knew what he was talking about.

It may be interesting to hon. members, especially those hon. members who came into the House at the last election, if I examine the record of the Labour Party. I find in “Hansard” for 1922, page 197, that on 12th July, 1922, Mr. F. T. Brennan, the then hon. member for Toowoomba, made a statement, after which he was promoted to Cabinet rank as Secretary for Public Instruction, and afterwards to a position on the Supreme Court bench. The hon. member for Brisbane was speaking and Mr.

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Fletcher, the then hon. member for Port Curtis, interjected—

“Do you stand by your policy?”

“Mr. Kirwan: I stand for the policy of this party.

“Mr. Vowles: Socialism?”

“Mr. Brennan: Communism. The farmers do, too.”

Mr. Brennan was not in the dialogue at first, but he bought into it. He did so because he wished to express what was the policy of his party. He was candid enough and shrewd enough to come out in the open and not indulge in any camouflage. His statement was on all fours with the statement made by Mr. Theodore. When the Labour Party changed its objective to the socialisation of industry, Mr. Theodore said—

“You have changed your objective; you may as well change the name of the party, and call it the Communist Party.”

Therefore, Mr. Brennan was quite right in his opinion, because it harmonised with the opinion of his leader. We also find on pages 164 and 165 of “Hansard,” 1922, that Mr. Brennan, in speaking on 11th July, 1922, made a plea for Russia.

I am not quarreling with the opinion expressed by Mr. Brennan, but I am endeavouring to show that the Labour objective has not changed since 1922. Mr. Brennan was arguing in favour of the organisation of primary producers, and he said—

“The industrialist is entitled to one big union as well. Only by organisation can the workers get their rights.”

Then Mr. Brennan proceeded to quote what the Melbourne “Age” and “Argus” had said in August, 1921, about the organisation of farmers, and remarked—

“I say the farmers are moving in the right direction by going in for communism. The ‘Age’ and the ‘Argus’ call it communism. . . . We stand for co-operative methods—in other words, socialisation—in connection with industry in every branch. The ‘Argus’ and the ‘Age’ call it communism, and so do we.”

We now come to consider the stage at which the policy of the Labour Party was put into operation, and we have a speech delivered by the then Premier, the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, on 19th February, 1918, when he said—

“We have been socialising industry, and now the people have their own cattle stations.”

Where are those cattle stations to-day? They went bankrupt. Reference was also made to the fact that the people had their own butcher shops; but we know that, as soon as they commenced operations, the price of meat became dearer. Similarly with the fisheries. When the Government started to interfere with legitimate fishermen, fish became almost unprocurable, and was certainly much more expensive to buy. I could enumerate many other enterprises which show equally disastrous results.

We can recall the words of Mr. W. H. Demaine, who was the president of the 1920 Labour Convention. Mr. Demaine was going to socialise every industry in Australia.

Mr. DASH: Who was Mr. Demaine?

Mr. FRY: When the hon. member asks that question, I can tell him that Mr.

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Demaine was well qualified to speak on behalf of Labour, because, when Messrs. Demaine and Lewis McDonald were in the Legislative Council, they were the bosses of the Labour movement; their word was law.

When the policy of socialisation was being put into effect, two sections of the Labour Party were at work—namely, the parliamentary or political section and the industrial section. The political section did everything it possibly could to make the position of private industry as difficult as possible.

It was their objective to make the position difficult, and, by imposing taxation upon taxation, they made it unprofitable for private industry to exist. That was their objective; and the industrial side of the movement did everything that was possible to cause irritation in order to prevent the successful organisation of private industry. So we find the Labour Government during their fourteen years of office attempting to socialise industry and destroy all private enterprise. They imposed taxation to its limit, and borrowed to the limit. Loans are usually obtained to avoid taxation; but the Labour Government not only taxed to the limit, but they borrowed to the limit. That was wrong in principle, and was bound to bring about the condition of affairs which has existed since 1928. The “Union Voice” of 6th December—a Labour paper issued from the Brisbane Trades Hall—has this to say—

“Tinkering with State socialism has admittedly been an inglorious failure. . . . The workers of Queensland desire continuity of work and high wages. Revolutionary communism is out of the question. . . . We must fall back on capitalism. That being so, it is essential that the system be developed as rapidly as possible. During such development the workers can command the best conditions and highest wages for the demand for labour is high where capitalism expands speedily. Can Labour in office assist in this development, and at the same time safeguard the workers’ wages and conditions? We believe it can. It is up to Premier McCormack and his party. . . . Let us cut our political cloth accordingly.”

First of all we have Premier McCormack telling us that the position during the next few years will be difficult and serious. Then we see the work of the Labour Party in their attempt to destroy privately controlled industry and set up in its place socialised industry; and then we find the workers’ representatives saying that their policy has been a failure, and then, just before the last election, Mr. Gledson, the Secretary for Labour and Industry, told us that they had 115,000 unemployed and partly unemployed persons in Queensland.

Mr. DUNLOP: You have said that about fifty times in this House.

Mr. FRY: And no Labour member has contradicted it. I remember the time when the late Hon. T. J. Ryan used to look over at me and say that, if a thing was worth saying, it should be repeated over and over and over again. I say that this statement should be repeated over and over and over again if we want to get at the truth.

Mr. Lang, the Labour Premier of New South Wales, has been endeavouring to carry out the policy of the Labour Party which

has been in operation over a period of years, and nobody will deny that. All credit is due to Mr. Lang for his sincerity and honesty in regard to his party politics. He has been courageous enough to stand up and say what he wants, and I have no quarrel with him on that point, except to say that I do not agree with his views. But we find the Labour Party in Queensland, now that the election is approaching, declaring that Mr. Lang has nothing to do with them—that he is ostracised, and something quite different from the original Labour Party. I want to point out to hon. members opposite that, from what I have seen of the Lang campaign in Brisbane, Mr. Lang and his party are drawing bigger crowds than the Labour Party here can draw. No matter where his representatives speak in Brisbane, they draw a crowd. If hon. members opposite say that his policy is wrong, what steps are they taking to put the people's minds right? None whatever! Hon. members opposite know that it is very difficult for them to define the position they assume of being the only section of the Labour Party in the whole of Australia that is standing upon a policy that is self-interpreted and is not in conformity with the general Labour policy.

In order to show that there is harmony between Mr. Lang and the Labour Party here, I shall quote the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition as reported on page 1893 of "Hansard" for 1930—

"The people of New South Wales gave their answer in no uncertain fashion on Saturday last; and I only wish it were possible for the Queensland Government to go to the country next week, for they would undoubtedly get their answer."

He was referring to the election of Mr. Lang in New South Wales.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What is wrong with that?

MR. FRY: There is nothing wrong with it. All I say is that the way hon. members opposite act is wrong. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also said—

"Mr. Lang is a gentleman. He is one who is game to stand up for the workers of Australia."

I do not doubt that statement; but I ask why the Labour Party in the Queensland Parliament are afraid to emulate his example. Why are they afraid to explain their policy? We know that the position in which we are placed to-day is a very difficult one, and grave responsibilities and obligations are placed upon the Federal Government and all the State Governments. It has been said to be an axiom of government that—

"A nation's supreme obligation is to protect its citizens. If its citizens are threatened or attacked, government must protect them or defend them. If they are naked and can be clothed in no other way, government must clothe them. If they are starving and can be fed in no other way, government must feed them. If they are unsheltered and can be housed in no other way, government must house them."

That is the logical position at which we have arrived after carrying out the policy of socialisation of industry. By that policy we have been destroying the very elements in our national life which provide employment

for our people. Industry has been destroyed, and something must take its place.

As I have proved in this Chamber from time to time, nothing remains to be done towards solving the production problem, for we can produce more than can be consumed. The unclothed and the hungry people of the world are the markets that are waiting for our production; so that the consumption problem as well as the production problem is solved; but the exchange problem remains to be solved, so that the product of industry can be consumed.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRY: I take it as a compliment that hon. members opposite should cheer me for what I have said. I challenge them to disprove one thing that I have uttered in regard to their policy or their actions. I tell them also that the Lang Party is going to make headway in Queensland.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Bunkum!

MR. FRY: Although hon. members may say that it is bunkum, they will have to take sides with or against Mr. Lang. They tell us here that his policy is the right policy for Australia and for the workers; yet they are not prepared to follow it, simply because they are not game, simply because they have their eyes on the next election. Hon. members reaped every advantage of the good times, but the depression fell on this Government. Mr. McCormack saw it coming, and warned the Australian people that it was coming; but it fell upon us in a way that was not expected. It came upon the Government in such a way that they were helpless, because hon. members opposite had spent the money that was available and there was nothing left to come and go on. They say that they left £5,000,000 in the Treasury, but they also left a public debt of £112,000,000, on which interest and redemption have to be paid. They were like a husband who, when his wife presents him with a bill for £5, gives her 5s. with which to pay it. Every man and woman in Queensland can quite correctly take that view of what the Labour Government did, and ask how the bill can be met. I say that it is a monument to the people of Queensland, to the men and the women and the children of Queensland, that they have been able to endure courageously their unfortunate destitution or hardship and to manage so well; but they would not have been able to meet the conditions that exist had it not been for the sympathetic administration of the Moore Government.

I have disagreed with the Moore Government in some things, but they were carrying out the plan of the Premiers' Conference, composed of four Labour and three Nationalist Premiers, but greater confidence can be reposed by the people of Queensland in the present Government and in their control of the affairs of this State than could ever be placed in a Labour Government as we have known it.

MR. BOW (*Mitchell*) [12.10]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the tirade of the hon. member for Kurilpa, extending over an hour, during which time he failed to associate himself with any party. He failed to associate himself with his own party, with the Labour Party, or with the Lang Party. No doubt his tirade was directed against the Labour Party, as at one stage he stated

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that the Labour policy had never been altered. I recollect the hon. member being secretary of a branch of the Australian Labour Party in Ipswich, so his views must have changed considerably since then. The hon. member gave the impression that he was the only coming statesman in Australia. I am afraid that the hon. member is very easily convinced. He spoke in this Chamber for an hour, but said nothing.

The hon. member for Nanango stated that the people of Queensland were better off under relief work and intermittent relief schemes than they were when the basic wage was paid. He definitely stated that he was in favour of a reduction of wages. How can an hon. member say that he is in favour of a reduction of wages whilst saying at the same time that he is not in favour of a reduction in the cost of living? He also stated that the cost of living had been reduced, but he should know that pertinent questions on this subject have been directed to Ministers on a number of occasions. Only the other day the hon. member for Burke, in pleading for the Mount Oxide men who were on strike, pointed out in a question he asked that, notwithstanding the fact that the wages of these men had been reduced by 3s. per day, they were compelled to pay the following prices for their commodities:—

	s.	d.
Butter ...	3	1 per lb.
Potatoes ...	0	4 per lb.
Onions ...	0	4 per lb.
Tea ...	3	0 per lb.
Flour ...	14	6 per 50 lb. bag.
Sugar ...	0	7 per lb.

In face of those figures, hon. members of the type of the hon. member for Nanango contend that the cost of living has been reduced. We know very well that the cost of living has not been reduced in the West. Even to-day Western people are paying the same prices for their beef as were charged when cattle realised from £12 to £15 per head. No action has been taken by the Commissioner of Prices, despite the fact that the matter has been ventilated on the floor of this Chamber scores of times.

It is interesting to note how the supporters of the Government endeavour to defend the Financial Statement. We have been told each session since the present Government came into power that the Budget would have been balanced but for certain happenings. This year we had a special session of Parliament for the purpose of passing legislation to assist in putting the Premiers' plan into operation. That plan, we were told, was a means to balance the Budget.

Mr. KELSE: In three years.

Mr. BOW: The Government have been in office a little over two years, and the finances of this State have drifted continuously during the whole of their career. The hon. member for Nundah stated that the plan covered three years' operations. As the Government have one year only to run, they evidently intend to extend the life of Parliament for a further two years. We were often told before the special session of Parliament that the Budget would be balanced if only the principles adopted at the Premiers' Conference were put into operation. Notwithstanding that that plan is now in operation, and that taxation, both direct and indirect, has been imposed

on the people—particularly on the working class—the Government have not been able to arrest the drift. The unemployment relief tax imposed on the wages of the working class a direct tax of 3d. in the £1 up to and including £104 per annum; but immediately the earnings of the worker reach £105 they are taxed at the rate of 6d. in the £1. It is rather strange that workers on such low rates of pay should be taxed to that extent, and that people with large incomes should be taxed on the same basis. The present Government appear to be out for no other purpose than dragging every shilling possible from the working class. A working man with a wife and family earning £104 to-day cannot afford to pay any tax, notwithstanding that hon. members opposite are repeatedly saying that these men are only too pleased to pay the tax in order that their less fortunate fellows can be employed at starvation rates on intermittent work. No worker would own up to such a thing. The man earning £105 per annum is taxed at the rate of 6d. in the £1 just the same as the man who is earning £2,000 or £3,000 a year.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The landlord and the Treasurer get the lot.

Mr. BOW: The capitalist class gets the largest proportion. When the Labour Government were in power, the workers were paid a reasonable rate of wage, although I did not consider they were paid all they were entitled to. The present Administration should be ashamed of themselves for reducing the wages of the workers to the extent they have done. It was not sufficient for the Government to impose an unemployment relief tax on the workers and then double that tax; but they have further penalised them by removing a large section from the protection of the Industrial Court. That is a severe indirect tax. Men and women who were covered by the station hands' award were taken from the protection of the Industrial Court, and thereby compelled to hike their labour from station to station and accept any rate that was offering. This protection was denied our white workers by the Government, who still protected the rates and conditions of the aborigines employed on the stations.

Although the aboriginal has to be paid a certain rate of pay, we have the paradoxical position that the white man has to offer his labour at any old rate that he can get. Notwithstanding the statement made by the Premier that the suspension of the station hands' award would create more employment, the fact remains that throughout the West no additional labour has been engaged. Not satisfied with the suspension of the station hands' award, the big pastoralists brought about the removal from the Industrial Court of the experts and woolclassers, who will now have to accept the same rate of pay as that paid to station hands—and that rate is whatever the pastoralists offer. After all, only one expert and one woolclasser can usually be employed in each shed, so that the suspension of that award will not mean the employment of additional experts or woolclassers.

It was stated this morning by an hon. member on the Government side that pools should be maintained; but I say most emphatically that, if there are to be reductions in wages, then pools must go by the board.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Isn't your union a pool?

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Mr. BOW: It is perfectly silly for the hon. member for Albert to compare pools with an organised section of workers. I only wish that the workers were on the same footing as the members of the various pools. Because then we could demand anything.

Mr. BOYD: You have been on a better wicket for many years—a much better wicket than any of the producers were on.

Mr. BOW: Hark to the noise of the angry bull! If we were enjoying the same conditions as the members of the various pools in Queensland—

Mr. PLUNKETT: Do you object to the producers being organised?

Mr. BOW: I object to the producers being protected under present conditions. The Labour Government protected the producers by the establishment of pools in order that the primary producers could get fair prices so long as the workers were able to buy the products.

Mr. BOYD: Do you condemn the action of your own Labour Government? Apparently you do.

Mr. BOW: Has the hon. member got another life? While the worker is on the low rate of pay that he is receiving to-day, when a married man draws intermittent pay at the rate of £1 1s. per week, he cannot pay the price of products which are protected by the pools; therefore I say distinctly that these pools should go by the board; and I make no apology to the hon. member for Albert or any other hon. member representing a country electorate for making that statement.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Is that the policy of your party?

Mr. BOW: The Labour Party believes in a high rate of wages, so as to allow the workers to buy those products, and so that the products can be sold at a price which will enable the producer to make a living. If my party is not prepared to protect the worker to that extent, then I am prepared to stand on my own.

Mr. BOYD: You are only showing your ignorance. The city worker has got protection right through, and you know it.

Mr. KIRWAN: He has not.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask hon. members on both sides to cease interjections and obey my call to order.

Mr. BOYD: Make him stick to facts.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BOW: I would like to remind the hon. member who has just been roaring across the Chamber that "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

Mr. BOYD: Do you suggest you are the wise man?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BOYD: So far as this party is concerned—

Mr. PLUNKETT: You were speaking for yourself a while ago.

Mr. BOW: The Labour Party would wipe out all pools to-morrow if the Government would bring wages down to such an extent that the workers cannot buy the products of the primary producers; and they cannot do it to-day. Only the other day the Government passed a Margarine Bill, which prevented the worker buying a substitute for

butter. No one objects to hon. members fighting for the butter industry.

Mr. PLUNKETT: You want to wipe it out.

Mr. BOW: You want to wipe the workers' wages out.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Never in my life.

Mr. BOW: In every instance the hon. member has voted for the reduction of wages and the cancellation of awards. The position to-day is that the workers cannot buy the necessaries of life. Four years ago men could live with reasonable comfort on the wages they were getting, but that is impossible to-day. There is no possible chance of the worker buying anything outside the bare necessities of life, such as bread, meat, and cheese. He cannot get any luxuries whatever. Yet we have members like the hon. member for Nanango saying that the cost of living has come down! The cost of living has not come down one iota in the Western districts. In Brisbane things are cheaper; but men in the West have no opportunity of getting their goods at Brisbane prices; therefore, it is no use hon. members opposite saying that the Government are doing all they possibly can for the workers, unless they qualify it and say "by starving them."

The statement has been made in this Chamber that the Labour Government have explored every avenue possible to tax people, and that they have left no one outside for them to tax. There have been four additional methods of taxation brought down this year—one of them to double the unemployment relief tax on the lower-paid men and women. The Government do that notwithstanding that they say that it hurts them to do it. When taxation Bills are going through and divisions are being taken hon. members opposite smile and seem to think they have the toiler at their feet, and are going to keep him there. This year a double tax at the rate of 6d. in the £ has been brought in for unemployment relief. Where was the necessity for that? Do the Government mean to tell us that a graduated tax would not have brought more than what they will get by the imposition of an extra 3d. in the £ on a toiler's salary of £105 a year? No worker to-day can afford to pay the tax at that rate. Notwithstanding that, the people who are well able to pay taxes, and who should have paid their taxes, are evading them to-day to the extent of £15,000, as stated in "Smith's Weekly." They are managers of butter factories, amongst others, men who are well able to pay their taxes, but they are evading them to the extent of £15,000. One man on the Downs has been found to have dodged the tax by about £3,000. When the Government have to drop on the worker to take away 3d. or 6d. in the £ from his pay sheet, it is very unjust. He has no possible chance of evading the income tax. But it is a bit over the odds for people who are supporters of the Government to be allowed to dodge income tax to the extent of £15,000.

Mr. BOYD: Who told you they were supporters of the Government? How do you know?

Mr. BOW: They could not be anything else.

Mr. BOYD: Do you think they are supporters of the Government, when the Commissioner of Taxes get hold of them and runs them into court?

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Mr. BOW: I hope the Commissioner does get hold of them, and that they are not merely fined. I will not be satisfied until these people are compelled to pay double income tax.

Mr. BOYD: I agree with you in every respect, but you are suggesting they are supporters of the Government.

Mr. BOW: I am not suggesting anything of the sort—I say distinctly they are.

Mr. BOYD: I say you are talking nonsense, because you don't know.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member for Mitchell to address the chair.

Mr. BOW: It is the dodging of taxes and things of that description that are reprehensible. According to the report of the Commissioner of Taxes, there is £80,000 owing by people, most of whom, I dare say, cannot afford to pay it; but to think that £15,000 is being dodged by those who can well afford to pay is out of all reason, and I am satisfied that Government members are of the same opinion.

At 12.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BOW: The hon. member for Cook the other day revived the Mungana case. I really thought the Government had had sufficient of it; I am satisfied, at any rate, that most hon. members have. The hon. member, however, resurrected it, and I am satisfied that no other hon. member would have done so. He was very careful to say that he was very much concerned about the integrity of this House, and that it had to be protected. What an excuse to make for his attack on the hon. member for Paddington! There was absolutely no truth in the suggestion—other than what the hon. member tried to read into the facts—that the hon. member for Paddington or anyone else in this Chamber was implicated or interested in the Mungana case. I cannot understand the reason that actuated the hon. member. If I had my way—and I wish to protect the integrity of this Parliament as much as anybody—I would have had an inquiry into the bribery case, because I consider that more than anything else in the history of Queensland that has cast a slur on the integrity of members of this Assembly. It is well known to every hon. member that rumours were prevalent that £3,500 was hiked through the lobbies of this House to buy one member of this party. Did hon. members ever hear of anything so low?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who told you that?

Mr. BOW: I know all about it. Hon. members opposite were not game to have an inquiry then to save the integrity of this House, with which the hon. member for Cook was so much concerned in the case of the hon. member for Paddington.

Mr. KENNY: When I raised that case the other day you were not game to listen to me.

Mr. BOW: I was here.

Mr. KENNY: You all walked out.

Mr. BOW: I say that nothing was to be gained by what the hon. member did.

The TREASURER: You have made a grave mis-statement about the other matter.

Mr. BEDFORD: Were not Sleeman and Connolly convicted?

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Mr. BOW: The Treasurer suggests that I am making a mis-statement. Were not Sleeman and Connolly prosecuted, and did they not get a sentence of three months' imprisonment and a fine of £500, and were only in gaol a fortnight.

Mr. BRAND: You said that money was hiked through the lobbies.

Mr. BOW: I know that many members of this party were approached in the lobbies of this House. (Government interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BOW: The Government made an inquiry into the Mungana case, but not into that case. (Renewed Government interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order: The debate cannot continue in this way. It is quite impossible. I ask hon. members on my right to allow the hon. member to speak, and not direct so many interjections at him.

Mr. BOW: The present Government investigated the Mungana question, appointing a Royal Commission and passing Acts through this Parliament and instituting an action, all to victimise one man. They fastened on him and they failed in their action, and most of them are quite satisfied that they have failed, but the hon. member for Cook was not content to let matters rest, and the result was that he struck a mare's nest.

Mr. KENNY: Why do you not explain it?

Mr. BOW: The hon. member for Paddington explained it. Hon. members on this side sat in the Chamber as long as it was possible, and we saw the hon. member for Cook looking round the galleries to see if everyone was taking particular notice of what he was saying. So far as flashness is concerned, chain lightning has nothing on the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. KENNY: Who has been priming you?

Mr. BOW: I do not need any priming, but I have seen the Attorney-General prime the hon. member for Cook. No one knows what I am going to speak about. (Laughter.) Let us see how far the Government are prepared to go! The hon. member for Cook refers to priming because he knows something about priming within his own party. The other day the hon. member for Oxley wanted to deal with unborn babies.

Mr. KENNY: What are you talking about now?

Mr. BOW: He wanted to do away with baby clinics. The hon. member for Cook does not understand, but the hon. member for Merthyr on his left could explain to him that the only way to bring clinic training from Brisbane to Western districts is by means of a travelling car.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. member for Oxley did not deal with baby clinics.

Mr. BOW: The hon. member for Cook does not know anything about it. Anyone who drinks his own bath water can have no knowledge of these subjects. The hon. member for Oxley definitely stated that he would do away with baby clinics.

Mr. KENNY: Read "Hansard"!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I again appeal to hon. members on my right to cease interjecting, and I ask the hon. member for Mitchell to address the chair.

Mr. BOW: I do not care what appears in "Hansard" now. We all receive proofs of our speeches, and in many many instances "Hansard" is very human. They have to report the speeches of members not only on one side of the Chamber but on both sides. I frankly say that I do not know how our speeches would appear if it were not for "Hansard."

Mr. CLAYTON: You are reflecting on "Hansard."

Mr. BOW: I am not reflecting on "Hansard." There is no doubt that "Hansard" licks the speeches of hon. members into grammatical shape.

Mr. CLAYTON: Particularly in your case.

Mr. BOW: Judging from the intelligence of the hon. member, I should say that there will be a close run between him and the hon. member for Nanango for the position of Secretary for Public Instruction, provided they are returned at the next election. I am making no reflection whatever on "Hansard." It ill becomes any hon. member to say that our social services, and particularly baby clinics, should be reduced in efficiency.

The action of the Government was bad enough when they were instrumental in reducing the wages of the nurses. How is it possible for nurses to live to-day except with the assistance of their parents? There is no possible chance of their subsisting on the wage paid since the Government removed them from the ambit of the Industrial Court.

After completing her general course, a girl on the nursing staff of a hospital takes up the obstetric course, when she receives only 8s. per week. Unless she has her parents to assist her to acquire all the knowledge a competent nurse should have, where are we to get our nurses from?

There is not the slightest doubt that the Government have searched every avenue and every class of worker for taxable purposes. If a graduated relief tax had been imposed, the Government would have obtained far more revenue than they have derived from taxing the mere pittance earned by the workers on the lower scales. Even a worker who earns 3s. 5d. must pay a tax of 1d., while workers earning from £1 to £104 are taxed at the rate of 3d. in the £1. The tax on earnings in excess of the latter amount is 6d. in the £1.

Mr. CLAYTON: Under a Labour Government in New South Wales the tax is 1s. in the £1.

Mr. BOW: Hon. members opposite should realise that they are charged with governing the affairs of this State and not the affairs of New South Wales. They are continually rushing to New South Wales for comparisons in order to show that they are not as bad as the Government of that State. The Government are charged with looking after the affairs of this State. They have neglected their job, although our whole productivity, which is the basis of our wealth, is the result of the labour of the workers. Notwithstanding that fact, they are only receiving sufficient wages to buy tucker. No man with a wife and child can live on one guinea a week, which is the amount paid him on intermittent work. If some hon. members were compelled to undertake that work for a few months, they would be more compassionate towards those workers. It is all very well for them drawing their parliamentary salaries in addition to earnings from

their private interests to agree to the rates prescribed for this work. They should have more regard for the men and women involved, many of whom do not know where the next meal will come from.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*) [12.48]: We have listened to a very extraordinary speech by the hon. member for Mitchell. He was very frank and definite, and spoke with the authority of the leader of a party. He made no bones about the fact that, if certain things emanated, the Labour Party would stand well behind them. His speech contained many extraordinary statements. It was extraordinary in the inaccuracies in the subject-matter dealt with. Possibly, the hon. member may be excused for his utterances, because he said that nobody in this Chamber knew what he was speaking about. I am quite satisfied that he did not know what he was speaking about when he spoke about the bribery charge.

Mr. Bow: How is it then that I got so many bites?

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member did not know what he was talking about, and hon. members on this side endeavoured to put him right. The hon. member deliberately made the statement that a certain sum of money was hawked about this House in an endeavour to bribe a member of Parliament, and he endeavoured to infer that hon. members on this side, who were the Opposition of the day, were responsible for the attempted bribery.

Mr. BEDFORD: So they were.

Mr. BRAND: The records of this Parliament show conclusively that the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. W. J. Vowles, asked the Government for a Royal Commission to inquire into those bribery charges. We know the reply which the Government gave. Yet we have these saints on the other side saying to-day that members of this party were responsible for certain things. I cannot understand hon. members representing responsible constituencies endeavouring so to mislead the people. So far as that matter is concerned, we welcomed the fullest inquiry at the time, and the hon. member for Mitchell now makes mention of it only after a considerable lapse of time.

Statements have been made by hon. members opposite which seem to indicate that the Labour Party has formed certain definite opinions of the policy to be applied to the primary producers. The hon. member for Mitchell said that all pools would have to go by the board.

Mr. BEDFORD: He said it with a proviso.

Mr. BRAND: When challenged, he said it was impossible to make a comparison between an organised body of workers and an organised body of farmers. I made sure that I would quote the hon. member correctly, because I wrote down his remarks at the time. I cannot understand how a party that was once of the opinion that pools were in the interests of the consumers of the State should now reverse its opinions; and, when the pools are well established and giving a great service to the people, desires to abolish them. According to the hon. member for Mitchell, these pools must go by the board—

Mr. Bow: On account of the reduction in wages.

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Mr. BRAND: In this respect he follows the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. DUNLOP: I say candidly that these pools are a curse. Why do you sell Queensland butter much cheaper in England than in Queensland?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member for Rockhampton does not need to repeat what he said before. We can quite imagine the hon. member consigning the farmers of Queensland to the winds—farmers who are working more than eight hours a day.

Mr. DUNLOP: Why are you selling butter in England cheaper than here?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRAND: In upholding the pool system established in Queensland, the Government are endeavouring not only to foster primary production but to ensure a supply of food-stuffs to the people at the cheapest possible rates.

Mr. DUNLOP: Do you stand for the 3d. per lb. extra—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DUNLOP: Do you stand for the extra charge to the consumers in Queensland?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must obey my call to order.

Mr. DUNLOP: He is getting personal to me, and he must take a Roland for his Oliver.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not repeat my call.

Mr. BRAND: We have to recognise that the pool system has done much to develop primary production.

Last year and this year, under the present Government, there has been a record production of wheat in Queensland. By guaranteeing the wheat producers a fixed price for wheat, the Government have made Queensland self-supporting in its bread supplies. Surely no one will contend that the price of bread is not lower to-day than ever it was under the Labour Government! I know from my own experience that bread is cheaper to-day than it was at any time during the regime of the Labour Government. The wheat producers are a satisfied body of men. The hon. member for Cook reminds me that bread can be procured in Brisbane to-day for 3d. per loaf. That was never possible under the Labour Government.

Mr. KIRWAN: Brisbane is not Queensland.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member cannot mention one instance during the Labour regime where it was possible to buy bread at 3d. per loaf. Surely, if the workers are able to buy bread at 3d. per loaf, the Government should not be criticised for it! Hon. members opposite should welcome it. The Government are endeavouring to help the primary producer, and at the same time they are helping the consuming public in the large cities of the State.

I also wish to mention the butter pool, to which the hon. member for Rockhampton is continually referring. For the first time in the history of Queensland the butter pool has placed the dairying industry on a stable footing.

Mr. DUNLOP: What about the English prices? Why is butter dearer here than in England?

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Mr. BRAND: I thought the hon. member was such an authority on political economics that he could understand those things.

Mr. DUNLOP: Why should the Queensland children not get it cheaper?

Mr. BRAND: The Queensland children are getting butter as cheaply as any other children in Australia. By a properly conducted marketing scheme we have made many things better for the people of Queensland. We propose to continue the present system.

Mr. DUNLOP: Tell us about the peanut pool, and how you robbed the growers.

The TREASURER: Mr. Roberts, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Rockhampton in order in saying we robbed the peanut growers? I say he is out of order, and should be asked to withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member if he made that statement.

Mr. DUNLOP: I made the statement, and I withdraw it. I shall make a statement on the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. BRAND: I can assure the hon. member that I shall not take any notice of him.

Mr. DUNLOP: No; but I shall reply later on.

Mr. BRAND: Pools create confidence on the part of producers, and encourage development. It is necessary that we should do that, because we have to look to our primary industries in Australia to balance our trade deficit abroad; and the farmer should be protected and given every encouragement in this direction. There cannot be any shadow of doubt that, since the Moore Government came into power, every consideration has been given to the consumer, in common with every section of the community. The Government have done what is right in the interests of Queensland, and are likely to help us to get out of this financial tangle.

The policy of the Government has been responded to by those associated with the industries of the State. Those who are engaged in our great exporting industries are making every effort to bring about the stability which we had prior to 1929. I shall quote figures given by Professor Bridgen giving the position of Australia with regard to exports. These figures are based on pre-depression totals, and show that Queensland is fast making good in the direction of increasing her exports—

EXPORTS AS PERCENTAGES OF PRE-DEPRESSION TOTALS, VALUES AVERAGES 1927-28 AND 1928-29 = 100.

Six months ending—	Australia.	Queensland.	
		1931.	1930.
	Pcr cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
March	59.0	72.3	
April	60.9	71.9	74.5
May	62.4	70.8	67.2
June	63.6	76.4	75.3
July	65.7	86.3	80.9
August	68.1	89.2	79.1

We have almost reached the standard obtaining in 1929 so far as our exports are concerned. In this respect Queensland is doing more than any other State in the

Commonwealth, and much more than the average for Australia. Surely we must give some credit to the Government for the confidence which has been given to the people of Queensland. I can quite understand why hon. members opposite are always endeavouring to disparage the work of the Government—they are endeavouring to make political propaganda for the next election in the hope that they may deceive the people.

In his Financial Statement the Treasurer said—

“The period through which we are passing is one of extreme difficulty. The general economic depression, although world-wide in its incidence, has had exceptionally severe effects on primary producing countries, such as Australia, the value of our primary products having fallen to record low levels.”

Why cannot hon. members opposite recognise that economic truth, and admit that the Government have had to put up with the greatest difficulties with which any Government in Queensland have ever been faced? They are the difficulties which Labour Governments in other States have had to meet; and the achievements of the Moore Government compare favourably with theirs. The Treasurer proceeded—

“A review of the economic position must force one to the conclusion that prices are below a payable level, and that until conditions improve overseas we must endeavour to accommodate ourselves to a national income considerably less than has been earned for a number of years past, and still further reduce our cost of production.”

Hon. members may say, “Why should we not do away with pools and sell our commodities to the consumer in Australia at the same price as that at which we sell them abroad?”

Mr. DUNLOP: We should sell them cheaper.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member for Rockhampton goes one further, and says we should sell them cheaper.

Mr. DUNLOP: And I make no apology for it.

Mr. BRAND: If the wages of the people of Queensland were the same as those of the countries with which we had to compete in the markets of the world, the hon. member would have some justification for his attitude.

Mr. DUNLOP again interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the continual interjections of the hon. member for Rockhampton. I asked him before lunch to restrain himself. He knows the rules of debate in regard to interjections; and I again ask him to cease interrupting the hon. member who is addressing the chair.

Mr. BRAND: We in Queensland have to pay a wage equal to what is called a white man's standard of living.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are not doing it.

Mr. BRAND: I shall show hon. members that we are doing equally as well as the Labour Governments in Australia, if not better. We have to meet the position with regard to our working people—I think it is

a position we should meet—but we could not do it if we accepted the policy of the hon. member for Rockhampton or the hon. member for Mitchell. If the prices received for our primary produce were equal to those obtained in other parts of the world, not one ton of cane would be grown in this State, and there would not be the amount that there is of other primary products for export. We as a Government recognise that we have to do all that is possible in helping these industries. I believe that we should pay a very high standard of wage in this State. The Government hold that belief also, and they have endeavoured to keep the standard as high as possible, having regard to the income available. After all, under the Moore Government in Queensland, the basic wage is higher than it is in States governed by Labour Governments. In South Australia, where the Hill Labour Government hold sway, the basic wage is £3 3s. per week. In Victoria, where the Hogan Labour Government are in power, the basic wage is £3 9s. per week.

In Queensland the basic wage is £3 14s. per week, clearly indicating that the Government recognise their responsibility to the working class of this State. The prescribed basic wage in this State is higher than the ruling basic wage in Labour-governed States of the Commonwealth. The Labour Government are in power in the Federal sphere, yet the Federal basic wage in Queensland is only £3 0s. 9d. per week. Again, the basic wage in this State is in excess of the basic wage prescribed by the Federal Arbitration Court.

I have listened with considerable attention to the interpretation by hon. members opposite of the action of this Government and of other Governments in Australia in accepting the Premiers' plan. It is admitted that that plan provided for a reduction in controllable expenditure; but it can be said that the reductions made by this Government were low, consistent with national safety. The reductions in the salaries paid to public servants are lower than in any other State of the Commonwealth. All Governments have now adopted the plan. Let me remind hon. members opposite that there are seven Governments in Australia, four being Labour Governments, and, if any dominance was to be exercised at the Premiers' Conference, then it should have been exercised by Labour Governments. The Premiers' plan, providing for a reduction in wages, was accepted unanimously; and it is all humbug and moonshine for the Opposition in the Queensland Parliament to say that they would not have accepted it. It is a fact that, when times were better—in fact, during the peak of the alleged prosperous times—the Labour Government in Queensland, of whom the present Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Brisbane were Cabinet Ministers, reduced the wages of the workers of this State and brought about industrial turmoil. We have endeavoured to protect the interests of the workers; and the wages that rule to-day are better than the rates prevailing in the other parts of the Commonwealth. We have been advised to impose additional taxation to make up the leeway in revenue. We have been charged with allowing wealthy people to escape whilst taxing the poorer-paid people of the State to an unnecessary extent. What is the position? I must again refer to the

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Treasurer's remarks in the Financial Statement. He points out that the national income has fallen considerably, and that we cannot obtain from the people the same amount of taxation as formerly. We have been told that the Government have assisted pastoral industries and the people engaged in pastoral pursuits. Heaven only knows that industry has had a very difficult time during the past few years. Wool prices have fallen by over 40 per cent., and the wool-grower has not been able to show a sufficient margin of profit to enable him to pay heavy income taxation. The Commissioner of Taxes, in his report on income taxation, points out that the amount of income tax imposed upon pastoral companies and pastoralists engaged in wool production in 1926 was £676,000, or 33.8 per cent. of the total income taxation paid. In 1931 the amount had slumped to £91,000, or 3.8 per cent. of the total receipts. Surely hon. members opposite realise the difficulty of that situation! It is all humbug to suggest that we have granted concessions to the pastoralists in order to grease the fat pig. The concessions that have been granted have been granted purely in the interests of the industry and in the interests of the people of Queensland.

If the prices ruling for wool during the term of the Labour Government had continued, the depression would not be nearly so severe as it is to-day. In my opinion, we have met the industrial position with advantage to the people. When the figures are submitted to them, they will recognise we have done very well. Anyone reading our newspapers on the occasion of the visit of many Southerners a few months ago read the expressions of praise for what the Government had done in this State; and the opinion was expressed that Queensland was in a more healthy condition than any other State of Australia. Some of the visitors even indicated that they were returning to Queensland to make their investments.

Hon. members opposite, including the hon. member for Mitchell, have contended that the emergency taxation imposed by this Government has been too severe. I admit that the unemployment relief tax of 3d. in the £1 on all incomes up to and including £104, and 6d. in the £1 on all incomes over that amount, is a very heavy one; but it must be recognised that it is the duty of the Government to look after those who are unfortunately unemployed, and after the women and children, in order to see that they have sufficient food. In this respect we are certainly not as badly off as the other States; and the Government can take some credit to themselves for having relieved the position. The latest figures available show the following increases in unemployment in the various States since 1929:—

	Per cent.
New South Wales	30.7
Victoria	26.5
Queensland	16.1
South Australia	32.4
Western Australia	27.1
Tasmania	27.3
Average	27.6

The fact that Queensland leads the way in these figures is abundant proof that her Government have at all times recognised their responsibility to those who, unfortunately, are unemployed, and by instituting

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relief schemes have given a wonderful help to those people. Those scheme have enabled the unemployed to obtain the necessaries of life to which they are entitled. While the Government would like to do more in this respect, economic circumstances prevent them.

At 2.17 p.m.,

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. BRAND: Much has been heard from hon. members opposite of what the Labour Party have done and what they are doing. The Federal Labour Government have been given credit for increasing the productivity of Australia and developing her industries. As a matter of fact, we all know that is not so. Statistics do not substantiate that statement. Let me disprove it by giving the figures for the factory employees in Australia as at 30th June, 1929, as compared with 30th June, 1930—

1929	450,482
1930	419,194
Decrease	31,288

The value of the output for the same period decreased from £420,000,000 to £390,000,000.

Mr. DASH: What is your definition of a factory?

Mr. BRAND: I am surprised at the interjection, for every school child knows what the definition of a factory is.

The Opposition claim that they managed the affairs of the State much better than we have done. I would point out to hon. members opposite that conditions have altered tremendously since 1929; but, compared with what has been done by Labour Governments in other States, the Queensland Government have a most creditable record.

It has been frequently stated by hon. members opposite that the Labour Government left a credit balance of £5,000,000 in the loan fund. They failed to tell us, however, that debits in respect of Chillagoe State Smelters, cattle stations, and State enterprises generally, and the Cleser Settlement Acts trust fund, approximated £1,500,000.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: All those amounts are allowed for in the net balance stated by the Auditor-General.

Mr. BRAND: No. The cash balance in the loan account represented slightly more than £3,500,000.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The net cash balance is shown as £4,033,536. You are deducting that debit twice. You had better get someone to prepare your figures with more care.

Mr. BRAND: I am satisfied that my figures are accurate.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You cannot get away from the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. BRAND: The loan cash available was not as has been stated by hon. members opposite. At all events, we know that during their term of office the Labour Government increased the public debt by over £55,000,000 in a period of fourteen years, so that, on an average, the Labour Government had over £1,000,000 of loan money to spend annually. As the public debt increased, so also did the interest bill; and every three years of Labour government represented the addition of £1,000,000 to the interest bill. Since

the present Government came into office the public debt has decreased, and so, too, have the interest payments.

Mr. PEASE: You have decreased the indebtedness by writing off £1,500,000.

Mr. BRAND: We have not borrowed the money; but, despite the inability of the Government to borrow, the Treasurer has shown that the Government have been able to carry on the affairs of state in a much better way than the Labour Governments in other parts of the Commonwealth. The Government have done remarkably well. At least we can say that they did not dismiss thousands of returned soldiers—reduce old-age pensions, interfere with invalid and soldier pensions, or tax tea, tobacco, and clothes, which are items greatly in demand with most people.

I recognise that there are many ways of taking the wages out of the envelopes of the workers; and the Federal Labour Government are experts in doing so without the workers knowing it. They have taxed tea, tobacco, and clothes to such an extent that the cost of living must soar in a very short time.

I stand equally with the hon. member for Mitchell in my desire to see that the great masses of the people of Queensland have sufficient money to buy the necessary commodities to maintain a good standard of living in this country.

It is unfortunate indeed that, when the present Government came into power, a peculiar set of conditions came about throughout the world, which had its reflex on Australian political life. A man is always worthy of his hire. Yesterday the Premier placed the position in a nutshell when he pointed out that during the last two years—that is the period during which we have been in control of the State—the price of our primary products has decreased on the markets of the world by from 30 to 40 per cent., and at the same time we know that wages awards have not been reduced by more than 10 per cent., and public servants have not, on the average, been reduced by more than 15 per cent.

Hon. members opposite must realise that before an employer can employ labour he must have the wherewithal to pay wages. They must realise that, when that wherewithal has been considerably reduced, he cannot employ labour to the same extent. I am interested in an industry in which the reductions have not been so severe as in others, but, as an employer of labour, I know that it is very difficult to meet the position as we would like to do and make a profit. There are very few employers in Queensland to-day making more than a bare profit on their undertaking. The workers recognise that, when we are in a position such as that, they must accept a small reduction in their wages. When I have spoken to those people they have realised that Labour Governments have been forced to do it, and they recognise that employers must do it. I am sure that the great majority of the people of Queensland will face the present unprecedented position, as it has been explained in the Treasurer's Budget, and will meet it not only in their own interest but in the interests of Queensland.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) [2.29]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat reminded the Committee that his Government had not been responsible for the reduc-

tion in old age and invalid pensions. The only reply to that is that, had it been left to the party on that side, the old and invalid people of Queensland would never have received any pension at all.

The TREASURER: The pensions were introduced by a Liberal Government.

Mr. BARBER: Many years back they were the bitterest of enemies of the pension scheme. Some hon. member opposite has interjected that it was brought in by a Liberal Government. If we turn up the Federal "Hansard" in the early days of federation, we will see that the biggest Tories in the Federal Parliament on that occasion, even including Sir John Forrest, gave credit to the late Andrew Fisher as being responsible for placing on the statute-book the old-age pension legislation. That Government was kept in office by the then Labour Party. The Fisher Party in those days got the credit from Sir John Forrest and other prominent Tories for being instrumental in forcing the Lyne-Deakin Government to bring it in.

A few days prior to the submission of the Budget to this Chamber, according to a local press report, the Premier was interviewed by a reporter attached to one of the newspapers, who asked him for some information regarding the pending Financial Statement. The Premier replied, "Wait and see!" The country has waited, and hon. members have waited, and we have seen what the Treasurer has delivered to this Assembly. There is no doubt that on this occasion the Treasurer has achieved notoriety, but I am sorry to say that in the concluding paragraph of the Budget speech he practically exhibited the most helpless state of despair that I have ever seen evidenced by a Treasurer of this State during the past thirty years. The last paragraph reads—

"The days of extravagant borrowing have passed away."

I do not know whether that is a benediction, a malediction, or a valediction—to me it sounds more like a valediction. I might observe that in this the last session of this Parliament a number of hon. members will make valedictory remarks so far as this House is concerned.

Mr. POLLOCK: You won't have to do it.

Mr. BARBER: Time will tell. I was so struck with the hopeless remarks of the Treasurer that I went along the passage at the Treasury and looked over the fanlight fully expecting to see there the Dantesque motto: "All hope abandon ye who enter here." I was pleased not to see it there, because it points to there being some hope for the future. During the past two years the Treasurer has lived what we would call in nautical terms, "a short life and a merry one." I remember fifty years ago next month a very heavy easterly blizzard striking a schooner, and driving it up 20 yards on a sandbank near the shore.

The coastguard, with their life-saving apparatus, came along and shot their rockets across the wrecked vessel with the life-saving line attached, but there was no sign of any member of the crew. I shall not say how old I was, but I was old enough to be asked to help to man the lifeboat and go out to the vessel. When we reached her we found that the crew, instead of making any effort to save themselves by passing the life

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line round the stern post, were all "blithering, paralytic tight." (Laughter.) They had not a care in the world—perhaps they thought they had not long to live—and, when we asked them why they did not haul the lifeline aboard, they said in Italian, "A short life and a merry one." I think that is exactly the sort of life the Treasurer has lived during the last two and a-half years. (Laughter.)

The Labour Government were very careful when they left office to leave a nice-sized nest egg of £5,000,000; and goodness knows what the Government would have lived upon during these last two and a-half years had it not been for that nest egg. Goodness knows what would really have happened to Queensland. Talk about bankruptcy staring us in the face! We would have found the Shylocks—the "three ball" men—coming out to this State and seizing our goods and chattels. Hon. members opposite know as well as I do that it is on that £5,000,000 that the present Government have lived, so that they have nothing to boast of. The Treasurer winds up his Financial Statement—and I have already said that, perhaps, this will be the last session of Parliament for a number of hon. members—

Mr. CLAYTON: On that side.

Mr. BARBER: On the hon. member's side, because the state of public opinion existing in Queensland is such that it will sweep down on their party like a combination of a Sahara Desert sirocco and an Arctic blizzard. Hon. members opposite will not know what has struck them when they get on the stump. (Laughter.) But I was making some remarks about the Treasurer, and I think that every hon. member on this side, old members particularly, like to criticize him—it is our job.

Mr. KENNY: He is not a bad sort of a cove.

Mr. BARBER: I have a lot of kindly feeling for him, because, like me, he is going down the western side of the hill. He has been in Parliament as long as I have; and, when he and I go out of Parliament, we may have to fall back on the old-age pension, so that the hon. gentleman has my deepest sympathy. Another phrase in the Treasurer's despairing Financial Statement as he straightened out in his last kick—(laughter)—made me apply to the hon. gentleman the words of Tennyson—

"Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea."

(Laughter.) I spoke of a gathering storm. The criticism that has been hurled at hon. members opposite during the past three years is the result of their system of legislation, regulation, and administration, which has been one cold-blooded merciless vendetta against every Labour principle and every humane sentiment. These are the things that the public will remember when the party opposite go to the country.

I propose to quote these few lines by Wendell Phillips—

"My advice to working men is this:

If you want power in this country; if you want to make yourself felt; if you do not want your children to wait long years before they have the bread on the

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table they ought to have; if you don't want to wait yourselves, write on your banner so that every political trimmer can read it, 'We never forget. If you launch an arrow of sarcasm at Labour, we never forget; if there is a division in Parliament, and you throw your vote in the wrong scale, we never forget.' You may go down on your knees, and say, 'I am sorry I did the act,' and we shall say, 'It will avail you in heaven, but on this side of the grave, never.'"

Hon. members may raise the old bogey about class-consciousness if they so choose. I am sorry that the Treasurer is going out of the Chamber, because on one occasion a number of years ago he remarked that I preached the gospel of discontent. I preached that gospel as a public man years before I came into this Chamber; and I am glad that I am preaching it to-day. When the Labour people at Bundaberg placed the Labour platform and the Labour charter in my hands, I felt that, dead or alive, I would hand back that charter unstained and unsoiled. I am proud of having placed upon the records of this House what was then known and condemned as the I.W.W. platform. That was a very pleasant period to me—an interesting period to me—the time of the tramway strike. When speaking here one afternoon, the Treasurer interjected, "You believe in the gospel of discontent." I did then, and I do now. This sob stuff—this Sunday school, cissie-kind of stuff—is no good in these days. The world is going through many changes; and any Government, Labour or otherwise, that endeavours to prevent those changes will be merely like Mrs. Partington on the seashore—they will not be able to keep them back. Any man who knows history to-day, and remembers the political, domestic, economic, and industrial history of the world for the past fifty or sixty years, must recognise what I say to be a fact. You may shut your eyes or try to avoid them as you can, but changes will take place. The days of parliamentary institutions to a very large extent are doomed. The workers are looking to Parliament, not only for relief, but to justify the existence of that institution. Parliamentary institutions have been magnificent institutions in the past, but they have passed through various transitional periods during the last three or four centuries. I am not going for a year or two; and twenty-five or fifty years is nothing in the life of a nation. These transitions are in operation to-day. I have heard hon. members opposite sneer at the efforts of our brothers in Russia.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Your brothers?

Mr. BARBER: Yes, my brothers. Hon. members opposite sneer at them; but they must remember that they are a nation equal to ourselves. One of the greatest mistakes that Great Britain ever made—and a blunder and mistake from which Great Britain and the Empire are suffering to-day—was when they severed diplomatic relations with Russia when the people of that great nation switched off from the great Romanoff family. The hon. member for Toombul talked about the importation of timber and wheat from Russia. These things are not new by any means. Years and years before I came to Australia—and that is a day or two ago—timber and wheat were being imported into

the old country from Russia. That was when the hon. member was at school in his pinnies and petticoats. Hon. members opposite talk about the sufferings of the great masses in Russia to-day under the Soviet Government; but their sufferings are not worse than when they were under the Czarist regime. I saw them subjected to slavish conditions long before Sovietism was established; and I make no apology for saying that, when I read the cables in the newspapers stating that the Czar and the whole of his family had been blown to what "Billy" Hughes termed "blithering blazes," I threw up my hat, and called "Hallelujah." Things could not have been worse in that country. The people in Queensland and Australia must learn that the days of sob stuff have gone.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Your party are the biggest exponents of it.

Mr. BARBER: If a man wants to obtain redress for his grievances to-day, he will have to put his back and backbone into the work. Labour practically marched to its Sedan at the last election. There is only one way of getting back to our former position, and that is by looking after the interests of the workers who sent us here. The merciless vendetta of the Government Party is not going to delay the movement. Our people require some great rallying-cry; and, before the party goes to the elections next year, that slogan will be found.

I want to quote some remarks by that great American leader, C. S. Darrow, who wrote "Labour's Hope and Dream."

What was Labour's hope and dream when it formulated its first platform? One of my most treasured possessions is a copy of the Labour platform of 1890-91. Since the first step was taken by humanity to make its presence felt, many battles have been won and lost; but the spirit of Labour is as strong to-day as ever it was. The words that I am about to quote will express ever so much better than I can—

"LABOUR'S HOPE AND DREAM.

"Have you looked back at the history of working man? If you do you will find that one hundred and fifty years ago in England and all over continental Europe he was a slave. He was bought and sold with the land. He wore one garment, if you would call it a garment. His food was of the coarsest. He had no luxuries.

"But gradually the light began to dawn in the minds of those toilers, and they organised themselves into guilds and trade unions and they met in the forests and waste places and formed their unions.

"They were sent to gaol and died on the gallows fighting for liberty; fighting for better food, for better clothing, shorter hours, for something to drink, for some little of the luxuries which the rich had always claimed for themselves, and you, the poor man of to-day, you have profited by the brave fight your ancestors made in the years gone by.

"The world's goal is liberty. There is no other way. It has never yet had real liberty. It has never had enough. It has never had very much.

"What we are hoping for and dreaming of is that real liberty will some day come to this old world of ours. If you

look at the history of the human race, look at its progress in the past, slow and difficult, but still on the whole going onward and onward; if you look away back to where man first began, and it looked very hopeless, and look at the world now and you think he has a good deal.

"Every step is marked with blood. It shows the toils and troubles of the human race, and yet through all the world has gone on, moving upward, and every step has led by one hope and one dream, and that is the hope and dream of liberty, the dearest to the hearts of men."

Those principles were initiated in the first Labour platform; and from that time—from the time when Labour was downtrodden—the movement has gone forward. We have had our setbacks; but I can assure hon. members opposite that the flag of Labour will fly over this country again after the next election. Every unit of the movement which calls itself the Labour movement of Queensland has taken cognisance of the failure at the last elections, which was brought about by many causes. For example, many people who had known no other conditions than the good conditions provided by the Labour Government could not contemplate what was in store for them when the Nationalists were returned to power. The Labour Government have been criticised regarding the unemployment question; but it is sad, although true, that unemployment has increased immensely since hon. members opposite became the Government.

At any rate, the men who worked during the fourteen years of the Labour Government's regime earned good wages. It was the first time that thousands of them had had the opportunity to enjoy life, and Labour desires the working classes to enjoy life. It was the first time hundreds had the opportunity of enjoying good homes. In the words of the poet, it was the first time "they warmed their hands at the fires of life." Not only have the Government half-starved the people; not only have they broken them physically by inflicting hardships upon them; but, worst of all, they have broken the morale of these men; and, when you break the spirit of the working man, it is 1,000 per cent. worse than breaking his heart or breaking him physically. The Government have done things that will be remembered against them when they go to the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are on the sob stuff now.

Mr. BARBER: This is not sob stuff; it is hard stuff; and the hon. gentleman cannot break it down into any solution that he can swallow.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What do you know about hard stuff?

Mr. BARBER: I know quite a lot about hard stuff. In Bundaberg we brew the hardest stuff brewed in Australia; it would kill at 1,000 yards. That is the kind of hard stuff that we turn out there. (Laughter.) I can say one good thing for the present Government, and only one, and that is that they have carried out to the full the dictates of their masters. But they have not carried it out in a humanitarian spirit. They have not carried it out in a spirit of charity. Labour has never asked for charity. What

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has been done has been done because the Government had the power to do it. It is part of the system that returned the Nationalists to power.

Let me quote a verse from the poem, "The Wheels of the System," written by the late Essex Evans:—

"Where is God whilst all around us
sound the jarring of the wheels,
Where the cry of human anguish star-
ward through the glory steals?
Woe to him who slips or falters whilst
the wheels are moving on,
Woe to him who stays to breathe when
the goal is nearly won.
There they lie, and lie for ever, over
whom the wheels have gone."

About 1894 or 1895, my old friend, the hon. member for Warrego, when I first knew him in the Labour movement in Victoria, wrote a poem, "The Christs of Trade," in somewhat the same spirit. That poem was based on very heart-breaking incidents. A mother and two grown-up daughters died of starvation, and, when the coroner's inquest had been held and the information regarding the circumstances under which these three women had died was made known through the press, the whole of the State of Victoria, at any rate, pretended to be shocked. It is on that sad incident that the hon. member based that poem.

The whole trend of the legislation of the present Government is based on the power of might. They have followed out the dictates of their masters, and the working class recognises that fact. Even when Labour was in office many of the working people complained that we were not doing enough for them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That was why they put you out.

Mr. BARBER: The lesson they have had has been taken to heart. When we consider the cutting down of 1s. per head per week for State children, paying for one less where previously three or four had been paid for, and the abolition of awards, which have put the workers into the greedy hands of the unscrupulous employer, is it not evident that the Government have done all these things on the basis that power is might. I shall quote the following words:—

"Might was Right when Christ was
hanged

Beside the Jordan's fount;

Might was Right when Gracchus bled

Upon the steps of Rome."

The gospel initiated forty or fifty years ago, so far as Labour principles are concerned, stands as firm to-day as it did in those old days when the Labour movement was born and organised—

"And Might was Right when Denton fell,
When Emmet passed away—

'Tis the logic of the Ancient World, and
The Gospel of to-day."

Mr. CLAYTON: What about singing a little hymn?

Mr. BARBER: The hon. member can sing his "Te Deum" later on. We are all prepared to admit that the world has been passing, and is passing, through very trying times. We all admit that these difficult times could have been more humanely handled by the present Government.

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I repeat that we all admit that we have been passing through some very trying times; but this is not the first occasion when, industrially and otherwise, the world has passed through such cataclysms. I do not like to suggest that it is such a time as in 1883, when I first listened to such leaders of the Labour movement as John Burns, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, and men of that type, when they addressed a crowd of 40,000 employees in England. Times then were hard. The people who then led the Labour movement were amongst the working class; but amongst the other class there was not 1 of 1 per cent. who had a good word to say for them. I remember that, when that great crowd of 40,000 people dispersed on that memorable morning, the huge London policemen on duty, who knew the dire hardships and starvation and struggles that those men and their families were going through, did not raise a single hand when they divided right and left in one of the main streets and forced their way through the windows of the shops and helped themselves. Those policemen recognised the sufferings and the hardships that those people were going through, and they sympathised with them. I am reminded also of that great man of the London slums, Cardinal Manning, who enunciated the memorable principle that "Hunger knows no law"; and if, in the big cities of Australia, as in other cities of the world, people who were hungry took the law into their own hands and helped themselves, I, for one, would not say them nay. That may be a revolutionary remark, but I mean every word I say.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What if they wanted a leader?

Mr. BARBER: If they want a leader, call on "Number 1." I do not want to be a policeman on a big horse charging through a crowd like that. It appears to me that one section of the community is always prepared to weep crocodile tears over the other section, and to appeal to them—that is, to the workers of Queensland and Australia generally—to be very kind and considerate and careful of the moneyed class—the kind of whom we heard yesterday and the day before—some of them with over £1,000,000 in bonds, who still refuse to convert, because they saw the opportunity of holding on to the high rates of interest they were enjoying by bleeding the workers and the people generally.

A few months ago I met one of these patriots—a fairly wealthy man, who used to be a member of this Assembly. I said, "What are you doing for a crust?" He replied, "Barber, I am a patriot." I said, "Do you know Sam Johnson's definition of 'patriotism' is 'the last refuge of a scoundrel'?" He said, "You may think so, but I do not. Have I not as big a right to call myself a patriot as So and So of Sydney, who sold out at a boom price during the war period and put over £1,000,000 into Commonwealth bonds? Every section of the capitalistic press boomed him as a patriot." A lot of crocodile tears have been shed over the wealthy bondholders. Even the hon. member for Toombul the other night worked himself up into a frenzy—characteristic of a Mahomedan fanatic—over the woes and sufferings of the Bank of England and other big banking institutions. He held that they were sacred—that they could not be touched or criticised. He held them

to be so sacred that no one should make any remark about them. The Bank of England has not always been the backbone of the British Empire. It has failed about seventeen times, and cannot be regarded as an infallible institution even in the hour of the country's need. Most of the great wars that have occurred have been caused by the power of the capitalistic group of the world. Let me quote from "Guises of Capitalism":—

"The money power garbs itself in militarism, nationalism, sectarianism, and all the other hypocritical guises which capitalism finds useful to its purpose. These serve as pretenses to hatreds. These are the bulwark behind which capitalism gorges and digests in security."

I could quote quite a number of other men who during past centuries have given utterance to somewhat the same sentiment to which the adherents of the Labour movement have given utterance. Take the remarks of W. J. Bryan, made at a huge reception given to him in New York in 1906. He said—

"Plutocracy is more despotic than monarchy; more insolent than aristocracy; more selfish than bureaucracy. It accumulates by conscious fraud more money than it can use, and denounces as public enemies all who question its methods or throw a light upon its crimes."

There is a mountain of truth in those remarks. He further said—

"All undertakings in the field of industry are now dependent upon the consent of the banker. The Stock Exchange activities of the banks are becoming more and more the controlling force in every department of economic life. Modern capitalism is the child of money lending. Money lending contains the root idea of capitalism. In money lending there is no thought of production. In money lending economic activity has no meaning."

In my opinion, Labour and democracy require a rallying cry. If the commercial vendetta, which I referred to just now, and which has been in evidence during the three sessions the present Government have been in office, is not enough to stir the incentive in the heart of the working class of Queensland, then nothing will stir them. Times were when the act interfering with a fellow worker stirred the crowd to enthusiasm. To a large extent the Government have taken away all the safeguards that were built up in the interests of the worker during the period Labour was in office.

Mr. BLACKLEY: They have simply knocked down the barriers.

Mr. BARBER: I say you have destroyed them. The Government have not been content with destroying those safeguards, which were part of the superstructure, but they have attempted to spoil and undermine even the foundation of Labour legislation. The foundation of Labour sentiments and Labour principles are imbedded in the hearts of the people who toil and moil and slave in the world to-day. The Government may succeed in sweeping away some of the superstructure erected by the Labour Government, but they will not succeed in injuring the foundations

which were laid in the past by the great leaders of Labour.

Mr. BLACKLEY interjected.

Mr. BARBER: There was a time when the hon. member for Maryborough was loudest in his denunciation of the despoilers of Labour. He was one of the strongest supporters of the sentiments I am expressing and in denunciation of those people he associates himself with to-day. We all know his doom. We all know that since the last by-election when he was elected he has been rushing to his doom. There is no escape for him. The hon. member for Maryborough, like at least 50 per cent. of the Government Party, will at the next election be caught between a Saharan desert sirocco and an Arctic blizzard, and will be swept into oblivion the same as the Denham Government were in 1915.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, Wynnun) [3.19]: The speeches delivered by hon. members opposite have indicated to a very great extent that they have failed to realise the importance of the position. I do not know that I have ever listened to speeches which have failed, and failed at nearly every turn, to admit the existence of the present financial crisis. They have failed to realise their responsibility as members of this Parliament; and, in addition to that, have done things which have brought the greatest discredit upon themselves and upon this Parliament.

I want for a moment to refer to the speech of the hon. member for Gregory. A great part of that speech, coming from the front Opposition bench, was not only a disgrace to the Opposition, but certainly a disgrace to the hon. member who uttered it. If there was one thing more than another that characterised that speech in one particular direction it was this: There might have been written across that speech in the largest letters possible the word "Coward." What did the hon. member do? He sailed round and round certain matters, and, using certain phrases, by inference tried to make it clear that the Premier had been a party to something which was dishonourable. When he was challenged to say what he meant, he showed that he was an absolute coward.

Mr. POLLOCK: Do you need any help from me, Mr. Maxwell?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to draw the Treasurer's attention to the fact that the word which he has just used is unparliamentary, and I ask that he withdraw it.

The TREASURER: I withdraw the word "coward"; but it is certain that the hon. member failed to the utmost extent to accept the challenge which was made. The hon. member was not game—

Mr. POLLOCK: You are an old Methodist.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

The TREASURER: I am saying what is true. The hon. member was afraid to accept the challenge. I cannot understand a man, under the guise of privilege, making the statements and inferences which he did and then being ashamed to come into the open.

Mr. POLLOCK: I'll get you a glass of milk directly.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

The TREASURER: The hon. member proved himself small in the attitude which

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he has taken. I say to him that, as a member of this Assembly—(Opposition interjections)—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind hon. members that I have called "Order!" on several occasions since the Treasurer commenced to speak. I want hon. members to understand that, during the time the Treasurer is speaking, I shall insist upon order being maintained.

The TREASURER: If the hon. member believes certain things, why has he not the courage to say those things in the open, where he can be challenged? It is perfectly certain that, whatever his constitution may or may not be, he fails sometimes to show that manliness which should be shown by a gentleman.

Mr. POLLOCK: You told Kidston that he was drummed out of Falkirk; yet you accepted office in his Cabinet.

The TREASURER: Yes; and I was exceedingly sorry for saying it, and said so from public platforms on several occasions.

Mr. POLLOCK: But you didn't withdraw it.

The TREASURER: Whilst I was in the late Mr. Kidston's Cabinet I did my job, and I did it with his full confidence; but the hon. member is now seeking to sidetrack me because he was not manly enough to go out and say that certain things have been done by the Government. The hon. member made use of a phrase of mine when he said, "If I could tell you all I know."

The hon. member said, "If I could tell all I knew." Why is he not game enough to tell all he knows? I want to throw back right in his face that statement, and I ask him why not tell all he knows? Why not be man enough to tell all he knows, instead of sidetracking and doing something to try to dishonour the name and character of a man whose character is such that it cannot be assailed to any extent even by the hon. member for Gregory?

Mr. POLLOCK: Is this the end of the sermon, or are we to get more?

The TREASURER: It will take a lot of sermons to improve the hon. member. The hon. member tried to make it appear that the Treasury was defunct. The hon. member frequently makes statements that are damaging to Queensland. He said we did not have £1 in the Treasury. On the 12th of this month we had a credit balance of £1,400,000 in Brisbane; yet we have a leading man on the front Opposition bench saying that we did not have £1! How can we accept a statement from an hon. member like that?

Mr. POLLOCK: That is the last of £9,000,000.

The TREASURER: That is not correct. We had not £9,000,000, and we had not £5,000,000. Another hon. member said we had £9,000,000. I say it is not correct. We did not have £5,000,000; and I want to say further that, when the Labour Government came into office in 1915, when the revenues were very much smaller than they are to-day, they said they had nothing, but, proportionately, they had as much as we had, inasmuch as they had over £2,000,000.

The hon. member implied that the Premier made a statement that was not correct. The Premier made no statement that was

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not correct. In that connection let me quote from page 7 of the Auditor-General's report for the year 1930. It is perfectly certain that, whatever cash there may have been on hand at that date, it was at least reduced by the statement which was made by the Auditor-General. He says—

"The improvement in the net balance of the trust accounts is more apparent than real, as this result was achieved by writing off to loan account the overdrafts of the undermentioned trust accounts—

	£	s.	d.
Chillagoe State smelters	610,122	15	5
Mount Mulligan State coal mine	89,412	16	6
State Enterprises Act—			
State stations	258,966	14	0
Total	£967,502	5	11

"The Treasury had no option but to write off these overdrafts, although it is unsound finance to charge the losses to the loan fund. However, in view of the very heavy deficit for the year, it would appear that consolidated revenue could not carry the burden. Had these losses been charged to consolidated revenue, the deficit would have been increased to the extent of such charge, and it is evident that the deficit will have to be met by the raising of a loan."

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: No one is contradicting that.

The TREASURER: When the Premier made reference to it last night, he was challenged.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: He was challenged as to the net cash balance. (Interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The TREASURER: Whatever may be said by the other side, or whatever state the cash balance was in, those are the figures. When the Premier gave those figures, he did not do anything that was wrong.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: "Cooked" figures!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The figures that were quoted last night were incorrect; they were not "cooked."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to withdraw.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Then I say they were carefully selected.

The TREASURER: The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will say they were not "cooked"—they were "raw."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I want the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Withdraw what?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The statement the hon. member made.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have withdrawn it—I have said they were raw.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has not withdrawn the statement, and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has not withdrawn.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have withdrawn it three times.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member says he will withdraw the statement, I will accept that.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have withdrawn it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has not withdrawn it. He is an old parliamentarian, and has been Chairman of Committees and an ex-Minister of the Crown, and he knows he has not complied with parliamentary procedure until he says: "I withdraw the statement."

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I withdraw, Mr. Maxwell. I also rise to a point of order.

I would draw your attention to the fact that, while the hon. member for Bundaberg was speaking, very insulting references were made to him. I would suggest that you take note of those things, Mr. Maxwell.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that, as Leader of a party, it is his duty to assist the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker to maintain order. He knows how impossible it is for the Chairman to hear everything that is passing; and it is his duty and function to draw attention to statements which he thinks are not in order.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The Treasurer cannot get away with his Budget in that way.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member for Cairns to withdraw that statement. He has made a remark about the chair which I strongly resent.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I did not make any statement about you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I heard the hon. member. He said: "You cannot get away with that statement."

Mr. O'KEEFE: I cannot withdraw it, as I never made it. I said: "The Treasurer cannot get away with his Budget in that way."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that the hon. member for Cairns did not refer to the Chairman?

Mr. O'KEEFE: You do understand that, if you understand anything.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement, which is one that I strongly resent and object to as Chairman.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What is it?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: That, if I understand anything, I understand that. I want the hon. member to withdraw that statement. He is placing the Chairman in a position which is not right, and I shall certainly have to name him if he does not withdraw.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Anything you desire me to withdraw I gladly withdraw. Will that cover it?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I will not have it withdrawn in that way. The hon. member must withdraw unconditionally.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I withdraw.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: In regard to the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, he, as Leader of the

party, if he heard something, knows full well, as he has occupied the position of Chairman of Committees, that it is impossible in the din which has existed this afternoon to hear all that is said. If he had drawn my attention to anything that was not right, I certainly would have called the attention of any hon. member to it as being unparliamentary.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. I want to draw your attention to the fact that most of the statements made from this side are somehow or other heard by the Chairman.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Gregory to withdraw that statement. He is making a charge against the Chairman of showing partiality. I resent it very much, and ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. POLLOCK: I will certainly withdraw.

The TREASURER: Hon. members on the other side have criticised us, and said that we have failed to face the position. That is absolutely incorrect, because, as a matter of fact, we were twelve months in advance of the other States in tackling it. I notice that one hon. member at least has said that we made a promise that the Budget could be balanced in twelve months. That promise was never made; and, as a matter of fact, it cannot be balanced in twelve months. Everyone must have been conscious of that fact, and must know that it was not intended to balance it in less than three years. Hon. members opposite should realise that Queensland is the best State financially; but evidently they fail to realise their responsibilities to Queensland. (Opposition interjections.) The Leader of the Opposition talks about expenditure. On the one hand he says, "Why do you not spend?" and on the other, "Why do you spend?" The leader of the Opposition has forgotten that there are matters—even personal matters, such as his trip to New Zealand—which show that in that regard he did not play the game when he was in office.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Is that parliamentary, Mr. Maxwell?

Mr. KENNY: He is only a big baby.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

The TREASURER: Under the present circumstances what was the Treasurer to do? The cause of Queensland's trouble is bad expenditure by the Government whose place we had to take. Let me go briefly over the figures already given in this Chamber, but put them in another form. In 1914-15 the receipts from income tax were £517,273; when hon. members opposite went out of office, they had increased to £2,755,514. Let me draw their attention to the fact that they increased during that period by 433 per cent. They had loaded the country to such an extent that to-day, as the result of their expenditure, the interest burden is bearing the people down. These high financiers lost over £4,000,000 in State enterprises. These high financiers, in order to balance their Budget, took from loan account £220,000 to pay interest.

Mr. PEASE: You took £500,000.

The TREASURER: We are not doing that. Then they criticise us. Nearly every

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year they were behind in their Budget. Eleven years out of fourteen they failed to balance it. If hon. members want to go back, let me remind them that I had the honour of being a Minister from 1907 till 1915, and every year we had a surplus. Hon. members do not like the truth.

Mr. PEASE: You do not give us the truth.

The TREASURER: These are absolute facts.

Mr. PEASE: What was the cash balance when you took office?

The TREASURER: It was between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000—nearer £4,000,000 than £5,000,000.

Mr. PEASE: That is incorrect.

The TREASURER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of correcting me if I am wrong.

Mr. PEASE: I will not.

The TREASURER: After we came into office the amount received from income tax decreased. In 1930-31 the amount received was £2,556,050—only 394 per cent. over the income tax of 1914-15. I could go on quoting figures to show the high financing of hon. members opposite.

We are told by hon. members opposite of their love for the workers, and that they have never done anything to injure the workers. How could they do anything to hurt the workers? Perish the thought! I have before me a list of the wage reducers at the 1923 Eruu Park Labour Convention, as published in the "Railway Advocate" of 10th September, 1924. These are the people who would not reduce wages—

"J. Mullan, T. Wilson, G. Pollock."

That may be another Mr. Pollock, not the hon. member for Gregory—

"T. Foley, W. F. Smith."

That might be the Leader of the Opposition—

"A. J. Jones, V. Winstanley, G. Barber."

These are the men who to-day say that they would not do anything of the kind; but they are doing it at every turn.

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. It has already been—

Mr. COOPER: The Treasurer is a liar.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Did I understand the hon. member for Bremer to say that the Treasurer was a liar?

Mr. COOPER: Yes, I did.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word.

Mr. COOPER: I certainly withdraw it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I should like to remind hon. members that, if that kind of language is persisted in while I am in the chair, I shall demand not only a withdrawal, but an apology. I am endeavouring to the best of my ability to co-operate with all hon. members, and I ask them to conduct themselves in a manner befitting this Assembly.

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. On previous occasions members of this party have explained to the Treasurer and to other hon. members on the other side that the division list from which the Treasurer has read, purporting

to be a division list showing that certain members of this party voted in favour of a reduction of wages at Emu Park, is not such a division list at all. It is a division list showing that those who voted for that resolution and are now in this party voted against Parliament fixing wages instead of the matter being left to the Arbitration Court. (Government interruption.) The division list that the Treasurer has read out is a division list showing those who favoured the Industrial Court fixing the wages instead of the job being left to Parliament. (Government interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to remind hon. members on my right that I have called "Order!" and I insist on that call being obeyed.

Mr. POLLOCK: My point of order is this: Having made that explanation again, I insist that you see that the Treasurer accepts our denial.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. POLLOCK: Oh!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Hon. members will have an opportunity on another occasion of contradicting a statement that may be made by another hon. member.

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Maxwell, the Standing Orders of this House provide that, if an hon. member takes exception to a statement which is offensive—and this is offensive to every hon. member on this side—

Mr. BEDFORD: Because it is untrue.

Mr. POLLOCK: Then his denial must be accepted. You, Mr. Maxwell, must know that.

Mr. BLACKLEY: It is a fact.

Mr. POLLOCK: With all due respect to you, Mr. Maxwell, I insist on my point of order—that the statement is offensive, and that our denial must be accepted. We deny that statement.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already given my ruling on the point of order.

Mr. FOLEY: Mr. Maxwell—

Mr. BEDFORD: Then, if the saint repeats, he will be treated in an unsightly way.

Mr. DUNLOP: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Gregory raised a point of order on the statement made by the Treasurer. As one who voted for the resolution, I say that the Treasurer is absolutely correct.

Mr. FOLEY: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to object strongly to the Treasurer falsifying—deliberately falsifying—a statement. I deny his statement with respect to me; and I ask that you direct that he accept my denial, otherwise I shall call him a deliberate and malicious liar.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call upon the hon. member for Leichhardt to withdraw the statement he has just made.

Mr. FOLEY: I withdraw, Mr. Maxwell; but I ask you to compel the Treasurer to withdraw his statement.

Mr. BRUCE: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Does the hon. member for Leichhardt withdraw?

Mr. FOLEY: I have done so.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bruce.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member for Rockhampton said that I raised a question before the chair.

Mr. DUNLOP: I never mentioned your name.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The Treasurer.

Mr. FOLEY: Mr. Maxwell, am I to understand that the Treasurer has accepted our denial?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I have already ruled on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Gregory.

Mr. FOLEY: If I deny a statement attributed to me by the Treasurer, has he not to accept my denial?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Chair!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I have already ruled on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Gregory. The hon. member for Leichhardt merely raised a similar point of order.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is the first time in this Committee that the denial of an hon. member has not been accepted. (Interjections.)

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [3.48]: Mr. Maxwell, I move—

“That your ruling be disagreed to, on the ground that it is in conflict with parliamentary practice.”

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Well established parliamentary practice lays it down that if any statement made by a speaker is resented by the person to whom it is attributed, then the hon. member making the statement must accept the denial. That is in our Standing Orders as well as in May's “Parliamentary Practice.” The Speaker of this Parliament has ruled frequently that, if any statement is objected to and denied, then that denial must be accepted by the speaker. The Chairman of Committees has also given the same ruling. Those are the two permanent Chairmen of this House. They are men who, by virtue of those offices, have specialised and endeavoured to make themselves acquainted with parliamentary practice in its complete form. I have been in this Chamber for upwards of sixteen years. The point has been taken in every session of Parliament during that time, and every Speaker and every Chairman of Committees until to-day has ruled that, if a statement is objected to and denied, then that denial must be accepted by the maker of the statement.

I wish to draw your attention to May's “Parliamentary Practice,” at page 325—

“The imputation of bad motives, or motives different from those acknowledged; misrepresenting the language of another, or accusing him, in his turn, of misrepresentation; charging him with falsehood or deceit; or contemptuous or insulting language of any kind—all these are unparliamentary, and call for prompt interference.”

I particularly draw attention to the words “the imputation of bad motives, or motives different from those acknowledged.” The Treasurer made the statement that hon. members on this side had voted at Emu Park in favour of a reduction of wages. That is

not true. No such vote ever took place. We have informed the Treasurer, and the hon. gentleman knows, that the division referred to was one as to whether Parliament or the arbitration tribunal should fix the basic wage—an entirely different matter. We deny the statement of the Treasurer, and, according to parliamentary practice, the ruling has always been that the hon. gentleman shall accept that denial. You, yourself, Mr. Maxwell, have previously ruled in favour of that practice.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [3.52]: Standing Order 119 states definitely—

“A member shall not use unbecoming or offensive words in reference to another member of the House.”

Mr. KELSO: There is nothing offensive about that.

Mr. POLLOCK: There is. To tell an hon. member on this side of the Chamber that he voted for a reduction of wages when he did not do so is offensive.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is only your version.

Mr. POLLOCK: At page 325 of May's “Parliamentary Practice,” we find that “the imputation of bad motives, or motives different from those acknowledged” are deplored. It is obvious that the function of the Chairman of Committees is to prevent anything which can call forth reprisals. It must be obvious that, unless the Treasurer is compelled to accept the denial of hon. members on this side, then we cannot be expected to accept the denial of an hon. member opposite. This matter has particular force, not only to the present question, but to every question that will be raised in future in this Committee and in Parliament itself. I have every desire to obey the ruling of the Chairman. I realise that there can be only one member in control of debate; but that member in control of debate must give exactly the same rulings to one side of the Chamber as he does to another—and I do not say that in any offensive spirit, Mr. Maxwell. It is a good thing that hon. members on this side should be compelled—as has always been the case—to accept the denial of an hon. member on that side, and the principle should apply equally when hon. members opposite are asked to do the same thing. No man can preserve order here unless exactly the same principles are applied to both sides.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in accusing any Chairman of Committees of partiality.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not doing that, Mr. Maxwell; there is nothing further from my intention. My point is that every Chairman of Committees, and Mr. Speaker in the House, when giving decisions and rulings on this question, has decreed that a denial of an hon. member must be accepted. In this case we denied that the Treasurer is telling the truth about this matter. We insisted that our denial be accepted. If it is right that Mr. Speaker and the Chairman of Committees should compel us to accept the denials of hon. members on the Government side, is it not a fair thing that the principle should also apply to them? I make that statement without any offence or heat. If that is not done, obviously there will be discord in this Chamber instead of obedience to the Chairman's ruling. We want to insist on our rights. We have no desire to take

Mr. Pollock.]

a vote on it, and we hope before it gets to that stage that you, Mr. Maxwell, will realise that we are only asking for what we are justly entitled to.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [3.55]: Every hon. member will give me credit for voting against any injustice being done. I have always voted against the "gag," because I do not believe in it; and on any motion disagreeing with the Chairman's ruling, I have used my judgment and have voted against the Chairman and even against the Speaker. I have made the statement complained of in this Chamber on more than one occasion, as being my firm conviction, and I am sorry if I hurt anyone whose name may have been mentioned, if it was not correct.

Mr. POLLOCK: If you repeat the slander, we will show you no mercy either.

Mr. DUNLOP: I am a chip of the old block, and I ask for mercy from no one either individually or collectively. If that is a challenge, I am prepared to stand up to it from now till the end of the session, and on the hustings when the Labour candidate opposes me. I have been fair in every shape and form.

Mr. POLLOCK: You have been on the fence all your life.

Mr. DUNLOP: I never budge an inch. On 27th August I got up and said that the hon. member for Cook was not quoting a certain resolution correctly. In justice to what took place at the Emu Park Convention, I maintain that the Treasurer is absolutely correct. It has been stated time and again; and neither the hon. member for Gregory nor others objected on the floor of the House. The actual vote is not contained in the official record; but this is the actual resolution moved at the convention, as reported in "Hansard" of 27th August this year.

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in quoting from "Hansard" of this year?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will not be in order in quoting the resolution.

Mr. DUNLOP: I can do without "Hansard." In due deference to you, Mr. Maxwell, I would point out that Mr. Speaker ruled that we could quote from "Hansard" of this year, and it has been done.

Mr. POLLOCK: From the same debate.

Mr. DUNLOP: I can do without it. The motion was moved by Mr. Bryan.

Mr. POLLOCK: What was the motion?

Mr. DUNLOP: The motion was for the restoration of the basic wage from £4 to £4 5s. per week.

Mr. POLLOCK: It was not.

Mr. DUNLOP: I will resign my seat if the hon. member can refute what I say. That is in the official record, and men like Mr. Moroney and Mr. Rymer, who were at that convention, were not fools.

Mr. POLLOCK: Did not Mr. Bryan move that the wage be restored by Parliament?

Mr. DUNLOP: No.

Mr. POLLOCK: Yes.

Mr. DUNLOP: The hon. member cannot sidetrack me in that way. The word "Parliament" is not in the resolution. The

[*Mr. Pollock.*

motion was for the restoration of the basic wage from £4 to £4 5s.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order. The hon. member has exhausted his time.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) [4.1]: I desire to support the protest moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Whether the Labour parliamentarians who attended that particular function were right or wrong does not enter into the question at the present time. The Standing Orders give every hon. member certain protection; and we are only asking that we shall be given the protection which the Standing Orders give us. We say that, as hon. members on this side have been accused of reducing wages, and they have given their denial to the Treasurer, he should accept that denial. I happened to be on that division list on the other side. On that occasion I thought that Parliament should fix the basic wage at £4 5s., and I voted for that. Some members of Parliament there adduced arguments to the effect that it was the function of the Industrial Court to fix the basic wage; and that was the point on which the division was taken. This is a slander that has been going on for very many years; and no one in this House knows better than the Treasurer that it is a slanderous piece of propaganda. It is an extraordinary position for you, Mr. Maxwell, to say that we shall have a subsequent opportunity this session to refute the statement made by the Treasurer. That means that, if the Treasurer wishes to accuse any member of the Opposition of murder, he will not be compelled to accept his denial that he is a murderer until the Estimates for the Justice Department are under discussion. That is a ridiculous position. The Treasurer should be compelled to accept the denial of Opposition members regarding the scurrilous and slanderous statement made by him to-day.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) [4.4]: Mr. Maxwell, the question before the Committee is a disagreement with your ruling refusing to make the Treasurer accept the denial of hon. members on this side. Yesterday, I said that the Treasurer had held a Cabinet meeting on Sunday and had given a sort of aeroplane guarantee, and I had to accept his denial. The "Hansard" report reads—

"Mr. Nimmo: Mr. Roberts, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Kennedy in order in saying that the Government came to the rescue of two banks when he has already been informed by the Treasurer to the contrary?"

"The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member for Kennedy has said anything to the effect that the Government gave a guarantee to the two banks in question, then he must withdraw.

"Mr. Bruce: I said that an aeroplane guarantee was given.

"The CHAIRMAN: That must be withdrawn."

I was forced to withdraw because the Treasurer denied the statement I made. The point then was exactly on all fours with the point now before us. As I was made to withdraw my statement, the Treasurer should be made to withdraw his.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [4.5]: The Opposition are trying to mislead the Committee. We know quite well that each and every Minister in the Government of which the hon. member who is the Leader of the Opposition was a

member signed an application to the Arbitration Court for a reduction of the basic wage from £4 5s. to £4 a week, and that was done.

Mr. HYNES: That is a hoary lie with whiskers on it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Do I understand the hon. member for Townsville to say that the remark of the hon. member for Cook was a hoary lie?

Mr. HYNES: I said it was a hoary lie with whiskers on it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. COOPER: I would ask you before you ask the hon. member to withdraw to remember your own ruling. (Interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The remark is unparliamentary and objectionable. It has been ruled that it is so, and I ask the hon. member for Townsville to withdraw it. (Renewed interruption.)

Mr. HYNES: Withdraw what?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The words "hoary lie."

Mr. HYNES: I will withdraw, and say that it is a deliberate lie.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I shall deal with the hon. member if he does not obey my ruling.

Mr. HYNES: Deal with me!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I want the hon. member to withdraw that statement. If he does not, I shall deal with him.

Mr. COOPER: It is your own ruling.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that the hon. member for Townsville will not withdraw?

Mr. HYNES: In deference to you, I withdraw.

Mr. KENNY: I was saying that the basic wage had been reduced from £4 5s. to £4. At the Emu Park convention a motion was moved—

"That the Government restore the basic wage of £4 5s. per week until such time as the Arbitration Act is amended to include a provision—"

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is—

"That the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to."

Mr. KENNY: I am speaking to the question before the Committee. I do not think that the Chairman's ruling should be disagreed with, for the simple reason that the motion that has been referred to was correct, and the statement was a statement of fact. The Opposition is trying to drag into this matter something that is not there. I was dealing with the motion that was before the Emu Park convention to prove my contention that your ruling is correct. The motion went on to provide that the Act should be amended—

". . . to include a provision that the basic wage be fixed on the standard arrived at by the Piddington Commission."

That motion was quite definite, and Parliament is not mentioned in it. Hon. members opposite are referring to Parliament. The quotation by hon. members on this side is

absolutely correct; and it is useless for the hon. member for Gregory and other hon. members to get up in their mock-modest fashion and try to gull the people into believing that they are above reproach. We know quite well that they have been repeatedly challenged on this matter, and have never yet been able to prove their innocence. Now they are trying to read something into the resolution that is not there; and they are taking advantage of the opportunity to make propaganda by moving that your ruling be disagreed with. There is nothing in their contention.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremser*) [4.9]: No ruling is more frequently given in this Chamber than that the denial of an hon. member must be accepted. (Interruption.) Every hon. member who has paid any attention to parliamentary procedure knows that Mr. Speaker—

Mr. KELSO interjected.

Mr. BEDFORD: You are an expert on Nundah gins.

Mr. KELSO: You are an expert on black gins.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to remind the hon. member for Nundah that it is not parliamentary to apply the description which he has applied to the hon. member for Warrego, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. KELSO: I must withdraw, but at the same time I ask you, Mr. Maxwell, to ask the hon. member for Warrego to withdraw the fact that I am a gin. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD: I certainly withdraw the fact that he is a gin. (Laughter.)

Mr. COOPER: Possibly the ruling given most frequently in this Chamber is that the denial of an hon. member must be accepted. The Treasurer knows that. The hon. member for Toombul knows it.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Treasurer very frequently asks that his denial be accepted.

Mr. COOPER: That is so. The other day the hon. member for Toombul asked that something that he was accused of saying, and which he said he did not say, should be withdrawn by the hon. member who had made what was, in the opinion of the hon. member for Toombul, a false charge, and the remark was withdrawn. I would not like to say that the hon. member for Toombul knew that he had said what he had denied saying; but there were at least ten on this side of the Chamber who can vouch for the statement that he did say it. However, he said that he did not use the words. A common ruling in this Chamber is that the denial of an hon. member must be accepted. I am satisfied that your ruling is wrong, Mr. Maxwell. I am satisfied that there is still an opportunity for you to correct your ruling. We do not want to press the question to a division. Debate could not be decently carried on in this Chamber if your ruling were accepted. For the sake of future debate and for the orderly conduct of the Committee, you should ask that the denial be accepted. There is still an opportunity for you to correct your slip. Why, even the hon. member for Gregory made slips when he was in the chair.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: He did.

Mr. COOPER: I will go so far as to say that I made a slip when I was in the chair.

Mr. Cooper.]

It is a common practice for a Chairman to make a slip in the flurry of the moment; and there is nothing wrong in acknowledging a slip. It is the cleanest way out, and it is the best way out. It is going to be very difficult for this Committee to proceed with business if your ruling is allowed to stand. A denial must be accepted, even though the statement be true; but a decent man would not deny a statement that was true, and then ask that any statement to the contrary be withdrawn.

Mr. DUNLOP: Moroney and Rymer are not two fools.

Mr. COOPER: I know they are not. Your ruling is undoubtedly wrong. The hon. member for Gregory has asked that his denial be accepted, and the Treasurer should end the business by accepting the denial. He should not put you in this frightfully awkward position.

Mr. BLACKLEY (*Maryborough*) [4.14]: I would point out that the Treasurer did not make a personal statement at all.

Mr. COOPER: He did.

Mr. BEDFORD: He read out the names.

Mr. BLACKLEY: He simply quoted a statement that appeared in one section of the press.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is offensive to us.

Mr. BLACKLEY: If the statement is not correct, then let those who are concerned with the statement ask the author to correct it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The question is in an entirely different category from an objection to an offensive expression. The Treasurer was only giving his opinion as to the result of a meeting. He merely placed his construction upon it, as he understood it.

Mr. PEASE: He is excusing a bad Budget.

Mr. COOPER: No—he is excusing a bad blunder.

Question—"That the Temporary Chairman's ruling be disagreed to" (*Mr. Smith's motion*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 25.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
" Bedford	" Mullan
" Bow	" O'Keefe
" Brassington	" Pease
" Conroy	" Pollock
" Cooper	" Smith
" Dash	" Wellington
" Foley	" Winstanley
" Hanlon	
" Hanson	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hynes	" Bruce
" Jones, A. J.	" Bulcock
" Jones, A.	

NOES, 20.

Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Macgroarty
" Blackley	" Moore
" Foyd	" Morgan
" Brand	" Nimmo
" Carter	" Peterson
" Clayton	" Russell, H. M.
" Costello	" Swayne
" Deacon	" Taylor
" Dunlop	" Tedman
" Edwards	" Walker, J. E.
" Hill	" Warren
" Kelso	
" Kenny	<i>Tellers:</i>
Dr. Kerwin	" Grimstone
Mr. King	" Plunkett
Mrs. Longman	

Resolved in the negative.

[*Mr. Cooper.*

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) [4.20]: I want to take the opportunity of dealing with the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition—namely, the arrangement that was made with the Bank of England. The hon. gentleman was very emphatic in stating that we had lost an opportunity with the Bank of England. I shall now read particulars of the exact arrangement which was made, so that the Committee may know the true position—

"The agreement with the Bank of England does not contain any reference to overdraft accommodation.

"An arrangement was, however, made in the year 1924, whereby the bank agreed to make advances. When agreeing to make these advances, the Governor of the bank stated as follows:—

'In this connection I am to say that, whilst the bank would be willing to make an arrangement of the nature desired, it would be contrary to their practice to bind themselves for an unlimited period, and they suggest, therefore, that any such arrangement should be made to cover a fixed period of one year, the maximum amount outstanding at any one time to be limited to £1,000,000, or possibly £2,000,000.'

"In November, 1926, the Agent-General was asked to ascertain whether the bank would make temporary advances, if required, in accordance with the arrangement made in 1924, and a reply was received to the effect that such arrangement held good, in principle, subject to amount, period, and security.

"In January, 1930, the Agent-General was again asked to confer with the bank and ascertain whether the facilities afforded in 1924 were still available. The Agent-General interviewed the Deputy Governor of the bank, and was informed that—

'When the Queensland Government transferred its banking and stock issuing arrangements to the Commonwealth Bank, it was confidently expected by the Bank of England that in the event of an overdraft being required to meet a temporary situation, the necessary accommodation would be provided by the Commonwealth Bank.'

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: You transferred to the Commonwealth Bank.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman is wrong when he says that. It was done when the Financial Agreement was entered into.

"The transfer to the Commonwealth Bank of the Government's banking and stock issuing arrangements, mentioned by the Deputy Governor, refers to the Queensland loan which matured in London on 1st July, 1929. Prior to its maturity, this loan was registered, with other Queensland loans, in the books of the Bank of England. The loan for its conversion was raised by the Commonwealth Government in accordance with the provisions of the financial agreement. This conversion loan, with other Commonwealth loans, is inscribed in the books of the Commonwealth with the bank in London."

I have already explained when the loan was about to be issued. We have been told that there have been no loans issued since we have been in office. There has been a redemption loan. The peculiar position in which Queensland was placed in that connection was that, whilst the Commonwealth Government are responsible for loans, they asked that it should be issued in the name of the Queensland Government, and that was done. That was a tribute to the reputation of Queensland—

“The present Government is not responsible for the financial agreement, and it is not responsible for the fact that the conversion loan was issued in accordance with that agreement. Moreover, it is not responsible for the preliminary negotiations in connection with the conversion loan which were commenced at the meeting of the Loan Council held in January, 1929, and which culminated in the issue of the loan by the Commonwealth Government.”

Probably the hon. member was at that Loan Council meeting.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is another matter.

The TREASURER: The hon. member always desires to sidetrack. At every turn he tries to put the responsibility on somebody else—

“Summed up, the position is that there was no permanent arrangement with the Bank of England as regards overdraft accommodation. The arrangement made with that bank was tentative only. The present Government is in no way responsible for the withdrawal by the bank of the tentative arrangement.”

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: What are you quoting from?

The TREASURER: I am giving the exact position in regard to the agreement—

“It must not be overlooked that the late Government entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Bank on the 1st April, 1921, whereby the whole of the banking business and the stock and loan management of the Government were transferred to that bank—

Does the hon. member deny that? He cannot deny that. He charged us with doing certain things—

“with the exception of the stock and loan management then being conducted by the Bank of England, but the agreement contains a clause that it shall take effect wholly or partly immediately the Government is able to terminate its existing agreements or arrangements with the Queensland National Bank and the Bank of England.”

That is the agreement; and that is the agreement that was carried out.

I want to draw attention to another phase of the criticism of hon. members opposite. What is the cause of the present financial position?

Mr. PEASE: A bad Treasurer.

The TREASURER: No. If I had followed the advice of the gentleman who said: “Don't pay interest!” I might have been a bad Treasurer.

Mr. PEASE: I say you are a liar. I did not say that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. PEASE: I can say what I like. You have ruled that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. PEASE: I withdraw. Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. I did not say that, and I ask that the Treasurer be made to withdraw.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: What did the Treasurer say?

Mr. PEASE: The hon. gentleman said that I said: “Don't pay interest!”

The TREASURER: If the hon. member denies having said so, I withdraw. The hon. member at least suggested that interest payments should be wiped out.

Mr. PEASE: I did not say anything of the sort.

The TREASURER: He came back from a campaign in the South, where he supported his friend, Mr. Lang, and others, and apparently he was following in Mr. Lang's footsteps. Have you noticed, Mr. Maxwell, how the hon. member has sought to keep quiet when anything is said about the question of interest? Generally, he puts his head in his hands and looks on and says nothing. What is the cause of the present financial trouble? First, may I say, the excessive borrowing by the late Government creating a tremendous interest bill—

Mr. PEASE: That is not true.

The TREASURER: In addition, we have received much less from taxation and from the railways, and then we have a very heavy exchange rate to pay. At the same time, Queensland's position is much better than that of any of the other States.

Mr. PEASE: Thanks to the rule of the Labour Government.

The TREASURER: It is only hon. members like the hon. member for Herbert, supported by the hon. member for Brisbane, who would do everything they possibly could to destroy this fair land of ours merely for political purposes.

Mr. KIRWAN: Mr. Maxwell, I rise to a point of order. I regard it as extremely offensive to say that I would do anything to destroy my own country, and I ask for a withdrawal.

The TREASURER: I am pleased to withdraw it, and to know the hon. member would not do that.

Mr. KIRWAN: You can never point to any statement I have made detrimental to my native land.

The TREASURER: I ask hon. members opposite to be national-minded, and to remember that they are representatives of a

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

great country, and that it is their duty to do their part in solving its difficulties.

Question—"That the item 'Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor' be agreed to"—put and passed.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress.

Resumption of Committee made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 4.33 p.m.