

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 1934**

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## WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER, 1934.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. Pollock, *Gregory*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

## QUESTION.

## MINISTERS' MOTOR CARS.

Mr. NIMMO (*Orley*): I desire to ask the Premier whether he has an answer to the following questions, which I addressed to him on the 18th September last:—

“1. What motor cars, used by Ministers, have been purchased during the term of the present Government, stating date of purchase, make of car, and price paid respectively?”

“2. Are any Ministers using their own cars for official purposes? If so, which Ministers, and what allowances do they receive?”

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) replied—

“The return will be laid on the table of the House in the course of a day or two.”

## SUPPLY.

## SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Hanson, *Buranda*) presented the resolutions reported from Committee of Supply on Tuesday, the 6th instant.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move—

“That the resolutions be now received.”

Question put and passed.

## ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The resolutions having been taken as read,

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move—

“That the resolutions be now agreed to.”

And hon. members indicating a desire to discuss Resolutions 4, 10, 16, 19, 22, 25, 27, 38, 39, 44, 52, 54, 56, 63, 68, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, and 86.

Resolutions 1, 2, and 3 agreed to.

Resolution 4—"Executive and Legislative—Legislative Assembly"—

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [10.41 a.m.]: This is the vote for Parliament itself. We have now only the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council having been abolished. In my opinion we, as the elected representatives of the people in this Parliament, are somewhat open to censure for the manner in which the business of the State is being conducted. The financial position of Queensland should receive the gravest and most serious consideration, nevertheless we find that the discussion on the financial problems of the State is limited to seventeen days. When this limitation was initiated the financial position of Queensland was that the following amounts were appropriated from the respective funds:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue ...	5,314,726
Trust and Special Funds ...	337,770
Loan Fund ...	2,704,605

The amounts to be appropriated for the current financial year are:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue ...	15,349,792
Trust and Special Funds ...	6,346,108
Loan Fund ...	4,400,000

It must be obvious in the face of the increased business of the State that if sixteen days were a sufficient time to allow for the discussion of expenditure amounting to £8,000,000 it cannot be claimed that that time is sufficient now that the amount has reached £26,000,000, or more than three times the former amount. Hon. members were not given an opportunity to discuss the administration of the Department of Labour and Industry, which deals with the very important question of unemployment. I drew attention to this matter away back in 1926, but I was then told that hon. members on this side of the Committee had wasted time, and in that way they had deprived themselves of the opportunity to discuss the estimates of certain departments. I hold the view that no time is wasted that is utilised in the discussion of public expenditure. I suppose that some of us can recall that the old stalwarts of the Labour movement, the big-hearted men who did not look for personal advancement continually argued that parliamentarians were sent to Parliament to attend to the business of the country, and that the question of time was not to be considered when important business of that nature required attention. It was their practice to advocate that Parliament should meet in June and sit until the end of the year, if necessary. I have in mind men of the calibre of the late David Bowman. I am sure that any reasonable man would agree that adequate time should be allowed for the discussion of the business of the country. Now it is the practice to close the debate on Supply on a certain day and put the Estimates not then discussed without discussion. It is very easy to say that the time is wasted; time is never wasted when it is spent in the discussion of public expenditure. Why should hon. members opposite have the sole right to say when hon. members on this side should cease to attend to the business of the country? We

[*Mr. Swayne.*

have the right to speak on any subject submitted for consideration by Parliament, and it is absurd to claim that any time devoted to the consideration of these matters is time that is wasted. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders provide for a time limitation of speeches, and so long as hon. members are limited to the times laid down there can be no grounds for the statement that time is wasted. It is a reflection upon the electors who return us to Parliament to say that the time devoted to the business of this Parliament is wasted.

Coming back to the all-important question of unemployment, I strongly contend that we should have been afforded an opportunity to discuss that question in all its aspects. There is no more pressing question before the people to-day. When I complained on this score in previous years we were told that if we had only asked for the right to discuss the Estimates of certain departments the opportunity would have been extended to us, but during the present session we did definitely ask that certain Estimates should be discussed, but our request was ignored. Some paltry excuse was offered—that the Minister in charge of that department was away in Melbourne, probably seeing the Melbourne Cup run or something of that kind. Are the electors of Queensland going to be satisfied with a paltry excuse of that kind? I do not think so. I would not be in order in going into details in connection with this matter, but it has been urged upon us by overseas visitors, including Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, that we should endeavour to capture the markets of the world for our primary produce. He said that we must sell abroad. We all know that a big factor in our ability to compete in these arenas is the cost of production, and that no department has a greater bearing on the cost of production than the Department of Labour and Industry, its Industrial Court, and all the activities that function under it. At the present juncture they are of prime importance, yet we are debarred from saying a word in regard to them. Nobody can justify such conduct as that. Hon. members opposite praise their own management of the unemployed problem. Why then should they be afraid of a discussion of this question? They have certainly laid themselves open to the charge that they shirked and side-stepped a debate on the essential department—a most costly department at the present time. This Parliament is in its last session and will rise without an opportunity to deal with the most important subject of all—unemployment.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: I should not be in order if I were to give particulars to justify my contention that it is most necessary that we should have an opportunity of discussing, for instance, the Industrial Court and many of the various sub-departments that function under the control of the Secretary for Labour and Industry, who has simply run away at a vital time. He most certainly should have been in his place to face the Committee on the Estimates of his department, explain the operations of his various sub-departments, and justify them. If a Minister had to be in Melbourne then another Minister should have been selected. He has utterly failed to do so, and the only conclusion that the electors can come to is that he is afraid because he has no case.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [10.51 a.m.]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat was most unfair in his criticism of the Secretary for Labour and Industry. (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The TREASURER: The Secretary for Labour and Industry is representing the Government in Victoria at the present time.

Mr. MAHER interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member for West Moreton will obey my call to order, and refrain entirely from interrupting the speaker.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member for Mirani was most unfair in his attack on the Secretary for Labour and Industry, because, as the Treasurer observes, he is at the present moment representing him in Melbourne on public business. Ministers from every State in the Commonwealth are at the present juncture absent in Melbourne. The Secretary for Labour and Industry has displayed great ability and characteristic courage in dealing with his department, and has shown that he does not shirk any issue.

The hon. member for Mirani has raised an interesting discussion concerning the time allowable for the discussion of departmental Estimates in this Parliament. I do not agree with the conclusions he has reached. In fact, I do not agree with his deductions at all. He complains that Parliament has not had sufficient time to discuss the important problem of unemployment. That is not in accordance with fact or truth. We know that hon. members had every opportunity to discuss that vitally important problem.

Mr. SWAYNE: We did not have the report of the department or the Estimates before us.

Mr. LARCOMBE: All available information that hon. members required was at their disposal throughout the currency of the present session. The problem of unemployment is a wide one and the principle very important, and we know that from time to time information has been furnished to Parliament by the Minister and statisticians concerning it. An opportunity was provided for such a discussion on the Financial Statement, and other opportunities on the various Appropriation Bills, and the hon. member for Mirani and his colleagues could have availed themselves of those opportunities to thoroughly discuss unemployment and allied problems. We know that they have, in fact, discussed the subject ad nauseam. They have attacked, Government members have defended the Government policy, and the Opposition have counter attacked, although, of course, the discussion of the subject by hon. members opposite has not conduced to a solution of the problem. Hon. members opposite certainly have not helped to solve it by their contributions to debates this session.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is only your opinion.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Of course it is; I cannot express the opinion of any other hon. member, but in my opinion opportunities have been available, and have not been successfully used by hon. members opposite.

A further aspect of this question is the consideration that it is not merely the extent

of time occupied in debate that determines the cogency of attack or the effectiveness of discussion; it is the use and the distribution of that time that counts. If I may presume, I say that the Opposition have not successfully distributed their time and organised their forces in the discussion of the Estimates. They have wasted much time upon unimportant matters, and have allowed to pass opportunities to discuss votes that they might in other circumstances have taken the opportunity to discuss. If hon. members opposite had ceased from their continuous attacks and incessant upbraiding of the Government on minor problems they could have got to the votes that they now complain they cannot discuss. If they have not had that opportunity it is not the fault of the Standing Orders or the fault of the Government; it is their own fault, and they ought to direct their censure to their own party. They ought to mobilise their forces, direct them more accurately and more effectively, they ought to curb debate on comparatively unimportant matters. If they do that there is no prospect of any vote not being discussed properly.

Moreover, we know that the Government have repeatedly, at the request of the Opposition, reversed the order of the discussion of the Estimates. That has been done for many years. I have known the votes for the Department of Labour and Industry, the Railway Department, and other departments to be brought forward at the request of the Opposition, especially when a challenge was made that the Government were shirking consideration of any vote.

The hon. member for Mirani has quoted the various amounts that are being discussed to-day and those that were discussed by previous Parliaments, but it is not the amount concerned that determines the importance of the issue, it is the principle involved. Even though the amounts are larger to-day, the problems are the same. By conciseness of expression, by proper direction of attack, all the necessary talking can be indulged in, all the necessary discussion provoked, and all the points that the Opposition desire to make can be effectively made.

We know, too, that other State Governments in Australia and the Commonwealth Government vote many millions of pounds annually without any discussion. The amounts are voted just in the same way in which certain votes were put through yesterday.

Mr. NIMMO: Your Government stonewalled their own Estimates.

Mr. LARCOMBE: When?

Mr. NIMMO: During the whole period.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I have yet to learn that the Opposition have a monopoly of the rights of Parliament. Have Government members no rights at all? Are they not entitled to discuss Estimates? Are they to sit silent and listen to the unfair attacks and unscrupulous attempts made to discredit the Government? Surely it is coming to a sorry pass if we are to be browbeaten by the Opposition and must sit silent and forbear to discuss the Estimates! Surely each member of the Committee has equal rights with every other to discuss them! That discussion has been done by Government members with reasonable consideration for the rights of the whole of the members of Parliament, and many of the speeches

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indulged in by members on this side of the Chamber were provoked by hon. members opposite, the nature of whose attack provoked the rejoinder. In many cases the discussion was not initiated by hon. members on this side of the Chamber at all. Hon. members on this side of the House will not sit silent and hear their party vilified, maligned, and abused by hon. members opposite without replying.

The whole tendency of modern times is economy—economy of time, economy of speech, and economy of effort. We know that the Standing Orders have provided for that in the past few years. To put the reverse of the argument used by the hon. member for Mirani, I would point out that in the old days, when votes were small, unlimited time was allowed Parliament for the discussions on the Estimates. We had members like Joseph Lesina and Matthew Reid standing up in this Chamber and speaking for eight hours each. I think the father of the present hon. member for Gympie almost established a record when he spoke for over eight hours on one occasion. If to-day hon. members were allowed to speak for eight hours and to vie with each other, not in the quality of their efforts, but in their volume and the time occupied, hon. members opposite would have reasonable cause for complaint. Those days are gone. To-day the Standing Orders permit only a limited time during which hon. members may speak on the Estimates; and no one can justly say the quality of speeches has suffered as a result or that any hon. member has suffered any injustice thereby.

The time allowed on the Address in Reply, the Financial Statement, and on the Estimates is sufficient for proper consideration of State problems. Therefore, I submit that, although the matter raised by the hon. member for Mirani is an important one, his deductions are not sound. Reasonable time is allowed, but that time has not been properly utilised by members of the Opposition.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [11.1 a.m.]: We must recognise that a great responsibility devolves on Governments throughout Australia to-day. The members of this Parliament should stand up to their responsibilities in accordance with the conditions we are facing at the present time. One of the most vital questions that should be receiving our earnest consideration is the condition of those people who are unemployed in this State. Parliament should devote the utmost possible time to the discussion of this vital problem of unemployment, but ever since the Government assumed office no opportunity has been afforded on the Estimates to discuss this problem and no information has been made available that would assist in such a discussion. This is the third session of this Parliament and no opportunity has been afforded to hon. members during the consideration of the Estimates to discuss the unemployment question and the administration of the Department of Labour and Industry. The report of the Department of Labour and Industry has not been tabled in any session till after the Estimates have been passed, and last session it was not made available till after Parliament had adjourned! If the Government were desirous of tackling the problem of unemployment, if they were desirous of allowing Parliament to do the work it should be doing, then this

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information would be made available and an opportunity offered to discuss this important question. I could understand it if this had only occurred in one session, but we have had three sessions without an opportunity of ventilating this matter.

The hon. member for Rockhampton has objected to what he termed the unfair criticism that was indulged in by the hon. member for Mirani. He said the Secretary for Labour and Industry was in the South representing the Premier. I would point out that the Minister was not in the South during the past month; the Estimates concerning his department could have been discussed then. Nor was he in the South during the last two sessions when this question could have been discussed and his reports could have been released. In view of those facts it is obvious that the argument of the hon. member is fallacious. If the Minister is in the South, another Minister is acting in his department on his behalf, and he would be able to represent him in Parliament and deal with any objections or arguments as to its administration. We have responsible Government and each member of the Cabinet should be only too desirous of having the whole question ventilated with a view to solving the difficulties confronting them.

Another point raised by the hon. member for Rockhampton was that the Opposition had every opportunity to ventilate this matter on the Address in Reply. The Opposition took advantage of the time allowed them on the Address in Reply; but they were handicapped owing to the fact that they did not have the report of the Department of Labour and Industry. Opposition members have asked definite questions of the Secretary for Labour and Industry and the replies they have received were to the effect that the information was being obtained or that it would be given in the annual report. During last session I asked two questions of the Secretary for Labour and Industry, and the replies I received were that the information was being obtained; apparently it was being obtained from the time Parliament opened till it adjourned, because I never received it. Early in this session the Leader of the Opposition asked for information in regard to the Department of Labour and Industry and the reply he received was "The information is being obtained." Apparently that information is still being obtained! Opposition members are handicapped in discussing this question when that information is not made available to them. If we had the advantage of perusing the report of the Department of Labour and Industry the information we seek might be found to be contained in it.

What do we find occurring in this regard? The public outside are getting information that is censored before it is given to the press, and no definite information is available to this House and no definite opportunity is given to this House to discuss the question in the light of essential information. If we neglect this most vital question that confronts Queensland, we shall not be doing our duty to this State. We are not representing our people in the manner we were sent here to do.

Another argument raised by the hon. member for Rockhampton was that the Opposition failed to distribute the time

allowed to them and did not take advantage of the opportunity that lay ready to their hands. I do not agree. On these Estimates the Opposition have discussed only the most vital questions, and on many votes the only thing they did was to reply to speeches made by Government members. We know quite well that so soon as the Estimates were brought up for discussion a definite system of stonewalling was followed by hon. members opposite in order to prevent the Committee from reaching the votes for the Department of Labour and Industry. In this respect I need only refer to the speech made by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock on the Estimates of his own department. His speech was a marathon; he endeavoured to establish a record. (Government interjections.) As hon. members opposite are attempting to make interjections as to the time I have occupied I would advise them that my speeches lasted only sufficient time to occupy a space of about three inches in "Hansard." I dealt with what was vital.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Is that when the speech was boiled down?

Mr. KENNY: My speeches were boiled down to hard facts, and were just of sufficient length to place the position before the Government so that they could consider what should be done. I fully appreciate the importance of having the opportunity of discussing the most vital question that this Parliament should discuss. I do not blame hon. members on the other side of the Chamber for speaking if they have something to say, but I do blame them for stonewalling. That is not the job of members of Parliament at all. We are here to do our duty to our State. We are paid to do that duty, and in that and other ways it is costing Queensland a considerable sum to tackle the problems confronting it. If we pretend to tackle them by stonewalling, so that the public cannot discover the true facts of the case, it is time that the constitution was altered and the government of the country placed on another basis.

The hon. member for Rockhampton accused the Opposition of saying that Government members were stonewalling and declared that we wished to deny them the right of speaking in this Chamber. Government members have every right to speak on every subject they desire to discuss, but while we wish to preserve that right to them Opposition members have the self-same right. If Government members wish to do their duty, they have the opportunities that hon. members of the Opposition have not. They have the opportunity in their caucus room of asking Ministers to bring up for discussion the vital question of unemployment. They have neglected their duty in not thus using their influence, in order that the whole question could be considered with the view of alleviating the position of the unfortunates who are suffering. That is the most vital problem facing Parliament to-day. It is useless for the hon. member to tell this Chamber that many years ago the father of the hon. member for Gympie made a marathon speech here. It is useless for hon. members to say that there was no limitation as to time in those days. You know quite well, Mr. Speaker, that the politicians or members of Parliament of those days did not face the problems that we are facing to-day. In those days mem-

bers of Parliament did not have this question of unemployment dragging at the roots of the constitution and of civilisation itself. (Laughter.) This is a grave problem. It is one of vital importance, and it is useless for the hon. member for Cairns to laugh.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I was merely laughing at your remark, "dragging."

Mr. KENNY: The hon. member may deny that the spectre of unemployment is facing the manhood and womanhood of the State and of Australia to-day. He may deny that the whole question is exercising the minds of individuals inside and outside of every Parliament of the world. He may deny that it is causing the fall of Governments in many parts of the world. We have democracies falling all over the world because this self-same question of unemployment has not been tackled. We have a democratic form of government in Australia; we are living in a democratic age, and this democracy we should be protecting. What are we doing to protect it? What are we doing to convince the people that we, as a Parliament, are doing the right thing and are not recreant to our trust? Parliament is not true to its trust. Parliament is casting the responsibility to one side, and is shuffling on this question, sidestepping it, and appears to be content to allow the State to drift till something turns up. The problem of unemployment in this State is too serious to allow that drift to go on. If we will not recognise our responsibilities and will not endeavour to tackle this question, the responsibility for our omission will be on our own shoulders. The men and women who are suffering through unemployment in this State will not always be as patient as they have been during the last few years. We must recognise that the unemployed in Queensland have been patient.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Discuss the matter with Joe Lyons.

Mr. KENNY: It is useless for the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I should like to give the hon. member for Cook every opportunity to discuss the resolution before the House, but I am not going to permit any hon. member to engage in a general discussion on unemployment on this resolution. The hon. member may refer to the matter in passing, but he may not debate it in the manner in which he appears to be doing.

Mr. KENNY: I had no intention of debating the question of unemployment in detail, although I may have been carried away in my arguments. I was endeavouring to impress upon hon. members opposite the responsibilities of Parliament when the hon. member for Fortitude Valley interjected, "Discuss that with Joe Lyons." I should be out of order in discussing any matter relating to the Federal Parliament. We are discussing our own responsibilities, and the need to justify our presence in this House. We must attend to our duties in such a way that the people will continue to have confidence in our parliamentary system. I want to assist Parliament to maintain that confidence. I want to show the people of this State that we have justified our existence as Parliamentarians, and that the confidence that they repose in

responsible government under our democratic system of society is not misplaced. That is a vital matter for the consideration of Parliament. One of the problems that threatens seriously to undermine our democratic system of government is the problem of unemployment. Parliament should devote a reasonable amount of time to the discussion of this problem, and in refusing to accede to our request for an opportunity to discuss the matter the Government are undermining the confidence of the people in parliamentary government, and if we do not take care we shall pass from the democratic age to an age where Parliaments will be no more, and the people of this country will be controlled by a dictator.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: It is well known that you are a fascist.

Mr. KENNY: I say definitely that I would prefer fascism to a system of bolshevism.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You do not believe in that.

Mr. KENNY: I believe in a parliamentary system. I have no time for a dictatorship, because under a dictatorship the people must lose their liberty. I want to retain for the people the liberty that they dearly won by strenuous fighting over many years, but there is only one way in which we can preserve it, and that is by maintaining the parliamentary system of government. It behoves every member of Parliament to carry out his duties in accordance with his conscience, and the most urgent problem that this important institution should discuss is the question of unemployment. I desired to have an opportunity to discuss that problem, and I regret exceedingly that the Government have not seen fit to concede it. Even at this late stage I appeal to the Government not to discuss many of the resolutions, but to pass them without debate, so that Parliament may have the opportunity to consider the pressing question of unemployment. Let us grapple with the problem with a view to its solution, so that the unfortunate people may have an opportunity to enjoy a better standard of living than that which prevails to-day. Let Parliament do its job; and if it is done then the Opposition will be satisfied that we have justified our presence here.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [11.15 a.m.]: The hon. member for Mirani showed shocking bad taste when he made a personal reference to a man who was not here to defend himself. Hon. members opposite may criticise, but it is very unfair indeed for any hon. member to attack another hon. member who is not here to defend himself and vindicate his honesty. I am satisfied that every hon. member who is unbiased will admit that the Secretary for Labour and Industry is prepared at all times to do his job, to face his responsibilities, and to give a fair deal to everybody. It will be admitted that he is prepared to give a fair deal to every hon. member who seeks his assistance, but I repeat that I consider that the remarks by the hon. member for Mirani concerning the Secretary for Labour and Industry ill become the hon. member, and are not fair.

Hon. members opposite are bewailing the alleged fact that they will not have an opportunity to discuss the ramifications of

[*Mr. Kenny.*

the Department of Labour and Industry, and are not getting a fair deal, but it is only right to pin them down to facts and to remind them that during this session, particularly during the discussion of the Estimates, they were the gravest offenders in wasting time. They engaged in stonewalling, and I pay them the compliment, if they can get any satisfaction from it, of saying that they are experts at the job. The hon. member for Cook is their most expert stonewaller, and absolutely the worst offender in that respect in this Chamber. He wasted fully twenty-five minutes going over and over the same matters that he had previously discussed.

Mr. MAXWELL: You have no right to usurp the Speaker's functions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Yet the hon. member for Cook and his colleagues charge the Government with not giving them an opportunity of reaching the votes they desire to discuss! If to-day every hon. member adopts his methods I am safe in predicting that this debate will not get beyond Resolution 16 or 19. If blame is attachable to anyone it is attachable to the Opposition themselves, because they have wasted much time since this Parliament has been in session. It has been conspicuously noticeable that member after member on the Opposition benches has risen on motion after motion and discussed it in the same way. We are thus able to refute the unfair charges that we are stonewalling because they have wasted so many valuable opportunities. They have only themselves to blame, and their unfair attitude in indicting the Government for their own sins will not earn them the respect of the people. They should face the fact that they have allowed their opportunities to pass and not attempt to place the responsibility on the shoulders of the Government.

It is necessary that we should recall the past political history of hon. members opposite. Hon. members are emphatic in their declarations that public matters should be fully discussed in Parliament, but we can remember what we had to endure during their three years of power. You, Mr. Speaker, should remember very clearly the attitude they adopted. On numerous occasions they endeavoured to prevent us from discussing matters of vital importance to the people. We did not seek to stonewall them, but they sought to stifle discussion in every possible way, and on numerous occasions applied the "gag" to prevent their ventilation. Their past performances stultify their criticism this morning. The hon. members for Mirani and Cook deplored what they termed a wasting of time, but overlooked the important fact that an opportunity yet remains to-day for the discussion of the important subject of unemployment; they have set a very bad example by taking up what time is available in opening a full dress debate on the Resolution under discussion. Again, we indict them: there is no honesty or sincerity of purpose in their claims respecting lack of opportunity for discussion.

I suggest to hon. members opposite that if they feel aggrieved at what they term the lack of opportunity to discuss certain questions, they should seek to remedy their grievances along the correct lines by endeavouring to secure an amendment of the

Standing Orders, whereby increased time would be allowed for the discussion of the Estimates and other questions. That is the soundest and most satisfactory method to adopt. The fact is that within the scope of the Standing Orders every opportunity has been afforded to hon. members opposite to discuss the questions they have now introduced, and their criticism this morning is ill-founded, because they have wasted much time in criticising other measures and discussing other matters of Government policy. Having failed to do the job they should have done when they had the opportunity, they are now attempting to place the responsibility upon the shoulders of the Government. I, for one, will not allow them to get away with that. It is they who must accept the responsibility for their failure, and the fact that they are continuing to waste time to-day will not in any way enhance their prospects in the election or their reputation with the people outside this Assembly.

Another matter to which I desire to refer concerns the efforts of yourself, Mr. Speaker, towards improving the general appearance and tone of Parliament House. I desire to offer you my appreciation and my compliments. You and I do not see eye to eye on all occasions; probably there are some questions upon which we can never agree; but I am very pleased indeed to see how you have renovated Parliament House, which is now a credit not only to Parliament but also to the people of the State. Not the least satisfactory feature of the renovations is the fact that in the process you have given to a large number of men a long term of employment in keeping with the general policy—the worthwhile policy—of the Government. Parliament House, being the seat of government, should be a building that is a credit to the State, a building where citizens may attend and hear questions of government discussed, and having done so may leave it knowing that it is in keeping with the dignity of the State and consonant with the desire of the people generally.

I also desire to express my thanks to the officers of Parliament for their unflinching courtesy during the period I have been member for Fortitude Valley. In response to whatever inquiries it has been necessary for me to make of them, they have at all times given me civility and courtesy. These remarks apply to the staffs operating in various branches of Parliament House. You are very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, in having such an able and well-informed staff to assist you to carry out your varied duties.

I reiterate my statement that whatever grounds hon. members opposite may have had for their argument on this resolution, they have forfeited their right to use it by their consistent stonewalling of the Estimates in general. They have shown an utter lack of political decency and principle. Having failed to perform their duty, they, in a poor, mean sort of way, in keeping with their general attitude on all occasions, endeavour to place the responsibility upon the shoulders of the Government. If any people are likely to be misled by their actions, let those people carefully search the pages of "Hansard," for there they will see for themselves who have wasted the time of Parliament, if time has been wasted. They will then realise that the arguments adduced by hon. members opposite are not founded on fact, are not

justified, and are in keeping with the attitude they have always adopted when they have the opportunity.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [11.28 a.m.]: The speech of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is typical of him and of many of his colleagues. They content themselves with belching forth a great number of blatant statements that can have no weight whatever. I do not think anybody takes any notice of the stupid, mendacious statements made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and others like him.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I would not appeal to you—

Mr. RUSSELL: You keep quiet! You have no intelligence anyway.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members are allowed forty minutes for discussion, and no hon. member is entitled to interrupt whilst another hon. member is speaking.

Mr. RUSSELL: You, Mr. Speaker, have always treated me uniformly fairly, but I resent the wild remarks made by hon. members opposite. It is about time attention was called to them. They are getting more publicity than they warrant.

Mr. BRASSINGTON interjected.

Mr. RUSSELL: You have made your speech; be quiet!

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I will interject when I feel inclined.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! No hon. member has that right. No hon. member has the right to interject at any time, unless the hon. member who has the floor, by remaining silent, gives him the opportunity. If the hon. member persists in interrupting I shall have to take very unpleasant steps to deal with him.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: If I feel it is necessary to interject, I will.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will obey my call to order at all times.

Mr. RUSSELL: The hon. member for Rockhampton stated that members on the other side had their rights. His remarks prompt me to ask what rights Opposition members have. The protest lodged by the hon. member for Mirani comes at a very opportune time. I certainly object to this House being made a recording instrument for caucus decisions. If we believe in the rights and the traditions of Parliament, the Opposition should be allowed the opportunity to discuss every question at length. I do not know who was responsible for devising this system of allotting sixteen days for the discussion of Estimates; but I do know that during the time Mr. Denham was Premier of this State the order in which departmental Estimates were considered was reversed each year. One year he would start with, say, the Chief Secretary's Department, and the following year with the Trust and Loan Funds, so that during the three years of a Parliament every vote was fully discussed.

It is all very well for the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to say we have wasted time.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: So you have.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RUSSELL: I deny that statement in toto. We had an instance the other day of a marathon speech by the Secretary for Agriculture, who occupied two and

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a-half hours and included even a dissertation on margarine. I admit that, owing to its importance, a little more time was given to the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture than otherwise would have been devoted to it. Queensland is a primary producing State, and it is necessary that country members should have ample opportunity of ventilating their grievances. In general, however, an enormous amount of money is devoted for each department, and a much longer time should be allotted to dealing with each department. Outside the Schedules, in the second section of the Estimates, we have to deal with about twelve very important departments—namely, Executive and Legislative, Premier and Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, Public Works, Labour and Industry, Justice, Public Lands, Agriculture and Stock, Public Instruction, Mines, and Railways, and then we have also the Trust and Special Funds and the Loan Fund. The biggest, so far as expenditure is concerned, is the Trust and Special Funds, running into £6,346,000, and the Loan Fund, £4,400,000, is slightly below the railways, £4,625,000. In view of the trumpety nature of the legislation that has come before the House this session, and the many important questions confronting the people, a good deal more time should be afforded to members on this side of the House to discuss these votes more fully.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you know of any other Parliament where more time is allowed?

Mr. RUSSELL: I do not know what is done in other parts of Australia. Our main function to-day is the control of the public purse, and more time should be devoted to the discussion of this enormous expenditure. The Trust and Special Funds concern every department; so too, does the Loan Fund. We know, for example, that the Government have a big loan programme in front of them, but what opportunity is afforded to discuss this very important expenditure?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: During the Address in Reply.

Mr. RUSSELL: During which an hour is allowed each member to talk on every subject under the sun! The time allowed is not sufficient to deal with the various problems that this expenditure affects. In other parts of the world these large matters are referred to a Committee of the House for investigation and report. I do not see why that cannot be done here. I do not wish in any way to affect Government policy, but as representatives of the people we claim the right to discuss every item of expenditure proposed by the Government.

Some members have referred to the question of unemployment and have said that we shall have an opportunity later on in the day to discuss this question. Such an important question warrants the setting apart of several days for its discussion. I think it would be wise if the views of every hon. member could be obtained in regard to this vital question. A learned judge a few days ago referred to "the terrible curse of unemployment." I have certain views on the matter, which I should like to place before the House, and I daresay other hon. members have likewise. But it appears the Government have a cut and dried scheme to bring in certain Bills and pass them without

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any consideration of the views of hon. members on this side of the House. That is not what Parliament should be. We are here to discuss public questions. Apparently the Opposition are considered as being of no consequence in the affairs of the State. It is questionable whether the public will agree with that attitude. As the representative of an important constituency I claim the right to offer my views and opinions on every question that comes before the House, but that opportunity is denied to me and other members. I refuse to accept decisions of caucus as being the opinion of the country. Hon. members on the other side are content to follow blindly what is decided in caucus. We have seen them day after day rising in their places in this Chamber and flattering this and that public servant, and wasting the time of the House in dealing with trivial questions. I object to it. The other day I objected to the attack on public servants who are not permitted and will not have the opportunity to defend themselves.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You objected to redistribution—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Fortitude Valley is now deliberately interrupting the speaker.

Mr. RUSSELL: I have no objection to the Secretary for Labour and Industry proceeding to Melbourne, but I say that another Minister could have taken care of his Estimates. Unemployment is of such an urgent nature that we should have a full-dress debate on the question.

We have also called attention to the increasing power of the Bureau of Industry. I should like to have information as to whether it is to be allowed to continue in the way it is going. I have nothing to say against the members of the bureau personally, but I object to the growth of a new department and the interposition of its will between the people and Parliament. I desire to know the reason why extra powers have been conferred upon it, and why the Department of Public Works should not carry out the Government's public works policy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Resolution No. 22 will give you an opportunity.

Mr. RUSSELL: All right—I know what I am doing. I am one of the most respectful members of the House, and I very seldom transgress. I know just as much about the rules of debate as do hon. members opposite.

We on this side have another grievance, and I take this opportunity of airing it. I refer to the offhand way in which the Ministry deal with questions asked by hon. members of the Opposition. Times out of number we have asked for information and it has not been forthcoming. As representatives of the people we demand to have this information. I will quote some that has not yet been given. On 30th August the hon. member for Nanango moved—

"That there be laid upon the table of the House a statement in the usual form showing the expenses of Ministers from 1933-34."

Up to the present that information has not been given to the House, and I say that omission constitutes a direct flouting of the privileges of Parliament, and also displays a lack of courtesy to the hon. members of

the Opposition on the part of the Government. What are they afraid of, anyhow? On the 18th September the hon. member for Oxley asked of the Premier this question—

"1. What motor cars used by Ministers, have been purchased during the term of the present Government, stating date of purchase, make of car, and price paid respectively.

"2. Are any Ministers using their own cars for official purposes? If so, which Ministers, and what allowances do they receive?"

The reply given to that is—

"The information is being prepared."

No information has yet been tabled, although that question was asked on the 18th September. That is another instance of the flouting of the privileges of the Opposition. We demand this information. It should be given. What is the reason for the delay? On the 18th September this question was asked of the Secretary for Labour and Industry by the hon. member for Cook—

"What was the total number of unemployed registered in the Labour Department at 31st August last—(a) Married males with dependants; (b) Single men; and (c) Females?"

The answer given to that is—

"The information is being obtained."

Up to the present no information has been tabled in this House. On the 20th September the Leader of the Opposition asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"What was the number of intermittent relief workers within the metropolitan area on the last pay day in August, 1932, August, 1933, and August, 1934, respectively?"

The Secretary for Labour and Industry answered as follows:—

"This information will be disclosed in the annual report of the department to be presented to Parliament shortly."

It has already been stated this morning that that report has not yet been presented to Parliament. The Estimates have been prepared and probably there is no intention whatever of presenting the report to Parliament before the recess. I object to the way the Government are side-stepping the issue and refusing to divulge information that would be useful to the country at the present time. On the 9th October the Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier—

"1. What was the total amount paid by all departments in fees and other emoluments to barristers and solicitors, excluding departmental officers, in 1933-34?

"2. What are the names of the recipients and the amounts received respectively?"

The reply by the Premier was—

"The information is being obtained, and will be tabled when the return is compiled."

Absolutely a lot of eyewash! There is no intention whatever of supplying the information, and I object to the way in which we are robbed of our privileges. We demand the information, which should be produced within forty-eight hours. I object to the humbug that is going on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will not use the word "robbed."

Mr. RUSSELL: I withdraw the word. I did not mean it, except in a parliamentary sense.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is quite out of order, even in that sense.

Mr. RUSSELL: I hope that the Government will take notice of our protest. There are many other important questions that the House should be discussing instead of the Government endeavouring to rush into recess. For instance, what has been happening at the Loan Council? How does Queensland stand in regard to the allotment of loan money, and what programme do the Government intend to put before the Federal Prime Minister? Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that this House might be asked to express an opinion on the matter? Those projects should be discussed in this House. What will happen? The Government will meet the party in caucus, and the proposals will be sent direct to the Prime Minister without hon. members on this side being given an opportunity to express any opinion whatever. What is the good of our coming here at all if it is only to register a negative vote against hurried and obnoxious legislation? It seems to me that we have been ridden over roughshod by the Government. They have treated the Opposition with the greatest discourtesy, and I think it is time that an agitation started for a restitution of the rights of Parliament. As representatives of the people we demand that we be provided with all information relating to public questions. There is the matter of the building of the Kangaroo Point Bridge and the Stanley River dam, both involving enormous sums of money. Separate Bills should be introduced into this House providing for that expenditure instead of having the provision for the first moiety of loan money tucked away in an obscure corner of the Loan Estimates. What has that been done for—to delude the House and to delude the country? Why can hon. members opposite not be open about it and say, "These are our projects, and we invite a discussion on them?" On whose report is the Stanley River scheme to be based? Have the people been consulted? I know that there was a discussion in the Brisbane City Council, but so far as I can learn no decision has been arrived at. I think the time has arrived in this State when hon. members on this side should be taken more into the confidence of the Government. Not that we claim any right to obstruct their policy! They have their ideas and they have their policy, but we have ours, too. They have the majority in the House, and naturally they must govern, and naturally also their policy must prevail, but I think that as useful citizens our advice may be of the highest advantage to the party opposite.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. A. Cooper, *Bremer*) [11.45 a.m.]: I have no desire to delay the debate, but it would be entirely wrong to allow a number of statements that have been made by hon. members opposite to go unchallenged. The hon. member for Mirani made reference to the Secretary for Labour and Industry, and I desire to point out that that Minister is engaged upon official business representing the Government of Queensland at the Victorian Centenary celebrations. I

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am sure that hon. members opposite would not like that important function to take place without any official representation from this State in Melbourne. When the Secretary for Labour and Industry completed his official business in Canberra he went to Victoria as a representative of the State and the Queensland Government. The Estimates of his department were ready, and they would have been dealt with by myself or by the Premier, if necessary, if the debate upon the other Estimates had permitted the Estimates of this department to be submitted for consideration.

Hon. members in this Chamber, particularly in Committee of Supply, have more opportunities for discussion than are given in any other Parliament in any part of the Commonwealth. The hon. member for Mirani referred to the fact that £25,000,000 or £26,000,000 was expended, and that only sixteen days were allowed for a discussion of that expenditure, but I should like to remind him that in the House of Commons itself, where the amount of money voted is many times greater than that in Queensland, only twenty days in all are allowed. In the Commonwealth Parliament, which spends much more money than does the State of Queensland, there are no allotted days for Supply, and the sitting days usually occupied for this purpose amount to about three or four. In New South Wales, where a much greater amount is appropriated than is the case in Queensland, not more than ten days are allowed for the consideration of the Estimates. There is no allotted period in South Australia, Victoria, or Western Australia. As a matter of fact, in those last-named States, and sometimes in the Commonwealth, the Estimates are put through at the one sitting, together with the Appropriation Bill, and everything else connected therewith. Hon. members opposite have had every opportunity to discuss the things that they desired to discuss.

Mr. MAXWELL: Where?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: On the Budget. The Budget was delivered on 25th September, and it was debated on 26th and 27th September, 3rd, 4th, and 5th October—four full days and part of a fifth day, exclusive of the day upon which it was delivered. Then Supply has been granted on one or two occasions since then, and there have been ample opportunities for hon. members to discuss any questions relating to the financial position of the State.

The hon. member for Cook said that he himself had not been extravagant in his speeches on Supply, and that they would probably not amount to more than about 3 inches per subject. I have gone through "Hansard" up to the fifteenth day, and I find that up to the fifth day of the Estimates the hon. member's speeches occupied twenty and a-half columns of "Hansard," while up to the fifteenth day his speeches occupy between forty-four and forty-five columns. Yet he stands up and makes the statement that his speeches on the Estimates would probably cover 3 inches on each subject! I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, because you are not in the Committee and do not know, that the hon. member for Cook occupies fully 3 inches with interjections on each subject, irrespective of his speeches upon it. It shows to what pass the Opposition have come when they do not know how long their

criticism on the various departments extends. If one day were allotted by the Committee to the Estimates of each department, including the Trust and Special Funds, and the Supplementary Estimates, that time should suffice to enable members of the Opposition to exercise their rights as they suggest, but they have monopolised much of the time of the Committee on Supply in discussing other questions. They know well when Supply begins that sixteen days are allotted to the Estimates, and if they regulated their discussion they could discuss every vote.

The hon. member for Hamilton raised the question of replies to questions. I would remind him that these replies are purely courtesy matters. I can assure him that questions are answered by members of the Ministry in a very full and very clear way. I remember the hon. member for Rockhampton in the last Parliament, Mr. T. A. Dunlop, asking a question with reference to the expenses of Ministers. The then Leader of the Government protested against the asking of the question, because he said it would probably cost £500 to collate the information required. The public service is not overstuffed, and when officers of the departments are taken off their regular work to prepare information to enable questions to be answered and to prepare elaborate statements that are asked for by members of the Opposition, then the Opposition must wait until the information can be compiled. Only this morning the Treasurer was asked some questions with reference to the cost of running motor cars, and he replied that the information was expected to be available in a day or two, and so soon as it was ready it would be given to the House. There is no point in the statement made by the hon. member for Hamilton that information is withheld from hon. members. That is not the case. Hon. members have had ample time to discuss all questions they desire to discuss. It rests with themselves entirely as to what matters shall be discussed, and I protest against the statement that there has been a desire to keep back the discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry.

Mr. KENNY: Why have you done so for the last two years?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We have taken the Estimates in their regular order. While the hon. member for Cook was straining at the leash to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry in order to get into grips with the monster of unemployment, he himself occupied time on other questions, and thereby filled forty-four and a-half columns of "Hansard"! You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that on another occasion it was desired to discuss the problem of unemployment. I remember it quite well. I remember, too, what happened, when we desired to remind the then Government of their promise to provide £2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs.

Mr. MAHER: You left the Chamber rather hurriedly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Several of us left hurriedly for a week. That is how we were restrained from discussing the problem of unemployment! It is a very true and a very old saying, that people in glass houses should not throw stones. When it comes to a question of burking discussion on public questions, we

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have only to cast our minds back to the three years when the Opposition occupied the benches. They gave us ample opportunity, if we desired, to learn their methods. But we have no such desire, for they remind us of the words of Bret Harte—

“That for ways that are dark  
And for tricks that are vain.”

Again I protest against the statement that the Secretary for Labour and Industry should be in his place. That hon. gentleman is on official business, representing the State at the Melbourne Centenary celebrations, and I am sure that the hon. member for Murilla and other hon. members who originally came from Victoria would think it very ill-becoming on the part of the Government had they not an official representative at these very important celebrations.

Mr. MAHER (*West Morcton*) [11.55 a.m.]: Despite the explanation of the Secretary for Public Instruction, it is extraordinary that during the triennial term of the present Government the Estimates for the Department of Labour and Industry have not been discussed at all. The term “Labour and industry” connotes the unemployment problem, and unquestionably the predominating factor in the election campaign in 1932 was the problem of unemployment. The Government having been returned to power on that occasion, it must follow that the influencing factor in the constituencies was the Government’s argument in favour of restoring the unemployed to work. Is it not rather extraordinary that, having been elected on that basis, having been returned by the people of the State to deal with this problem, the Government during the three-year term that they have been entrenched in power in this State have failed to bring up the Estimates for the Department of Labour and Industry for discussion and consideration in Parliament? In the 1932 Parliament, the first year of the present Government, the departments dealt with were those of the Home Secretary, Justice, Mines, Chief Secretary, Public Instruction, Public Lands, Public Works, and Executive and Legislative. In 1933 we covered exactly the same ground, with the exception that a brief discussion on the chief Railway vote. In this, the last session of the present Parliament, we are served up with the same old fare, the same old Government departments that were traversed for the past two years; each time the Department of Labour and Industry is deliberately avoided. We can only come to the conclusion that the Government have some special reason for preventing members of the Opposition from discussing the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry and the great problem associated with it. It is rather an insult to the members of this Parliament to think that at a time when the Estimates connected with this department should be placed before the House for discussion the Minister in charge of it should find it convenient to visit Melbourne on a pleasure trip, no doubt for the purpose of seeing the Melbourne Cup run. At a time when unemployment is as great as ever it was, and when the people are distressed and worried on every hand by the lack of employment, that the Minister should leave his State and

go away for a pleasure trip to Melbourne is beyond words; it almost savours of Nero fiddling while Rome burned. The Minister takes his obligations to the country so lightly that at a time when he should be presenting his Estimates for the consideration of this Parliament he finds it suitable and convenient to absent himself in another State for pleasure purposes. It shows a measure of contempt for the big problems associated with his department. The hon. gentleman should be in his place to give some explanation on the eve of an election of what he has done during the past three years to alleviate the evils of unemployment in this State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When you get to the vote all that information can be given.

Mr. MAHER: But we are not getting to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why are you standing up?

Mr. MAHER: Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to discuss the Department of Labour and Industry on the chief vote is past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Not at all.

Mr. MAHER: What opportunity is there? The matter of two hours between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., including the hour for dinner, in which to discuss the big problem of unemployment—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Ordinarily a man makes progress by standing up, but in this Chamber we make progress by sitting down.

Mr. MAHER: The hon. the Minister knows well what happens in this House. If members of the Opposition were to refrain from debating certain relatively unimportant Government Estimates, what would happen? We have seen what occurred during past sessions. The Government instruct their followers to stonewall the Estimates in order to make certain that the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry will not be reached in the time allotted. The whole thing reminds one of the story of Tantalus. According to ancient mythology Tantalus was the son of a wealthy merchant, and owing to the sins he committed in this world he was consigned to the lower world and there ordered to stand up in a lake where the water reached his chin. Each time he endeavoured to allay his thirst the waters of the lake receded from him, whilst overhead hung branches containing luscious fruits that were also just beyond his reach. In regard to the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry, members of the Opposition are in the same position as Tantalus. We are “so near and yet so far.” Members of the Government took ample care that this important vote—the most important affecting the country to-day—was kept out of reach of debate by members of the Opposition. Not only that, but the important votes under Loan Fund and Trust and Special Funds have not been reached during the past three sessions. The activities of the Main Roads Commission, the State Government Insurance Office, and the Public Curator have never been discussed during the present Parliament, which in itself is an absolute scandal.

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The people of the State who find the money have a right to know what is occurring.

The comparison made by the Secretary for Public Instruction with the House of Commons is hardly valid, for the reason that in Australia our governmental activities are divided between the Commonwealth, State, and local governing bodies, whereas the House of Commons has to deal with practically everything concerning the national life of Great Britain; and, therefore, it is obvious that it is impossible for that Parliament to allocate such time as its members would like to the financial aspects of government. There is no excuse for any limitation in this State. Parliament met in August, and will adjourn after a session of scarcely more than three months. Sufficient opportunity is not given to members to debate the important financial aspect of our activities in Queensland. I join in with the protest made by the hon. member for Mirani this morning that opportunity should be offered to members to discuss the important vote of the Department of Labour and Industry and the Trust and Loan Funds. It is a shocking thing that in a period of three years no opportunity has been afforded to members to debate matters relating to either.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [12.4 p.m.]: I regret the hon. member for Mirani raised this question, because I was desirous of dealing with matters connected with some of the other votes, but as it has been raised it may be as well to ascertain the actual position. I desire to emphasise what the Secretary for Public Instruction and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley have said in connection with the absence of the Secretary for Labour and Industry in Victoria. Although the accusation has since been repeated by the hon. member for West Moreton, I think the people of Queensland will appreciate the justification for the visit of the Secretary for Labour and Industry to the South, where he has gone on a mission in connection with the problem of unemployment. I take it that it is of more importance to the people of Queensland that additional people should be employed than that the Minister should be sitting in this House listening to the words of alleged wisdom that fall so freely from the lips of members of the Opposition. It seems to be the wish of hon members opposite that members on the Government side should listen to what they say without making any reply. Government members have actually been accused of stonewalling the Estimates because they have felt it incumbent on them to make speeches.

I have taken the opportunity to go through the speeches of both the Opposition members and members of the Government on the Estimates, and drew up a list of their respective performances. I have not had time to check them, but they are sufficiently accurate to give to the House an idea of the number of speeches made on the Estimates by hon. members opposite as compared with hon. members on the Government side. Members of the Government, in speaking on the Estimates and in seeking information from Ministers, made 139 speeches during the course of the sixteen days allowed for the Estimates. The speeches made by hon. members of the Opposition totalled 230. The following is a

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list of the hon. members opposite and the number of speeches made by them:—

Hon. member for—

East Toowoomba	...	...	7
Wynnum	...	...	6
Warwick	...	...	9
Stanley	...	...	3
Isis	...	...	6
Wide Bay	...	...	2
Keppel	...	...	4
Cunningham	...	...	14
Nanango	...	...	8
Kennedy	...	...	4
Cook	...	...	24
Logan	...	...	14
Toowong	...	...	10
Murilla	...	...	20
Murrumba	...	...	2
Oxley	...	...	13
Hamilton	...	...	11
Dalby	...	...	5
Mirani	...	...	7
Gympie	...	...	14
Cooroola	...	...	5
Passifern	...	...	6
West Moreton	...	...	13
Albert	...	...	3
Fitzroy	...	...	1
Carnarvon	...	...	1

The total is 230, and the hon. member for Cook, who had so much to say this morning about not being able to reach the votes he wanted to discuss made no fewer than twenty-four speeches of them. (Government laughter.) I do not propose to include in the number the speeches made by the Leader of the Opposition, because I am of opinion that, as leader, he has the right to make them. The hon. member for Hamilton, who also had a good deal to say this morning, made eleven speeches on the Estimates.

Another statement made by the Opposition was that the Secretary for Agriculture occupied two and a-half hours in reply to statements made on the Estimates of his department. Mr. Speaker, he did not take two and a-half hours at all. The hon. gentleman took two hours eight minutes. I was in the chair and the time was recorded. Everything said by the Minister was in reply to questions raised by hon. members opposite and to give information desired on certain matters. Members of the Opposition desired that he should answer their questions, but now they complain about the time he occupied and ask, "Why did he not sit down?"

Almost in the same breath members on the other side complained of not being able to get from Ministers replies to their questions. No matter what is done by Government members, members of the Opposition are not satisfied.

The hon. member for Mirani asks the important question—what is Parliament doing to improve conditions in the country? I should like to impress upon him that the present Government did not make a long list of promises to the people, as was done by the Moore Party at the 1929 elections, who then failed to carry them out. The Government have set to work in a determined manner to improve the position of the men and women in Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: And failed.

Mr. GLEDSON: I should be out of order in discussing this matter in detail, but I regret that hon. members opposite devoted so much time to the discussion of other matters as to prevent our reaching the

Estimates for the Department of Labour and Industry. Had we been able to discuss the Estimates of that department we should have been able to point out that when the Moore Government took control in 1929 the number of registered unemployed was 7.7 per cent.—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I realise that I should be out of order in dealing with the matter in detail, but I was drawn off the track by an interjection from the Opposition. If we had had an opportunity to discuss those Estimates we could have pointed out these things, including the percentage of unemployment, and we could have successfully established that the present Government have been a Government of action. The Government set out to do things instead of merely talking about what should be done. They have acted, and because of their actions many hundreds, I might even say thousands, of men and women in Queensland bless the day when Labour was returned to power in June, 1932.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [12.15 p.m.]: It was rather amusing to hear the protests from hon. members opposite that the Government would not allow them an opportunity to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry, and after hearing the list of speeches quoted by the hon. member for Ipswich they should hold their heads in shame. I have no doubt that they will not now have the tenacity to continue to make such protests. I suppose they regard it as justifiable to make those protests in an endeavour to belittle the Government, but they must understand that their statements can be checked. The charge that they hurled against this Government has now been thrown back into their teeth as a result of the careful research work carried out by the hon. member for Ipswich. I think that Parliament owes him a debt of gratitude for the thorough manner in which he has dealt with the matter.

Some rather extraordinary statements have been made in this Chamber by hon. members opposite. I understand that other hon. members opposite, in addition to the hon. member for West Moreton, charged the Secretary for Labour and Industry with deserting his post whilst he was in Melbourne. They have stated that he callously and cynically disregarded his high responsibilities as a Minister of the Crown in order to go on a pleasure jaunt. What is the position? The Secretary for Labour and Industry is in Melbourne at the invitation of the Prime Minister, and is representing this State at a conference assembled to discuss problems associated with the development of Australia. It is interesting to recall that another hon. member, a member of the party to which the hon. member for West Moreton belongs, is also in Melbourne at the present time. He came into this Chamber once during the present session of Parliament. I refer to the hon. member for Sandgate, who is living in Melbourne working on a financial proposition for the development of a gold mining corporation, but his parliamentary pay goes on just the same. I do not know whether there is any arrangement whereby the hon. member for Cook gets half his salary or some percentage of it for looking after the Sandgate electors.

Perhaps he is working on a piecework rate while the hon. member for Sandgate is away. It would be rather amusing, if it were not so tragic, to hear hon. members opposite saying that the Secretary for Labour and Industry is in Melbourne on a pleasure jaunt. The records of their own Ministers in that respect is not very edifying, and at the present time one of their members is in Melbourne, but doing no service to the State. He is there purely for the purpose of doing something that will enrich him and some of his fellow capitalists, but his parliamentary salary is going on just the same. I think hon. members opposite should show that they have at least some political decency by refraining from mentioning something that will certainly rebound and hit them very severely. I understand that the ex-Secretary for Labour and Industry desired to resign. We are told a story in the streets that the Leader of the Opposition did not desire him to do so because he did not want to face a by-election, as the Opposition figures have dwindled in each by-election. The fact remains that in the Wynnum by-election the majority of the Opposition dwindled from 1,200 to 150; that the majority of the Government in the Fortitude Valley by-election increased by over 1,500; and that the majority secured by the late Mr. T. R. Roberts at the last general election in East Toowoomba dwindled from 1,200 to a little over 150 in the recent by-election.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Through stuffing the rolls.

Mr. WATERS: I understand that the hon. member for Murilla is an authority on stuffing rolls. In fact, he has an intimate knowledge in that respect. He is regarded as such an authority on the subject that he is appointed as a sort of coach to new members on the other side, in order that they and the party may profit from his advice and wisdom.

The time of Parliament has been definitely wasted by members of the Opposition protesting, and protesting in vain, about methods which they adopted on every conceivable occasion when they were in power. They endeavoured by every means to frustrate discussion on the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry, and the hon. member for Murilla was very touchy about discussion, not only of his Estimates but also of his administration. Apparently he did not desire the full light of day to shine on matters such as the famous transfer of capital of the Railway Department. That subject was not discussed to the extent it might have been. The Opposition cannot justify their charge that the Government have endeavoured to frustrate discussion on the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry, because they had the opportunity to discuss that department on the Address in Reply, on the Financial Statement, and on the several Appropriation Bills. If they did not take full advantage of those opportunities, then the responsibility is theirs and not that of the Government. If they chose to discuss matters that do not affect the general welfare of the State and confined themselves to tiddlywinking matters connected with their electorates, the blame is theirs and theirs alone. They have had a full opportunity to achieve the object they now make complaint about. They have

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not exercised the powers which the Standing Orders confer on them to debate the questions they say they want to debate. Therefore, their claim that the Government prevented them from reaching the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry cannot be substantiated, and will not be recognised even by their own electors when they go back to them.

It will be particularly difficult for hon. members opposite to justify their waste of time. We know, for instance, that the hon. member for Dalby will have some difficulty in winning the Dalby plebiscite because of the manner in which he has conducted himself in this House. A number of his colleagues will probably be in the same boat. Nationalist supporters, particularly in the metropolitan electorates, constantly state that they are disgusted with the way their members behave; they convey the impression that they hold the opinion that younger men should represent the Nationalist Party. They even go so far as to say that quite a number of the members sitting opposite should resign and make way for better men. (Opposition dissent.) I understand that several members opposite are marked out for the axe. The ex-Attorney-General has gone into the Toowong electorate to live, and I suggest that the hon. member for Toowong might comport himself with the dignity becoming to a member of Parliament, and that instead of discussing matters of trifling importance, should concentrate his attention on vital issues affecting the welfare of the State. (Opposition dissent.) Then the hon. member for Isis is very sore. He has a very inquiring mind. We met him one night, and he told us that although his seat was such that it could not be affected by any redistribution, he did not want any coal-mines to go into it. Somehow or other, after listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Isis—in which, by the way, he shows a particular interest in the coal mines of the State—I am led to think that the hon. member is not leaving anything to chance. Hon. members opposite have made marathon speeches. They seem to think that because twenty-five minutes is allowed for discussion in Committee of Supply and forty minutes on the Financial Statement or the Address in Reply debate, they are compelled to speak for the permitted time. I know it is difficult for them to struggle along at times, and there may be something in the suggestion that the hon. member for Toowong holds a gun at their heads, and tells them that they must speak for the full time. In any case, the fact that they exercise their full time in discussing in the majority of instances, matters of minor importance and do not deal with votes that they now complain are being withheld from them, is sufficient indication that they lack a sense of responsibility, and is sufficient reason why some of their electorates will replace them at the next election.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [12.30 p.m.]: The complaint has been made by the Opposition that sufficient time is not allowed members of Parliament to discuss financial questions. I want to emphasise that the Queensland Parliament gives greater facilities in that direction than any other Parliament in Australia. Queensland is the only Australian Parliament where

[*Mr. Waters.*

the Standing Orders definitely allocate seventeen days for discussion of the Estimates in Chief and the further Estimates that are set out in detail in the documents circulated in Parliament. No time is allotted in the Commonwealth or in the other State Parliaments, and it is not uncommon in the Commonwealth Parliament for the Budget and the Estimates to be passed at the same sitting at which they are presented. Queensland has no limitation of the debate on the Financial Statement itself, while seventeen days are allowed for discussion on the various items. In the House of Commons, where Estimates of greater magnitude are presented, only twenty days are allowed. In all the other States it is not uncommon for the Budget and the Estimates to go through in one day. The maximum time allowed in New South Wales, although it is not fixed by the Standing Orders, is ten days. So members of this House cannot complain of any undue restriction being placed on their right to debate financial matters.

Reference has been made to the fact that the Secretary for Labour and Industry is not in his place in the House. I consider that to be a most unwarranted statement on the part of the hon member for Mirani. At the present time, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the Centenary celebrations are taking place in Melbourne. They were organised by the Victorian Government, and the Premier of every State was invited to be their guests during the period of official celebration. I claim it would be a discourteous thing for this Government not to be represented in Victoria during that period. I accepted the invitation; but on account of business that had to be attended to in this State I arranged, when in Canberra, that the Secretary for Labour and Industry should go on to Melbourne to represent me. It was at my request and on my instruction that he went there, and he represents this State and its Government at the celebrations conducted by the Victorian Government. It would be discourteous and churlish in the extreme if Queensland did not participate in the functions organised by the Victorian Government; it would be as churlish as the attitude taken up by the hon member who has discussed it.

Reference has also been made to the discussions on the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry. I was prepared to take those Estimates; and the details had been prepared by the Minister for presentation to Parliament, and had they come on I should have handled them myself and have been able to give all the information that hon members might have required on those Estimates. If members devote their time to the little things they understand to the exclusion of other things with which they are unable to grapple, no one can be blamed but themselves. When I was Leader of the Opposition, the party organised the debate on the Estimates. Members of the party were allotted to take charge of the debate on the various departments and certain specific times were allotted for discussion, with the result that we obtained a discussion of all the items on the Estimates that we desired to discuss. That was organisation; that was discipline. Every member's rights were preserved, orderly debate was forthcoming, and public opinion was kept informed. If hon. members opposite are so disorganised that they cannot

do that, surely they cannot blame the Government for their lack of capacity!

Resolution 4—(Executive and Legislative—Legislative Assembly)—agreed to.

Resolutions 5 to 21, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 22—“*Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—Bureau of Industry*”—

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [12.35 p.m.]: I wish to protest against the position we have reached in regard to this Bureau of Industry. In two paragraphs of its report it has recommended that the Government guarantee private companies to the extent of £600,000. That is committing the State to an expenditure without Parliament having any say whatever. I wish to protest against that principle and to say, as far as I am concerned, I do not vote for this sum. I believe the hon. member for Hamilton has a similar outlook on the matter. I do not like to sit in a division alone—I have had one experience and I do not want another—but if the hon. member will join me I would call for a division as a protest against this extraordinary disregard of sound principles of finance.

Resolution 22—(Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—Bureau of Industry)—agreed to.

Resolutions 23 to 26, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 27—“*Home Secretary's Department—Charitable Institutions and Grants*”—

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [12.37 p.m.]: I desire briefly to support the request made to the Government for the establishment of a home for the aged and infirm in Central Queensland. The request has been submitted to the Home Secretary, who while being sympathetically inclined points out it is not possible to accede to it during the currency of the present financial year. I hope that in the future, however, the request will be granted. There are many reasons why such a home should be established. Inter alia, there is the question of the nearness of the relatives and the familiarity of the aged people with their surroundings. These are important factors to those whose course of life has been run, and who have reached the closing days of their careers. Central Queensland is a very large area and carries a fairly large population as compared with that in other portions of the State. Its industries are very fine and enduring and will expand. In general, the district is a very, very promising one, and will justify the expenditure of money in the direction suggested. Another aspect of the question is that the establishment of such a home in Central Queensland would relieve the pressure upon similar institutions at Dunwich and the Eventide Home at Charters Towers. The Eventide Home is a credit to the Government and to the State, and exemplifies the very fine humanitarian spirit of those responsible for its establishment. I am pleased to be able to voice the request of the people of Central Queensland for the establishment of a similar home for the aged poor in that portion of the State. I should like to pay a tribute to one of the very active spirits working for the establishment of that home, Mr. R. Bruce Downie. Mr. Downie is a man who has passed the allotted span of three score years and ten, and has done great work for the State. He was partly responsible for the

establishment of the carnival week in Rockhampton in conjunction with the late Mr. R. R. Dawbarn, which is such a feature of the life of Central Queensland, and is known throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. Downie has done great work in emphasising the need for such a home. The question of the site of the proposed home is a matter I will not discuss at this stage. When it is decided to establish the home will be time enough for the Home Secretary and his department to make investigations as to the best possible location. I commend the proposal to the Home Secretary. I know he is sympathetic, and I trust that the financial position of the State will allow him to carry out the work, if not during the currency of the present financial year, then as early as possible thereafter.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, *Ithaca*) [12.41 p.m.]: The matter raised by the hon. member for Rockhampton was brought before me by a deputation that waited on me in Rockhampton during my recent visit there. On a survey of the position of institutions for the aged and infirm in Queensland there is no doubt that there would be justification for one in the Central district. At the present time people in the Central district in need of such an institution either have to be brought to Dunwich or sent north to the Eventide Home at Charters Towers. In many cases the old people are separated by long distances from their relatives and families, if they have any. Whilst entirely sympathetic towards the proposal of the deputation and the hon. member for Rockhampton, the Government felt that they were not in a position to accede to the question just yet. Money could be provided from loan fund for this home, but in view of the prevailing financial situation the Government felt that they would hardly be justified at the present time in saddling the consolidated revenue fund with the annual cost of an institution of this kind. Of course, finances have greatly improved, but it must be remembered that we are yet far from a balanced Budget. If an institution of this kind is to be of any value to the community it must be well equipped and well staffed so that the inmates may be well looked after. That, in fact, is why these institutions are so expensive to conduct. I am sure that no hon. member would like an institution of this kind to be conducted in a parsimonious manner where the comfort and welfare of the inmates were sacrificed to the expediency of keeping down expenses to the degree that would be necessary to-day. However, the proposal is receiving the very sympathetic consideration of the Government, and I have no hesitation in assuring the hon. member for Rockhampton that so soon as we can see our way clear to face the annual cost of the upkeep of such an institution the Government will again consider the matter.

Resolution 27—(Home Secretary's Department—Charitable Institutions and Grants)—agreed to.

Resolutions 23 to 38, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 39—“*Department of Public Works—Chief Office*”—

Mr. GAIR (*South Brisbane*) [12.45 p.m.]: I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary for Public Works, the Under Secretary, and the officials of

Mr. Gair.]



the Department of Public Works upon the able manner in which they have carried out their duties, especially during a period when public works activities have considerably increased. During the past two years a considerable amount of loan money has been expended upon a public works programme. Hon. members opposite hold the view that it is wrong to expend loan money on public works, but it is needless for me to say that I take a contrary view, and that I believe that during times of economic stress loan money should be expended upon approved reproductive works. Who can claim or who is prepared to claim that the erection of buildings to accommodate public officers and the erection and extension of asylums, hospitals, schools, and similar institutions under the control of the Government do not constitute necessary work and are not reproductive in some form or another? A considerable amount of loan money has been expended by the Government in this direction, and in this way necessary work has been carried out and considerable employment has been given to men engaged in the building trade. I trust that the Government will continue to carry out their policy providing for the construction of such public buildings as are necessary. In this connection it is pleasing to note that in carrying out this programme work done by the day-labour system compares favourably with work carried out under the contract system. Day labour, which is the policy of the Government, can be justified to-day just as it could be justified throughout the history of Labour Governments. With proper supervision and the selection of capable men the work can be just as successfully carried out under the day-labour system as under the contract system.

It is interesting to note on taking a survey of the building operations in Brisbane and eleven other towns of the State that the value of building permits, including governmental operations, from January to June, 1934, disclose an increase of no less than 75 per cent., as compared with the figures for the same period of 1932. That is a striking advance, and is indicative of the success of the persistent efforts of this Government to stimulate industry and solve the problem of unemployment. After the Moore Government were elected in 1929, the value of building permits fell rapidly. The figures during the regime of the Moore Government were—

	£		
1929-30	...	...	878,917
1930-31	...	...	610,428
1931-32	...	...	530,875

These figures clearly show the results of the deflation policy pursued by the Moore Government. Immediately this Government were returned to office the figures began to improve, as is shown in the following table:—

	£		
1932-33	...	...	640,171
1933-34	...	...	929,407

The last-mentioned amount is over £50,000 higher than the best year during the Moore Government's period, and over £400,000 greater than the figures for their worst year. This illustrates that in addition to pursuing a building policy with a view to stimulating industry and creating work for the unemployed, the Government

[Mr. Gair.

have created confidence and induced the public to engage in building, which has given an added impetus to that stimulus. The figures are a distinct indication of the high success of the policy of the Government.

I congratulate the officers of the Department of Public Works who have met this considerable increase in work so efficiently and satisfactorily to all concerned. There is a great deal of preliminary work in connection with buildings of any description, especially in relation to the preliminary surveys and the preparation of plans. Some of us may complain about the delay in proceeding with certain work in our electorates, but when we recognise what the staff has been, and is coping with, we must admit that they are performing their duties very satisfactorily and expeditiously.

Mr. ANNAND: It is their job.

Mr. GAIR: The same staff that executed the diminished programme of the Moore Government has carried out the increased programme of the present Government without additional assistance. That fact is worth mentioning. I am reminded, too, by the Minister, that during the last two or three years the expenditure on Government works has increased from £250,000 to £500,000. That in itself shows what the policy of the Government is and the work it must entail. The hon. member for East Toowoomba said that the officers were being paid for doing this work. That is characteristic of the hon. member for East Toowoomba, who, when he was an employer, sweated every employee in his employ; but that sweating of his employees did not save him from bankruptcy.

Mr. ANNAND: You are a damned liar!

Mr. ANNAND having risen,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member for East Toowoomba please resume his seat? I ask the hon. member for East Toowoomba to withdraw and apologise to the House for using those words.

Mr. ANNAND: I withdraw with pleasure, and apologise to the House, but, Mr. Speaker, I cannot allow that to go on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ANNAND: I rise to a point of order. I want to seek your protection, Mr. Speaker, in this House. I ask that you request the hon. member for South Brisbane to withdraw both statements he made. They are not only untrue but also they are offensive to me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear the statement of the hon. member for South Brisbane, but if the hon. member said anything which is unparliamentary he ought to withdraw.

Mr. GAIR: I have no objection to withdrawing my statements if they are objectionable to the hon. member for East Toowoomba—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GAIR: If you desire me to repeat what I said, I said that the hon. member—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps it would be better not to repeat anything. If the hon. member has withdrawn, the incident may be considered as closed.

Mr. GAIR: I understood that you wished me to repeat the statement, Mr. Speaker.

As I was proceeding to say when the hon. member for East Toowoomba persistently interjected and brought trouble upon himself, it is all very well for some hon. members to say that the public servants are well paid for what they are doing. That may or may not be so, but I am one of those who believe that the least that we, as representatives of the people, can do, is to express our appreciation of the very efficient public service in Queensland and to register our gratification at their being able to meet an emergency such as the Under Secretary for the Department of Public Works and his staff have succeeded in meeting in relation to rapid and considerable improvement in the works programme of the present Government.

I also take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. L. P. D. O'Connor, the manager of the State Advances Corporation, which is one of the sub-departments associated with the Department of Public Works. Mr. O'Connor is a very capable and efficient officer, and in addition possesses qualifications that fit him to occupy this position at a time when sympathetic consideration must be extended to necessitous cases. I extend that tribute of appreciation to the efficient staff that is co-operating with Mr. O'Connor in carrying out the important housing schemes for the people of Queensland. A perusal of the report of the State Advances Corporation reveals in some degree the magnitude of its work. I was amazed to find that the total loans approved from the inception of the advances for workers' dwellings in 1910 up to 30th June, 1934, amounted to £7,255,310, and that the total amount advanced in that period was £6,486,211. The amount repaid by borrowers in that period is £3,365,714, and the amazing feature of the report is that the losses written off in respect of workers' dwellings amounted to only £476 from the inception of the scheme in 1910 to the close of the year 1918-19, and that during the last fifteen years no losses have had to be written off. That is a great compliment, first to the honesty of the people of Queensland, and, secondly, to the wise administration of this department. I offer my congratulations on that splendid work, and I trust the department will pursue the same policy in future. It is to the lasting credit of the administrators of the State housing activities in Queensland that appreciation is expressed of their actions by the bona fide clients who have made application for relief owing to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, unemployment, reduction in wages, and all those adversities that have been suffered by the great bulk of the people during the past five or six years. To every bona-fide case the department has displayed the greatest sympathy and extended the most favourable consideration.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [2 p.m.]: I desire to compliment the Minister and the Department of Public Works upon the public buildings policy inaugurated and being carried out in Rockhampton. The existing buildings have been renovated and repaired generally, and have been made more convenient and therefore more comfortable for the people working in them, as well as more attractive externally. I congratulate the Minister and the Government upon the erection of a very fine up-to-date police court building in Rockhampton. The work is

almost completed, and the edifice will provide a fine addition to the architectural attractiveness of the city, as well as afford additional accommodation.

I have a further congratulation to offer to the Government and the department—that is, upon the decision to erect further public buildings in the State Government block in Rockhampton. I received an intimation from the Secretary for Public Works a few days ago in which he conveyed that decision. That will provide a continuity of building policy for Rockhampton, and the erection of up-to-date buildings will provide additional employment for artisans and labourers in the Rockhampton district. For many months past a good number of artisans and unskilled workers in Rockhampton have been engaged on public building work, and the decision to continue the building policy will provide further work for these people. Another building the Government propose to erect in the Rockhampton district, in the electorate of the member for Fitzroy, is a school building at Allenstown. The member for Fitzroy and myself have been advised that estimates are being prepared for a new school building for the Allenstown district. Pupils from both Rockhampton and Fitzroy electorates attend that school. Over 700 pupils are educated in the present school building, which is overcrowded, and ample provision for them will be made in the new building to which I have made reference.

We frequently hear criticisms of the departments and of Governments for deficiencies, but I would like to place on record the appreciation of the citizens of Rockhampton and myself for the excellent public building policy that is being proceeded with in the Rockhampton district.

Mr. LEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [2.5 p.m.]: During the consideration of this vote in Committee I was absent, and therefore did not have an opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the public works policy of this Government in so far as my electorate was concerned. According to "Hansard," the hon. member for East Toowoomba said he could not compliment the Government upon any work that had been done in Toowoomba during the preceding twelve months. I challenge the hon. member to outline any work of an essential or attractive nature carried out in that city during the three years of the Moore Government's term of office. A complete survey has been made of the Government building requirements of the city of Toowoomba. The hon. member for East Toowoomba knew that a programme had been outlined and actually entered upon in pursuance of the Government's policy. It would have been but courteous for him to have made reference to the great advantage that the policy of the Government means to the city of Toowoomba. I venture the opinion that when our new police station is completed it will be a building worthy of our city and in keeping with the dignity of the purpose for which it is intended. I am very happy to say that I have been advised by the Department of Public Instruction that we are to have a new building for intermediate school purposes on the present site of the North Toowoomba State School, and in addition a new structure for primary instruction purposes on the same site. All these things are a source of considerable pleasure to me, and give great satisfaction to the people of Toowoomba.

*Mr. Lewelyn.]*

In connection with the public building policy of the Government, mention has been made of the merits of the day-labour system as against the contract system for the construction of buildings. I sincerely express the hope that the contract system will be avoided as far as possible by the Government. The insidious methods and the pernicious effects of that system are apparent to all members. I desire to state in this House my opinion on the contract versus day-labour principle of building construction.

Mr. ANNAND: You built the Trades Hall in Toowoomba by contract.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I know we did, but that does not alter my opinion one iota. At all events, when that building was being constructed the workmen did not commence work before 8 a.m. and finish after 5 p.m. The hon. member knows as well as I do that under the contract system, as it obtains in Toowoomba, it is the custom to work before and after these hours.

Mr. ANNAND: No, I do not. I do not poke round these jobs.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The hon. member must know. Under the contract system unemployed men, anxious for work, are "cutting one another's throats" in their endeavours to get a contract at any old price, and in many instances are not able to fulfil their obligations.

Another matter that I take the opportunity of bringing forward under this vote is my objection to the remarks made by the hon. member for East Toowoomba when the vote of the Department of Public Works was being considered in Committee. He is reported in "Hansard" as making the statement that the Builders Labourers' Union in Toowoomba had closed its book. I was not in the Chamber at the time, but my attention has been drawn to the statement by the Secretary of the Toowoomba Builders Labourers' Union, and I ask the indulgence of the House while I read the letter from that gentleman—

Mr. ANNAND: I got one yesterday from the same quarter.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The hon. member can also read his if he so desires. The letter is as follows:—

"16 Eleanor street,

"Toowoomba, 1st November, 1934.

"Mr. E. J. Llewelyn,

"Parliament House, Brisbane.

"Dear Sir,—Following my conversation, per 'phone, with you yesterday, I am enclosing copy of letter which I have sent to Mr. Bruce, denying the statement of the member for East Toowoomba. As you know, it is hard enough now to try and get things going peacefully without outbursts of this nature. Many people are only too fond of giving limelight to such utterances, and much damage is done before we have time to deny them."

I have read the letter to the House because it is a direct denial of the statement by the hon. member for East Toowoomba.

Mr. ANNAND: That is the statement by the union. I have the statement by the worker in my bag.

[Mr. Llewelyn.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I am prepared to accept the assurance of the secretary of the union that the books of the union in Toowoomba are not closed. The hon. member for East Toowoomba also stated that it was necessary for a workman to have a union ticket before he could commence to work on these jobs, but that statement also is untrue. If a man is not a member of a union and desires to work on public buildings he is allowed four weeks in which to qualify as a member. That practice has been faithfully carried out in Toowoomba, and the men engaged in the industry are satisfied that it is being honourably observed.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) [2.14 p.m.]: I have no desire to delay the debate, because I know that hon. members on this side are very anxious to discuss the resolutions dealing with the Department of Labour and Industry. They may be rather optimistic in their belief that that opportunity will be extended to them, but the Treasurer should welcome any opportunity to receive constructive suggestions that may be in the interests of the unemployed in this State.

I was prompted to rise and speak on this resolution by the remarks that have been made by the hon. member for Toowoomba. I know that he and his colleagues on the other side of the House were very keen on the day-labour system during the early days of Labour Governments, and I well remember the issue of that little red book, "Socialism at Work," which was distributed amongst the members of the party some years ago. In that publication the efficacy of the day-labour system was upheld whilst the contract system was condemned. I casually came across a report which appeared in the "Courier-Mail" of 22nd February, 1934. In that paper I found this astounding announcement—

"TOOWOOMBA.

"NEW TRADES HALL.

"Plans have been drawn and a contract has been let for the erection of a new Trades Hall in Toowoomba, in Little Russell street, adjoining the Princess Theatre. The estimated cost is £4,000. Originally the Trades Hall was situated in Margaret street, on the present site of the Church of Christ, but after that property was disposed of the local labour organisations occupied rented rooms in Searle's buildings. The new hall is expected to meet union requirements in Toowoomba for the next fifty years. The contractors are Messrs. Kell and Rigby, of Brisbane, and the architect is Mr. M. C. Williamson, Toowoomba."

There is a case where the Labour Party departs from the day-labour system—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member please explain what that has to do with the resolution under discussion?

Mr. CLAYTON: It may not have very much to do with the resolution, but I am sure it is of great interest to the members of this House.

Let me now proceed to discuss the question of the expenditure of public moneys under the day-labour system as against the contract system. By the adoption of the contract system the people in the country during the past few years have been provided with a great many more schools than was previously

the case. Speaking on the Estimates of the Department of Public Works in 1926, I pointed out that under the day-labour policy of the Labour Government a school at Bell's Bridge, with dimensions 21 feet by 18 feet, cost £649, that another school at Munna Creek, 18 feet by 21 feet, cost £642, and that another school at Kia Ora cost £609. Under the contract system the same schools are being built for about £320. Following the willingness of the Labour Government to have schools constructed under the contract system, as well as under the day-labour system, the people in the country have been provided with greater educational facilities for their children. I congratulate the Government on their reversal of policy, because the money has been expended with greater advantage to the people. I could also point to the opinion of Mr. W. H. Demaine, president of the Central Executive of the Labour Party, concerning the day-labour question. When the Government were making money available for the construction of hospital buildings at Maryborough in 1927 the department estimated that the cost of that work would be £44,000. Mr. Demaine, one of the leaders in the Labour movement, and a staunch advocate of the day-labour system, was forced to abandon his principle and accept a tender of £30,000 from a private contractor. That tender was based on the same plans which had been drawn up by the Department of Public Works. The contributors to the Maryborough District Hospital were, under the contract system, saved £14,000. I congratulate the Government on having followed the policy enunciated from this side in that respect, and I trust that in the future, as at present, we shall obtain a greater return from the money placed on the Estimates by the adoption by the Labour Party of the contract system in preference to the day-labour system that has been so ruinous to this State.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [2.19 p.m.]: I, too, take this opportunity of saying a word on the question before the House.

Mr. MAXWELL: Why do you stonewall?

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Toowong should know enough about stonewalling. I congratulate the Minister on the erection of such a fine stonewall of buildings by day labour around this State.

Mr. MAXWELL: At the Ipswich railway station.

Mr. GLEDSON: If I were to give a dissertation on the attitude of the Moore Government in respect of the Ipswich railway station I should be out of order, because the Works Department had nothing to do with the cessation of those operations; it having been done under the instructions of the ex-Secretary for Railways. I cannot be drawn off the track.

The hon. member for Rockhampton congratulated the department on the excellence of its work in that centre and the very fine public buildings erected under its supervision. I, too, desire to congratulate the department on the very fine buildings it is going to erect in Ipswich. It is true they have not been built yet. There are a number of public buildings in Ipswich that have been erected for fifty or sixty years. The department is remodelling those buildings, and I understand intends erecting some

buildings which will be a credit not only to itself, including the architects, but also to Ipswich and the district. I know that the Minister will carry out that work by day labour, as the department has a number of men in Ipswich who have been erecting public buildings by day labour and have performed their work equally as efficiently as if they had been working for a contractor.

Some time ago the department erected a new section at the asylum in Ipswich. That new building is utilised for housing young patients who have been brought from various parts of Queensland. It has enabled the medical superintendent to separate these unfortunate children from the adult patients. The medical superintendent conferred with the architectural branch of the department as to the type of building required. Plans were drawn up accordingly, after which the department set to work not to call tenders to carry out the work but to construct the building by day labour. A foreman, who had been on relief work, was engaged and placed in charge of the construction work, which was carried to a successful issue. The cost as estimated by the department on the plans was £5,126, but the building was completed for £4,876. The building is a credit not only to the Works Department but also to the workmen who built it, for the very fine manner in which the building was erected left no ground for complaint. Unlike the experience with quite a number of contract jobs, where buildings have had to be pulled to pieces and rebuilt because of inherent faults, this building was passed by the inspectors and stands as a striking tribute to the excellence of the work of the men who built it, from the foreman in charge of the job to the ordinary labourer. In company with the Home Secretary I had the privilege of being present at the opening of that building, which externally and internally is in consonance with the purpose for which it was built. Dormitories have been equipped with furniture that is both up to date and hygienic. Years ago the equipping of these institutions with suitable furniture was no mean problem, but thanks to the activities of the Department of Public Works, bedding and other equipment has been provided which not only provides for the comfort of the inmates but also secures them against accident. Baths and lavatories have been established on the most up-to-date lines. As a representative of the people I should be failing in my duty if I did not give credit to the Minister and to his officers for the building and equipping of that very fine children's hospital.

In its widespread activities during the last twelve months the Department of Public Works has contributed in no small degree to the alleviation of the unemployment problem, for work has been found for hundreds of men who previously were unemployed. Most unemployed plasterers and bricklayers have secured employment, and in addition work has been found for many carpenters, builders' labourers, and ordinary labourers. So that the contribution of the department to the solution of the unemployment problem is worthy of the highest commendation.

Nor can the work of this department in regard to the improvement of school buildings be overlooked. At Ipswich the Central Boys' School and the Central Girls' School had a most out-of-date sanitary system, and the sanitary service was effected sometimes when pupils were at school. Approval was

*Mr. Gledson.]*

given for the Department of Public Works to install an up-to-date septic system. The work was completed and the septic system has been operating at both these schools for a month, with advantage both from the point of view of hygiene and from the aspect of general appearance and cleanliness. The effluvia associated with the old out-of-date system is now absent, and the new system, with its beneficial effects on the health of the children and teachers, is a standing tribute to the excellent work of the Department of Public Works. There are two or three other schools in the district where the institution of the same hygienic system would be appreciated. It has been proved that the expenses of the department have been less where the new system has been instituted.

Every hon. member recognises the splendid work that the department, under your direction, Mr. Speaker, has carried out in this House. For many years linoleum was used to cover the floors. Its appearance was good for a certain period, but when it became worn and holes appeared in it, hon. members often wondered if the rats had paid us a visit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I wish to commend the Department of Public Works for the work of putting down the new parquet floors.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I thought the department undertook this work.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Department of Public Works had nothing whatever to do with it.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am sorry; I thought it had. I understand that the painting of this House was done by the department, and I desire to commend those responsible for the bright appearance that has resulted. I hope that brightness will be reflected in the debates in this House.

The hon. member for Wide Bay said that the Department of Public Works was not prepared to accept any constructive ideas from the members of the Opposition. If there is one vote on which constructive ideas should be offered it is this, because it is the Department of Public Works that does the construction work. We desire to know where the constructive ideas of the Opposition are. One begins to wonder whether a saw, a claw hammer, or a chisel is necessary to open this wonderful box of new ideas that the Opposition are supposed to possess. If in fact they can produce one that would help the department in its work or add to the architectural beauty of its buildings, I am sure it would gladly adopt it.

The hon. member for Nanango introduced into the discussion the question of the respective merits of the contract and day-labour systems of building construction. For as long as I can remember that has been a hardy annual in this Parliament. We have always discussed it at some stage or other of a parliamentary session. The hon. member read out certain figures in reference to the construction of three school buildings, and informed the House as to the cost of a shell of a building 18 feet long. We know that is not all that the cost included, because the figures included the cost of fitting and furnishing the building. The hon. member led us to believe that the

cost was simply for the shell, and that it could have been built much more cheaply by contract. Hon. members opposite merely give the contract price for the construction of the building itself, but the department's figures include not only the cost of construction but also the fittings and furniture, in fact everything in the building ready for its legitimate purpose. In my electorate some people consider that they could have work done far more cheaply by letting a contract, but it was found that the contractors obtained their workmen not from Queensland but from New South Wales. After part of the work had been done the contractors found that they could not complete the job, and somebody else had to be found to carry out the work to its conclusion. The same thing has occurred in Brisbane—contractors abandoned certain work, and it had to be completed by the day-labour system.

The Department of Public Works is doing a splendid work, not only in the maintenance of existing buildings and the erection of further public buildings, but also in making a contribution to the solution of the unemployment problem. It is providing full work and wages for a great number of men who had not been employed for some considerable time. I certainly commend the department upon its policy, and trust that it will continue on those lines.

Mr. ANNAND (*East Toowoomba*) [2.40 p.m.]: I should like to say a few words on this vote, particularly as I was indecently spoken to this morning when I saw fit to make an interruption in reference to public servants. Nobody has a greater admiration for men who do their jobs than I. I do not think that the public servants read with any pleasure the remarks that are constantly being made in this House, making it appear that they are heroes because they do the work that they are engaged to perform.

I desired really to reply to the hon. member for Toowoomba, and I wish to say that I regret that when I spoke in this House I did not know that a new police station was to be erected in Toowoomba. The hon. member for Toowoomba evidently knew of it. The first I knew of it was when I telephoned later to the police on a very urgent matter, and found that there was not a telephone at the police station. I am not castigating anybody for that this afternoon. Far from it! I then went round to give my message to the police station verbally, and I found that things were in a state of confusion. All the furniture was being moved, and I was told that the new building had commenced. I wish to assure the hon. member for Toowoomba that is the very first I knew of it. I had no idea at all when I spoke.

Mr. LEWELYN: The mayor of the city?

Mr. ANNAND: No. The mayor of Toowoomba was never advised. I had no idea either as mayor of the city of Toowoomba or as parliamentary representative for East Toowoomba that the new police station was being commenced.

The hon. member for Toowoomba quoted a letter from the secretary of the Toowoomba Builders' Labourers' Union taking exception to my remarks in this Chamber on a previous occasion. I certainly made use of that remark, and I received a letter this morning from the secretary of that union assuring me that such was not the case. I am sorry

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to have to introduce this domestic matter, but the hon. member for Toowoomba saw fit to bring the matter up. I have with me the letter from my informant setting out the facts of the case, and I am quite prepared to hand it over to the hon. member for Toowoomba, because the man resides in his electorate. I can give him the facts of that case, and others besides. This man is certainly three years in arrears with his union. He is a builder's labourer. The secretary of the Builders' Labourers' Union in Toowoomba wrote to the hon. member for Toowoomba, and also wrote to me. A resolution has been passed by that union to the effect that no tickets will be issued while work is on the board at the Labour Bureau. That was an enigma to me. I had no idea how it affected this man.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! How does the matter affect this particular resolution?

Mr. ANNAND: I expected to be called to order, but it affects this particular resolution in this way: The hon. member for Toowoomba assures me that the public works that are being constructed at Toowoomba are being carried out by the Department of Public Works. This individual is anxious to engage in those jobs that are financed out of this vote, but he is debarred from becoming a member of the union or getting a ticket in the union. As a citizen of Toowoomba he claims the same right as any other man to engage in this work, which is being provided out of this particular vote, but he has to be content with taking an odd job or two offered by the Department of Labour and Industry in that city. I should like the hon. member for Toowoomba to see this man when he goes back to Toowoomba. This is purely a domestic trouble, but it was introduced into this Chamber, and I am sorry that I have had to refer to it.

Mr. LEWELYN: I did not introduce it. You brought it up before.

Mr. ANNAND: I brought it up because it involved the right to work. Hon. members on this side are anxious to reach other resolutions that are listed for discussion, and I shall not delay the debate on this resolution any longer. I should not have spoken at all had the matter not been raised by the hon. member for Toowoomba.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [2.44 p.m.]: During my speech on the Address in Reply I advocated the construction of a new police station in Fortitude Valley, and I am now pleased to be able to say that very shortly the Department of Public Works will undertake the construction of this new building. I appreciate the action that is to be taken in this direction, and I express the hope that the time is not far distant when the department will construct a new railway station, or at least make substantial improvements to the existing railway station at Brunswick Street to bring that building up to date. Hon. members opposite have condemned the policy of the Government in spending loan money upon the construction of public works, and in joining issue with them on that point, I want to point out that there is a lot to be said in favour of that policy, which is now being carried out by the department throughout the State. It is highly desirable that old buildings should be improved, and that new public buildings should be constructed, first

to enable the occupants of the buildings to carry out their duties with a greater degree of comfort, which is possible only by the use of modern up-to-date buildings; and, secondly, because future generations will be able to utilise these buildings to the fullest extent. Hon. members on this side are justified in claiming that in the construction of public buildings it is a wise policy to make provision for the present and to plan also for the future. It should be the policy not only of the present Government, but also of any Government, to make as much work as possible available for our people, and in this connection hon. members opposite can be taken to task for their lack of policy during their three years in power. They closed down on building operations wherever possible, and retarded the activities of every department under their control, with the result that increased numbers of men and women were placed on the unemployment market. Contrast the policy of the late Government, which was a policy of despair, with the policy of the present Government now being carried out by the Department of Public Works! The policy of the present Government is a policy of progress tending to give the largest measure of employment in the shortest possible space of time.

Mr. KENNY: What loan money was available when the Moore Government were in power?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I would remind the hon. member for Cook that the Moore Government took over a balance of approximately £5,000,000 from the outgoing Government in 1929, and it is idle for him to ask what loan money was available then. He would be better employed in explaining to us how the Moore Government misspent the magnificent sum of money left to them by the McCormack Government.

I was about to deal with a very interesting point in connection with our public buildings. We have created a tourist bureau for the purpose of attracting tourists to this State. I am sure it is the desire of every hon. member, irrespective of his political creed, that the Tourist Bureau should be in a position to point out to these tourists the fine public buildings which have been erected. Consequently, the policy of the Tourist Bureau in encouraging tourists to come to Queensland is in consonance with the policy of the Department of Public Works in constructing magnificent public buildings throughout the State. The department has something to show these visitors of which it can be well proud. That is a very laudable policy on its part.

Hon. members opposite have brought forward many arguments in an endeavour to bolster up a time-worn case in favour of contract work as against day labour. There is one very good argument in favour of the department's system of day labour, and that is the Women's Hospital, adjacent to the Brisbane General Hospital, now under construction. I advise hon. members opposite who oppose the day-labour activities of the department to visit that job and see for themselves the nature of the work, the quality of the materials being used, and the mentality of the men engaged in its construction, together with the up-to-date methods that are employed. If they do so and then take the time and trouble to compare the work as they see it with the average building constructed under the contract

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system, they will, if they are honest in their opinions, favour the policy of day labour as it is pursued by the department.

We have some very fine examples of the greater advantages of the day labour policy. An outstanding argument in its favour is the construction of two blocks of the Brisbane General Hospital which were completed some years ago. These are designated as Wards 7 and 8. Ward 8, consisting of several storeys, was constructed under the day-labour system. Whilst it was in the course of construction plans were completed for the laying of the foundations of Ward 7, which is adjacent. Other specifications were drawn up for its construction, based on the plans prepared in the first instance for Ward 8. If hon. members opposite were asked for their opinion respecting the two jobs they would seize upon the argument that the cost under day labour was slightly in excess of that of the contract job, but they would overlook the fact that although those two wards were erected within a short space of time of each other, Ward 7 is to-day in practically the same condition as when it was completed, whereas men working at the hospital on those two wards inform me—and I have taken the time and trouble to look into the question—that the ward built under the contract system calls for continuous repairs. Ward 7, carried out by day labour, needs no repairs, the first cost being the only cost. Ward 8, therefore, entails additional charges on the finances of the board to keep it in a proper state of repair. Those repairs consist of filling up cracks that appear in the cement and taking cement levels. In that particular case the policy of the department is justified. The difference between day labour, as put into effect by the department, and the contract system as put into effect by operators outside the department, is that the department insists that the plans and specifications shall be followed out minutely. Therefore, when the work is commenced the builders know exactly what is to be done. A schedule is also provided in regard to materials and faithfully adhered to. The result is that an excellent job is furnished.

On the other hand, past experience shows that in some cases—it would be unfair to make a broad and general charge covering all contractors—buildings constructed under the contract system were found to be not in accordance with the specification, as a result of which many weaknesses afterwards developed. It has also been discovered that under the contract system certain contractors used inferior materials and did not conform to the specification for the particular job. I merely raise that matter to show the advantage of the day-labour system as compared with the contract system as enunciated by hon. members opposite. A fair and impartial comparison of the two systems leads to the definite conclusion that a continuance of the day-labour system by the Department of Public Works is an advantage to this State.

To another point in connection with the contract system some consideration should be given. I refer to the evasion of awards by many contractors, and I bring the matter to the notice of the responsible authorities, particularly the Department of Labour and Industry. During my experience as an industrial inspector I was detailed to investigate cases where the correct award wages

and conditions were not paid and observed by the employers concerned. Hon. members opposite who endeavour to decry the day-labour system and laud the contract system should let us know where they stand on the question of the evasion of awards, in so far as that evasion concerns work done under the contract system. My experience in the department convinced me that evasion of awards was occurring, and I have no doubt that if a strict inspection were carried out to-day that state of affairs would be shown to exist in many cases. The time is opportune for consideration to be given to the question.

The department is to be commended for its activities in the construction of new schools and the improvements effected to existing school buildings. It is very necessary that every endeavour should be made to provide building accommodation that will be in consonance with the progressive policy of the Department of Public Instruction. Realising the up-to-date nature of our educational policy it is fitting that the policy of the Department of Public Works should be directed to providing the most up-to-date accommodation and conveniences available, because with pleasant and hygienic surroundings school children are in a much better position to benefit from that up-to-date educational system. The activities of the Department of Public Works call for commendation not only by this Assembly but also from the people generally. The sound and progressive policy has accomplished much, and I hope will be continued in the future.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*) [3.0 p.m.]: This debate has been marked by the parish pump attitude of hon. members opposite. Some hon. members on the Government side seem to think the Department of Public Works should carry out works irrespective of whether that policy is a sound business one or not. I think that is an entirely wrong attitude. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley made a statement to the effect that the department should ensure that this State will possess outstanding public buildings so that we shall be able to demonstrate to tourists and visitors that our public buildings are the finest in Australia. A statement of that nature indicates that the author has not considered whether the State is financially capable of carrying out that work.

Mr. LEWELYN: What about the A.M.P. buildings and others which have been recently erected?

Mr. EDWARDS: That is the business of the organisations concerned. Surely the Department of Public Works has not reached the stage where it requires all this congratulation! I do not think the Secretary for Public Works—a man who has done hard work himself—deserves that congratulation if the building of public works is not based on a sound business policy. After all, the test of government is finance. It appears to me that hon. members on the Government side desire that big buildings should be erected irrespective of whether they are required and irrespective of whether the State is able to provide the money. Are we to reach the stage in the history of this State when we shall think it creditable to say, "Look at the wonderful public buildings we built when we had the money"?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Name one building that we do not need.

[*Mr. Brassington.*]

Mr. EDWARDS: In Brisbane far too many public buildings are going up, in view of the financial position of the State. The figures quoted by the Attorney-General yesterday in regard to the voting strength of electorates indicates a migration of the people from the country centres to the towns; and it is encouraged by the policy adopted by the Government. One argument put forward by hon. members opposite to justify these buildings is that they provide a certain amount of work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We need all we are building.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Secretary for Public Lands knows well that the country districts are not getting the buildings.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are.

Mr. EDWARDS: They are not getting the consideration that they should. There is considerable difficulty in some instances in getting a small addition made to a building. When the hon. member for Logan was Secretary for Public Works he inaugurated a policy which gave favourable consideration to the needs of the country centres. The building of residences for teachers was a reproductive work. Instead of paying rent to private owners, and in many instances having to drive many miles to work, the teacher got a residence in proximity to the school and paid a rent to the State. That is the class of work that should be carried out in the State. I hope the present system will not continue. When the erection of a large public building is suggested in the city, due consideration should be given to the question whether it would not be more advantageous to distribute that cost over a larger area. The Minister for Transport will agree with me, because he has to send trains out to the country, and he realises it is not a wise policy to expend all the money in the large centres of population. This matter should not be considered from the parish pump point of view.

We should not flatter or smoothe to the Department of Public Works simply to obtain the erection of a building in any centre. If I were the Secretary for Public Works I would look at the question in the light of whether it was my duty to sanction the construction of a building at a certain place, irrespective of all other influences. I would say, "It is my duty to lay down on broad lines a system of building in the interests of the whole of the State and not in the interests of the larger centres of population, which have the greatest pull or the greatest influence." To allow any other consideration to influence one is entirely wrong. Unfortunately Queensland has not developed during the past few years in the degree that one would like to see, owing to the pernicious influences that I have mentioned. Apparently the larger centres of population are considered because they have the greatest pull, but I hope that in the interests of the development of the State the matter will be looked at from a different angle in the future.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [3.8 p.m.]: I desire to offer my appreciation to the Government and also to the Department of Public Works for the method adopted in securing work for the unemployed tradesmen in our State by the policy of erecting public buildings in

different parts of the State. I am much surprised at the attitude adopted by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He complained of the amount of money expended by the department on public buildings in the country.

Mr. EDWARDS: In Brisbane, I said.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I see no reason for any condemnation on behalf of the people in the country. The report of the department for this year shows that a large amount of money is being expended on public buildings in various parts of the State. There has been no preference to any electorate. In order to illustrate my contention, I remind the house that at Dalby, which is not in a Labour electorate, a court house had been erected at an estimated cost of £8,451. At the same centre we find a police station being erected at an estimated cost of £2,584. The Giru police station was completed as a cost of £1,245, the estimated cost being £1,311. At Gladstone we have a hospital being erected at an estimated cost of £7,000. At the Goodna Mental Hospital, addition to night nurses' quarters, estimated to cost £1,554, and a male ward, No. 14, estimated to cost £13,418, but completed at a cost of £10,156, have been erected. In the latter case the actual cost is approximately £3,000 below the estimate. This shows that work done under the day-labour system can be done at less than the estimated cost. Hon. members should be fair to the department and its policy of having buildings constructed under the day-labour system. They will agree that the work is well done. If I were allowed to compare the work done by the department with a number of private buildings in this State I could prove that a number of the latter are a disgrace and should not be allowed to be constructed. I am not allowed to do so during the course of this debate, and I do not desire to trespass.

I now come to my own electorate. For many years it was considered necessary that we should have some change in regard to the method of housing the various Government departments in Cairns. A very high rental was being paid to the Commonwealth Bank for the use of portion of its buildings for the branch of our State Government Insurance Office. The same thing applied to the Public Curator's Office. For many other departmental branches rent had to be paid. Last year I approached the Minister and pointed out that the people whom I represented had requested that the whole of the Government departments in Cairns be housed under one roof. That is now being done. A very fine building is in the course of erection at an estimated cost of approximately £35,000. During my visit to Cairns last week many of its leading citizens congratulated me on my efforts, which had resulted in such a fine building being erected in the main street of their city.

One must readily agree that it is far better for the Government to construct public buildings and homes for public servants rather than pay rent for the use of private buildings. Until recently the inspector of police at Cairns received approximately £90 per annum in lieu of rent, and there are other public servants similarly situated throughout the State. It would be a wise investment if the Government constructed workers' dwellings for use by certain public servants for which a rental could be charged

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rather than continue the practice of paying officers as much as £90 per annum in lieu of rent. A public works policy on these lines would provide a considerable amount of employment and would lead to the provision of assets from which a reasonable return would be secured. Many hon. members opposite have advocated that money should be spent in this direction.

I have already pointed out that the estimated cost of a new public building in Cairns is £34,000, but this building will house the State Government Insurance Office, the Government Tourist Bureau, the Lands Department, the Agricultural Bank, and the Forestry Office, as well as other minor offices such as the office of the inspectors of the Health Department, Weights and Measures, etc. Last Wednesday I had the pleasure of visiting a portion of my electorate where a school had been reconditioned at a cost of £5,000 or £6,000. About 300 to 400 parents attended a function there, and their comments on the very fine building indicated that the money had been wisely expended and that the work had been faithfully carried out. There were no complaints about the day-labour system, and no complaints about the cost. This building, which I understand was erected at a cost within the estimate, will provide the necessary schooling accommodation for the increase in population which must occur in that district. The children attending the school will now be able to enjoy much more comfortable conditions. Prior to its reconditioning I had occasion to visit the school one hot summer day and I found a number of small children lying asleep with their heads upon their desks because of the muggy atmosphere. I am pleased now to be able to say that the reconditioned building is well ventilated and well lighted, and that it provides appreciable comforts for the many children who have to attend the school at an early age in a hot climate.

I desire again to offer my expression of appreciation of the very fine work carried out in my electorate by the Department of Public Works.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon H. A. Bruce, *The Tableland*) [3.15 p.m.]: I was rather surprised at some of the remarks that were made by the hon. member for Nanango. He first of all referred to the question of school teachers' residences. It is true that the construction of a large number of school teachers' residences were approved by the Moore-Barnes Government, but it is equally true that the greater number of them had to be constructed by the present Government. As the greatest proportion of the population is to be found in the cities it is natural that the Government should concentrate upon a public works programme to fulfil the requirements of the cities. That is why the department is controlling the construction of the new Women's Hospital, which is a semi-public department, a new unit in the Auzac Square scheme for the purpose of housing the Railway Department, an extension of the Agricultural Department building, as well as other large undertakings that are necessary in the city; but never at any time have the interests of the country been overlooked. Judging from the number of letters I have signed and forwarded to the hon. member for Nanango and many other hon. members opposite dealing with building requirements

in country districts, one can conclude that the country districts are receiving every attention.

The hon. member for Nanango could inform the House that in 1932 quite a number of public buildings were erected in his own electorate, and many other hon. members opposite would also be able to say that the whole of their urgent requirements in the country had been met for the time being. Naturally our building programme cannot be completed within a month or two, or even a year or two. My department has been working at the highest pressure and efficiency. The expenditure this year will, roughly speaking, be double that of any financial year during the Moore-Barnes regime. One of my main difficulties in expending the money is the pressure placed on the Drafting Branch.

A greater percentage of day-labour work is now being carried out in my department than has previously been the case, but in small country towns where men capable of constructing buildings are available, and where it would involve increased costs to the department to adopt the day-labour system, tenders are called and contracts let. I do not desire day labour to bear the burden of certain additional charges which would have to be met in the transfer of workers to centres far distant from the metropolis and larger towns. In the past day labour has been unfairly asked to carry those costs, which, consequently, have told against the system. It is peculiar that bricklayers, carpenters, and other artisans and workers connected with the building trade will proceed to any place in the country where work is offering by a private contractor, and pay not only their own train fare but other expenses as well, whereas if they were engaged to carry out work for the department in these centres they would expect the department to pay their fares and "away-from-home" allowances. Therefore, the contractor is unfairly credited with advantages when a comparison is being made between the contract and day-labour systems.

Work carried out under day labour is 100 per cent. efficient. Work that has been carried out by the department between the 1st July, 1932, and the 30th June, 1935, will definitely prove the efficiency of day labour, both as regards quality and costs. The work of bricklayers can be checked up by the number of bricks laid per day, and I am satisfied that under the day-labour system the bricklayers are performing their duties as well as under the contract system. I remember the opening ceremony of the City Hall. It was a large public function, and a number of gentlemen were seated on the platform. One gentleman had just said, "This building has been well truly, and faithfully built," when a leg appeared through the roof, followed by a large portion of the roof, which fell at the feet of the speaker. I am in a position to give a written guarantee that this would not happen in connection with any building erected by the department.

The hon. member for Cairns, in passing, mentioned Dalby, where the department has erected one of the finest court houses to be seen in a centre of its size. We cannot be accused of constructing buildings for political purposes, because Dalby is not a Labour seat. Numerous other buildings have been

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erected throughout the State at least equal to the class of building erected by private enterprise in the same locality. Many of the public buildings in the older towns have deteriorated and are out-of-date architecturally. Our policy is to erect public buildings in keeping with the type of building erected by private enterprise in the town. In a time of depression, when private enterprise is unable or fails to provide employment for our people, it is the paramount duty of the State to improve the assets of the State. We have large investments throughout the State, and the State is under an obligation to preserve those investments and provide employment for its people. So far as has been possible with the loan money available, my objective has been to provide new public buildings for the convenience of the people and to bring others into conformity with modern conditions, and thus give as much work as possible to artisans and their assistants who are out of work. Despite the fact that many of these men have been out of work not merely for months but for years, in the course of a few days after recommencing work they have given work of great efficiency, and have justified our policy of giving them employment.

Whilst on the vote for the Chief Office I would point out that the Opposition do not give Ministers the assistance they should. In the "Telegraph" of the 30th ultimo the following statement appeared:—

"COLLUSION SUGGESTED.

"CHARGES FOR EXPENSES IN INSPECTING MACHINERY.

"PROTESTS IN PARLIAMENT.

"An objection to the expenses involved in the inspection of machinery and a suggestion that an inquiry should be made was voiced in Parliament to-day by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. E. A. Moore). The matter of collusion between machinery inspectors and representatives of scale-supplying firms also was mentioned.

"The Minister for Works (Mr. H. A. Bruce) said that the suggestion of Mr. Moore that an inquiry should be made into the 'cartage' charges made by inspectors was a reasonable one. He also agreed to make an inquiry into the suggestion of collusion.

"During consideration of the Works Department Estimates, Mr. Moore remarked that there seemed to be discrepancies in the charges under the Act for the cartage of equipment. Traveling expenses of inspectors and the cost of carting equipment in country centres were made a charge on the factories. Did the same apply, he asked, in the city whenever anyone wanted weights and measures inspected?

"WAITING TIME.

"Mr. E. B. Maher (Opposition) said that frequently the person whose property was inspected in addition had to pay for the waiting time of the driver of the car conveying the inspector. Also, he said, it had happened that the inspector condemned a set of scales, and within a few days a representative of a scale-supplying firm had called, thus suggest-

ing collusion between inspector and the scale suppliers.

"Mr. Moore: That's always happening.

"The Minister said that the only expenses charged in the case of a car being required were those involved in taking equipment from the nearest railway station to the factory.

"MAKE INQUIRY.

"He added that he would make inquiries into the matter mentioned by Mr. Maher, and if any collusion was found between inspectors and the representatives of scale-supplying firms action would be taken. In any case, he said, if such was the practice, why had not the Moore Government taken action to prevent it?

"Mr. Maher said it had been asserted that in one case the inspector deliberately condemned the scales to facilitate the work of the salesman.

"Mr. J. A. C. Kenny (Opposition) said that he himself in his own car carried equipment and inspector, and yet had been charged carting expenses. He instanced a case in which a Greek store-keeper himself had carried his scales to the inspector and carried them back, and yet had received an account for cartage."

I promised an inquiry, and to that end I wrote the following letter to the hon. member for West Moreton on the 1st instant:—

"During the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Public Works, you stated—

'On one occasion in connection with my business at Yelarbon we had two perfectly good scales condemned by an inspector from the Weights and Measures Department, and within three or four days of his visit a representative of a scale company called and endeavoured to sell us new scales. That seemed to me to suggest collusion between the inspector and the representative of the scale company. We did not buy two new scales, but we sent those old scales to Brisbane and had them repaired, and they came back with the stamp of the Department certifying that they were correct.'

I would be pleased if you would give me the date on which this occurred, also the name of the inspector referred to, with the object of assisting me to carry out my promise made to yourself and the Leader of the Opposition that an inquiry would be made into complaints raised by members during the debate."

The hon. member for West Moreton said he knew the people, but although that letter was sent to him on the 1st instant no reply has yet been received.

A similar letter was sent to the hon. member for Cook in reference to his remarks that he himself in his own car had carried equipment and an inspector and yet had been charged carting expenses. No reply has been received from the hon. member to the letter sent him on the 1st instant.

Mr. KENNY: I replied to you to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member has not supplied me with the information as to who the inspector was.

*Hon. H. A. Bruce.]*

Therefore, he is not assisting me in any way to carry out the inquiry I promised. In fact, my opinion is that there is no truth in the charges made by the two members in regard to the inspectors of my department. When I ask for information to assist in the inquiry, I find they are unable to give the evidence that they said was in their possession. In the defence of my inspectors and in order to ascertain if anything was amiss I have endeavoured to get information from two members, who definitely stated they had information. That information was necessary in the prosecution of the inquiry which I promised the Leader of the Opposition to institute, but no reply or assistance has been given to me. I am definitely of opinion that what these hon. members said so far as my inspectors are concerned was untrue; otherwise these hon. members would have forwarded the information immediately and assisted me to go on with the inquiry.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba made a statement and repeated it to-day concerning builders' labourers at Toowoomba. I have received the following letter from the hon. secretary of the Toowoomba sub-branch of the Australian Builders' Labourers' Federation, under date of 1st instant, contradicting the hon. member's statement:—

"16 Eleanor street, Toowoomba,  
"1st November, 1934.

"The Hon. H. Bruce,  
Minister for Works, Brisbane.

"Dear Sir,—I have been directed by my committee to write you in connection re a statement made on the floor of the House by the member for East Toowoomba, J. D. Annand, 'That he has had it on good authority that the Toowoomba builders' labourers had closed their books, whereby men were deprived of obtaining work on public works.' I wish to state, on behalf of my committee, that this statement is untrue. The books of our branch have never been closed. There are constitutional methods of gaining membership into this union, as provided in the preference clause granted by the Arbitration Court in March, 1933.

"Mr. Annand evidently is unaware of these matters, as his interest is never for the workers, and outbursts of his, similar to this, cause a good deal of misunderstanding with unions and Government departments.

"We would like you to know that great resentment was taken when this matter was made known to us, hence the reason we wish to advise you of the inaccuracy of the statement.

"Thanking you for past favours.

"I am,

"Yours faithfully,

"(Sgd.) M. THOMAS,

"Hon. Secretary,

"Toowoomba Sub-branch."

Why are accusations made against these men who cannot protect themselves by way of reply in this House? I have quoted that letter in defence of these men. It sets out the position clearly. That letter was forwarded to me as Minister in charge of the department, and I was determined that the accusation should not go unanswered. The

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reply will now appear in "Hansard" as well as the accusation, and will indicate to the readers of "Hansard" that the accusation was entirely unfounded.

No favouritism is shown by the department. Careful consideration is given to the wants of the country as well as the city, and work is carried out in accordance with the amount of money available. I say without fear of contradiction that the electorates represented by members of the Opposition have received equal treatment with electorates represented by members of the Government. I reiterate that when private enterprise fails or is unable to supply work for the people it is the duty of the Government to do so and at the same time to increase its assets. That is my objective, and with the assistance of the Treasurer I have carried out a policy in an endeavour to achieve that objective.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [3.33 p.m.]: I did not intend to speak on this debate but the Minister mentioned a letter he had written to me, and in fairness to him I wish to state that I received that letter two days ago and I dictated a letter in reply and posted it to him to-day. If he is too impatient to wait until he receives that letter, I will tell the hon. gentleman now that if he looks up the bills sent to me in Mareeba between the years 1925 and 1929 he will find that I was charged for cartage from my business premises to the railway station in Mareeba when I conveyed those scales from my business premises to the railway station at Mareeba. I have been out of business since 1929 and I cannot give the hon. gentleman any experience beyond that date in that regard.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You did not give the inspector's name.

Mr. KENNY: The letter did not ask for it. The information desired by the Minister will be found in those bills I mentioned.

Resolution 39 (Department of Public Works—Chief Office) agreed to.

Resolutions 40 to 43, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 44—"Department of Public Instruction—Chief Office"—

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*) [3.35 p.m.]: I did not have an opportunity of speaking when this vote was before the Chamber. I consider it is one of the most important votes that come before Parliament. Quite a number of schools of different grades come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Instruction. In the bigger centres of population kindergarten schools are provided; but in the less populated centres sometimes one teacher has to take pupils from the kindergarten to the seventh grade. It seems to me in that case the educational facility would not be as efficient as in the bigger centres where different teachers are provided for the different grades.

I commend the department for the establishment of what are termed "opportunity classes." Mr. Beverington is in charge of this work. On many occasions I have had the opportunity of visiting such classes in Ipswich and of inspecting the wonderful work being done. The opportunity classes take children who are backward or who have not

been able to reach the standard set for the normal child. Sometimes the children are not abnormal in the real sense of that word. They may be backward on account of having lacked the opportunity of getting a thorough grounding in the rudiments of education. The work that is being done in the opportunity classes in the school at Ipswich is a fit subject for commendation, and I desire to take this opportunity of adding my meed of praise of it. The first essential required of a teacher in an opportunity school is that he or she should be sympathetic and capable of understanding children. The teacher of an opportunity class should understand each individual child in the class. His work is totally different from that of the ordinary teacher, who requires mainly the scholastic attainment necessary to enable him to impart instruction in the curriculum of the school. The teacher of an opportunity class requires imagination, an artistic sense, but more than all a great love for children. It is very difficult to find teachers who combine all the qualities necessary to enable them to take charge of an opportunity class. We certainly have been very fortunate in that from the establishment of that school till comparatively recently—until the Department of Public Instruction saw fit to make a change—we have had an exceptionally good teacher.

In a system of education we look for results, and it can certainly be said that the department has obtained results by the establishment of these opportunity schools throughout Queensland. Children have entered such schools ignorant of the art of learning or assimilating the subjects taught in the ordinary schools, and have passed through the opportunity class and taken their place in the usual classes at school. I do not think it is necessary to say how much we appreciate the work of the teachers under Mr. Bevington, and also the efforts of the department, to make the opportunity schools as efficient and useful as possible. In some of the centres the Department of Public Instruction has established intermediate schools, which are filling a longfelt want. They are taking children from the top grades of the primary schools and giving to them instruction that will enable them to start out on their life's work.

The department could go further in the direction of rural and vocational training. It is a well-known fact that in the past a great deal of trouble has been caused by the lack of training of many of our girls. They certainly have received the usual education, and have left school able to read and write. They then have gone into employment, and eventually have married. It was found, however, that they lacked the training necessary for making their homes as comfortable as they should be for their husbands and themselves. The department, as I said, is filling a longfelt want along those lines, and I ask the Minister to consider the advisability of extending the work. In some of the larger centres the girls go one day a week from the primary school to the High School, Technical Training School, or Domestic Science School. They could be entirely drafted to a high school or to a technical training school for the purpose of engaging in domestic science and other subjects. I suggest to the Minister that he should consider the possibility of extending the curriculum of ordinary schools to provide for domestic training in some of the

smaller centres of the State so that the children situated in those parts will be able to enjoy advantages equal to those in the larger centres of population. The same thing should apply so far as the boys are concerned. The manual and vocational training that is provided in the larger centres of population enables splendid work to be done. The rural schools, in addition to providing for project clubs and experiment plots, could also teach the girls domestic science and sheet-metal work, woodwork, saddlery, etc., for the boys. If boys are given an opportunity to engage in manual training they will be able to fit themselves for the battle of life as well as engage in hobby studies.

The department is to be congratulated upon providing hobby studies for boys and the girls, and there is no doubt that very fine work is being carried out in this direction. In connection with our educational system we must bear in mind the old saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." In formulating an educational system, providing for the adoption of hobby studies for the boys and the girls, the department is filling a longfelt want. The administrative costs of the Department of Public Instruction approximate £1,500,000 per annum, and it is well that we should not pass the resolution relating to this department without making adequate comment upon the wonderful work that it is carrying out. We have the satisfaction of knowing that by the expenditure of this large sum of money the boys and girls are being fitted for their places in life and, in addition, opportunities are being provided for them profitably to engage their leisure time.

Mr. SPARKES: That is not the view of some of the distant centres in the country.

Mr. GLEDSON: If the hon. member had given some attention to what I have already said, he would know that I advocated that the advantages provided in the large centres of population should be extended to the smaller centres of the State. I have already advocated that domestic science, manual training, and hobby classes should be available throughout the State so that children of school age generally may absorb the benefit of all these subjects. I do not propose to take up any more time on this subject, because I realise that hon. members opposite are anxious to offer some constructive suggestions to the Government relating to this matter. Every hon. member opposite has quite a number of schools in his electorate as well as a large number of pupils and teachers. I am sure that every hon. member opposite is anxious to add to my constructive suggestions in the hope of assisting the department to provide additional educational facilities in country areas. I think that they agree with me that the salvation of this country lies in training our boys and girls so that they may with comfort fit into the avenues of employment that they inevitably must adopt in the years to come.

Mr. GAIR (*South Brisbane*) [3.47 p.m.]: I unhesitatingly assert that in Queensland we have an educational system that is second to none in the Commonwealth. The notable progress that has been made in our educational system over a period of the last twenty years is due to the attention that Labour Governments have devoted to this

*Mr. Gair.*]

very important matter. Queensland possesses a splendid primary educational system. It is a system that gives to the children of our State schools a free education from the kindergarten to the period when they graduate to the secondary schools. This splendid efficient primary system is supplemented by a very liberal scholarship system which enables many of our children—approximately 2,000 per annum since the return of this Government and before the advent of the Moore Government—to receive a secondary education at the expense of the State. That is a very liberal and very worthy concession, and it is to be regretted that the Moore Government saw fit to restrict it. As a result many children were denied the right of obtaining that secondary education which was given to the children of this State by a Labour Government in the first instance, and later extended by Labour Governments.

In addition, we have technical colleges performing valuable work in training our children for various vocational callings. We also have our Agricultural and State High School at Gatton, which, despite what some hon. members opposite may say, is doing a most valuable work in training our youths who are inclined to agricultural and other pursuits on the land. Our rural schools, too, are achieving splendid results in rural training.

The Correspondence School is doing invaluable work by providing educational training facilities for children of parents living in the lonely outposts of this far-flung State. No person or child should suffer through their going out into the lonely and sparsely populated centres of this State to engage in pioneering and developmental work. Every child, whether living in the city or country, should possess equal educational rights. It is patent to all that to provide the same privileges to the child in the outback as is provided in the cities and larger centres is a great problem. It is a much simpler matter to give these facilities to children in the cities and towns than to the children in the outback. To provide these facilities a correspondence system of education was established. It is performing a very necessary and valuable work, which the parents and the children appreciate. The hon. member for Dalby claimed that the children in the country were entitled to all the facilities of education enjoyed by the cities and towns. No hon. member on this side of the House disputes that claim. We gladly concede that the country children are entitled to enjoy the same facilities, and everything possible is being done by the Government to improve the educational facilities of children situated in the country.

Then the department has not neglected the backward children. They are catered for by what are known as opportunity classes. The special attention devoted to these children, who may be backward because of sickness, protracted illness, and many other causes, is also much appreciated. These children, who cannot compete with the average child, are taken in hand by specially selected teachers in "Opportunity" schools, where the greatest patience is exercised in their training with a view to their attaining the normal standard of the average child. I congratulate the teachers associated with those schools. I feel deeply for the child

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who is handicapped by protracted illness, and I believe that the consideration to which he or she is entitled is being given by means of this excellent system.

The school for blind and deaf children is affording an opportunity for children who are unfortunately afflicted, and in this connection also the humane and wise administration of the educational system of Queensland cannot be too strongly emphasised.

I am not so sure that the intermediate schools as they exist at present are altogether a great success.

At 3.56 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. GAIR: I have endeavoured to obtain information on the matter, and, perhaps, my criticism of the intermediate school system may be a little premature, because I believe the real intention is to develop the system and to give the children graduating from the State schools to the intermediate schools some vocational training.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: More vocational training.

Mr. GAIR: With our technical schools, I think the children have that opportunity, for in those schools they can be trained in any selected vocation. The effect of the intermediate schools, in my opinion, is to take the top of our present State schools, for children from about twelve years of age upwards are graduating from the State schools into the intermediate schools. Walk into most of the suburban schools in Brisbane and you will see that schools that were once serving the children of a particular district up to the time when they were ready to proceed to a secondary education, have now no children beyond the age of eleven or twelve years. That destroys the tradition of the school and militates against the desire to take a prominent place in the scholastic or sporting arena. I am yet to be convinced that the intermediate schools are a success or are warranted, in view of the existence of our technical schools. If we extended our technical schools we could accommodate all the children who are desirous of obtaining a vocational training. High schools have been established with a view to providing facilities for secondary education. The boy or girl who passes a scholarship examination can graduate to a high school, grammar school, or any other secondary school. It is argued that we should extend the system of high school education to make better provision for children in the way of secondary education, and I say that if we extend our technical schools we provide further facilities for children who do not want a secondary education but a training in a particular vocation. Therefore, the intermediate school is not warranted if we give to the extension of technical schools the attention we should devote to them.

It appears to me that more money is being spent on high schools than is warranted, especially during a period of financial stringency. No one appreciates the development of the system of education more than I do. In many towns throughout Queensland to-day there are secondary schools which have provided the secondary education for the young people of this State over a period of fifty years, and graduates from those schools have reached positions

on the judiciary, in the professions, in the world of commerce, in the public service, and in every sphere of the community life of Queensland, and have acquitted themselves remarkably well. In view of the efficient educational facilities provided by grammar schools and private secondary schools, is it necessary that the department should incur expenditure, particularly at a time like the present, to duplicate the secondary education in these towns where secondary schools already exist? I say it is good policy to establish a high school in a town that is not provided with a high school or secondary school, but to establish one to provide secondary education for the children of a town which is already catered for amounts to a duplication of services.

One notices with regret the small endowment provided in the Estimates for the University of this State. The University is undoubtedly the coping stone of our educational structure, and in my opinion it is financially starved. In addition to being a seat of learning, it is a centre of inquiry and research. The public examination system of the University is a broad and democratic one, which affords opportunity to every boy and girl in this State to graduate to it. Therefore, we should exercise as much concern about the development of the University as we would about any other section of the educational system. The University has played an important part in the solution of many of the problems that have confronted the State. I instance the fruit fly, bunchy top, banana ripening, prickly-pear pests, and other problems that have been successfully overcome with the help of the work of the University. Their solution has resulted in increased wealth in the industries concerned; and the work of the University warrants a reasonable share of that wealth being devoted to the development of that institution. The University has also played its part in inquiries into our mining and other important industries in Queensland, and I contend that every assistance should be given to this section of our educational system.

I would suggest that some consideration be given to the establishment within the University of faculties of law, medicine, and dentistry. Time and time again the absence of such faculties has been mentioned by leaders of our thought, and in spite of the ever-increasing and definite demand for them nothing seems to be done. The inclusion of these faculties in the University of Queensland would have the effect of placing it on an equal status with the Universities of the other States. Why should it be necessary for the young men and women of Queensland to proceed to Sydney or to the other States of the Commonwealth to obtain a degree in law or medicine? We as Queenslanders should have a State pride. We should aim at being as well equipped in every regard as the other States of our Commonwealth, and I commend to the Government the addition of the faculties of law, medicine, and dentistry to the University of Queensland.

The University buildings themselves are a reflection on the people of Queensland, and I hope that the time is not far distant when we will have in this capital city of Queensland a fully equipped University of which we shall have good reason to be proud.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. A. Cooper, *Bremer*) [4.9 p.m.]: The matters mentioned by the hon. member will receive my very careful consideration.

Resolution 44—(Department of Public Instruction—Chief Office) agreed to.

Resolutions 45 to 55, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 56—“*Department of Agriculture and Stock—Chief Office*”—

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [4.11 p.m.]: I did not have the opportunity of speaking on this vote in Committee—there was not sufficient time. The matter I wish to raise is the position of agriculture generally and the outlook of those persons who follow the vocation of the cultivation of the soil in Queensland. Hon. members opposite have for some time been speaking about the man on the land, as if they really represented the country districts of this State. They or many of them call themselves the “Country Party.”

The area that I represent, and the areas represented by a number of other hon. members sitting on this side of the House, really constitute what is known as the country portions of this State, whilst hon. members opposite represent only what might be termed suburban areas, although there is no doubt that in their areas there are many settlers engaged in the cultivation of the soil and in following agriculture generally. The point that I desire to stress is that whilst it is necessary for a capitalistic society as we know it to produce agricultural products to sustain itself, the present system of agricultural organisation does not seem to fit in with the existing form of society as a whole in any of the capitalistic countries of the world, including Australia and Queensland. If the present form of agricultural society is the ideal form under the present capitalistic system, why are the agriculturists in practically every agrarian country throughout the world to-day in a perilous plight financially? They are unable to meet their commitments, and they are practically left with no alternative but to seek financial assistance from the Government. Many years ago English statesmen realised the relation of agriculture to the other phases of society, and no encouragement whatever was given to the development of agricultural pursuits in that country because of the contradiction to which I have referred. The agricultural form of society did not conform with the prevailing system of production that was then being followed, and was the most profitable in that country. Consequently, Great Britain decided to import most of her foodstuff requirements from the agrarian countries of the world, and declined to make any effort towards the provision of her own foodstuff requirements internally.

There must be some underlying cause for the present position of agriculture throughout the world. We are now verging on the sixth year of the world crisis, but agriculture in the various countries of the world is still in much the same plight, if not in a worse plight than when the crisis first occurred. In Australia we are worried about the possibility of Great Britain imposing quotas on the introduction of some of our primary products into that country. The United States of America is at its wits' end in an endeavour to placate the farmers of

*Mr. Foley.]*

that country, and place them in a better financial position. In South America the authorities are at their wits' end as to what to do with the coffee crop, which is burnt by the millions of bags because it is impossible to find a market for the product in any part of the world. In some of the European countries decrees are being issued for the destruction of stock, particularly dairy stock, because markets are not available for the surplus production of butter and cheese. Apparently, every country appears to be faced with the same paradoxical difficulty, and the paramount questions are whether the methods pursued in most agricultural countries to-day are the proper methods in view of the changed and changing orders of society, and whether the economics of agriculture are being properly studied with a view to bringing agricultural society and production into conformity with modern day society.

If one considers the subject for a moment, one must realise that in the region of secondary production a collective, social, or mass production system has been evolved on a huge scale, whilst on the other hand agriculture endeavours to continue under the effete individualistic system of production. It should be apparent to the average individual that herein is the main trouble. If it is pointed out to him he will agree to it. In many cases, even in Queensland, the agriculturist, the man on the land, has endeavoured to establish an organisation for the collective handling of his products. In Queensland that is done by means of the Council of Agriculture as the central body, and various commodity boards. The whole of the product is collected from the individual farmers and disposed of through a common agency, the endeavour being to obtain better results. The dairy farmer is an illustration. He is endeavouring to carry on as an individualist, but is sending his product to a central butter or cheese factory. His by-products, such as pigs, are sent to the bacon factory to be handled collectively and more in consonance with modern conditions. Is the time not ripe for Governments, parliamentarians, the press, and the farming community to encourage and develop an outlook in favour of the collective idea in farming operations, in much the same manner as these cream products are handled by butter factories?

I know very well what is going on in some other countries. It is commonly known that in America, where large scale farming operations have been practised for a number of years, they have been able to withstand the enormous fall in the price of primary products or, at least, to meet them more successfully than the small farmers, who have been forced off their farms, not by the hundreds but by the tens of thousands. Let us look at the big experiment being conducted at the present time in Russia. During the luncheon adjournment I noticed in the Parliamentary Library a little magazine, intitled "U.S.S.R. Chamber of Commerce, Moscow, Economic Survey No. 2, Issue March and April, 1934," in which is to be found a report by M. Stalin, the head of the Communist Party in Russia, or the Government of Russia. M. Stalin made a report to a congress on the progress in the various fields under its control over a period from the previous congress. The figures I intend to quote refer to what is known as the reorganisation period. Considerable

progress has been made in agriculture by the application of the collectivist idea to farming operations as against the individualist idea. I recognise that the human element comes into this question, and it had to be overcome in that country as it must be overcome in any country that departs from the individualist system of farming. We can take this report as a fairly accurate one, seeing it is made to a congress consisting of delegates from all parts of Russia, many of whom are keen students of economics, and have a knowledge of economics almost as great as that of M. Stalin himself. The cultivated area of all grain crops in Russia under the collectivist system increased from 94,000,000 hectares in 1931 to 101,500,000 hectares at the time of the congress.

The following are significant figures:—

CULTIVATED AREA OF ALL CROPS IN THE U.S.S.R.

	In Millions of Hectares.	
	1913.	1933.
Total cultivated area ...	105.0	129.7
(a) Grain ...	94.4	101.5
(b) Technical ...	4.5	12.0
(c) Vegetables ...	3.8	8.6
(d) Fodder ...	2.1	7.3

CULTIVATED AREA OF TECHNICAL CROPS IN U.S.S.R.

	In Millions of Hectares.	
	1913.	1933.
Cotton ...	0.69	2.05
Flax (long fibre) ...	1.02	2.40
Sugar beets ...	0.65	1.21
Oil seed ...	2.00	5.79

GROSS PRODUCTION OF GRAIN AND TECHNICAL CROPS IN THE U.S.S.R.

	In Million Centners.	
	1913.	1933.
Grain ...	801.0	898.0
Cotton (raw) ...	7.4	13.2
Flax (fibre) ...	5.3	5.6
Sugar beet ...	109.0	90.0
Oil-bearing plants ...	21.5	46.0

That country, where under the collectivist system all possible overhead expenses are eliminated and over-capitalisation is avoided, is the only country in the world that is showing any progress in an extension of the areas under cultivation and an increase in the production.

Mr. PLUNKETT: What about the position of the farmer?

Mr. FOLEY: If from 1913, when the farmer as an individualist worked on his strip farm, to the present day such an improvement has taken place in the case of oil-bearing plants alone that the production has increased from 21,500,000 centners to 46,000,000, it follows that the farmer is in a much better position.

Mr. PLUNKETT: He is poorer to-day than ever.

Mr. FOLEY: No. As a matter of fact, the figures point to the fact that the farmer in that country is showing a general improvement, while the farmer in every other country throughout the so-called civilised capitalist world is looking forward to aid and assistance from Governments.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Because he is over-taxed by your Government.

[Mr. Foley.

Mr. FOLEY: It is not a question of taxation. As a matter of fact, hon. members opposite do not wish to see the position as it really is. Their petty politics lead them to make inane interjections with a view to diverting the minds of the farmers from the true position in order that some political gain may result. Consider the position in South America, and in particular in Brazil. Consider also the position in the United States of America, where it is claimed that practically no taxation exists. How is it that the farmer there is in the same plight as the farmer in Queensland and in other parts of the world? In Japan, which industrially is the most prosperous country in the world, the position of the farmer is just as deplorable as in Great Britain or in other countries where industrial conditions are at the lowest ebb. Why not face those facts? Why not endeavour to ascertain the true position with a view to creating a public opinion among the farming community that the position may be rectified by adopting the co-operative idea in production, just as that system is being applied in the manufacture of the raw product into the marketable article. I advance the suggestion that the farming system world-wide does not fit in with the capitalist system as a result of the individualist form of production being adopted in farming generally throughout the world, whereas on the secondary side other forms of production are developing up to the trustified stage, where the latest scientific technique is being applied to industry. In farming the old individualists method is still being pursued.

We are opening up certain areas of land in this State in the not very distant future. In my district the Secretary for Public Lands is opening up land in the Theodore area for selection, and it is proposed that mixed farming, dairying, and the production of other commodities will be carried on there. Each farmer will have his own set of yards, each will surround himself with a fence, each will have his own water supply. One water supply would probably be adequate for two farms, one set of yards, and one fence. The farm is soon over-capitalised, whereas if a different system were applied favourable results would be obtained. I appreciate the necessity for overcoming the human element. There will be difficulties in that respect; they have been experienced in the past in our group settlement system. I maintain that if the Government wiped off all the arrears—as they intend to do with some sections, owing to the impossible condition the farmers find themselves in—and gave concession after concession, nevertheless so long as the present system continued they would have to continue to grant concessions to the farmers of this State. That would be necessary owing to the fact that the system that is being followed does not fall into line with the system of capitalism as a whole. What possible chance would the old-type craftsman, who employed one or two hands before the factory system started in England, have in competition with a mass production system now in operation in that country? Not a ghost of a chance! Yet hon. members opposite attribute our troubles to taxation! As a matter of fact the average farmer to-day is not earning sufficient to make him assessable for taxation.

Mr. KENNY: What about the relief tax?

Mr. FOLEY: If that is going to make the difference between success and failure it is a poor lookout for the farming community of this State. There is a bigger factor behind the whole thing. I put forward the suggestion that the time is ripe for a thorough investigation in order to ascertain if it is not possible to create a different outlook amongst the farming community of this State with a view to inculcating in them the co-operative or collective idea for their own benefit, and thus bringing the farming industry into line with other branches of industry; in other words, to do on the land what is being done on the factory side of production.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [4.34 p.m.]: The hon. member for Normanby has read from a Russian magazine a story that sounds all right; but let the hon. member read a bit further. Let him read some of the stories related by visitors to Russia. Let him read some of the books in the Parliamentary Library. Let him read there the story of absolute utter failure as related by an official who was endeavouring to carry out the collective system of farming. There is a book in the library written by one of the chief commissars who points out that he was unable to get the peasants to work under the collective system, and that production had fallen off and stock had died. Last year there was an enormous shortage of stock in Russia—cattle and horses had died owing to lack of attention. Yet the hon. member for Normanby suggests that we should adopt that system in Queensland! The collective system of farming in Russia was inaugurated by confiscating the farms owned by the wealthy and prosperous landowners. The Government then took all the land of the peasants. They certainly left the smaller peasant who was not doing very well. They took the landowners and sent them to work in the coal mines. They then placed all the peasants under military rule and drove man, woman, and child to work. They had to work. They were slaves. It was just slavery. The work was done under armed guards. Soldiers, with rifles, accompanied them to the field to see that they did not steal. If they stole they were shot. In spite of these methods—hard driving, shooting, murder—in spite of all this, production has fallen until this year all Russia is on rations.

Mr. FOLEY: That is wrong.

Mr. DEACON: It is right.

Mr. FOLEY: It is not.

Mr. DEACON: It is right. The hon. member can make a search and find out the export from Russia to-day in grain or any other farm produce. The figures are lower than they were under the reign of the Czar.

Mr. FOLEY: Leave Russia out of it.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member has based everything on Russia.

Mr. FOLEY: I did not.

Mr. DEACON: He desired that we should adopt the system prevailing in Russia.

Mr. FOLEY: No, I did not.

Mr. DEACON: He desired that everything should be run on the collective system. He desired a collective system of farming. When the Labour Government adopted the collective system in Queensland as regards

*Mr. Deacon.]*



cattle stations, what do we find? They were managed by the Government.

Mr. FOLEY: They were managed by individuals.

Mr. DEACON: They were managed by the Government in the interests of the community. They were a miserable failure from start to finish, while cattle stations alongside, managed by individuals, prospered. They both had the same set of conditions. The Government cattle stations failed until the Government themselves had to confess they were a failure. They do not talk about them now. Each and every one of the State enterprises conducted in Queensland was a failure.

Mr. FOLEY: How is it your collective butter factories are not failures?

Mr. DEACON: We have not got collective butter factories. Our butter factories are run on the co-operative system, in which every man has a personal interest.

Mr. FOLEY: He would have the same under the system I advocated.

Mr. DEACON: Not at all. It all goes to the community. All of the agricultural community would become the slaves of the people in the city. Who is going out on the land, when you have ideal conditions existing in the city? Who would go on the land and stay there? They might be forced to go there; they would have to be forced to stay there. Of course, the hon. member for Normanby, we know, is the only genuine Socialist on that side of the House. He believes in that system, but he is the only one that does. The remainder, although not willing to admit it, are Conservatives. They are Tories. (Laughter.) They are all believers in the system of individual effort. They have dropped their socialistic principle, except, of course, on paper—for their election campaigns. They have all given up the idea of nationalisation of cattle stations and farms, except the hon. member for Normanby. He is the only genuine and honest Labour member on that side of the House. (Laughter.)

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) [4.40 p.m.]: I desire to associate myself to the fullest extent with the remarks made by the hon. member for Normanby. Hon. members opposite adopt the attitude that when statements emanate from this side of the House regarding our magnificent country they should counteract such statements by stating that things have gone to the dogs. I have heard more ignorance about things Russian displayed by hon. members on the other side of the House generally than I have ever heard before in my life on any single subject. The hon. member for Cunningham unfortunately read some book to show the failure of the agricultural system in Russia. Ever since the Russian revolution in 1917 Russian refugees have not been allowed, of their own freewill, to return to their native country. If you pick up the book by a Russian Countess entitled "The First One Back," you will gain a different impression from that sought to be conveyed by hon. members opposite to-day. I make bold to say that Russia is making more progress in scientific agriculture than any other country in the world. What was to be expected from a nation of 140,000,000 people? Hon. members opposite talk about slavery in Russia. What were nine-tenths of the Russian people but serfs and slaves prior to

the Russian revolution. I remember that in 1882, when I was a young fellow, reading the arguments in the press of the old country, and the press of the world generally relating to the cost of production. The cost of production in those days under the terrible system of abject slavery was practically nil. I loaded wheat on two occasions at Odessa away back in the early eighties when tens of millions of bushels of grain were simply dumped on the so-called wharves at a cost of practically nothing, because it was produced by serf labour. Hon. members opposite refer to the people of Russia as slaves. Let them go back to early history when the dukes and princes retained tens of thousands of people under the most abject kind of slavery to produce wheat which became the property of the dukes and princes who were their bosses. Immense progress has been made in scientific and co-operative agriculture throughout the world, in Russia in particular, since the revolution of 1917. Whether the world likes it or not we have to recognise the fact that, as Tennyson said—

"Our little systems have their day  
They have their day and cease to be."

At 4.45 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BARBER: A tremendous change has taken place in the development of agriculture just as there has been a tremendous scientific change in other phases of world production. The old system of production is going to change whether we like it or not, and the Russian nation is showing the way. If hon. members opposite would read the "Moscow News" and the Soviet "Times" they would find set out from week to week full and comprehensive statements showing the progress that is being made in agriculture in Russia, because the farmers of Russia have adopted the co-operative system. In the early days when I first became associated with the Labour movement one of the planks of the party's platform was a co-operative Commonwealth, and so far as I am concerned I have never receded a step from it, and I stand by the principle I advocated over forty years ago. I recognise that therein lies the progress of the world; the world will have to accept those conditions or go under. Many nations prior to Great Britain have had to go under; nations that have lived for centuries have gone under because of their refusal to apply progressive measures. The whole of the world will have to recognise that unless we are prepared to develop the agricultural industry on co-operative lines we can make no progress. I may not be in order if I refer to anything outside of agricultural development.

With the aid of modern appliances and the best scientists available agriculture in Russia has progressed beyond all expectation. I would invite hon. members who treat this subject very lightly to read some books on the question by Russians themselves. I suggest that they should read "Red Bread," by M. Hindus, a Russian gentleman, who left Russia in the latter part of the last century. He migrated to the United States of America and became a wealthy manufacturer, but since the establishment of the present regime in Russia he has visited Russia annually. Read what he has to say on the matter! This

[Mr. Deacon.

subject is very distasteful to hon. members opposite, but I take my stand with the Russian people in that regard. They have made immense progress; in fact, greater progress than any other nation in the world. I repeat, we have to face it. It may not be very pleasant for us to do so, but we have to do so, and sooner or later every nation in the world will have to alter its methods, especially its agricultural methods. I have seen tens of millions of bushels of wheat in the granaries and on the wharves at Russian seaports. When rain fell it got wet because it was unprotected, but as soon as the frost and snow came it set and froze until the grain became encrusted with a hard surface. The transport was drawn close to the wharf. The workers then tunnelled into the face of the wheat and carted it in baskets to the steamer's hold until the vessel was loaded. It makes me a bit sore when I hear people talking about the Russian people being slaves. Never in their history have the Russian people been as well off as they are to-day. Half a century ago I saw thousands of these Russian workers, and I say here to-day without fear of contradiction, that these people are on the right lines whether in the application of science to agriculture or other phases of human activity and progress. I look forward to the time—I am going down the hill, perhaps, but there is always the youthful spirit to keep one going—that it is in the best interests of the people of the British Empire and the people of the world to adopt the co-operative method to which the Russian people have devoted themselves.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is a split in the party all right!

Mr. BARBER: There is no split at all.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) [4.52 p.m.]: I was most sorry and disappointed to hear the speech made by the hon. member for Normanby, in which he advocated Russian methods in regard to production in Australia. It is rather remarkable that any responsible member of Parliament should recommend that we should adopt such methods in regard to production as are now adopted in Russia, because it is well known that the producers in Russia to-day are bound down by slavish conditions.

Mr. BARBER: That is all bunkum; it is ignorant bunkum.

Mr. PLUNKETT: It is not bunkum. The production in Russia to-day is under Government control. That production is exported under Government control and placed on the markets of the world and sold by the same control for what it will bring. As a result of this sacrifice of the production of people under slavish conditions, the markets of the world have been brought to a state of chaos, and the markets of some of Queensland's exportable products have been seriously handicapped. It is rather astounding to hear the hon. member for Normanby advocate that system.

Mr. FOLEY: I did not.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The hon. member advocated the Russian system.

Mr. FOLEY: I am advocating the collective idea in agricultural production.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The hon. member advocated socialised production.

Mr. FOLEY: You will not face the problem at all.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The hon. member should be known as Public Enemy No. 1 in so far as Queensland producers are concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOLEY: So far as I am concerned, you can name me that.

Mr. PLUNKETT: It has been stated to-day that if private enterprise cannot employ people it is the function of the Government to do so. Let us analyse that proposition. The progress that Australia has made so far has been due to individual effort and private enterprise. People who say that private enterprise has failed might answer this question: Why has it failed? For the simple reason that a burden has been put upon private enterprise by Governments that makes industries unprofitable, with the result that we are facing our present position.

Mr. FOLEY: You are really too simple to listen to.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I am not too simple to disagree with the hon. member in his advocacy of the Russian system. The position is that private enterprise cannot progress by reason of the interference to which it is subject and the taxation which is imposed upon it by various Governments. Many people in this country cannot get work and we have to keep these people in existence by borrowed money.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting rather wide of the subject.

Mr. PLUNKETT: It is a wide subject, Mr. Speaker, when we can travel from Russia to Queensland. It has been argued this afternoon that private enterprise has failed in regard to many of our activities.

The PREMIER: Your whole co-operative system is an argument in favour of that contention.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I do not agree with that altogether.

The PREMIER: Your whole pooling system is a negation of private enterprise.

Mr. PLUNKETT: But the system whereby farmers co-operate and make a success of their undertaking is different from the system of Government control advocated by the hon. member for Normanby.

The PREMIER: To the extent that co-operative activity succeeds, it replaces private enterprise.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The hon. gentleman who interjects has been associated with Government control, and we know what happened in regard to State enterprises.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Were there any State enterprises associated with this vote?

Mr. PLUNKETT: I do not think we have got so far as that. We had State stations.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PLUNKETT: In advocating collective farming methods for this country the hon. member for Normanby is adopting an entirely wrong attitude, for it would be a sorry day for Australia if such a system were introduced. Despite what is claimed for the conditions existing in Russia, it is the last resource we should adopt in Queensland or Australia.

Resolution 56 (Department of Agriculture and Stock—Chief Office) agreed to.

*Mr. Plunkett.]*

Resolutions 57 to 78, both inclusive, agreed to.

Resolution 79—“*Department of Labour and Industry*”—

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [4.59 p.m.]: I do not think this resolution should be agreed to. This is a vote on which we have been desirous of having a discussion for some considerable time. This is the first opportunity we have had for three years of dealing with the effect of unemployment on the State and on the people. It is a question on which the Government have shuffled for three years, and it is a question on which we do not intend to let them shuffle any further.

At 5 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 367 and the Sessional Order of 29th August, I shall now proceed to put the resolution under discussion and the resolutions not already agreed to by the House.

Resolution 79 (*Department of Labour and Industry*) agreed to.

Resolutions 80 to 86, both inclusive, agreed to.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

##### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Hanson, Buranda, in the chair.*)

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [5.1 p.m.]: I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1934-35, a further sum not exceeding £4,630,180 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1934-35, a further sum not exceeding £3,044,675 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1934-35, a further sum not exceeding £2,150,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1935-34, a supplementary sum not exceeding £83,709 5s. 4d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1935-34, a supplementary sum not exceeding £444,216 15s. 9d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1935-34, a supplementary sum not exceeding £314,216 8s. 2d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1935-

[*Mr. Kenny.*

36, a sum not exceeding £1,800,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1935-36, a sum not exceeding £1,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1935-36, a sum not exceeding £750,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifer*) [5.4 p.m.]: I think I am within my rights in raising now a matter I intended to bring forward when the Railway Department Estimates came before the Chamber for consideration. As those votes did not come up for discussion, I must avail myself of the only opportunity that remains to me to bring the matter forward. I am glad the Minister for Transport is present, so that I can appeal to him direct. The position of the employees on the Kyogle Railway is not at all a satisfactory one. The Kyogle Railway was not only a hybrid business; it was a “tribrid” business.

The TREASURER: You voted for the agreement made by the Moore Government.

Mr. WIENHOLT: I took this very same stand when that agreement was brought in by the Secretary for Railways of the day. I have always declared it is very necessary to get a clear division of the spheres of the Commonwealth, State, and local authorities. This particular arrangement was one that struck across that principle. The employees on this railway are in a peculiarly unsatisfactory position. They appear to be like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth, and their whole position is now clearly defined. I believe the Minister for Transport will be no less sympathetic than any other hon. member of this Committee. I trust he will carefully investigate this matter and clarify the anomalous position in which these employees find themselves. I notice that the hon. member for Oxley during this session asked certain questions of the Minister for Transport touching upon the subject which I am now raising.

I wish to read certain paragraphs extracted from letters received on the subject—

“The wages paid to the men are below the basic rate for Queensland. Some of the men are working under a Federal award, and are paid in full £7 8s. for ninety-six hours per fortnight. Group 2 are paid £7 1s. for eighty-eight hours. These men are paid under the New South Wales State award, and their wages are determined by the New South Wales Industrial Commission although they are and always have been working in the State of Queensland.”

Another correspondent writes—

“It is all a mixed-up affair. Queensland blames New South Wales, and New South Wales blames Queensland for our condition.

“To go back to the beginning, when applications were called in Queensland

for employees of the Railway Department staff to transfer to this section, no notice was given that we had to be taken over by New South Wales.

"We are not eligible for a transfer to Queensland at the present time. I have a communication from the Commissioner for Railways to this effect.

"The Industrial Registrar of New South Wales states definitely that the New South Wales awards cannot operate in Queensland; yet we are subject to the Federal basic wage for New South Wales although we pay Queensland unemployed relief tax! We are subject to the Public Service Salaries Act—a matter of about 7s. a fortnight—also New South Wales superannuation—about 3s. a fortnight. We are not allowed to transfer into New South Wales either.

"Our contention is this: that if we pay the Public Service Salaries Act and superannuation we are entitled to the climatic allowance. If we are not entitled to be paid the climatic, then we contend that the Public Service Salaries Act and superannuation should not be deducted from us. We have been here for three and a-half years now, and have absolutely no chance of obtaining a transfer either way, in Queensland or New South Wales.

"If Queensland wishes something from us they take it. New South Wales does the same."

These quotations show the position of these employees and is a very unsatisfactory one. They do not really know where they are. I believe that there is—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed the hon. member a great deal of latitude on the resolution. The resolutions now before the Committee are merely formal, and the remarks the hon. member is now making, or perhaps desires to make, can be made during the second reading of the Appropriation Bill—that is, if he desires to do so. The moving of these resolutions is an entirely formal matter, and all the authorities support that view.

Mr. WIENHOLT: I take this opportunity, anyhow, of appealing to the Minister for Transport. I understand a new agreement is contemplated, and he should take the opportunity to have the position of these employees clearly defined in order that they will know where they stand.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*) [5.11 p.m.]: Mr. Hanson—

The CHAIRMAN: According to the rules that are invariably applied to this stage, the resolution is formal.

Question—"That the resolutions be agreed to" (*Mr. Smith's motion*)—put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and asked leave to sit again.

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

RECEPTION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

On the motion of the Treasurer (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), the resolutions were received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 3.

FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced, and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. FADDEN (*Kennedy*) [5.14 p.m.]: Parliament is now being asked to appropriate a sum aggregating approximately £14,250,000, including an increase in loan expenditure from £3,300,000 to £4,400,000 and an increased expenditure for intermittent unemployment relief from £1,411,174 to £1,515,627. The Bill also includes an increased appropriation for ration relief from £200,000 to £350,000. We have been told that the unemployment position in Queensland has improved, and we have also been told that the policy of acceleration of loan expenditure has borne fruit—has been justified by results. If the policy of the present Government is shorn of its embroideries, it is shown to be purely a policy of accelerated loan expenditure, the very same policy that was pursued by a Labour Government from 1915 to 1929. The results of that disastrous policy can be ascertained from the financial records and achievements of the Governments of those years. If the present Government and the people of Queensland confidently and optimistically believe that we can borrow ourselves out of our difficulties, then it is logical and reasonable to ask why it was not possible to achieve that desirable end during the boom periods in the history of this State. We know that between 1915 and 1929 millions of pounds were borrowed and expended in Queensland, but that the results were disastrous. We know the tragic results of State enterprises; we know the annual burdens that have to be borne to-day by the people of Queensland as a result of the loan policy of Labour Governments in the past.

Let us review the position since 1931-32. These figures will show the expenditure from the various funds during the last year of the Moore Government and the period of the present Government—

	Moore Government.	Present Government.		
	1931-32.	1932-33.	1933-34.	1935.
Loan Fund .. .. .	£ 1,162,910	£ 2,188,022	£ 3,166,481	Estimated. £4,400,000
Unemployment Relief Fund .. .. .	1,200,674	1,771,111	1,903,000	1,950,000

*Mr. Fadden.]*

Those figures definitely show that the expenditure that should show the unemployment position and certainly should reflect any unemployment improvement that exists has moved from £1,162,910 to an estimated expenditure of £4,400,000, so far as loan moneys are concerned—or approximately four times the amount expended for the year 1931-32—and from £1,200,674 to £1,950,000 so far as the Unemployment Relief Fund is concerned.

In addition, I desire to quote figures for the three months ended in September. They are the latest figures available, and with their aid we shall have a better opportunity to study the position to as late a date as possible. They will let us see whether we are drifting, and enable us to see how far distant the Government are from a solution or to what extent they have secured any relief of unemployment, having regard to the factors that the taxpaying community has to find the wherewithal, and the taxable capacity of the people is dependent on favourable prices for our wool and the continuation of good seasons. We are adopting an optimistic outlook as to the future, hoping that we shall be blessed with a continuation of good seasons, and that the position of our industries will continue to be favourable. The position of the wool industry, our most stable industry, is at the moment very distressing. If there is not some relief in the very near future, and some better outlook for us there, then the position of Queensland, especially as to the financial capacity of her citizens, in particular those dependent on this great industry, is very grave indeed. We find that for the three months ended 30th September, 1933, the receipts and expenditure of the Unemployment Relief Fund were—

1933-34 FINANCIAL YEAR.

	£
Receipts ... ..	423,865
Expenditure ... ..	440,165
<hr/>	
Excess of Expenditure over Revenue ... ..	16,300

The current position for the three months ended 30th September, 1934, is—

1934-35 FINANCIAL YEAR.

	£
Revenue ... ..	528,960
Expenditure ... ..	399,185
<hr/>	
Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure ... ..	129,775

In comparing the three-month period of 1932-33, when the Government assumed the responsibilities of office, with a similar period

in 1934-35 we find that the expenditure from loan funds was—

	£
1932-33 ... ..	389,686
1934-35 ... ..	1,108,611

The expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Fund was—

	£
1932-33 ... ..	311,574
1934-35 ... ..	399,185

Therefore, the expenditure both in respect of loan funds and the Unemployment Relief Fund has increased. These figures conclusively convey the impression that the expenditure of loan money is not having the desired effect to the advantage of Queensland, of relieving unemployment, and is certainly not a solution of the unemployment problem. We have expended in the three months set out approximately £700,000 more from Loan Fund Account, yet the expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Fund, which is the barometer indicating the effect of that policy—because it is the amount which has to be found from taxation—has increased from £311,574 to £399,185. Therefore, despite the expenditure of loan money, accelerated by the loan policy, as reflected in the three months' expenditure, the unemployment relief tax has, in 1934-35, drained the public purse to the extent of another £88,000, in addition to the amount collected in the corresponding months of 1932-33.

For the four months ended October the increase in the aggregate expenditure was as follows:—

	£
From revenue ... ..	47,566
From trust ... ..	400,545
From loan ... ..	858,143
<hr/>	
	£1,306,254

What effect is that increased expenditure having on the unemployed of the State, and upon the drain upon the public purse of the taxpayer who has to provide the wherewithal to enable the Government to carry on? In considering the loan policy of the Government it is necessary to be guided by the past history of that policy and its association with the present party. At different times I have referred to unproductive debt in a relative manner. I am not foolish enough to think that the whole of the loan expenditure of this or any other Government or of any individual can be totally productive of interest. I recognise that some governmental activities create an invisible asset, and such assets as Government buildings, hospitals, and schools; but the point I desire to make is that there is an ever-increasing ratio of unproductive debt. In that connection the following comparison is illuminating:—

Year.	Interest.	Actual Charge on Revenue.	Percentage Charge on Revenue.	Percentage of Reproductivity of Loan Works and Services.
1914-15 .. .. .	£ 1,975,581	£ 267,852	13·6	86·4
1933-34 .. .. .	4,997,637	2,213,248	44·2	55·8

As I stated previously, I do not for one moment imagine, or claim, that the whole

of the loan expenditure of this Government could possibly be reproductive of interest,

[Mr. Fadden.

but I do say that the proportion to-day is far too great and that we have food for serious thought when we find it moving from 13.6 per cent. in 1914-15 to 44.2 per cent. to-day, so that as a consequence of the unremunerative debt consolidated revenue is called upon to find £2,213,248, or approximately £100,000 more than the revenue from the combined income and land taxes. That aspect of our loan expenditure must be seriously considered in determining the wisdom of that expenditure and in ascertaining the exact position of the State, for at all times we must remember that we are placing an increased responsibility on future generations.

In regard to the claim that a fair proportion of the loan expenditure has an invisible asset value and also comprises governmental buildings, services, etc., I would point that, according to Table E.4 of the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement, only 3.25 per cent. of the total loan expenditure, or an amount of £3,697,976, is accounted for in buildings, and to that extent only can expenditure on buildings constitute an excuse or reason for the unremunerative nature of the debt of the State. If we look through the total we shall find that the State enterprises accounted for £4,017,408, harbour and rivers £2,250,264, and land settlement and development £3,797,747.

In dealing with the matter of public buildings and the unremunerative portion of the debt due to them, we must bear in mind that the debit or charge on revenue in that respect is £144,063, while the profit made out of loans to local authorities—the credit balance as a result of charging local authorities a higher rate of interest than that paid by the Government—is £111,489, whilst workers' dwellings returned £18,641, and the Agricultural Bank £12,592. The credits from local authorities and these two other departments I have mentioned must be taken into consideration when considering the question of public buildings and their relation to the unremunerative debt. Governments in the past in their wisdom erected wooden buildings, in respect of which no provision is made for depreciation or future maintenance and repairs, to as great an extent as possible out of Consolidated Revenue, and to a minimum extent out of Loan Funds. From 1912-13 to 1914-15, 27 per cent. of the expenditure in this direction was from Loan Funds, and from 1915-16 to 1928-29 the proportion of expenditure from Loan Funds had increased to 62.7 per cent., whereas from 1929-30 to 1931-32 (during the Moore Government's administration) that percentage decreased to 61.2 per cent. That is certainly not a very marked improvement, but is sufficient to indicate that the policy pursued by the previous Labour Government was to some extent discontinued or arrested by the Moore Government. For 1932-33, however, 81.4 per cent. of the building expenditure was a charge against loan money, and in 1933-34 the figure increased to 86.7 per cent., whilst for 1934-35, according to the Estimates, the amount will be no less than 88.6 per cent. It will be seen that the charge on loan expenditure for Government buildings (which are mostly of wood, and in regard to which depreciation is not provided for) has moved from 27 per cent. in 1914-15 to 88.6 per cent. in 1934-35, according to the Estimates.

I also desire to draw attention to page 23 of the Auditor-General's report, where he has this to say—

“The discounts and flotation expenses on loans unprovided for amount to £2,137,531, having increased by £107,520 during the year. No adjustment on account of these expenses has been made since the financial year 1927-28, when £266,923 was charged to consolidated revenue.”

In considering the loan policy we must take into consideration the incidental cost of that policy. We must take into consideration the fact that that debt was built up during the financial “jazz” indulged in by the Labour Government when they borrowed and spent money lavishly. In addition to the unremunerative debt there are the incidental costs, discount and exchange, incurred by reason of that policy.

On page 12 of his report the Auditor-General says—

“The subsidies were generally on the basis of £1 for £1 of the loan granted.

“This expenditure does not produce any asset to the Treasury.”

He is not concerned with the invisible asset. He is simply concerned with the economic consideration, and has treated the whole of Queensland as an economic unit as a consequence, and has given full consideration to the effect upon the Treasury. I am totally opposed to the principle and policy of charging these subsidised loans to Loan Fund Account. If these subsidised loans are warranted, and are given for the purposes for which we are told they are given—namely, to assist local authorities and other local governing bodies to relieve unemployment, then the amount should be a definite charge against the Unemployment Relief Fund. If that is the purpose for which the loan is made, it should not be a charge on Loan Fund, but a charge on the fund that is provided for the purpose of the relief of unemployment—that is, the Unemployment Relief Fund.

The matter of subsidised loans leads one to comment upon the effects of working the Chillagoe smelters. I think it is time that the Government gave very serious and earnest consideration to the position at Chillagoe. No doubt keeping Chillagoe open has its advantages so far as unemployment is concerned, both direct and indirect. If that be the object aimed at, then the cost of achieving that objective should also be a charge on the Unemployment Relief Fund. To keep piling up a debit to Trust Funds, which has now reached £226,744, and which comprises an accumulated loss of £211,264 over five years, is a very bad policy, and a very bad principle to pursue. Having regard to the fact that, according to this balance-sheet, the assets are worth about £60,000 or £70,000, and having regard to the ultimate loss that must occur from the activities at Chillagoe, I say that very serious consideration should be given to the wisdom of keeping the smelters open. A full survey should be made as to the direct and indirect benefits as a consequence of the expenditure of approximately £40,000 a year with no possible chance of recovery.

Mr. KENNY: It all depends on the management there.

Mr. Fadden.]

Mr. FADDEN: I can only go by the facts as revealed in the report of the Auditor-General. I say the facts are such that the matter warrants the acceptance of responsibility by members of this House in order to ascertain whether we are doing the right thing by the people of Queensland in keeping them open under the circumstances reflected in the balance-sheet and the financial results achieved.

Mr. MAHER: You suggest an inquiry into the management?

Mr. FADDEN: I suggest an inquiry into the whole of the activities at Chillagoe, having full regard to the direct and indirect benefits that may accrue from the relief of unemployment or the increase of employment both directly at Chillagoe and indirectly in industries dependent upon the activities of the smelters. But, in any case, I say that whatever losses are made at Chillagoe they should be debited to the reason for keeping Chillagoe open—namely, the relief of unemployment. If unemployment is to be relieved as a consequence of the continual losses at Chillagoe, then the Unemployment Relief Fund should bear the brunt of that expenditure. The whole matter warrants serious and early consideration. I am not going to say it is not in the best interests of the State to keep the smelters open, but I do say that the facts and figures reveal a serious position, and that having regard to the enormous amount that has been written off to Loan Fund Account from Trust Funds incidental to them, we should not pursue that policy. I think that losses aggregating approximately £1,000,000 have been written off as the result of the operations at Chillagoe, and the accumulated losses over the last five years approximate £211,000. What are the prospects of regaining these losses or making good the position, having regard to the times and, as I have emphasised, to the incidental benefits that accrue as a result of the employment that they give?

I also desire to say a few words with regard to the Bowen coke ovens. According to the report of the Auditor-General it would appear that the more coke we make and the more coke we sell the greater will be our losses, because the cost of production is ever so much greater than the contract price with the Mount Isa Company.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Another bonus to Mount Isa!

The TREASURER: Given by your Government.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No.

The TREASURER: Your Government most certainly gave it.

Mr. FADDEN: The matter requires prompt and thorough investigation because under the agreement entered into with Mount Isa we cannot continue to supply that company with coke at £1 13s. 8d. per ton when, according to the report by the Auditor-General, it is costing £2 2s. 8d. per ton to manufacture. If these coke ovens are being maintained because they provide an added advantage in the relief of unemployment then the Unemployment Relief Fund should bear its proportion of the cost. If the coke ovens are to continue to make these losses with no possibility of being able to retrieve the position, then the Unemploy-

ment Relief Fund should carry its share of the responsibility—that is, if the enterprise is being maintained for the purpose of providing employment. Here we have a “dud” asset in our Trust Fund Accounts amounting to about £14,000—I believe that is the loss, including the working overdraft. We have sufficient dud assets in our Trust and Special Funds without maintaining an additional one that must inevitably continue to show losses from year to year. If this enterprise is continued the ostrich act is being carried too far.

These funds should be thoroughly investigated and cleaned up, and where necessary a proper proportion of the charge should be made against consolidated revenue or the Unemployment Relief Fund. I repeat, if there are incidental advantages by way of relief to unemployment then the Unemployment Relief Fund should bear its proportion of the cost.

The TREASURER: The whole matter of the coke ovens is being investigated now.

Mr. FADDEN: I am pleased to hear that.

The TREASURER: The present position could not be allowed to continue.

Mr. FADDEN: That is obvious, and it is also obvious that someone should be hauled over the coals—or over the coke. (Laughter.) We know that the Government of the day went thoroughly into the matter before they entered into the agreement with Mount Isa, but somebody blundered, somebody fell down on his job when he stated that the coke could be produced and sold profitably at £1 13s. a ton, whereas it is actually costing £2 2s. 8d. a ton to make. The sooner we clean up these ever-increasing “dud” assets the better it will be for all.

The TREASURER: It is a pity that they were ever started.

Mr. FADDEN: I desire also to deal with the Closer Settlement Acts. The Auditor-General, in his report for 1931-32, at page 136, states—

“In previous years the transactions relating to the above Acts were comprised in a Trust Fund at the Treasury, but on 30th June, 1931, the balance of the account £1,387,991 4s. 1d. was transferred to the Loan Fund, and the rents received from the various estates have since been paid to revenue.”

In his report for 1929-30, at page 127, he states—

“Of the twenty-nine estates listed on page 123, more than half have either been purchased by settlers, or a few portions only remain to have the purchase price paid.”

Further on in the same report he states—

“The practice of charging such interest should receive attention, as in the cases abovementioned there is no possibility of reducing the amounts of the trust debit—in fact, the debit is being increased yearly by the interest charged.”

I desire to point out that a debit balance of £1,387,991 was written off to Loan Fund Account without any valuation of the assets

being made. Interest, amounting to £901,786, had been charged up to the Trust Funds from 1st July, 1916, to 30th June, 1931.

The TREASURER: The arrangement to which you object was made by the Treasurer of your own Government and included in a Land Act Amendment Act.

Mr. FADDEN: No. The Moore Government were not in power on 30th June, 1931. (Government laughter.)

The TREASURER: To cover it up they introduced it in a Land Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. FADDEN: I will go further and point out that it was the hon. gentleman's party that accumulated the £901,786, or the greater proportion of it. I prepared for that interjection. The policy that was adopted was to charge up interest to this fund, credit consolidated revenue with the interest charged, and ultimately write the whole thing off to Loan Fund from Trust Funds. Did you ever hear of such a policy?

The TREASURER: If you look up "Hansard," you will see where we said that.

Mr. FADDEN: The capitalised interest, which was purely fictitious, having regard to the circumstances, and was included in the capital, which was definitely written off in the Loan Fund Account, was made up as follows:—

	£
1916 ... ..	44,576
1917 ... ..	52,206
1918 ... ..	54,282
1919 ... ..	54,312
1920 ... ..	67,834
1921 ... ..	42,786
1922 ... ..	58,562
1923 ... ..	58,560
1924 ... ..	56,569
1925 ... ..	58,574
1926 ... ..	58,577
1927 ... ..	58,578
1928 ... ..	58,579
1929 ... ..	58,580
1930 ... ..	58,580
1931 ... ..	58,581

It will therefore be seen that of the £901,786, £700,000 was written off between 1916 and 1928, inclusive, by the Government representing the party opposite. (Opposition laughter.) I leave it to hon. members to say who was responsible. We do not want the Chillagoe State smelters to get into that position. We do not want the Bowen coke ovens to get into a similar position, for the reason that I have brought forward. It is a very bad practice and a pure violation of sound accountancy principles, but it was pursued in connection with the closer settlement scheme and every other scheme, including State enterprises, adopted by the Government.

We can only review the past with a desire to safeguard the future—a post mortem never brought a body back to life. We should benefit from the experience of the past and the position of one of these unsatisfactory enterprises, and do all we can in

order to make loan expenditure as remunerative in interest as possible, having regard to the circumstances of and the immediate requirements of the people. Until we can do that we have no chance of relieving the burden that rests on the taxpaying community. Having regard to the credit balance of the Unemployment Relief Fund and the amount of loan money that is available, together with the position of the cash balance generally, I say that the unemployment relief tax can be reduced, and should be reduced as soon as possible in the interests of the State and in the interests of all concerned.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [5.52 p.m.]: As the hon. member for Kennedy has just said, we are asked to-day to pass an amount of money aggregating about £14,260,000. The greater proportion of this money will come from loan money, and that money has been obtained purely on the supposition that the prices of the goods that we produce and export overseas is going to improve to such an extent that the people can carry the added burdens that are being placed on their shoulders. We are shirking our present responsibilities which we ought to be carrying out of revenue. We are expending loan money to ease the position to-day purely on the supposition that prices will rise again. I can see no justification for that supposition. We have no grounds for supposing that prices of our dairy produce, our wool, and other exportable articles are going to rise beyond the ordinary fluctuations of the market before the pre-war period. There is nothing to make us think so. We are basing our expenditure on the prices existing in war time, when there was a large inflation of pre-war prices. When the war stopped the policy of inflation continued, and prices rose to an enormous degree. This led to a remarkable position in Australia. People working farms and kindred properties secured prices for their produce that enabled them to enjoy a standard of living they were never able to enjoy before.

Is there anything to suggest that, from this period onwards, without some dislocation of everything such as another war, prices of commodities are likely to increase in such a manner? As a matter of fact, all we are endeavouring to do is to keep up the standard of living in the city and the standards in our secondary industries, and making the gap larger and larger between those people who are living in the large centres of population and the people who are living in the areas outside them, and who have to sell their products on the markets of the world in open competition. We are expecting to recover from the position on the pure supposition that prices of exportable products will increase to such an extent as to enable us to pay off the debt we are incurring at the present time, which is our responsibility, and also to enable the interest burden to be met that we are placing on the shoulders of the people of the future.

The extraordinary feature of the position is that, whilst we are spending an ever increasingly large amount of money on unemployment relief, and giving conditions that are based purely on money that we are able

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to borrow, and not on what we earn, we are placing the burden on the shoulders of the people of the future. If prices do not increase as anticipated, what will be the position of the people on whose shoulders we are placing the burden? We should recognise the experience of the past as some indication of what the position is likely to be in future. Instead, we are blithely increasing taxation, giving concessions to all sorts of people, building up huge departments and social services of all sorts—and not doing it on revenue but on borrowed money—and placing the burden on the people of the future. We are doing all this on the strength of an expectancy—the expectancy that the prices of commodities will increase.

When we were expending this large amount of loan money and taxing the people to the bone for unemployment relief purposes, one would think that all sections of the community who were in the unfortunate position of requiring relief would be treated in the same way, but we find that people in the country who need relief are placed in an entirely different position from those people who have lost their employment in the towns. In that connection I want to read a letter that I consider puts the position most clearly. I questioned the writer of the letter as to whether I might use it to show the discrimination that is exercised between two sections of the community, and I have full permission to do so. The letter was written on the 24th October, and reads—

“Mr. Moore.

“Dear Sir,—I noticed in the Nambour “Chronicle” where you asked Mr. Hynes several questions. It appears to me that everything is done for the town people. Take our case, for instance. My husband worked at the local sawmill for about eleven years. Instead of trying to buy a house in town I thought trying to buy this small farm a better proposition. The other workers bought houses in town twice the value of this farm. When the other workers lost time they were able to draw their sustenance, but my husband could not because he was on a farm, and we were not growing even vegetables. The mill closed down, my husband could not get work, so we tried growing cane. Well, as you know, cane has been on the drop for years now, we’ve had sickness and bad seasons and a family of five to keep, and this is a 16-acre Agricultural Bank farm, and the Agricultural Bank inspector said it wasn’t a living area for us. Still, when my husband applied for work on the intermittent he was told he was an established farmer. What a farce, and we were starving. I don’t mean when you were Premier. Last January this happened. Our income last year was £70. The Agricultural Bank would not agree to us getting a lien on the sugar mill unless we paid all dues and the instalment due in last June. As we wanted some cash to buy food, too, the mill would only lend us a certain sum. We applied for the lien last March, as friends had been good enough to advance us cash to buy food. When we did get the cash from the mill it had to be paid away. We had to apply for relief and promise to pay back, other-

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wise get sold up. Well, the way the cane is panning out we will be sold up, as there is the lien to be paid back, and fertilizer to be paid for, and we can’t see how we are going to pay the amount due in December back. They even took the thumb print of my husband’s thumb. They treat the poor beggars equal to criminals.”

When this unfortunate man goes in to secure relief he has to sign a paper that he will pay back the money he gets, yet that man has invested in a farm not half the value of the dwelling that the city worker may have erected! And to make sure there is no deceit whatsoever, the authorities take his thumb print and put it upon the promise to pay back. The letter continues—

“My husband is working on bread and butter. Our cow came in last week. Meat we cannot buy. If the cow had not been mortgaged to the bank she would have been sold long ago.”

I am prepared to give the name. I wrote to ascertain whether I might use this letter and whether the facts were correct. The letter continues—

“My children are undernourished. I had a few fowls, but as the relief run out I sold them to relief workers at 3s. per head dressed. I could even give you their names; it makes one bitter. We received the winter gift in June; I nearly lost mine on account of misunderstanding. I had to wear a pair of lent shoes to walk into Nambour. I bought flannelette and crepe for my family. I asked to see a piece of dress material. The man started to bring down material worth 2s. 6d., 2s. 11d., and 5s. 6d. per yard. I said, ‘Good gracious, no, something about 9d. per yard.’ He said, ‘You are a sensible woman.’ Then he told me about one woman—a relief worker’s wife—who wanted an evening frock worth £1 17s. 6d., and he said they pretty well all bought a new frock out of their orders, not cheap neither. Ours (order) was a God-send as we were in a bad way. My husband cannot get work as all the farmers employ boys, 10s. per week. I have a friend at Torquay who’s husband is on the intermittent, she wrote saying, get off the farm on to the intermittent, she is well off. They have a house and acre of land 3s. per week rent, and they grow all their own vegetables, and I suppose sell what they don’t need, Good luck to them, I say.

“I do think if Mr. Hynes was to go and see the poor (criminals) that’s what the little farmer is classed as, taking his thumb print! How they are existing he would be shocked. Trusting I have not taken up too much of your time. I’ve had a friend in Mr. Walker, who has done us lots of good when I have asked his aid. We are like Micawbers in David Copperfield—waiting for something to turn up.

“Yours Sincerely,

“RUBINA SMALLEY.”

I could not believe the suggestion that he was compelled to sign a paper promising to pay it back and sealing it with a thumb print. I wrote a letter saying that I could

not credit such a thing, and on the 30th I received the following reply:—

“Dear Sir,—

“Your letter to hand. I asked my husband to explain more fully to me about the thumb print. This is what he said: he had to sign three papers exactly the same before the C.P.S. in Nambour. Then the C.P.S. put them together, and my husband had to press his thumb of the left hand on to a red round seal. The C.P.S. showed him how to place his thumb, and to press down hard. If that isn't taking a print, I don't know what is, Mr. Moore. If we could have done without after that happening, I can tell you we would have done so. You certainly may use my letter as what I've written in the truth and I'm not afraid of it being used.”

Mr. GAIR: Would that be an affirmation of signature?

Mr. MOORE: It is not an affirmation of signature. I understand there is a suspicion sometimes that the unfortunate individual who happens to own a piece of land may repudiate the signature, and care is taken to make sure of the signature. What I am objecting to is that these people have to pay the unemployment relief tax, and when they get to a basis where they are receiving below the basic wage why should they be placed in a different position from the man who loses his job in the town? The man who loses his position in the town may have a home, and he can get relief without having to go through this indignity.

The TREASURER: You can give me those papers, and I will have the matter investigated.

Mr. MOORE: Those letters are the only papers I have in connection with the matter. I have made inquiries and I understand it is not by any means uncommon. These people should be placed on the same basis as those who lose their jobs in the city. Because a person happens to live in the country district and gets into a position where relief is essential, why should they be placed on a different basis from persons who have been earning a living in the city and who lose their jobs? I say the discrimination is entirely wrong, and that it is driving these people from the land. There is always the suggestion, “Why don't you get off the bit of land and go down to the city?” That unfortunately is the basis on which the matter has been worked all the way. Gradually the people who used to live on small blocks of land ask themselves the question, “Why should we work for twelve days in a fortnight all the time for next to nothing when we can be certain of getting 13s. 6d. for one day's work a week and rations the next week, and probably get an odd job now and again?” That is what is happening. The Government are unfortunately encouraging these people to get on to the intermittent relief work instead of doing all they can to encourage people to keep off that scheme. I consider that the relief scheme should be absolutely the last resort of the individual. In many instances it is getting to be their ultimate objective. They are quite satisfied to keep there, and many of them marry on it. I know several cases where they did marry while on the relief scheme. We

should make conditions such that the relief scheme is the last resort for a man and we can best do it by encouraging him to take work outside. The taking of casual jobs of any nature should be encouraged. The last thing we should want to do is to encourage the growth of a class of people who are content to take the amount of money that is given to them under the intermittent relief scheme, marry on it, and are presumably to remain on it rather than do other work. I am afraid we are getting to the position where we are encouraging a large number of people to get on to this scheme and remain there permanently. Only the other day the Secretary for Agriculture spoke of the difficulty of getting boys to go out to the country to do farm work. He stated that there were twice as many applications for boys as there were boys willing to go out. He quoted extracts from several letters to himself and Canon Garland stating that the lads sent out were satisfied with the treatment received. We seem to be reaching that stage where, on account of the enormous expenditure of loan money, a large number of people are not prepared to go away to some other locality to work. They keep on thinking that there may be a large amount of loan money expended on works in their particular area, and were they to move they would miss the chance of obtaining a certain amount of employment owing to the expenditure of this loan money. What we are doing is holding out to them a chance of living or existing, whatever one may call it, by the proposed expenditure of a large amount of loan money. We are suggesting that it may be possible for them sooner or later to get five or six months' work.

All this is being done on the basis that the prices for our commodities will so increase as to enable us to meet our commitments. Would it not be better were we to look at the position as being one where the level of prices obtaining is the normal position and that if prices do increase it will be so much the better for us? Why not look at the position on the basis that the present ruling prices were more or less the normal prices prior to the war, and that they will probably remain at that level so long as nothing abnormal happens again? We then would so arrange our finances to meet that normal position. After all, there must come a time in which the suppositions will not be fulfilled, that is, that prices will jump up to what they were in the boom days of the inflationary period after the war. We are carrying on in such a way that we are placing the meeting of the commitments for these loan moneys upon the shoulders of those who come after us. They will have to pay for the easy method of solving our problems by borrowing money. We are placing future generations in such a position that they will have to meet very heavy obligations.

Mr. W. T. KING: What is your solution?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MOORE: There are many phases of this question which is one that I have not had the opportunity of discussing at length. It is one of the most important questions in the State to-day. There are so many phases of it and so many things to be looked at, so many considerations that have to be attended to, that it is not easily answered. When relief is given in one way one finds

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the trouble accentuated in another. We are driving people away from the work they may get at the present time in the country, because they consider they will have a better opportunity if they come to town. That comes about owing to the inflation caused by the large expenditure of loan money. Both Mr. Theodore and Mr. Fihelly in 1915 pointed out that the inflation of boom periods comes about by the large expenditure of loan money and causes a discrepancy between prices in the country and in the town. The more loan money that is expended the greater the difference between the two sets of conditions, and the more difficult it is for the primary producer to make ends meet and obtain the money necessary to develop his property.

The more loan money we spend now, the more burdensome will become the taxation that will inevitably have to be placed upon the shoulders of the people to meet the interest and redemption payments in respect of the money that is now being borrowed and spent. To-day we are proceeding merrily along with suggestions from all quarters as to how expenditure may be increased in many directions. Loan expenditure is being increased with the full approval of many sections of the community. The Government are definitely increasing public expenditure in many ways, but we shall not be able to continue unless we borrow more money—again in the anticipation that prices will eventually rise. The Treasurer has stated time and time again that there is nothing that he would welcome more than an opportunity to reduce taxation, but it is little use talking in that strain when at the same time he is increasing the expenditure from consolidated revenue to such an extent that it is becoming more and more difficult for him to do so. It is only humbug to talk like that and at the same time to continue to increase public expenditure. We recognise, in fact most people recognise, that these financial burdens are reducing the capacity of private industry to provide employment. We must also recognise that we cannot alleviate the position unless we economise to some extent. It is little use being generous with public expenditure if we do it with a full knowledge of the fact that the burden of taxation, which is already too heavy for industry to bear, is going to be greater in the future. We are increasing the burden by borrowing and spending more loan money and building up big departments of officials. Such a system must eventually come to an end, and it is perfectly obvious that we cannot solve the problem of unemployment by spending loan money. Let us suppose that we spend a large sum of loan money upon the construction of the Stanley River dam or the Kangaroo Point Bridge. That is not going to provide an increased amount of employment in the future after those works have been completed. It will then be necessary to borrow more money to provide the people engaged on it with employment, unless they are to be thrown on the unemployment market again. If the money were expended in developing the country by enabling more stock to be carried and more commodities to be produced, then increased employment would be found for the people after the immediate improvements were carried out. The Land Administration Board in its report makes reference to the amount of money expended upon ringbarking, providing

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water, subdivision into small paddocks, and improvements generally, and the splendid results that have accrued from this expenditure. There is no need to insist that the rate of interest shall be 5 per cent., or that the wages to be paid shall be 10s. a week in excess of the ordinary station hands' award. It would be infinitely better for the country and infinitely better for the people in search of employment if the amount of money to be expended in this direction could be increased even to £1,000,000 per annum on conditions similar to those of the first loans. This expenditure would provide employment for quite a large number of people, and it would enable landholders to obtain an adequate return in the future. They would then be in a position to obtain a greater income, which would mean that they would have a greater amount of money to spend and provide continuous employment.

Mr. W. T. KING: Why did you not do that when you were in power?

Mr. MOORE: We did as much as we could. We provided a greater proportion out of the amount of money available for this purpose than is being made available to-day. That is not the question. One must learn from experience. I think it will be generally recognised that if money is spent in a way that will enable more commodities to be produced, or that will bring about a reduction in the cost of production by enabling the commodities to be placed on the market at a lesser cost, the people will have a greater opportunity to meet their obligation and will thereby be in a better position to provide employment than if the money were merely expended in creating jobs. Most of the loan money that is being expended to-day is expended for the purpose of creating jobs. We can borrow money and create jobs, but that policy must surely end. We should consider how best to spend the money with a view to providing a greater earning capacity from the land, either by way of reduced costs or in enabling products to be placed on the markets at a lesser cost so that the people will be able to meet their obligations. But what are we doing to-day? We are certainly placing the obligations upon the people, but instead of giving them an opportunity to meet their obligations in a more efficient way we are depriving them of their existing opportunities, and we are doing it with the certain knowledge that the action we are taking will eventually lead to greater taxation being imposed upon them in the future. What we are actually doing to-day is reducing their opportunities to meet their obligations, and that policy is an entirely wrong one.

Mr. FOLEY: Who is going to consume all this increased production?

Mr. MOORE: The whole of our production could be sold to-day, but our only trouble is that the cost of production is too high. If we can sell our produce at a price the consumption is unlimited, but we are merely trying to maintain a standard of living that the rest of the world cannot afford to maintain. If we continue to do this we shall reduce our overseas market further and further, and eventually lock ourselves out. That is the difficulty. We have to recognise that we cannot carry on that policy indefinitely. We are only burking the position to-day. Eventually it will have to be

faced by some Government, who will either have to economise very drastically or repudiate our indebtedness. There is no other way out, if the present policy is continued.

Unless the Government are going to spend loan money in channels which will enable people to increase their earning capacity, we are definitely, and with our eyes open, going towards that goal. That is entirely wrong. We have no right to place ourselves in that position. We should say that we are going to face the position as it exists, however much we may dislike doing so. We should expend our loan money in directions having for their objective the development of the country and the reduction of producing costs in order to bridge the gap between the primary and secondary industries, in order to enable the people to meet their obligations. Such a policy will lead us towards a solution more surely than the present policy of the Government. This is a policy which must be recognised eventually. The policy of the Government is the gambler's throw. They are gambling in the hope that some untoward circumstance may arise, or some action may be taken in some other parts of the world by which the prices for the produce we grow will be increased. And all the experience of the past goes to show that we are gambling on something which is not at all likely to take place. Our chances in that direction are only one in 10,000. Of course, it may be done by a policy of inflation, under which an attempt may be made to deceive the people that their purchasing power is not being reduced, but in the end we shall have to get down to the basis of living within our income—we cannot keep on borrowing to make up the difference between what we earn and what we think we should have. We are not doing so to-day, and I cannot see that the position will get any better till we do. The discrimination and other methods we are adopting in attempting to solve our unemployment problem are creating a very difficult position, and a wider gap between the earnings of the people in the country and what the people in the towns are endeavouring to secure. Consequently, the position is getting worse and worse, and all the time our expenditure is increasing, and that increase is destroying any possibility of a reduction in taxation.

From that point of view the amount of money we are asked to pass is, of course, wrong. If I could see that this amount of loan money could be spent on developmental work, not on buildings or on something for which the people will have to pay increased taxes, such as water and sewerage schemes, but on objects that would increase production, we should be able to get somewhere; under the present policy I cannot see any way out.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [7.21 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition quoted a rather extraordinary letter in relation to unemployment relief. I have already indicated, but will do so again, that if he gives me the information at his disposal, I will have the case fully investigated. No relieving officer is clothed with any authority to take the finger prints of an applicant for relief. If such were done the action was entirely illegal. Only people who have been arrested for an

offence have their finger prints taken. Therefore, if anything of the nature complained of was done, it was a violation of every principle of administration, and was done entirely without the authority of the Government or the Department of Labour and Industry. If the Leader of the Opposition will give me his correspondence, I will see that the matter is thoroughly investigated.

Everyone realises that unemployment relief work presents difficulties. That was stated in Parliament when the scheme was first instituted. The Moore Government imposed special taxation and started relief works on which men were to get an amount equivalent to sustenance in return for certain duties. The basis of that scheme was the Pauline doctrine—that if a man did not work neither should he eat. From that basis the scheme started a few years ago by the Moore Government has continued and extended in countless different directions. No one can put forward relief work as being a sound method of dealing with this economic question. As a matter of fact, it of itself creates further problems.

Nothing could be more tragic than the spectacle of an unemployed relief worker becoming content with being a relief worker. That would be a national tragedy, and is to be guarded against. Yet, recognising that danger, the Leader of the Opposition advocates that certain conditions should be given to the man on the land which, in effect, would result in extending the principle which, in the first instance, he condemned. Obviously, a farmer may require relief for a period. If a man has a farm with security of tenure he at least has shelter—one of the first elements in human existence. If he requires relief owing to failure of his crops from drought or any other cause, then he only requires temporary assistance. A renewal of good seasons puts him right, and he returns to his normal employment as a man tilling the soil and working as a farmer. He is not in the same category as the artisan or the labourer who has neither property nor anything else but has only his labour power to sell. There is a basic difference between the two cases. The scheme of relief granted in country centres is availed of, I believe, only in extreme cases. But if we are to adopt the principle that any farmer or anyone else who earns in any one week less than the basic wage should get payments bringing his receipts up to the equivalent of the basic wage, then we shall have a nation composed of people taxing each other in order that all may live. The position has only to be stated in that way to demonstrate the basic absurdity of the case put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

On the question of unemployment generally, I assert that the State cannot give employment to all its people. That could only be accomplished if all the land and all the instruments of industry were owned and controlled by the State, in which event a scheme could probably be devised of orderly development within the State, orderly production, and the control of that production for the use of the people. That would be complete collectivism under a form of State control, and under circumstances such that the land and the instruments of industry were controlled by the people through their elected representatives, the production

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of collectivist labour could be equitably distributed. But while land and the instruments of industry are controlled by private individuals and used by them in any manner they think fit and proper, then if unemployment results the State must come to the aid of those people who are unemployed and enable them to live. No Government can remain inactive in the face of a state of affairs in which people would starve through the want of employment and the consequent lack of earning power—the State must give them aid and provide relief. To the extent of its resources the State must find employment for the people and so provide a counterpoise to the evils brought about by the breakdown of the system of private enterprise, whether it be temporary or permanent. The existing crisis is not a crisis of collectivism; it is a crisis in a world in which private enterprise is the basis of public economy. That fact cannot be gainsaid, and while that crisis continues to exist the State must endeavour to use its resources to provide relief for people and employment to the greatest possible extent. Every Government in Australia, every Government throughout the world that is making any progress with the position is adopting the same method, and it is rather astounding to find a Nationalist Party adopting their present attitude after having supported the Nationalist Government in the Federal sphere. Only last week that Government came into the arena of loan expenditure and proposed somehow in some indefinite fashion to assist re-employment work in the States—for which an expenditure of £5,000,000 has been approved by the Loan Council. So that the inexorable logic of the position has been at last impressed upon the Commonwealth Government, who have to some extent recognised their responsibility in the matter. What the future will hold is yet to be demonstrated. I take the view that with the dual system of taxation and the intrusion of the Commonwealth into the State arena in countless different ways, the central Government must assume some responsibility in regard to unemployment relief or the problem of the re-employment of the people.

Mr. FADDEN: On account of tax-free loans?

The TREASURER: The question of tax-free loans has no bearing really on the matter of employment that we are now discussing.

Mr. FADDEN: It is eating into your revenue.

The TREASURER: A case may be put forward for not making such exemptions, and I know and thoroughly understand that case; but I am not going to be drawn off my subject by any side issue, such as a detail in connection with a loan issue, when I am dealing with the major problem of employment—which is the only problem that confronts society to-day. It is the problem of civilisation itself; and if a form of society continues in which a growing number of adults and youths are to be denied employment in the normal avenues of industry, then a graver situation will develop in all Governments and States. That is how I regard it.

Under the present conditions the Government are doing what is necessary and possible, and what they are doing is sound. As I pointed out in the Budget, it is a remark-

able thing that funds can always be found for armaments. No matter how apparently bankrupt countries may be, immediately there is a question of providing armaments money is found. If it was a question of war, funds would be found to engage in that war, yet immediately a Government, in defence of the livelihood of their own people, in defence of their economic wellbeing propose to borrow money for the purpose of developing the State and providing work, their action is condemned by hon. members opposite. The whole position only needs to be stated in that fashion to show how ridiculous the attitude of the Opposition is.

During the Budget debate and the discussion on the Estimates we found critic after critic rising in his place and dealing with the various points of the Estimates, not only from the point of view of his own electorate but all the time from the point of view of political expediency and the desire to gain party advantage. I say very definitely, and with all the sincerity of which I am capable, that unemployment is a national question that affects every individual in the community, and can only be dealt with in a national way; and no party is true to this country that will exploit the unfortunate for the sake of gaining a few miserable votes.

The money necessary for the carrying out of our loan proposals is to be spent in the development of this country. All the works on which the money is being spent are improving the State assets, and are works that would have to be done anyhow. During a period when cheap money is available it is good business to engage in such a policy. In addition, it is providing the maximum amount of employment for our people. The loan programme we are engaged upon is sound from a developmental point of view. It is sound economically, inasmuch as it provides assets to the State and gives national way; and no party is true to this country in the doing of work which is of national value.

The member for Kennedy was most amusing in the speech that he delivered. The sword-bearer of the Leader of the Opposition again wielded his painted lathe. He gave us an interesting lecture on what might be described as the principles of book-keeping. He told us how the public accounts should be managed, how they should be set out, and so on and so forth—all of which no doubt is very interesting. I could lecture, and so could the hon. member for Toowong, about a scheme of decoration for this Chamber different from what it is. I could speak for half-an-hour about the beauty of those walls if carried out in shades of buff rather than in shades of green, but the facts would remain the same, and the walls and the form of the structure would be the same. And so it is in keeping public accounts. We may elaborate on the forms of these public accounts, but that would not add one penny to the final figures in the Treasury. It would neither add to the revenue nor decrease it. While it is valuable as a side issue, and perhaps as a means of speaking interestingly for a few minutes, it has no real bearing on the case we are dealing with, nor does it impinge in any way on the life of the community.

The hon. member also complained that loan expenditure was not having the result that is claimed for it, and he quoted the

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increasing revenue from the unemployed relief tax to support his argument. The hon. member appeared again to fall into error, this time of confusing revenue with expenditure. In an endeavour to bolster up his case he said that, although revenue had increased, no increase in employment had been effected.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, if revenue from unemployment taxation is increased it means that more people are earning salaries and wages. Unemployment taxation is an income tax without any form of exemption, and as that revenue becomes correspondingly buoyant it is evident that an increasing number of people are employed and an increasing amount of wages and salaries is earned. As a matter of fact, the diminution in expenditure on account of unemployment relief for the first four months of the financial year is £58,000.

The hon. member does not believe his own argument, for having in the first instance claimed that employment was not being increased, he concluded his speech on the note that because things were becoming better and revenue more buoyant, unemployment relief taxation should be reduced. That indeed is the position we are rapidly approaching. As the state of the finances improves, as employment increases, obviously taxation will be reduced; and unemployment relief tax will be the first that will be reduced.

He then proceeded to condemn a method of dealing with a certain form of land revenue. He reminded me of the story of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; we know what happened to him. The hon. member condemned certain forms of finance, but, unfortunately, he has found himself associated with a party that has dealt with him as the thieves did to the traveller from Jerusalem. The criticism that he levelled against the present Government is a criticism of the Government of which he was a supporter and of a policy for which every member of his party then in Parliament voted. I wish to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, and the attention of the House to a Bill introduced in 1931, where this method was adopted.

I quote section 50 of an Act introduced by the hon. member for Cunningham, then Secretary for Public Lands. Section 50 (5) (c) reads as follows:—

“Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act or law to the contrary—

(a) The Special Trust Account, designated as ‘The Closer Settlements Trust Account,’ constituted pursuant to ‘The Closer Settlements Act of 1906’ (and which account includes any Special Trust Account pursuant to the provisions of section 3 of the said lastmentioned Act) is hereby, and shall for all purposes, be determined, and the said account is and shall be closed, and the debit balance of such account, as at the thirtieth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-one, shall be transferred to and be debited to the Loan Fund Account; and the provisions of this paragraph shall for all purposes be deemed to have come into operation as at thirtieth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-one, and shall

have retrospective operation accordingly;

(b) From and after the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-one, all moneys received for rent, survey fees, or purchase money in respect of land selected and forming part of any estate acquired pursuant to the Closer Settlements Act which, but for the provisions of this paragraph would have been paid into the Closer Settlements Trust Account, shall be paid into and shall form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund: Moreover, all such payments made into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, from and after the said first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-one, are hereby approved, ratified, and validated, and the provisions of this paragraph shall have retrospective application accordingly.”

That is the section introduced by the party and put on the statute-book by the party which now criticises the method they themselves initiated.

Mr. FADDEN: Stop it.

The TREASURER: Stop it? The hon. member who has been appointed the financial critic for the Opposition cannot laugh it off in that fashion. He made a blunder of major political importance during his speech and in attempting to pass it off in the manner he is doing he cannot obliterate the fact that his criticism is not a criticism of the Labour Government but a splendid condemnation of the methods of the Moore Government and of the man who was at that time Premier. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The TREASURER: This is what I said when the Bill was before the House—

“This clause is another remarkable evidence of the methods of an impecunious Treasurer. I mentioned some time ago when that remarkable Bill was introduced by the Secretary for Railways which contained a new system of accountancy that the hon. gentleman should prepare a new set of text-books for the political neophytes who supported him. The Treasurer, evidently jealous of the prominence the Secretary for Railways received on that occasion, has adopted new methods for himself under this clause. Under this clause he proposes to close the Closer Settlements Trust Account and transfer the debit to the Loan Fund Account. In other words, he proposes to transfer the debit to the national debt, and, like the illustrious Micawber, he says to himself, ‘Thank God that is paid.’ He then, in his inimitable fashion, proposes that all future revenue from this source shall be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The purchase money in respect of the sale of land, survey fees, inspection fees, and every other form of revenue which may come into the Department of Public Lands shall now be paid into the consolidated revenue in the year the payments are made, and shall be regarded as revenue. This is a proposition which should not be agreed to by any Parliament. It means that the sale of capital is being treated as revenue. I believe the Treasurer is interested in a number

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of companies, and he knows that, if those companies disposed of any of their capital assets and paid the receipts into revenue while maintaining their old capitalisation, such action would be regarded as fraud under the Companies Act.

"The disposal of land is obviously the disposal of capital. The assets of Queensland are obviously the land and everything the land contains, and the industry of the people applied to those resources. That is the security that is offered when the Government float a loan. It is the basis of all forms of national security and the basis of all our State assets: yet the Treasurer in this remarkable clause, in his desire to get into his clutching hand every penny that is handled by every Government department, says that in future all those things shall be regarded as revenue and shall be treated as such."

That is a sound condemnation of the methods that were adopted by the Moore Government. It is interesting to note that those methods are also condemned by the hon. member for Kennedy, but before lecturing this Parliament or this Government on what he considers to be sound forms of finance he should endeavour to instruct some of his own colleagues who perpetrated the very deed to which he now objects. Of course, the hon. member entirely overlooked the fact that it was the Moore Government, and not the present Government, that were in power in 1931. (Government laughter.)

He also raised the question of the Bowen coke ovens. That is one of the most disastrous activities ever commenced by the Moore Government. Everything the hon. member for Kennedy said in that regard was a condemnation of the Moore Government and their methods. Much more could be said on this question, but I am prepared to agree with his condemnation of the Moore Government as to the initiation of this enterprise and the disastrous agreement that they entered into with the Mount Isa Company. The whole enterprise is on an illegal basis. In the first place the Moore Government sold the existing State enterprises—in many cases gave them away. They depreciated the value of the assets in every possible way and then sold them at a breakdown valuation. Then they provided by means of legislation that no new State enterprises should be established, but having done that they commenced a new State enterprise by the establishment of the Bowen coke ovens. That State enterprise was started by the Moore Government, and it followed a Cabinet decision. Cabinet decisions are noted on the relevant papers, and the then Secretary for Mines in collaboration with the then Treasurer was the man who gave effect to that policy. I believe that if ovens should be built they should be built where the coal is mined. It takes approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  tons of coal to make a ton of coke, so why carry  $\frac{1}{2}$  tons for the purpose of manufacturing 1 ton? That query in itself condemns the location of these ovens. They should have been constructed beside the coal deposits so that the extra haulage could be saved. The most disastrous thing in the whole venture was the agreement made by the then Secretary for Mines—with the approval of Cabinet—with the Mount Isa Company. Upon the

Mount Isa Company's undertaking to purchase a given amount of coke per annum, the then Government undertook to supply it with coke at 10 per cent. above the cost of production, with a maximum price of 35s. per ton.

The most important feature of the agreement is the maximum price chargeable—that is, 35s. per ton. The agreement lasts for a period of five years from the time it was entered upon. No investigation in an economic way was made on the question of the site. No thorough investigation was made as to the advisability of starting that enterprise at all. The Moore Government simply rushed blindly into the activity without thorough investigation, with the result that we see in the position that now obtains. When we took office the Secretary for Mines investigated the position and explained it to Cabinet. We all saw that it was a bad deal, but having regard to the principle of the inviolability of Crown contracts we had to carry on, complete the work, and supply the coke. The only alternative was to repudiate a Crown contract. We do not propose to repudiate a Crown contract. We believe in the principle of the inviolability of contracts entered into by the Crown, and, therefore, we have to carry it out for a period of five years. That disastrous arrangement was made by the Moore Government. Everything said by the hon. member for Kennedy to-day and everything said by the hon. member for Isis yesterday was a condemnation, not of the present Government, but of the methods adopted by the Moore Government in relation to activities of this kind.

The position is being thoroughly investigated, and so far as possible costs will be reduced. The first year is naturally the most expensive year for running any enterprise. Ovens built of brick must be handled carefully, and consequently their efficiency was less in the early stages than they will be later on. Owing to the stoppage of operations at Mount Isa and the consequent closure of the mine for a period the output was lessened, but it is to be hoped that by methods adopted by the Secretary for Mines the output will be better for the future. The basic fact remains, that there was no justification for starting the enterprise at all, and no justification for starting it in the method it was started, and the terms of the contract entered into cannot be too strongly condemned by everyone who has investigated them.

Our policy in relation to unemployment has resulted in the greatest reduction of unemployment of all the States. The number of unemployed in Queensland in 1932 was 38,320, whilst in August, 1934, the number had been reduced to 25,360. The percentage of unemployment was reduced from 22.2 in 1932 to 14.2 in August, 1934. The percentage was further reduced for the quarter July to September, 1934, to 11.4. By comparison with the other States Queensland shows the greatest reduction in unemployment, the percentages of which, according to the Commonwealth Statistician, are as follows:—

	Per cent.
Queensland ... ..	11.4
New South Wales ... ..	24.5
Victoria ... ..	17.5
South Australia ... ..	25.4
Western Australia ... ..	17.2
Tasmania ... ..	18.9

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

Those figures indicate very clearly that not only has Queensland the lowest amount of unemployment of all the States but that it has had the greatest reduction of unemployment over the last three years. Hon. members condemn Labour policy, not because there is anything wrong with the policy, but because of its continued success.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: They hope by their continual reiteration and misrepresentation of the real facts to convert some people to their cause. They hope, with the assistance of the majority of the newspapers throughout the country, to get people to believe these things; yet all the facts of the position to-day indicate very clearly that the attitude taken up by the Labour Government is the only sound attitude that can be taken up in all the circumstances. We are condemned, not because of the alleged failure of our policy, but because of its continued success.

Another satisfactory feature of the Labour policy is the result in reference to interest. During their term of office the Moore Government showed callous brutality towards the wage-earning section of the community, repudiating every pledge made to the people who regarded them as honourable men and exhibiting the greatest activity in reducing wages and worsening the conditions of the workers. When in Opposition we pointed out that if economies had to be effected, the economies should be effected all round, and as interest was the wages of capital a progressive reduction in the interest rate should be adopted. The Labour Party in Queensland made the first declaration of policy in this regard. Speaking on behalf of this party at Morningside in 1930, I made the announcement that in the economic rehabilitation of Australia it was necessary that interest rates be reduced, and that public moneys be obtained at a lower rate of interest. The following information regarding public issues by the Commonwealth Government in Australia will show the extent to which the policy of the Labour Government has had an effect in the councils of the nation:—

PUBLIC ISSUES BY THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA (FOR COMMONWEALTH AND STATES).

Date of Issue.	Rate of Interest. Per cent.	Issue Price.	Return to Investor. Per cent.
November, 1929	5½	98	£ s. d. 5 14 4
June, 1930	6	100	6 0 0
November, 1932	3½	100	3 15 0
May, 1933	3½	100	3 15 0
November, 1933	3½	99	3 12 5
June, 1934	3½	98½	3 7 9

It will be seen that the effect of Labour policy has been progressively to reduce the interest burden, enabling public works to be undertaken and public development to be carried out during a period when money is less costly than was formerly the case.

The same story can be told in relation to Treasury bill accommodation, where the following position is disclosed:—

TREASURY BILLS.

DISCOUNT RATES.

	Per cent.
1st January, 1931 ... ..	6
1st July, 1931 ... ..	4
1st January, 1932 ... ..	4
1st July, 1932 ... ..	4
1st January, 1933 ... ..	3½
1st July, 1933 ... ..	2½
1st January, 1934 ... ..	2½
1st July, 1934 ... ..	2½
15th October, 1934 ... ..	2

Again, we see the result of Labour policy in the progressive reduction of the interest burden!

When dealing with these questions hon. members opposite are either ignorant of the facts or desire to withhold the information from the public, for it is noteworthy that in discussing these matters they fail to deal with the whole of the facts. The policy being pursued by the various Governments in relation to loan and Treasury bill accommodation is providing employment for the reserve funds held by the banks throughout the Commonwealth. The statement is frequently made by hon. members opposite from Tory platforms that the associated banks have saved Australia. As a matter of fact, this method of investment of the surplus funds held in the banks on behalf of depositors in Australia has been an important means of maintaining the solvency of the banks, so that the Labour policy of providing funds to give work to unemployed men at normal rates is giving employment not only to human labour but to the capital available in Australia that would otherwise be idle.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [7.59 p.m.]: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hardly think it is worth while the hon. member commencing his speech when he has only a minute to go.

Mr. NIMMO: I think it is worth while, Mr. Speaker. The Treasurer has a habit of making wild statements when no possibility exists of a reply being made from this side of the Chamber. The hon. gentleman indulged in a speech which really is a misrepresentation. For instance, with regard to interest rates, the Treasurer knows perfectly well that he had nothing to do with the reduction of interest rates in Australia, and I object to his making a statement in this Parliament that he is responsible for reducing interest rates from 6 per cent. to 3½ per cent. We have had the spectacle of this Bill passing through Parliament and no opportunity being given to members on this side of the House to discuss the main purpose for which the money will be used—the relief of unemployment. No opportunity has been given to discuss the greatest problem confronting the country. The Government are simply trying to bolster up their own case. On the eve of an election members on this side of the Chamber have had no opportunity of saying whether that unemployment can be relieved or not.

Mr. Nimmo.]



At 8 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 29th August last, I shall now proceed to put the question.

Question—"That the Bill be now read a second time" (*Mr. Smith's motion*)—put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Hanson, Buranda, in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule, and preamble agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 8.5 p.m.