

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 1935

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WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 1935.

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

QUESTIONS.

EXEMPTIONS FROM UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF TAX.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"1. Is it correct, as stated in the Press, that in future gangers, leading hands, draymen, and clerical assistants engaged on intermittent relief work earning up to £3 2s. a week are to be exempted from payment of unemployment relief tax?

"2. If so, will he consider the advisability of exempting other sections of the community earning not more than the same income, including primary producers?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. M. P. Hynes, *Townsville*) replied—

"1. The wages of the workers mentioned are not exempted from relief tax, but it has been decided that the tax payable will be borne by the department for these classes—as has been done previously with respect to all intermittent relief workers receiving less than the amount mentioned.

"2. The intention of the Government in this regard will be disclosed when the Bill to amend the Income (Unemployment Relief) Tax Act is before the House."

SALE OF ASSETS OF SUB-DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FRASER ISLAND.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. In reference to tenders, which closed on 31st July last, for the purchase of tramline, locomotive, trucks, scrap iron, tools, etc., on Fraser Island—(a) how many tenders were received; (b) what was the name of the successful tenderer; and (c) what was the amount of the successful tender?"

"2. When did the Government purchase these assets, from whom, and at what price?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) replied—

"1. (a) Two tenders received; (b) Abrahams and Williams; (c) £1 per ton for rails on site and £10 for tools.

"2. (a) 1926; (b) H. M. McKenzie (Queensland), Limited; (c) £5,000."

PAPERS.

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

Fourteenth Report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Government Inscribed Stock.

Fiftieth Report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Stock.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulation, dated 29th August, 1935, under "The Navigation Acts, 1876 to 1930."

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Question stated—

"That the following Address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this the first session of the twenty-seventh Parliament of Queensland:—

'May it please Your Excellency,—

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

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

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [10.36 a.m.]: I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being again elected to the honourable office of Speaker of this House. I also congratulate you on the excellent work that has been carried out in this House under your regime, work that has made it much brighter, and improved the general conditions affecting members in this building. One may also say the Parliament of to-day is certainly a little brighter and probably a little more intelligent than the Parliament of a few years ago. That being so, one may at least be excused for expecting the surroundings to be in harmony with the attempts made by the legislators to give full consideration to the requirements of the State.

I was pleased to note the optimism displayed by His Excellency and his advisers in presenting the policy of the Government for this session. No doubt there has been a little improvement in the general condition of things in the State of Queensland during the past year or two. The Governor, during the course of his tours, would no doubt notice the improved confidence of the people. He would also notice that the general outlook of the working class in the North, for example, was vastly different from the outlook they displayed during tours by the Governor made during the regime of the party now in Opposition. Yet, although we have reached a certain stage in the forward march, and are able to record a definite improvement in our development, it may nevertheless be necessary at this juncture to say that conditions may be improved more materially in the near future than they have been during the past two or three years. There is no doubt that confidence is returning and the outlook caused by the Moore Government is disappearing from the minds of the people. A general improvement is evident in the business circles of the city of Brisbane and generally throughout the State. The conditions that govern finance militate against any great advance; but the actions of the Government during the past three

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years have created a general desire amongst the business people to improve the conditions of their undertakings. No doubt, that has been due to the loan programme and the general policy to which the Government has given effect during that period. The Australasian Insurance and Banking Record contains statements on the position in Queensland that indicate a decided improvement in tone, and this publication can be taken as a very reliable guide. It contains indications that the firms in Brisbane, particularly the larger firms such as Finney Isles Limited, McWhirters Limited, and McDonnell and East Limited, whose shares on the Stock Exchange during the past twelve months have shown a decided improvement, have been able to pay dividends to their shareholders at the rate of 8 per cent. to 10 per cent.; whilst firms such as Engineering Supply Company of Australia Limited have been able to pay dividends of 3 per cent. Of the firms in the North, Cairns Timber Limited has been able to pay a dividend of 8 per cent., whilst the Millaquin Sugar Proprietary Company Limited, in Bundaberg, has also been able to pay one of 3 per cent. That is cogent evidence that the conditions of business generally in Queensland are improving. It also proves to some extent that the confidence inspired by the administration of a Labour Government has been of direct benefit in dispelling the gloomy outlook that the citizens of the State had acquired during the term of those hon. members who are now sitting in the cold shades of opposition.

One of the problems facing us is to ensure a continuation of the progressive conditions of the past two or three years. In that connection I desire to place before this House the endeavour made by the Labour Government during the past twelve months to make provision for land settlers. It is obvious to everyone that in a country such as Australia, the whole of the country's population cannot be provided for in the city, and that, therefore, greater provision has to be made for closer settlement on the land. The greater the provision in this respect the greater will be the progress and advancement of Queensland. An adequate scheme of land settlement will provide, at least, homes for those who undertake to select the opened areas. The Department of Public Lands has done a fair amount of work in opening up new areas and in providing the necessary road facilities. The Public Estate Improvement Branch has expended a considerable amount of money for this latter class of work, and incidentally this has provided work for a certain number of the unemployed.

After all, this finding of work for our unfortunate unemployed is one of our major problems. No doubt hon. members of the Opposition benches will argue that in some industries there is a tendency to over-produce, but I would remind them that such over-production can be counteracted by the establishment of a more effective home market. This can be done by the employment of greater numbers in our industrial centres, so that the primary producers will have a stable market for their products. Until that is done the problem of placing the unemployed in remunerative work cannot be finally solved. The closer settlement of our country districts and the greater production of our

primary products must mean that markets will have to be found, and in this respect the efforts of the Government should be augmented by those of private enterprise in establishing or enlarging secondary industries, giving employment to greater numbers in the industrial centres. By this means there would be an increased purchasing power to cope with the increased productivity of the land. It was only yesterday that His Excellency stated that Queensland had nothing to fear by way of increased production, and Australia generally and the respective States should tackle the problem of enlarging our trade in the markets in the near East. Of course, that is a problem for the National Government. The 6,000,000 people inhabiting Australia, and of that number the million people, approximately, within the borders of Queensland, are not sufficient to provide markets for the settlers of the primary-producing areas. It is for that reason that I say one of the major problems facing us is being very effectively handled at the present time by the Department of Lands—the catering for those people who desire to settle on the land and become primary producers.

That department is also to be commended for its very excellent work in the timber industry. Last session I informed the House that the journey I made to the North in company with the Secretary for Public Lands afforded me an opportunity of inspecting some of the timber areas in their virgin state, particularly that at Cooktown. The possibilities of the timber industry have given me very much food for thought. I am pleased to say that, through the actions of the Sub-Department of Forestry, that industry to-day is returning to the State of Queensland revenue in excess of that which was estimated when the project was started. In addition employment is given not only to the men in the industry, but also to those engaged in the transport side of it. There again is evidence of the good work being done to solve the general problem of unemployment in Queensland. In July of this year I had occasion to visit a sawmill at Maryborough, in company with other members on this side of the House, and we saw the industry working under the most up-to-date conditions of any mill in Queensland. Moreover, the mill was working two shifts, whereas a few years ago it was not working even half time. That again shows that the policy of the Government in regard to the forestry and timber industries has conferred a boon and benefit on the workers and the people of Queensland as a whole. I do not wish to be taken to say that the cutting down of all our timber within a given period would materially assist the future. On the other hand, side by side with the cutting of such matured trees as are needed to meet the requirements of the timber industry, the policy of the Sub-Department of Forestry embraces the replanting of one or two trees of a similar nature to every tree removed, so that the future timber requirements of the State are being very excellently provided for.

I desire to deal also with another industry of great value to Queensland—one that for a number of years was slipping back into a state of despondency—that is, the mining industry. For forty or forty-five years

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the Commonwealth, and Queensland in particular, considered it to be one of their three major industries. Owing to the fact that many of the fields had been depleted to the point where the ore remaining was not of a payable order, people who otherwise might have desired to invest in mining would not put their cash into any of the ventures that appeared to be available in the State. We see now a decided rise in the price of gold, giving a fillip to mining activities, and the development of lower grade ores, which are to-day proving of very great value to the State. This advance in mining activities was greatly accelerated by the Department of Mines, which gave effect to the Government's policy of making grants to prospectors. I hope that the Estimates will not disclose any curtailment in this expenditure. The money that has been spent in giving assistance to genuine prospectors and miners has been more than amply repaid by the increased gold yield that has resulted during the past twelve months. Queensland has been raised again to the position of the second largest gold producer in the Commonwealth. With the aid of prospecting grants provided by the Government experienced miners from the comparatively worked out fields at Mount Morgan, Charters Towers, and elsewhere were able to seek fresh fields and pastures new, and, to use a mining term, were grub-staked by the State in their search for new wealth. The increased gold yield thus comes as a result of very welcome assistance extended by the State to the prospector. Again, the Mount Isa field was assisted by the Government to the extent of £500,000 last year. This timely aid enabled the company to continue its operations and to employ a large body of men who, with their families, would otherwise have been compelled to leave the field. It was preferable for the Government to extend consideration in this direction than be saddled with the cost of transferring hundreds of employees and their families to other centres, probably only to be maintained on the dole. These are things that have been achieved by the Government in the interest of the mining industry and cannot be adversely criticised by hon. members opposite.

Coming to the magnificent effort made by the Government through the Department of Public Works, one is forcibly reminded how utterly futile was the criticism by hon. members opposite of the loan programme of the Government. Consider for a moment the benefits enjoyed by the people solely as a result of the activities of the Department of Public Works in building construction! Undoubtedly during the past year the Government, through this department have given a definite lead to private enterprise, and in this connection one has only to consider the improvement in building activities throughout this and other cities. Still, much remains to be done even in this connection, and whilst congratulating the Government upon their very splendid effort to ameliorate the privations of the people I take this opportunity to suggest to them that a new Supreme Court is urgently required in Brisbane, and that the present is an opportune time for its construction. One has only to visit the offices of the clerk of petty sessions to transact the ordinary business that falls to the lot of a member of Parliament to appreciate just how overcrowded, insanitary, and inconvenient they

are. Why, I do not think that there is any public office in any State in Australia that is so inadequate and so inconvenient as the clerk of petty sessions office in the city of Brisbane. I believe that in view of the considerable amount of revenue derived by the Government through this office the expenditure upon the construction of a new clerk of petty sessions office and a new Supreme Court would be more than justified. The Supreme Court is one of the dowdiest public buildings in the city. I strongly impress upon the Government that the time has arrived when consideration should be given to the construction of a new Supreme Court. I also urge that earnest consideration be given to a reorganisation in the administration of justice. I suggest the establishment of a separate Children's Court and separate portions of the buildings for the hearing of criminal and civil cases. Such a building would be an asset to the city, and with the removal of the staff of the Commissioner for Railways to their new and up-to-date offices in Anzac Square the city could be still further beautified by a continuation of Adelaide street through to North Quay. The building programme that I have suggested would not only provide a fair amount of employment for a couple of years upon the actual construction of the buildings but also useful work in subsidiary industries in the quarrying of stone and in the transport of this and other materials to the job. Generally speaking, it would be good economics for the Government.

In conjunction with the decision of Cabinet to build a new University at St. Lucia some consideration should be given to an extension of the technical side of education by an improvement in the Central Technical College buildings and equipment. If the site on which the present University building is situated is not required for University purposes then the Government should give consideration to an extension of the Central Technical College buildings in that direction. The present buildings and equipment of the college will not be of very great value five or six years hence. With a growing population and a steadily increasing desire on the part of parents to have their children taught the arts and sciences, it will be necessary for the Government to give serious consideration to an expansion along the lines I have suggested.

The question again arises of a further extension of the roads programme of the Main Roads Commission. I listened yesterday with amusement to the criticism of hon. members opposite of the policy of the Government in transferring £250,000 from the Main Roads Fund to consolidated revenue. They contended that this money should be used for road construction purposes. When one takes into consideration the amount of work that has been done by the Main Roads Commission, together with the road construction carried out by the Public Estate Improvement Branch of the Department of Public Lands, one can come to no other conclusion than that the taxpayer has already received value for his money spent in that direction. Some consideration should be given to connecting the various railheads by a system of main roads. I do not consider that their linking by connecting railway lines would be of very great value. The work would be too costly, and in this era of flying machines and internal

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combustion engines transport by rail would not prove to be a great success. Some provision can be made for the squatters in the West by the construction of a decent main road that will enable them to transport their stock in dry seasons by motor vehicles in areas where no railway operates. As a result of the continued activities of the Main Roads Commission our roads are becoming a very valuable asset. When one considers the expansion in the last two years, especially during the last year, of the main roads programme, one can only come to the conclusion that the people are receiving full benefit from the fees and taxes paid by owners of motor vehicles. The continuation of the main Northern highway will ultimately result in providing a motor road from Brisbane to Cairns and probably Cooktown.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Not probably!

Mr. TAYLOR: Well, we will say that we hope the road will be extended to Cooktown. Consideration is also required of the necessity for the construction of an inland main road to the North in addition to the main Northern highway. There has been constructed through Mount Mee the commencement of what will eventually become the Northern highway. We all admit that a main coastal road is necessary, but we are also forced to admit that a main Northern highway through the inland parts of this State, connecting also the towns of the North and North-West, is equally necessary.

That, I believe, is a programme of whose value the Government are fully cognisant, I feel sure they will give effect to it as time goes on. It would bring to this State that happy excellence of transport facilities that one meets in Victoria and New South Wales. It is very necessary that the Main Roads Commission should continue to expand its road policy and thereby give to the country settlers, at any rate, more roads of the class it is building to-day.

I wish to deal with the question of the lack of an industrial programme in the Governor's Speech. I was somewhat disappointed that the Speech did not contain some reference to an industrial programme relating to hours and conditions. Whilst I realise that the Industrial Court is the body to prescribe conditions and hours, I realise also that it is the policy of a Labour Government at least to indicate to the industrial workers of the State just where they stand on questions of industrial policy. I claim that the time has arrived when we must declare definitely that the working conditions and hours that have been operating in this State for the past half century cannot be allowed to continue. We must seriously consider the reduction of the working week. In support of that view it is only necessary for me to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that only last week a demonstration was given in the canefields in the vicinity of Bundaberg of a cane-cutting machine. That is a very significant factor in connection with labour in the canefields. No doubt the efficiency of that machine will be improved and the time may not be far distant when we shall see a complete revision of the labour conditions in regard to canecutting. The employment of machinery for this purpose would decrease the number of canecutters. That phase of the development of machinery is apparent throughout secondary and productive industries gener-

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ally. It is therefore incumbent upon us to concentrate on the problem of providing for the men who are thus thrown on the scrap-heap. The machine is displacing the man. Instead of being used by the individual for his own benefit it is making a slave of him, for the benefit of the employer who owns it. That is giving rise to world-wide unrest, and brings us to the point where we, as a Government representing the working class people of this State, must declare our industrial policy and legislate accordingly. I claim that the Industrial Court, constituted as it is to-day, is rather like a ship cumbered with barnacles. It is too slow and too cumbersome, and it does not seem able to get down to the problem of giving effect to industrial legislation as it should. There is no doubt that every direct benefit that has been secured to the workers by the court has been first won by them—forced as a concession from the employers on the industrial battlefield. That should not continue to be the policy of the court at a time when every economist and every other person who understands industrial conditions recognise the need for action—and action of a character that will eliminate the present industrial conditions. There is no doubt the time has arrived when awards covering secondary industries operated by machines should provide for the employees a working week of forty hours, if not of thirty-six hours. It is my firm belief that the forty-hour working week will have to be generally applied within this State during the next year or so, particularly in those industries where machine power is displacing man power. The Industrial Court should also take into consideration the present cost of living as compared with that of two or three years ago. In two years rent has increased by 33½ per cent. The price of meat has gone up approximately 50 per cent. Consideration should be given to employees as to wages and other conditions at the time when that consideration will be of some benefit; it should not be left until such time as the employees have to draw forceful attention to their requirements, usually with the result of a series of industrial disputes. The Industrial Court should move with greater rapidity than it has in the past if it is desirous of avoiding a recurrence of the present position in the North.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: The next matter with which I desire to deal is the need for a Milk Act for the city of Brisbane. The Government would show their wisdom by the introduction of such a measure at the present time. Brisbane is the only city in Australia without a pure milk supply, controlled by legislative enactment. To-day the milk producers supplying the metropolitan area of Brisbane are not getting a decent living wage in return for their efforts. In my own electorate there are many milk producers who have to sell their produce to the distributors at a price as low as 6d. a gallon. The consumers in the city are paying 5d. and 6d. a quart for that milk. That is an anomaly, and shows that there is something wrong with the organisation of the milk supply of the city of Brisbane. The Government should take that disparity into consideration and also the fact that the employees on the distributing carts are not receiving an adequate basic wage. There is no award covering that

calling, in which men are receiving as low as 25s. and even £1 a week, and keep, for their labours. A Milk Act would at least ensure that the producer received a fair price for his product, such a price as would enable him to obtain a decent living wage. As to the purity of the supply, I would remind hon. members that milk is regarded as one of the staple diets of the human race, particularly of children. There is a paragraph in this morning's issue of the "Courier-Mail" that sounds a note of warning in regard to the milk supply of the city of Brisbane. It reads—

"NEW DISEASE GAINS GROUND.

"PROBABLY DUE TO INFECTED MILK.

"Perth, Tuesday.

"A new disease, undulant fever, was referred to at Fremantle to-day by Mr. T. S. Gregory, senior lecturer in bacteriology at the Melbourne University, who is a passenger for Melbourne on the 'Mongolia' from the United Kingdom, where he spent a year studying at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He said this disease, which was becoming a major health problem in America and Britain, and of which one or two cases had been reported in Australia, was probably caused by infected milk, and could probably be prevented by pasteurisation. No direct cure was yet known for it. He had been impressed with the importance attached by medical opinion and the public to pasteurised milk in Britain, and the attitude of the public, contrasted with the careless attitude of Australians, who should be encouraged to drink more pasteurised milk, which was especially desirable from the viewpoint of children's health."

That draws emphatic attention to the inadequacy of the control of the milk supply of the city of Brisbane. The Health Department is doing its best. The inspectors are out morning, noon and night, but they cannot adequately control the quality of the milk because they do not come into touch with it at the point of production or at the point of distribution. They have to inspect it in various centres of the city and take samples from the milk carts. Goodness knows exactly how much milk may have been supplied from those cans to parents with children before the inspectors take their samples.

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

Mr. NIMMO (*Ozley*) [11.19 a.m.]: Mr. Speaker, I should like first to congratulate you upon being elected Speaker of this House. I trust your occupancy of the chair will be as free from serious trouble as it was during the last Parliament.

I also feel pleasure in saying how much we appreciate the work of His Excellency in going throughout Queensland and bringing inspiration and confidence to settlers in the far-back areas by his kindly words and his optimistic outlook on life generally. Of course, his speech, delivered at the opening of this Parliament—except the first portion of it—was written by the Government and handed to him to read and I am sorry to say that it contains no constructive policy

or anything that would tend to get this State out of its present difficulties. It is simply window dressing and advertising on behalf of the Government, who again prove themselves to be simply time servers, taking always the line of least resistance, bluffing, using propaganda and generally trying to make the best of things with loan money. They are out to make good cover for themselves, irrespective of whether it is going to improve the State permanently or not.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is why the people gave us such a clear mandate.

Mr. NIMMO: Exactly. The people did give the Government a wonderful mandate, but do you remember, Mr. Speaker, that just before the decline of Rome the people also gave the politicians a great mandate simply because they threw favours to them? The same thing is going on to-day. The Government are pandering to the people for their own gain, and that policy is not going to benefit this State.

The last speaker made some statements with which I agree, and many statements altogether contrary to the truth. Like many other speakers on the Government side of the House, he referred to the great improvement that has taken place in Queensland. There is no doubt that Queensland is showing a great improvement.

Mr. TAYLOR: You agree with me?

Mr. NIMMO: Certainly I agree with the hon. member. The whole world is showing an improvement. I am happy to say that Queensland is showing an improvement in common with the other States—not through the acts of the Labour Government, but in spite of them. This is a State that would progress under present conditions under any Government, with a good Government in the Commonwealth sphere.

Mr. POWER: It went back under your Government.

Mr. NIMMO: That interjection of the hon. member for Baroona shows with what levity he looks at matters, and how irresponsible he is. As a matter of fact, it did not improve under the hon. member's Government. Let us analyse the position. Was there any depression in the world during the period 1929 to 1932, or was there not? Did the other States of the Commonwealth have prosperous times during that period? Is the hon. member for Baroona honest or not honest?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid the hon. member is interrupting a speech on the other side of the House.

Mr. NIMMO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We want honesty in politics to-day, and if we have members coming here who are simply trying to introduce "soap-box" theories to this Parliament for the purpose of some gain for themselves outside, we are not going to make any real progress. The hon. member knows very well that there was a depression all over the world. That depression, we are all thankful to say, is passing away. It is no use hon. members opposite preening themselves and taking comfort in the thought that "Alone we did it." Take the Acting Agent-General's report, which we have just received. What does he say with regard to Great Britain?

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Under the heading of "Trade and Commerce" he writes—

"TRADE AND COMMERCE.

"It can, I think, be safely stated that a return to normal conditions is now at last almost in sight. The progress in this direction, which was made in 1934, has varied greatly in different parts of the world, but undoubtedly it has been Great Britain that has shown the way.

"Figures issued by the Board of Trade show an increased industrial output in 1934. Based on the existing index, the estimated production last year was 12 per cent. greater than in 1933, and 18 per cent. above 1932. The index numbers for the three years (based on 1924=100) were 110.5, 98.6, and 98.3 respectively. For manufacturing industries alone, the index number (117.4) is the highest yet recorded, being about 1½ per cent. above that for 1929. The total increase of 12 per cent. compares with a rise of 4 per cent. in the United States.

"Unemployment has fallen below the peak figure of 1929 by 28 per cent. Steel production was 26 per cent. above the level of 1933; building activity was 14 per cent. greater, and electricity output about 14 per cent. larger.

"On the Stock Exchange values reached new high records owing to the exceptional cheapness of money, which dominated the security markets."

I am sure that every hon. member, irrespective of party, is pleased to see that part of the report by the Agent-General. It indicates that economic conditions are improving at the hub of the universe. It assures us that the world has turned the economic corner and that conditions generally are improving, but despite that assurance and the evidences patent to everyone, an hon. member is prepared to rise in his place in this House and to say that all credit for this improvement is due to the Queensland Labour Government. No hon. member is justified in doing that. The hon. member for Enoggera did quote a number of figures from an insurance magazine in an endeavour to show that Queensland was the only State where industrial shares had shown marked improvement. I have to admit that the shares of certain companies in this State have improved over the past year or two, but I most reluctantly ask if they have shown the same degree of improvement as is to be seen in the healthy state of the balance-sheets of Southern companies?

Mr. TAYLOR: Quote some figures.

Mr. NIMMO: I can refer to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, Limited, which is in control of a key industry. Its shares during the depression were quoted at 16s. 9d., but are quoted on the market to-day at over £3 each.

Mr. TAYLOR: What about goldmining?

Mr. NIMMO: The goldmining industry, in common with all other mining ventures, is a more or less unstable industry—up to-day and down to-morrow. I suggest to the hon. member that he focus his attention upon such huge undertakings as Anthony Horderns Limited, and Farmers Limited, large trading ventures catering for the requirements of an industrial population from day to day.

Mr. POWER: Take gold in Queensland.

[Mr. Nimmo.

Mr. NIMMO: When the hon. member for Baroona delivered his Address in Reply speech in this House we were muzzled and could not interject when he made some of the most outrageous statements.

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Oxley in order in suggesting that certain hon. members were muzzled in this House?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Oxley should be more careful in the choice of his language. I hope that he is not intending to reflect on the Chair.

Mr. NIMMO: I was not reflecting on the Chair at all, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Enoggera knows very well what I mean. He knows that it is the unwritten law of this House not to interject or otherwise interrupt a new member during the deliverance of his maiden speech. That is what I meant when I said that we were muzzled and could not, or did not, interject. I did not intend to reflect on the Chair at all. I repeat that it is true that a number of companies have shown a marked improvement in their business operations, but it is unfair to select two or three companies that have shown this material advance and ignore many others that do not show up in such a favourable light. What is the object of the hon. member in adopting those tactics? Is it merely to bring unmerited kudos to the Government? Is it honest? Is he trying to boost the Government and to discredit their predecessors in office? He made the astounding statement that confidence in this State was inspired by the presence and the administration of a Labour Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hear, hear! Quite true.

Mr. NIMMO: The Secretary for Public Lands, who interjects, knows very well indeed that confidence came as the natural result of the adoption of a sound method of finance in Australia. Had the Labour Government been returned to power last Federal election, one shudders to think what might have been the outcome of their proposal of monetary inflation and a new banking system.

Another matter on which I intend to cross swords with the hon. member for Enoggera is that of land settlement. I notice that the Secretary for Public Lands is in the House. I definitely assert that very little progress has been made in land settlement during the term of the Labour Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are wrong.

Mr. NIMMO: I admit that large areas of land are supposed to have been settled, but on analysis one finds that the great proportion of what is claimed as new settlement is due to the volume of priority selections, and that really very few new selectors have been placed on the land. We also know that the Government embarked on a policy of road construction to open up new areas for selection in North Queensland. One of those areas is in the electorate of the hon. member for Mirani. That hon. member said he hoped the work was going to continue. Men were engaged for that work just prior to the election in the hope that the strength of the Labour Party in this House would be increased. That hon. member is now in the House as a result. I am afraid that much

of the land settlement of the Government was merely undertaken to boost votes for the Government candidates. A definite land settlement policy should be evolved by the Government. The Government have slipped on the job. The hon. member for Cunningham, when acting as Secretary for Public Lands, had a definite policy of land settlement of resuming large holdings and opening new areas. Those resumptions had been made and everything was set in train when his Government went out of office. Advantage has, however, been taken of it by the present Government, with the result that land settlement figures have gone up. The Government made those figures look better than they otherwise would appear. We want to see more people settled on the land and production increased.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The local producers' association asked us not to open any more land for settlement.

MR. MOORE: And you are very obedient!

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. NIMMO: I hope that the Minister will not be guided by that advice. This is a young country that needs to be developed, and unless we adopt a vigorous policy we can shut up shop. There is no necessity to stand still. Every hon. member recognises that if a vigorous land settlement policy, in conjunction with a policy of water conservation, is not adopted, Queensland will not take her rightful place among the nations of the world.

The Government have claimed that a wonderful improvement has taken place in the timber industry and that sawmills are working throughout the State. That again is a reflex of the policy initiated by our Government. The Government are aware that when they assumed office they found that their predecessors had a well-defined forestry policy in train. During the 1932 elections a great noise was made by Labour candidates of the appointment of Mr. Duffy to the Sub-Department of Forestry by the Moore Government. They described it as political. It was only part of a policy that has resulted in a vigorous development of the sawmilling industry. The Minister has merely followed in the path of his predecessor and he should acknowledge the fact.

The hon. member for Enoggera referred to the position of the mining industry, which is also mentioned in the Governor's Speech. The Government take great credit for the wonderful improvement in gold production.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NIMMO: Hon. members opposite evidently believe that if they repeat an assertion often enough they will eventually make the people believe it to be true. The hon. member for Enoggera claims that the improvement in gold production is due to the policy of the Government in encouraging prospectors. I have perused the gold production returns as published in the "Government Mining Journal." Every hon. member will admit that gold production by the Golden Plateau mine at Cracow, the Mount Morgan and the Mount Coolon mines were primarily responsible for this result and that they were definitely established by the Moore Government.

MR. TAYLOR: That is not a fact.

MR. NIMMO: I say very definitely it is a fact those three mines were established

during that period. Operations at Mount Morgan were recommenced in February, 1932. The company appealed to the Government for assistance. The Moore Government induced Sir Herbert Gepp to come from Victoria and report on the application. He recommended that the Government should make the necessary grant. The Government accordingly made available £15,000. That grant was approved by the Moore Government. In honesty hon. members must admit the fact that the Moore Government were responsible for the recommencement of operations at Mount Morgan.

The Golden Plateau and Mount Coolon mines were also established during the Moore regime. Excepting those fields, we find that the increased gold production in Queensland for 1934 was £99,771. Golden Plateau showed an increase of £111,000, and Mount Morgan an increase of £9,000, making a total between them of £120,000. It will thus be seen that except for those mines there was a decrease in the gold production in this State. I mention those facts because hon. members opposite have claimed in this House and outside that the Government are responsible for every improvement that has occurred in the country. Hon. members opposite should display some degree of fairness and give credit where credit is due. Hon. members on this side of the House are prepared to give the Government credit for anything they may have done, and we consider they should adopt the same attitude in regard to the actions of the Moore Government.

The "Economic News" for August has already published figures on the point, and I have some that demonstrate that the position in Australia is definitely improving at a very rapid rate. The following index of share price figures relating to the different countries affords an interesting comparison:—

| | June- July, 1929. | May, 1935. | Per- centage recovery to 1929. |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---|
| Australia | 169.4 | 159.1 | 93.9 |
| United Kingdom | 157.9 | 114.4 | 72.5 |
| Sweden | 168.9 | 88.1 | 50.9 |
| Canada | 264.1 | 130.8 | 49.5 |
| United States of America | 191.0 | 85.5 | 44.7 |
| Netherlands | 121.0 | 33.0 | 27.2 |

Those figures indicate that the improvement in Australia has been much greater than in other countries. That advance must be due to the policy of the National Government operating in Australia.

The Savings Bank deposits for the whole of Australia for the year ended 30th June, 1935, show an increase of £7,000,000.

Many statements have been made by new members in this House during the present debate that have not been quite correct. The hon. member for Logan bestowed a great deal of praise on the City of Brisbane Act. To my mind that Act represents one of the greatest burdens ever inflicted on this State. The area prescribed for Greater Brisbane is much too large. People in the outside areas were forced into it without the opportunity of saying whether they were prepared to come in, and were compelled to pay the rates deemed necessary to liquidate the debts of the thickly populated areas in the centre, with the result that their rates were doubled.

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The hon. member for Logan also spoke of the action of the Moore Government in passing an Act that reduced the salary of an alderman to £300 per annum. That reduction was made during a period when a great number of ratepayers in this city were unable to pay their rates. Under the circumstances I consider the amount fixed was reasonable.

It has also been suggested that a change should be made in our monetary system. The monetary system that is operating to-day has stood the test of time remarkably well. Yet hon. members opposite assert that it should be altered. I wonder what their intention can be. Is it to adopt the policy, suggested by the Federal Labour Party during the last Federal election, of paying for the construction of public works by Commonwealth Treasury bills? What policy do hon. members opposite really suggest? The present monetary system has stood the test very well, especially when one realises that capitalism has had to bear the burden of every benefit or extravagance, and every political stupidity perpetrated on the community. Notwithstanding, capitalism is recovering.

Mr. HILTON: What about the royal commission to be appointed by the Lyons Government to inquire into the monetary system?

Mr. NIMMO: It is my opinion that at the conclusion of its investigations the members of the commission will find that the monetary system operating to-day is perfect, and that too many burdens have been placed upon it in the past. Every hon. member must realise that capitalism is carrying a tremendous burden, and if the policy of heaping further burdens on it is continued it must eventually break down. No hon. member can expect industry to function with the load of taxation at present levied upon it by the Government of this State.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is doing it.

Mr. NIMMO: It is not doing it. Men are out of work in all our secondary industries. There has been no increase in the numbers of secondary industries operating in this State. The cause is obvious when it is realised that a company with a capital of £100,000, making an annual profit of £24,000 has to hand over to the Government £8,000 by way of taxation. That amount is State tax alone. The chairman of directors of Peters Ice Cream Coy. Ltd. pointed out only the other day that for the State Taxation Department to get the dividend they received, if it were a shareholder, it would be necessary to hold 80,000 shares in the company. Is that not a tremendous amount to take from industry by way of taxation? Industry cannot function under such an imposition. Industry must be allowed to retain sufficient money to enable it to expand.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Have you read the balance sheet?

Mr. NIMMO: I have read some balance sheets, and was rather surprised to find the amount being taken by way of taxation. A small company with a capital of £2,000 made a profit of £500 and of that amount the State Government took £185 by way of taxation. Hon. members must realise that our taxation is much too high. (Interjections).

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Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Oxley during the course of his speech has been subjected to repeated interjection and some interruption. I ask hon. members to cease.

Mr. NIMMO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I desire to make an appeal to the Government to look into the question of offsetting losses against profit so far as income tax is concerned. I refer to the settlers on the land particularly. In common with other hon. members of this House I am very pleased to see that the drought has broken throughout Queensland. We have just emerged from a very serious dry spell, which has placed thousands of our very valuable settlers in a very peculiar position. They are fine people. Everybody must admire the manner in which they tackle their job, but under the present method of taxation what hope have they of recovering from their troubles?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: They never will.

Mr. NIMMO: I think I heard an hon. member interject "They never will." I quite believe he is correct—under the present system. As it stands, if these people fortunately make a very big profit from next year's operations most of that profit will have to be paid away in the form of taxation. At least a very large portion of it will have to go in that direction. Were such people allowed to offset their previous losses against present profits they would have some opportunity of at least reducing their bank overdrafts or repaying loans they had to obtain during a difficult period. This would enable them eventually to become free of financial difficulties and able to meet taxation in the ordinary way. I do not think it is too much to ask that these people be allowed to set off their losses against their profits over a certain period. The Commonwealth recognise that it is a fair policy, and they allow averaging over five years. If the Government have any desire to help these people, who have suffered great hardships, they should allow the Commissioner to set off the losses suffered during the depression against the profits made in better times.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Why did your Government not do that when they had the opportunity?

Mr. NIMMO: Our Government gave the lessees of all Crown lands a very substantial reduction in their rents. They reduced railway fares and freights on four occasions; this Government, as soon as they came into power, raised them again. Our Government abolished the super land tax and gave the people on the land a chance. I hope the present Government will pursue the same policy.

Some hon. members are prepared to make statements in this Chamber which cannot be borne out by facts. The other day the member for Warwick made certain statements with regard to a rise in prices in this State.

Mr. LLEWELYN: They were correct.

Mr. NIMMO: We know they are correct, but the rise is simply the result of the policy pursued by hon. members opposite. They have increased taxation in this State by £2,150,000 since they assumed office; they have loaded all sorts of burdens on to industry. Does any man expect that those burdens are not to be passed on to the consumer?

The result is that prices are going up, as they must, and this puts a great hardship on the man on the land. Although he has to pay a great deal more for the articles he buys he gets no higher prices for his commodities. The hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the price of wool packs as being 5d. higher in this State than in New South Wales. When he made that statement I thought it was worth looking into and I did so, only to find that it is due to handling charges. The business cannot be conducted as cheaply in Queensland as it can in New South Wales, and all the charges loaded on to the goods are, of course, passed on to the consumer. Talking of passing on these charges, I have here a good cartoon from this month's "Taxpayer" showing two people looking into the window of a store. A notice reads "Extras passed on to our customers with every purchase: Federal sales tax, Federal land tax, State land tax, customs and excise, income tax, city rates, water rates, stamp duties." All those have to be borne by every article that is bought, and the result is the fact to which the hon. member for Carnarvon referred. He rather exaggerated the position, however, because I understand that the difference in price in this case is 3d.

Members on the other side of the House say that we have the highest basic wage in the whole of Australia. That is so, but if we stand for that we must expect the people to pay higher prices for the articles they require, for those prices must include the higher basic wage we are paying. Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that instead of saying that we have the highest basic wage in Australia and taking pride and pleasure in the fact, it would be better to say that we were going to strive to get the whole of the Australian States up to our basic wage? Then our industries could function and we could sell goods to our people at the same prices as the Southern States can sell them. The matter is one of policy, and it is obvious that if we have higher costs throughout Queensland, eventually Queensland will be put in an obnoxious position in carrying on trade in competition with the South. We should move to bring about some equality between the different States, no matter in what way it is done.

I also wish to refer here to another statement made by the hon. member for Warwick, concerning the way people in the West were fleeced in regard to maize during the drought period. Hon. members opposite should be more careful in their statements. He said that at the peak period of the drought maize purchased at Warwick for 3s. 6d. a bushel was sold in the West at 6s. and 6s. 6d. a bushel, and that someone was getting a rake-off of 1s. 3d. to 2s. 9d. a bushel.

Mr. H. WILLIAMS: Your friends.

Mr. NIMMO: The remark by the hon. member for Windsor is a sample of the insane sort of interjections that come from the other side of the House. Here are the true facts: At the peak period of the drought maize sold up to 4s. 2½d. a bushel in Warwick, and that price was paid to the farmer—not 3s. 6d. a bushel as suggested by the hon. member for Warwick. He referred to maize being sold at Longreach at 6s. 6d. a bushel, but my investigation discloses that this maize was sold by a small

storekeeper in the habit of selling a bushel or two to a man to feed his horse, and the statement could have no application to the sale of large quantities as fodder for starving stock. Since the hon. member made his statement in this House I have taken the opportunity to analyse the accounts of several big trading houses and I find that in all cases the handling charges were set down at 1d. a bushel. I have here an invoice dated 10th June, when maize was sold at 3s. 6d. a bushel. I have taken that invoice because it sets out a price of 3s. 6d., which was the price mentioned by the hon. member for Warwick. On 10th June, then, 3s. 6d. a bushel was paid for maize by Dalgety's, to which was added 1d. a bushel to cover handling charges. The cost of railing a ton of maize to Longreach was £2 4s. 2d., or approximately 1s. 1d. a bushel, making the landed cost of the maize, 4s. 8½d., the price that was actually charged. I deliberately visited three large trading houses and investigated their accounts, from which I discovered that in each case 1d. a bushel was charged for handling costs. I am dealing with this matter to show that some irresponsible members of Parliament are prepared to make statements in this House that tend to inflame the minds of the people, particularly the farmers and the purchasers of primary produce. The statements are deliberately made with the intention of conveying the impression that certain sections of the community are being fleeced, although they are far from true.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The hon. member knows that they have been fleeced.

Mr. NIMMO: That statement is untrue. That is the kind of statement that is used to assist Labour into power in this House. Hon. members opposite have always endeavoured to inflame the minds of the workers and the people generally so as to secure their votes, and that is why hon. members opposite are incapable of handling an industrial trouble such as the one that now exists in North Queensland. They assiduously carry out their policy of trying to inflame the minds not only of the workers but also of the producers, but in time of need and trouble they are incapable of facing up to the job for fear of losing much political support. They are not prepared to make that sacrifice.

Unemployment is still a very important question for consideration. The Government have intimated that there is to be a reduction in the relief tax to the extent of 1d. in the £1. A penny in the pound! The whole proposal is laughable, the most laughable thing I have ever heard in my life. A reduction in the relief tax of 1d. in the £1! The Government have led us to believe that unemployment has been reduced to the 1929 level—before any relief tax was imposed.

Mr. H. WILLIAMS: The "Courier-Mail" said it had.

Mr. NIMMO: What?

Mr. H. WILLIAMS: That unemployment had been reduced to the 1929 level.

Mr. NIMMO: There seems to be something wrong somewhere. Some very contradictory statements are being made. We are told by the hon. member for Windsor that the "Courier-Mail" has given it out that unemployment has been reduced to the 1929 level, which is confirmed by the considered

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opinion of the Government, but the Premier has said, "No, we cannot reduce the relief tax more than 1d. in the £1."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: When did he say that?

Mr. NIMMO: I understand that since the proposal by the Government has been treated as a joke, and as being too ridiculous for serious consideration, the Government have crawled a little and are now thinking of making the reduction 2d. in the £1. They know very well that unemployment is still with us, despite the fact that considerable employment may have been created by the lavish expenditure of loan funds.

The Government have made certain increased payments to men engaged on unemployment relief works. What do those increases amount to? A married man, who received £1 0s. 3d. a week during the terrible depression which existed, receives an increase to 25s. This notwithstanding the great noise hon. members opposite made against the Federal Government for paying only 36s. a week to a man and his wife receiving old-age pensions.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You are wrong again. You are talking about 36s. a fortnight.

Mr. NIMMO: The Federal Government's old-age pension payment to a man and his wife amounts to 18s. a week each, whereas the State Government pay an unemployed married man 25s. a week only. A married man with a wife and one child receives an increase of only 2s. 6d. per week. I do not know on what basis this payment is made. An unemployed worker with a wife dependent on him gets one and a-half day's work a week, and is paid at the rate of 16s. 8d. a day. Possibly he works alongside an employee of the Brisbane City Council who receives 13s. 6d. a day. The whole scheme is ill-considered and does not mete out decent treatment to the man out of work. The relief tax should be abolished entirely, together with relief work, and every man willing to work should be given a job. That could be accomplished if the Government tackled this problem in the right way. The expenses of certain Ministers, and of the Government generally, are large, yet at the same time an unfortunate married man with a wife dependent on him receives only 25s. a week. Had the Moore Government been returned at the last election every man prepared to work would have been found Government work. (Government interjections.) We know that certain new members in this House have been hypnotised by the Premier. Metaphorically speaking, they put a halo round his head and consider him a wonderful man.

Mr. BRASSINGTON interjecting,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: They will be disillusioned before they are very much longer in this House. They will discover the actual position. They will observe that there are still plenty of men unemployed and perceive that many men engaged temporarily on loan works will be again unemployed. Unemployment is one of the greatest problems we have, and it should be faced. Those who have full and plenty should help to provide a wages fund in order to provide work for these unfortunate people. Extravagance in Government expenditure should also cease.

Mr. BRASSINGTON again interjecting,

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Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to obey my call to order and not interrupt the hon. member's speech.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, I will not interrupt.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: Government expenditure to-day has become greater than ever. One would think that the State was passing through a period of great prosperity. The Government provided a special train to take the delegates attending the Labour-in-Politics Convention at Maryborough to the coast.

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

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [12.5 p.m.]: I take this opportunity of offering you, Mr. Speaker, as previous speakers have done, my congratulations on your elevation once again to the high and responsible position of Speaker. I also desire to convey my good wishes to the mover and seconder of the motion for the Address in Reply. Hon. members generally were very impressed with the subject-matter of the speech of the mover of the resolution, and especially with the manner in which he handled it.

The hon. member who has just resumed his seat at some length compared the share markets in this and other States.

At 12.6 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Hanson, *Buranda*), relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The daily barometer reflecting the quotations on the share markets published in the newspapers affords striking evidence that investments in industrial and commercial concerns in Queensland compare more than favourably with those in other States.

I submit that is the best indication of the prosperity of Queensland compared with the other States, notwithstanding the doleful story regarding the amount of taxation imposed on capital in this State.

During this debate hon. members opposite have dwelt at length on the sins of the Government in obtaining and spending loan money in finding employment. It will be remembered that after three years of office of the Moore Government, the present Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, went to the country and sought the confidence of the people on a definite statement that if a Labour Government were returned to office it would endeavour to bring about an alteration in the Premiers' Plan in order that it might obtain loan money for expenditure, as far as possible, on reproductive works to provide employment for many thousands who were out of work. The people returned him. As Premier he was successful in his effort at his first meeting of the Loan Council in having the plan reviewed, and during his subsequent visits to that Council he was successful in obtaining sufficient money to put his policy into effect. After that policy had been in operation for three years the Premier went to the country and asked the people for a renewal of their confidence. The only promise he made was that if his Government were returned to office they would carry out the

same policy during the ensuing three years as during the past three years. It is common knowledge that the people not only overwhelmingly approved of that policy, but also returned the Government Party in increased numbers. The Premier could do no other than accept their support as a mandate to carry on the same policy during the next three years.

I desire to draw attention of hon. members to three paragraphs from the report of the Land Administration Board for the year 1933—

“The depression and its wave of unemployment is not due to the lessening of local primary production for that has been largely maintained. It is due to the stagnation of international trade and the lowering of commodity prices, and as we are an exporting nation these things inevitably have repercussions in this country. A permanent cure for our trouble, therefore, lies outside Australia. Meanwhile all we can do is to adopt alleviating measures within.

“But even alleviating measures are of such importance that the resources of Government departments must be mobilised to provide them. The economic maelstrom in which our people are engulfed is generating such devastating consequences to the community that help in the direction of giving relief of any kind should not be withheld.”

In the same report there is a further very important paragraph reading—

“Employment of any kind, reproductive or not, serves a useful purpose, but if we can so utilise the services of the capable and willing unemployed workers that at the end of the depression we shall find our country enriched by practical achievements—our lands developed—our exports expanding—then we shall have succeeded in wresting from the depression solid accomplishments and permanent gain which we and succeeding generations may enjoy.”

Comment is unnecessary inasmuch as the report is very logical and full of commonsense. These things must appeal to every right-thinking and reasonable person.

Concomitantly with the work I have outlined, the Government set out to achieve their object of replacing men in employment, and to that end adopted a programme of public works, the construction of which will not only give employment for many thousands of our unemployed but will also provide very valuable public utilities and, in many instances, public assets of great national value. Here, I desire to quote a statement issued recently by the Secretary for Public Lands, referring to water supply and sewerage works, and in passing to draw attention to the fact that the Premier, during the course of his speech on the Appropriation Bill recently, referred to water conservation as being the life blood of the nation. I am heartily in accord with that sentiment. The statement referred to reads—

“As a result of the liberal terms under which the Government has made money available, considerably increased activity has been manifest on the part of local authorities throughout the State in the provision of new or improved facilities for domestic water supplies and sewerage. These works have been

financed by subsidised Government loans. The Department has, in a number of cases carried out the whole of the works, including investigations, surveys, design, and construction; in other cases the local authorities have been responsible for the execution of the work—the Department acting in a supervisory and advisory capacity. Throughout the year 69 schemes in various stages have been dealt with.”

Among the schemes referred to are—

| Water supply at— | £ |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Coolangatta and Burleigh ... | 77,000 |
| Innisfail | 46,000 |
| Mount Isa | 17,000 |
| Gatton | 16,000 |
| Sarina | 13,000 |
| Bowen | 10,000 |

Schemes being carried out under the supervision of the respective local authorities—

| Water supply at— | £ |
|--------------------|--------|
| Townsville | 70,000 |
| Cairns | 26,000 |
| Rockhampton | 19,000 |
| Redlynch | 16,000 |
| Tully | 18,000 |
| Toowoomba | 10,000 |

Schemes in course of preparation—

| Sewerage at— | £ |
|--------------------|---------|
| Townsville | 500,000 |
| Rockhampton | 531,000 |

| Water supply at— | £ |
|------------------|---------|
| Toowoomba | 220,000 |
| Longreach | 49,000 |
| Kingaroy | 51,000 |
| Ipswich | 20,000 |

Mr. EDWARDS: They are not being carried out.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I understand everything is in order for their being carried out. The Toowoomba City Council approached the Government for a loan subsidy amounting to £220,000. I am very happy to be able to state that the Treasurer has granted this request. Of course, it can be understood that there was a great deal of anxiety on the part of workers regarding the apparent delay in commencing this work. One quite understands with what anxiety an unemployed worker merely on intermittent relief work views any delay in the commencement of work that may provide him with increased weekly wages. Naturally our men in Toowoomba look forward to the commencement of the Cooby Creek scheme and hope there will be some continuity of work for them when it is commenced. Trial surveys have been finalised and a report has been sent, or is in course of preparation for sending, to the Toowoomba City Council. I express the hope here that there will be no delay on its part in having that work commenced.

I should like to emphasise that the various local authorities throughout the State have been co-operating with the Government as far as their own local requirements and funds would permit in the undertaking of schemes of a reproductive character having the specific object of finding work for the unemployed. Moneys have been made available for forestry and railways, in addition to water conservation projects; large sums of money have been spent in land settlement; other large sums have been made available for the construction of workers' dwellings;

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and yet other amounts for main roads and public buildings in all parts of the State. The Treasurer and this Government have been sympathetic to requests for money in any avenue where it was considered that money could be spent to advantage.

I submit in all earnestness that this policy I have detailed is a wise one, and while uncertainty prevails in economic conditions should be continued. I hope that our Treasurer will be successful in obtaining sufficient money from the Loan Council to enable its continuance for some time ahead. Of course, I realise that it is necessary that the money should be expended upon schemes from which some advantage will accrue.

At 12.22 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I would suggest to the Treasurer and to the Government—particularly to the Minister for Transport—the construction of a railway from Cooyar to Tarong. The Leader of the Opposition is the member for the district closely adjacent to Cooyar and for the district including the railway that connects Oakey with that terminus. I have no doubt that he realises what a great asset the construction of that link would be to the State. The suggestion is not at all a new one. Over twenty years ago an agitation was commenced in the area between Toowoomba and Maryborough for the construction of this link. As is generally known, the railways from the Maryborough side were constructed through the Burnett and opened up very large tracts of land, which have proved very suitable for agriculture and dairying. On the other hand, we have connections from various points on the Western line dipping north towards the Burnett district. It seems to be rather remarkable that these two fertile districts have not been connected by that railway link before.

Mr. EDWARDS: That was turned down by your Royal Commission on Public Works.

Mr. LLEWELYN: I do not know whether it was turned down altogether by the commission, but I believe that Mr. Sexton's report, which I unfortunately have not been able to see, absolutely favoured the construction of a connection between Cooyar and Tarong to any other connection.

Mr. MOORE: He did; quite right.

Mr. LLEWELYN: If this link had been constructed it would have tapped timber wealth approximating 70,000,000 super. feet of pine, and although it is just possible that the volume may be reduced to-day, there is still a considerable amount of timber wealth in the Cooyar district that would provide valuable freight for the Commissioner for Railways. Toowoomba possesses one of the best equipped bacon factories in the State, run by a co-operative company that draws a considerable quantity of its supplies from the Burnett district, but in some cases the pigs have to be conveyed for approximately 370 miles, whereas, by the construction of this link, the journey would be reduced to only 82 miles. Again, the construction of this link would permit of the easy transport of the products of the Downs to northern markets, and would tap all districts served by the railway whose terminal points are at Oakey, Milmerran, and Killarney, and would be of economic value to the primary producers in the Stanthorpe and Warwick districts. I firmly believe

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that the construction of this link could not fail to be of considerable value to the State, both commercially and industrially. It would also be of material assistance in times of drought in the removal of starving stock. When I introduced a deputation to the Minister for Transport on this particular issue during his recent visit to Toowoomba, I pointed out to him that when the Commissioner for Railways was in that city shortly before to discuss other matters associated with railway administration, he pointed out to the deputation that waited upon him that there was a considerable amount of congestion at the various railway depots, which gave him cause for considerable anxiety. I pointed out to the Minister that if that congestion continued it would be better to relieve it by the construction of the link between Cooyar and Tarong rather than duplicate the North Coast line from Theebine Junction south to a point where the line is at present a double one. I submit, in all seriousness, that rather than incur the cost of duplicating more of the North Coast line from Theebine south it would be far better to spend the money in the primary producing districts to which I have referred. The total length of the proposed link is 24 miles and the cost would not exceed £300,000, which I believe is a generous estimate.

The construction of the Kyogle line has been rather a disadvantage to the producers on the Darling Downs. As an additional reason for the construction of the Cooyar-Tarong link, I should like to point out that its construction would enable the primary producers on the Downs to offset some of the disadvantages that followed the opening of the Kyogle line. I ask the Minister for Transport, the Cabinet, and the Treasurer, to give some consideration to my suggestion when they are considering ways and means of spending loan funds to the best advantage.

One pleasing feature of the results of the recent general elections is that many of the new members sitting on the Government side of the House represent farming districts. That in itself reflects the greatest credit and honour on the individuals concerned. It is also evidence that the farmers are conscious of the great benefit our legislation has been to their industries. We have a Labour member for Warwick, which is practically a farming district; a Labour representative for Mirani; a Labour representative for Carnarvon; and a Labour representative for East Toowoomba, a constituency in which many men are engaged in agricultural pursuits. This confirms my oft-repeated statement that the farmers of the State approve of Labour's policy as applied to their industry; they have manifested that approval by sending representatives into this Parliament to support the Government.

I was very interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern, the only new representative on the Opposition benches. I compliment him on his very excellent speech. It lacked that hostility to the Government that is so marked in the speeches of hon. members with whom he sits. He gave credit to the Government not only for their legislative enactments dealing with primary industries but also for their sympathetic administration of those measures.

Hon. members will remember that when the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was introduced in this Assembly in 1922

hon. members opposite displayed a great amount of hostility against it.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Hon. member after hon. member rose from his seat opposite and stated that he agreed with the Bill, but almost without exception suggested that it should be altered in Committee.

Mr. NIMMO: Nineteen alterations were made.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The desire of Labour Governments up to that period to legislate for the improvement of the lot of the farmer was manifested in measures such as the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Acts, which was responsible for a greater return to the sugar grower for his cane; the Agricultural Bank Acts, which enabled farmers to secure advances for the purchase of stock and the construction of silos; and the repeal of the guarantee sections of the Railways Act, which relieved the farmers of responsibilities approximating £250,000

Mr. WALKER: Every hon. member in the House supported that measure with the exception of Mr. A. J. Jones, the then hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. LLEWELYN: My point is that it was a Labour Government that repealed them, because they recognised they were unfair in their incidence. I intend to quote from some of the speeches delivered during the debate on the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill. I quote first from the speech delivered by Mr. G. P. Barnes, the ex-hon. member for Warwick, to be found at page 294 of "Hansard," Vol. 137, for 1922. He said—

"It is not a matter of accepting a proposal like this with a grain of salt. So far as I am concerned, in view of the purpose of the Bill and the inclusion of the various industries in the State into one great big union, I shall urge every man on the land to pass it out, because it is an unwise procedure; it is going back on all the fundamentals of our life, and it is a staggering blow to any man who has at heart the very best interests of this country.

"The Premier: What dangers do you foresee?"

"Mr. G. P. BARNES: If I were to put it in my own terms, I would say that if the purpose is carried out, it is a kind of tone-down Sovietism. I know it is quite bloodless in its way, but still it is revolutionary in an extreme, and certainly it is moving in the direction of the objective of the party or they would not be so quiet about it, and they would not have given it their blessing, because, whatever we may say or feel regarding the Labour Party, I believe that, as a rule, they are a body of sincere men. They may delude and they may help to deceive the people, but they are carrying out a purpose within them, and are actuated by sincere desire."

A little further on in his speech the Premier interjected—

"Do you say that the Country Party are supporting a system of Sovietism?"

and Mr. Barnes went on to say—

"It is for them to say. I am speaking as I feel. They evidently see some

good in this, but I think that every member of that party who has spoken has said, in effect, that, although he may accept it in a degree, yet it is only in a degree, and with the latent hope that the Government may see their way to accept amendments. Of course, there is good in everything if you can only trace it; but there is a mighty lot of evil in this thing—so much evil that it should never have been introduced into an Assembly of English people."

That was the viewpoint of Mr. Barnes, the ex-member for Warwick, a man who was interested in farming pursuits and who represented farmers in this House. My reason for quoting it is because the hon. member for Fassfern praised this and other Labour Governments for their vision in assisting the primary industries, and said there were certain new members who represented farming constituencies who, instead of being here on the Government side of the House, should be there in opposition. After he had spoken I thought it would not have taken much to persuade him to sit here and not there.

It was pleasing to me to read the reference in the Governor's Speech to health and education. It is stated that four railway travelling schools were recommissioned at the beginning of 1935 for the purpose of giving instruction to children in the distant parts of the State. Two new dental cars have been commissioned in order to ensure an adequate dental service for children residing away from the large centres of population.

I wish to express my appreciation of the action of the Government in establishing free dental clinics for the benefit of the poorer section of the community. Last year the Government announced that they would provide certain dental clinics in centres outside Brisbane similar to that in Brisbane. The Toowoomba Hospital Board accepted the offer of the Government, and the building has been constructed, and I am happy to state that next Saturday it will be opened to the public. The Government are finding the necessary equipment for the first twelve months at a cost of £520. When one considers the great value of regular dental attention in maintaining the good health of the community one must be appreciative of the work of the Government in this regard.

I should like to quote the opinion of an expert on dental matters, Sir William Wilcox, expressed at the medical congress that commenced in Melbourne yesterday. That noted authority had the following to say on the subject of dental sepsis and its relation to focal infection:—

"Dental infection was one of the commonest causes of disease generally. Any person who carried focal infection in his teeth must always be in a state of insecurity since at some time one or more of many diseases might develop. There was need for care of the teeth and the prevention of dental sepsis not only in children of school age and in adults, but in young children of pre-school age as well."

The facts I have quoted show that the present Government have regard to the physical wellbeing of the community at large and are endeavouring to provide the

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necessary facilities away from the metropolis. Such a policy must be of great advantage to the people.

Diphtheria immunisation is the subject with which I shall conclude my speech. Hon. members should be happy in knowing that the incidence of this dread disease, the cause of so much anguish and suffering in domestic life, is rapidly on the decline. Our heartfelt thanks go to the discoverer of the serum used in diphtheria immunisation. With any object of our thanks in this respect we must associate the Government for their enthusiasm and great help to the medical men of Queensland in their efforts to stamp out the dread disease or minimise its dangers. I hope that with the co-ordination of the health matters of the State under the administration of a Department of Health, greater efforts will be made. They cannot but prove of great value to all concerned. In conclusion, I trust the Government will continue with their great work of providing for the economic welfare of the workers and the physical wellbeing of the people as a whole.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [12.45 p.m.] : At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I desire to express my congratulations to yourself and the Chairman of Committees on your re-election to your respective offices, and also my appreciation of all that His Excellency the Governor is doing in the interests of this State. During his extensive journeyings through the State he has taken a very keen interest in everything. I feel sure that on his return overseas at the completion of his term in Queensland he will prove of immeasurable benefit to the State. He will do everything in his power to assist Queensland.

I have listened with great interest to the speeches of hon. members during the debate. Unfortunately some hon. members, even some new to the House, seem to have a personal grudge against members on this side. That is rather regrettable, especially when one remembers the difficulties of the present day. Of course there are other hon. members, some also new to the House, who have a different point of view. For instance, I was very much struck with the address delivered by the hon. member for Cook. The hon. member displayed no ill-feeling and offered no undue criticism of his opponents. He put his case simply in the interests of the section of the country he represents, no doubt realising that although he has seen fit to join the Labour Party and enter this Parliament as a representative of that party, he does not forget that the country districts are in great difficulties, and he appreciated the responsibility that rested on him of deciding what he should advocate in the interests of his country electorate.

Another speech that afforded me much food for thought was that delivered by the hon. member for Normanby. As always, he honestly and sincerely put before this House his views of the position reached in Queensland. He stated in plain language how closely we were approaching the position of the soviets in Russia. He made the definite statement that private enterprise had failed. If that be so there is only one conclusion at which we can arrive, that is, that the Government intend to take over control of private industry—the policy set out in the platform of the Labour Party in bygone days. The hon. member expresses his

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opinion sincerely and conscientiously, and the position requires analysing. After all, has private enterprise failed? If it has, to what extent and why? That is the important question for us to consider at the present time. We could follow many side issues. We could, for instance, talk about public works for the purpose of employing labour, but we have to decide—and I think very definitely, too—whether the Government are to be the big employer of the State or whether private enterprise is to be given the opportunity and the assistance that is so desirable to allow them to carry out that function.

Mr. FOLEY: They have had those opportunities for over 100 years.

Mr. EDWARDS: Have they had those opportunities during the last few years?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. EDWARDS: I say they have not.

Mr. KING: Loan expenditure gives them that.

Mr. EDWARDS: If a cart were outside loaded with stones and we saw the driver trying to make the horse pull the load and the horse failed to do it, and the driver was about to heap further stones on the cart, what should we say?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Put on another horse! (Laughter).

Mr. EDWARDS: Exactly. Not put on another stone, but give the horse the opportunity of being able to do something. The Government are not giving that opportunity in the State of Queensland to-day. They are not assisting the horse that is trying to pull the load; they are doing nothing of the sort. They are heaping burdens of taxation and otherwise, direct and indirect, on the people who are producing and developing, to such an extent that they cannot pull the load. It is impossible for them to get another horse to assist; and it is impossible for them to employ the labour we desire to see employed. That is our difficulty to-day, and here lies the crux of the whole argument. We can bring in as many side issues as we like, but we shall not get out of our difficulties until we right the position in connection with the development of the State so that these people can become employers. On the other hand, as the member for Normanby suggested, have the Government decided definitely that within a few years they must take over industry, become dictators, and be the one big employer? Are they going to be the only employer of any importance within the State? I think that the position should be analysed from every viewpoint to see if the producers of this wonderful State are not being asked to carry so big a burden that it is impossible for them to continue to employ labour and develop the State and increase its wealth. I believe the position is becoming dangerous. It is quite true, as was remarked the other day by the hon. member for West Moreton, that during the last season the primary producers were in difficulties because they could not get the labour they desired. Men were camped in considerable numbers in sheds on the show grounds and at other places about the towns, and the farmers went and offered them 10s. a day and food and they would not go out to work.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did you say "a day" or "a week?"

Mr. EDWARDS: I said "day," and I want to make that clear. They offered them 10s. a day and their food to go out and harvest hay or assist to get lucerne into stacks—and that is an asset to the State as well as to the farmer—and on several occasions to my knowledge those men refused to go out to work.

The Government know by their own experience in regard to putting boys out on the land that they invariably come back to Brisbane, because conditions are made so good in the large centres in comparison to the country that we are gradually drawing people from the country districts, while those who do remain there direct their energies to an opportunity to get away and come to the large centres of population. The whole policy in relation to this all-important question calls for immediate alteration, and I believe that it is not too late to bring about that very desirable change, one that will enable the primary producers and private enterprise generally to offer the maximum amount of employment to our people. It is unfortunate that there is so much discussion about the question of unemployment. The Government must know, I am sure that the Secretary for Labour and Industry must know, that to-day considerable numbers of men throughout the State are systematically receiving assistance from the Government that they do not deserve, and unless a firmer administrative hand is used the people in the country will not be able to obtain that measure of employment that is their due. I have had considerable experience in this matter. Only last year some men visited my farm to inquire about work that I was offering. Some accepted the work, and proved themselves to be very efficient. One man in particular, who agreed to accept a job of chipping peanuts, remained with me for five months, whilst his companion, who visited my place on the same occasion, absolutely refused to accept the work, and I suppose returned to the police station to obtain rations. It is most unfair to the people who are contributing the relief tax that an individual should decline to accept work when it is offered to him.

Mr. FOLEY: What were you offering?

Mr. EDWARDS: Quite sufficient to enable a man to earn a reasonable livelihood.

Mr. FOLEY: How much was that?

Mr. EDWARDS: That matters not. The important fact is that one man accepted the work, continued in employment for five months, and is still in the district and highly respected. I might inform the hon. member that another young man has been with my boys and myself for the past six years. Surely sufficient evidence that we pay a fair and reasonable wage! It is necessary to make even greater endeavours to attract the people from the large centres of population to the country, where they may engage in primary production. It has been contended by hon. members opposite that the unemployment relief schemes have been conducted and the proceeds of the unemployment relief fund have been expended in the development of the State, but I cannot agree with that contention. The unemployment relief tax is contributed by the whole of the people of Queensland, in some cases under extreme difficulty, but despite that fact the Government have decided to abolish intermittent

relief schemes except in the large centres of population. No fair-minded man could approve of that arrangement. It is entirely unfair. And whilst on the subject of the unemployment relief tax, I express the hope that when the Secretary for Labour and Industry introduces his Bill to reduce the unemployment relief tax he will take the opportunity to remove many of the anomalies that exist. There are many people, particularly in country districts—perhaps in the city, too, although not to the same extent as in the country—who are endeavouring to pay relief tax on an income they may never actually receive. I can illustrate my point in this way: A man with a family of small children in receipt of a certain income is called upon to pay unemployment relief tax based upon his gross income and in addition to maintaining his children throughout the year has to meet expenses for doctors, chemists, dentists, etc. For relief tax purposes, he is allowed no concessional deduction in respect of these items, which is altogether unfair. I appeal to the Minister to give serious consideration to that aspect of this question, and I also urge him to approve of the adoption of a statutory exemption of £250 in the case of primary producers. The financial position of the primary producers has become so burdensome that the Commissioner of Taxes is compelled to collect the unemployment relief tax at the factories by deducting small amounts from cream cheques from month to month. No Government should tolerate such a state of affairs in a prolific State like Queensland. The Government must legislate and administer in such a manner that primary industries will be encouraged to develop and extend their operations. By this means the wealth of the nation will be increased. The country districts must receive more favourable consideration than they are getting at the present time as compared with the larger centres. Boiled down, the position is that the primary producer, whether he be an agriculturist or pastoralist, has no definite assurance as to what return he will receive from his product to keep his wife and family and develop his holding. For instance, immediately the dairyman's cream arrives at the butter factory it is handled by employees who always know what wages they will receive. In fact, every operation in a butter factory is classified and provision made in the industrial award as to the amount of remuneration each employee shall receive. When the butter is manufactured it is transported to the distributing centres by the railways, the employees concerned again working under award rates. Immediately the man in the forest wields an axe or handles a saw to cut down a tree for the manufacture of butter boxes he knows what he will receive for his work. Likewise with the employee of the engineering firm manufacturing the nails used in butter boxes. But the producer's wages are governed by the fluctuations of the market. Organised marketing assists the producer, but it does not accomplish all that is desired. Although the Government may from time to time assist various primary industries by subsidies, there is no soundness in that method. The producer has to contend with climatic conditions as well as with pests—and Government inspectors can be included within the latter category.

These are some facts illustrating why the producer is in his present difficulty and is unable to give employment to the workers.

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If the conditions of the man on the land were improved then thousands of sons of primary producers would remain on the land instead of drifting to the larger centres to seek employment in more remunerative avenues, including the public service. This position cannot continue. What I have said is true of the industry not only in Australia but also elsewhere. The hardships of the producer must be faced and overcome. The old pioneer and his successors have attempted in vain to overcome the difficulties caused by droughts, pests, and the vagaries of markets.

Never in the history of this or any other State in Australia were they hampered to the extent they are at the present time. The primary producer pays the tariff that is imposed upon the machinery he uses or on any other article he purchases for the purpose of developing his property. The assistance rendered by the Agricultural Bank to the primary producer has been made necessary by the imposition of conditions that have been prejudicial to his interests. In my opinion the time has arrived when this

matter should be thoroughly explored with a view to eliminating the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. The position will not be remedied by carrying out public works for the purpose of absorbing the unemployed. I am not arguing that we should not carry out public works that are necessary in the interests of the security of the State; I refer to many of those public works that are embarked on merely for the purpose of employing men. It is our duty to pursue a policy that will result in permanent improvement. There is only one way in which that can be achieved, and that is to give private enterprise a fair and reasonable opportunity to recover; that can be done by removing taxation and reducing overhead costs by a cut in railway freights. That policy would not only result in improving the conditions of the people on the land but also have the effect of attracting people to the land again.

The following table of figures indicates the very unsatisfactory condition that has been reached in this country:—

Wealth Production and Cost of Government.

| Queensland. | 1914-15. | 1924-25. | 1932-33. |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. |
| Wealth production, per head | 56 4 9 | 80 9 7 | 49 12 0 |
| Cost of Government (Commonwealth, State, and Local), per head | 15 14 6 | 32 4 4 | 32 5 7 |
| Leaving for all other activities of the community, per head | 40 10 3 | 48 5 3 | 17 6 5 |

I am prepared to admit that those low figures have something to do with the falling of prices; but, unfortunately, they show that the State and Commonwealth are absorbing the resources that would make it possible for these people to expand. It is time the question was thoroughly explored and more suitable methods adopted of dealing with it.

Hon. members sitting behind the Government, when speaking on unemployment, appeared to get carried away. It is natural to be imbued with the idea that since there are unemployed work must be found—work under any conditions. But would it not be better to consider the matter very carefully indeed and ascertain whether the employment given will prove continuous? Would it not be better to discover whether such employment will continue to absorb our unemployed instead of being a temporary expedient? I hold, and every hon. member must agree with me, that the wealth of the State is produced in the country districts. That being so, why is not greater consideration given to this aspect of the problem than has so far been the case? There is an institution controlled by the Government for the purpose of assisting primary producers, particularly in the early stages of their settlement. I refer to the Agricultural Bank, but it cannot be denied that at the present time it is just as difficult to obtain money from that bank as from any other financial institution. My contention is that the policy of the Agricultural Bank is entirely wrong and that were it to be placed on the basis that private control would adopt numerous difficulties would be overcome. In this respect my argument is backed by certain information regarding new industries obtained quite recently from the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock.

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These industries were established during recent years. The argument I advanced should be of great assistance to many public men who are continually asserting that machinery has displaced so many thousands of workers and resulted in their being thrown on the scrap-heap of unemployment. Certainly, the truth of their statement may be admitted to a certain point, but it is very hard to doubt that in Queensland at any rate there has been some attempt to offset that position. It is very doubtful whether it can be proved that the percentage of unemployment has been increased very considerably by the installation of modern machinery. In Queensland the position could be met by establishing some other industry on a successful basis and there finding scope for those thrown into unemployment owing to the introduction of machinery. To my mind these great numbers thrown out of employment by machinery are a myth. I directed to the Secretary for Agriculture a question dealing with three industries established in the State during the past few years. These industries have not so far had a successful run because of dry seasons, overhead costs, and many other difficulties with which they have had to contend. The question and answer are—

“1. What is approximately the average annual value of (a) cotton, (b) peanuts, and (c) tobacco produced in Queensland?”

“The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) replied—

“1. (a) Cotton.—The average annual value over three recent years, including value of by-products and Federal bonus, approximately £320,370. (b) Peanuts.—Average annual value over three recent

years approximately £71,256. (c) Tobacco.—Average annual value over recent three years approximately £135,000."

I am just now in receipt of information from the general manager of the Queensland Cotton Board, which I greatly appreciate. He has forwarded figures that are very interesting and show how this new industry is expanding in the State. The following figures show the value of the crop for the years shown:—

| | £ |
|---|---------|
| 1928 | 266,115 |
| 1929 | 180,411 |
| 1930 | 393,852 |
| 1931 | 326,053 |
| 1932 (drought year) | 144,112 |
| 1933 | 335,308 |
| 1934 | 481,699 |
| 1935 (estimated—season not quite finished) | 480,000 |

Mr. FOLEY: Did he give you for each of those years the price per lb. of cotton?

Mr. EDWARDS: No, he did not. I am endeavouring to point out that here is an illustration of what I have been saying. The point is that it is from these returns that the farmer has to create improvements and employ men to assist him in doing it. At every stage, from the planting of the seed to the pulling of the cotton, all the way down to the ginnery, throughout the manufacture of by-products such as oil, men must be employed. Almost as soon as one crop is cleaned up another is coming on. To my mind here is the way out of our difficulty. In 1934 there was 570 growers of peanuts and in 1935 there were 600. In 1934 the crop realised £118,397, and in 1935 it realised approximately £150,000. Here is an illustration of what we could do if the proper assistance were given to these industries—and not only to these, for there are thousands of tons of imports coming from the other States of Australia and overseas that we could grow quite successfully within the boundaries of our own State, if the proper conditions were set out and the proper practical knowledge obtained and disseminated so that the people in these industries may use it. Theory is all right in books, and it is all right when setting the crop out in plots, but when it comes to meeting climatic conditions during the growing of the crop it is a different matter altogether. Therefore, the best practical knowledge that it is possible to obtain should be obtained in the establishment of these new industries.

Mr. FOLEY: Plus the best price for the product.

Mr. EDWARDS: There lies difficulty again. If you harp on that sort of thing, you must get into difficulties.

Mr. FOLEY: I know the cotton grower was getting 5d. under the Scullin Government, and he is only getting 3d. now.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Moore Government assisted them to the extent of £30,000, and that practically saved many of them. Here is one of our difficulties. If we use the argument that the hon. member is using now, an argument of one Government against another, what can we achieve? The Commonwealth Government can do nothing that will suit this Government, no matter what it may be. Surely it is wrong in a Commonwealth like this to take up that attitude!

Surely it is only fair that all the State Governments should help the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth should help the States!

Mr. FOLEY: Why did they interfere with the method that was in operation?

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member can go and ask them if he has the time. I want to know why he wants to put the Russian system into effect in Queensland.

Before I conclude I want to make a few remarks on a subject in which I am well versed, one that was mentioned by the hon. member for Toowoomba, that of a railway link between Tarong and Cooyar. This question has been brought before the House for very many years, and unfortunately there is a division of opinion as to where the link should be. The Royal Commission on Public Works were sent out, and presented their report on the 7th July, 1916. They decided that the best route to take would be to connect the Downs by a link between Boonenne and Bell. They discarded the link between Tarong and Cooyar and agreed that it was necessary to build a second link between Nanango and Yarraman; the latter was agreed to by Parliament on 30th October, 1918.

Mr. LLEWELYN: That would be no benefit to the Downs.

Mr. EDWARDS: Perhaps the one from Bell would, I am not arguing which would be the best link. It will be very difficult for the Government to decide upon a course of action until the people concerned are of one mind on the matter. I suggest to the Minister for Transport that he cause a re-survey to be made immediately of the whole railway problem in its application to the Southern Burnett, Darling Downs, and Brisbane Valley districts, because, as the hon. member for Toowoomba has pointed out, considerable sums of money are being expended upon the main North Coast line to enable it to cope with the ever-increasing traffic. I am informed by railway officials that it is extremely difficult to carry the present heavy burden of railway traffic over the existing North Coast line, and in view of this circumstance it is highly imperative that there should be an outlet for this traffic from the Southern Burnett through the Brisbane Valley to Brisbane and the Darling Downs. The construction of a railway link as suggested would connect two wonderful primary producing districts. It is unfair and unjust to the primary producers that they should be called upon to convey their produce over 60 odd miles of railway, which would be absolutely unnecessary if the suggested links were constructed.

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

Mr. HAYES (*Yundah*) [2.26 p.m.]: I desire to join in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, upon your being unanimously re-elected to the position of Speaker in this House. I am satisfied that your impartiality in the administration of the Standing Orders of this House and your capable conduct of its affairs during your occupancy of your exalted position during the past three years has won for you the unanimous approbation and respect of hon. members.

I desire also to congratulate the hon. member for Buranda upon the confidence

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again reposed in him by hon. members in re-electing him unanimously to the position of Chairman of Committees.

I desire, too, to congratulate the two new members who have had the honour of moving and seconding the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Mirani and the hon. member for Sandgate. I congratulate them not only because of the excellence of their maiden speeches but also because they succeeded in displacing two Nationalist members who were, perhaps, regarded by the Opposition as stars in the Nationalist firmament. Judging from the speeches delivered by those hon. members I have no doubt that their political opponents in their respective electorates have been removed from this Chamber for ever.

I listened with great attention to the speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition, hoping to hear proposals of a constructive nature—which, of course, hon. members on this side are at all times entitled to expect. Queensland, in common with the other States of the Commonwealth and the rest of the world, has had to endure a very severe depression, occasioned in the first place by the outbreak and the aftermath of a terrible war, involving a young country like Australia in a cost amounting to £800,000,000. Such an expenditure by a young country must have serious repercussions, and it is the duty of any Government to offset the consequential difficulties, whether due to misadventure or otherwise. As a result of the war, Queensland, in common with Australia, was bereft of its very life-blood, and the duty was cast upon our legislators to see that a new system was designed to take the place of one that had proved to be totally inadequate. Labour has advocated monetary reform on every occasion when an appeal has been made to the people. Its representatives have argued that the system has failed and a change is necessary to meet the ever-recurring problems facing Governments. The Federal Labour Party will have another opportunity at the next Federal elections of pressing their claims in this direction.

It is pleasing to me, as it is to the Government, that the Labour legislation and administration of the past three years found favour with such a large percentage of the people. They evidently realised that the Government did everything that was possible to ameliorate the conditions of the people by placing them back in employment. As one hon. member remarked, the workers in this State were suffering mainly from a man-made depression, which was largely contributed to by our predecessors, the Moore Government. The Leader of the Opposition said the hon. members on this side had taken credit for everything that had happened in Queensland, and in particular for the increased prices of wool and gold. It would be ridiculous to take all the credit for these increases, but this can be said of the previous Labour Administration, that the people regarded them as legislating not only for the industrialists but also the pastoralists and farmers generally. That is reflected in the fact that more representatives of farming constituencies occupy seats on the Government benches than on the Opposition benches, where it is claimed the friends of the farmers are to be found. The position was left to the people to decide and they are the best judges. They showed very definitely on 11th May last that they believed

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the Government were assisting to rehabilitate Queensland, and I believe the Government will not let the people down. Hon. members know that on many occasions when the wool industry has been passing through a period of adversity the Government have been sympathetic and granted what assistance lay in their power. Proof of that is to be found in the legislative proposals mentioned in the Governor's Speech. There is indication there that further assistance will be afforded the industry during this Parliament.

The hon. member for Hamilton set out to prove that the Moore Government had adopted a policy that had had a beneficial effect on the goldmining industry and led to increased gold production. His claim was that towards the end of their three-year term £10,000 or £15,000 had been made available to the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company to enable it to recommence operations. Labour has adopted other methods to assist in the revival of mining. They, perhaps, made such arrangements, but it was the Labour Government that found the necessary money and have continued to assist the industry since. It has granted assistance to prospectors and made grants for the purchase of machinery, including batteries. This method was largely responsible for the increase in the gold yield by 1,500 per cent. The gold yield in 1930 was valued at only £33,224, but in 1934 it had increased to £490,490. The Government had also afforded assistance for the recovery of other minerals.

The underlying motive of the Government was the finding of more work for the unemployed. It has always been the policy of Labour that work must be found for the people. Let us go back to the position as Labour found it in 1932.

Hon. members will recollect the conditions that obtained in this State when Labour again took office. During the previous three years the Moore Government, which had obtained power as a result of promises made to the people that they did not carry out, failed to grapple with the problems of the people, apparently considering that a handful of capitalists were the only ones who were in need of assistance. The Leader of the Opposition has stated that this State was in the throes of depression from 1928. We are prepared to grant the conditions that obtained then; the fact remains that it was the job of the Government to find a way out of the impasse. The people of Queensland found that their elected representatives were not capable of doing so, and it was not until 1932, when Labour was again returned to power, that conditions began to improve. The decision reached at the first Premiers' Conference attended by the Premier after the 1932 elections was the turning point, not only for Queensland, but also for the other States of the Commonwealth.

The Leader of the Opposition remarked that hon. members sitting behind the Government claimed credit for everything that has happened. I say very definitely that the Labour Government are entitled to 100 per cent. of the credit for the progress that has been made during their term in office. Hon. members opposite are well aware of what occurred when the present Leader of the Opposition attended the meetings of the Loan Council as Premier of this State. He was one of the astute leaders

who said that Queensland did not want money. Apparently it did not matter whether the people in this State were in work or not! When the present Premier attended the meeting of the Loan Council, after the return of the Labour Government, he was successful in an impromptu speech in persuading the conference—although they had their minds made up previously, and spoke from typed speeches—that it was necessary to provide work and wages for our people in order to get us out of the morass.

The Leader of the Opposition has also remarked that the reduction of wages caused increased employment in Queensland, whereas, although in New South Wales the reduction was less than in Queensland, the increase in employment was greater in that State. I cannot understand why such a statement as that should be made, because it has no foundation in reason, and can be easily knocked over. During the last election campaign our Tory opponents again attempted to gull the people by election dope similar to that used in 1929, such as the promise of "£2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs."

He further stated, "We will not lengthen hours, neither will we reduce wages." Unemployment must increase when hours of labour are increased. Did it not mean that the extension of working hours would result in one workman in twelve being taken from industry? Certainly it did. He proceeded to say that if the opportunity were his again and under similar conditions he would do the self-same thing. I hope that the people of this wonderful State will remember those words of the Leader of the Opposition. If they do, neither he nor the remnant of his party will appear, in Opposition, in the next Parliament. Having neither the ability to discover the solution of the problem nor effect a change, no suggestion came from the hon. member at the Premiers' Conference other than that Queensland did not require the money that was offered. In his opinion Queensland did not want it, and could get along without it. It made no difference to our opponents how many of our people would remain idle so long as the friends of the Opposition party were doing well financially.

The job of governing to-day is to proceed further along the road of progress than has been traversed so far. Labour administration in Queensland during the past three years has been responsible for successfully placing in full-time employment no fewer than 31,000 individuals. But that is not sufficient for the present Government! They are looking for some further means of combating unemployment and finding jobs for Queensland citizens, irrespective of their political opinions; an opportunity is being afforded to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth to carry into effect a principle to which Australia pledged herself at the International Labour Conference at Geneva during the present year, the introduction of a forty-hour working week. The time is opportune; it must not be delayed. Any action taken by the Commonwealth Government towards that end will be welcomed by every State of Australia—of this I am certain. People frequently speak of the present as a machine age. Inventive genius has been responsible for the introduction of many instruments and implements useful in the manufacture of numberless articles. This

has certainly resulted in the throwing on to the unemployment market vast numbers of manual workers. However, the question to be discussed is not whether we shall put back the hands of the clock. We must find another way of overcoming our difficulties. This condition of affairs exists not only in the manufacturing industries. Take the drapery emporiums in Brisbane. One need only throw one's mind back a decade to remember that the windows of these establishments were in alignment with the footpath. What has happened? Although in many instances property carries a valuation of £1,000 a foot such business organisations can still afford to leave spaces between their windows and have what are known as island windows. These silent salesmen alone are responsible for throwing out of employment a certain number of employees.

Goods were once sold from behind wooden counters. These were considered obsolete and glass showcases replaced them, with further showcases also displaying goods and showing their prices. Where science has been applied to industry it has been responsible for the reduction of the number of people formerly in full-time work, and that is so even in drapery houses. A way of overcoming these obstacles must be found, and the only way that I can see is the introduction of a shorter working week. I hope the time when that will be achieved is not far distant; its coming should be hastened; it is something that all Governments should welcome. At the conference at Geneva of world representatives a motion was carried by seventy-nine against thirty in favour of the shorter working week, so that when we establish it we merely embrace the opinion of the whole wide world. Nor would it be a new step, because there are countries where a 40-hour week is operating to-day. Should the move come when the present Federal Government at last become seized of their responsibility and realise that they have been elected to do something in the interests of the people of Australia, I trust that the reduction of hours will not bring about any interference with the rate of wage now obtaining. It has been said that if we worked fewer hours we should not be in a position to compete with manufacturers in other parts of the world. If we were to take notice of the arguments used by members of the Opposition we should have people working as they did when the hours were increased from forty-four to forty-eight—we should have people working those hours and perhaps even longer at the rate of about 1s. 2d. per day, as they do in Japan.

Mr. RUSSELL: Wake up!

Mr. HAYES: The Opposition need to wake up or their numbers will be further depleted. The introduction of a 40-hour week would be responsible for placing more people in full-time employment. That in turn would mean that reductions could be made in taxation generally, for a greater number of people would be carrying that taxation. So long as we have so many thousands of people still unemployed our chief duty is to find them full-time employment. Whilst in agreement with the lessening of the relief tax, I say that we must not be unmindful of those of our people who need all the assistance that a humane Government can give them. That assistance will, I am sure, continue to be given to them.

Mr. Hayes.]

I am pleased to note the increase given to men engaged on intermittent relief work and to see that the Government have endeavoured to bring about some alleviation of their sufferings. The introduction of a shorter working week and the better use of the money that is now taken in from taxation—with a simultaneous lessening of taxation on the individual—would be an advantage to the State and the nation. That is a contribution that is to be expected from people who are prepared to give of their very best in the interests of civilisation.

Mr. BELL (*Stanley*) [2.54 p.m.]: At the outset I desire to tender my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the hon. member for Buranda upon being unanimously re-elected to the positions of Speaker and Chairman of Committees respectively in this House. That you have so conducted the affairs of this House as to merit the unanimous support of hon. members reflects very great credit indeed upon you both.

I very much regret that the Speech delivered by His Excellency did not contain measures calculated to be far more effective in the interests of Queensland generally. Looking through the Bills forecast in that Speech one cannot feel that important constructive proposals are to be submitted, or look forward with any great degree of confidence to the future of Queensland under the administration of the present Government. There are certainly two or three Bills that will be welcomed by the primary producers, but I hope that when the Bills relating to the relief tax, the improvement of stock routes, and land tax are introduced, they will be so drafted as also to meet the wishes of the primary producers. The hon. member for Nundah claimed that the Labour Government were the friends of the pastoralists and the primary producers generally. I trust that when these measures are before the House hon. members opposite will consider them in the light of their importance to the industries concerned and to the community generally, and that they will not give an undue measure of support to what may be regarded as the extreme element of the Government Party, who would act to the detriment of those industries.

This is the second occasion on which I have been elected to this Parliament. During the last Parliament I was not very much impressed with the time-worn tactics of hon. members opposite of attacking the Leader of the Opposition and his party, accusing them of formulating what has almost been termed the Moore-made Plan. I feel that the time has arrived when we should consider matters of State from a broader viewpoint than that adopted by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Nundah practically accused the Leader of the Opposition and his party of being responsible for all the dreadful things that have happened.

Mr. WATERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BELL: That remark reflects very little intelligence on the hon. member. If he will cast his mind back to the time when the Premiers' Plan was formulated, and if he has any reasonableness in his make-up at all, he will admit that that plan was adopted by Australia as a whole because it was inevitable. He will also discover that it was approved by three Labour Premiers, three Nationalist Premiers, and one Labour Prime Minister, which, in other words, means that

[*Mr. Hayes.*

the plan that the present Leader of the Opposition is accused of formulating of his own volition was really brought into being by four Labour representatives. He will also realise that the then Federal Prime Minister, Mr. Scullin, warned the people of Australia that if the plan were not accepted Australia would be compelled to default, because at that time she was able to meet her indebtedness only to the extent of 12s. in the £1. It is very petty in the extreme to accuse the Leader of the Opposition of being responsible for all the political ills that beset the country during his term of office, but as I stated last session—and I now repeat it—the Leader of the Opposition and his party would rather come back to this House with diminished numbers, having told the people the truth than mislead them in the hope of regaining the Treasury benches.

Mr. GLEDSON: You cannot suggest that we misled the people.

Mr. BELL: I do not know what the hon. member for Ipswich would call misleading, but I would remind him that four Government members visited the Stanley electorate during the election campaign and threw out all sorts of baits—baits that I would be ashamed to dangle before any constituency. Let me now pass to the unemployment question. I recognise that the subject has been worn threadbare, but looking at the matter broadly one must appreciate the utterances of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for West Moreton and Cunningham. The most important question we have to solve is the getting of our men and youths back to work, even though they may wish to accept something less than the basic wage.

Mr. WATERS: You believe in a reduction of wages?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BELL: It is all very well for the hon. member to interject. He came up and addressed the electors of Stanley during the election campaign. He told the primary producers—what they did not believe—of the concessions his Government gave them. After all, when one talks of concessions, it all comes back to the same old pocket, and that is the primary producer's. It is the primary producers who are creating the wealth of the country, and that is something of which any one of them may well be proud.

The hon. member for Sandgate referred to what he termed the tragedy of youth, but he did not state how he would overcome the difficulty. All sorts of restrictions are imposed on private enterprise to prevent the employment of youths.

Mr. WATERS: Give us a few indications.

Mr. BELL: I will tell the hon. member how the employment of youths is restricted under the award governing the pastoral industry. The irony of the whole position is that one is debarred from employing two or three more youths if he desires. Yet the hon. member for Sandgate refers to the tragedy of youth!

Mr. GLEDSON: How many boys did you find work for during your term of office?

Mr. BELL: I did not have any term of office, but more youths were placed on cattle stations during the Moore Government's term of office than in the last three years. The following clause in the award governing the

pastoral industry will enable the hon. member for Kelvin Grove to see how employers are debarred from employing youths in this industry—

“Not more than one youth (or, in the alternative, one jackeroo) shall be employed to every three employees receiving not less than the minimum rate for station hands: Provided that every employer may employ one youth, or, in the alternative, one jackeroo.”

That condition regulates the employment of youths according to the number of adults engaged. You, Mr. Speaker, are aware that there are many jobs on stations that can be carried out just as well by a youth as an adult. If we desire to solve the unemployment problem we shall require to take a wider view and deal with it in a more constructive way than at the present time.

Mr. WATERS: Why not disgorge a little more profit and employ a few more youths?

Mr. BELL: I have always realised that the bigger the drum the more noise it makes. (Laughter.) Private enterprise has been accused by Government members of falling down on its job, but when the position is scrutinised closely one must admit that great credit is reflected on private enterprise for having survived the attacks made on it during the administration of the last twenty years in Queensland. The wool and cattle industry, as well as other primary producing industries, have been attacked and taxed to such an extent that to-day hon. members opposite who represent industrial constituencies are awaking to the position of these industries and are seeking to improve their lot. The time has arrived when private enterprise should receive the encouragement it deserves. For that reason alone, relief from taxation should be given to such an extent that private industry would be encouraged to absorb some of the unemployed.

Mr. WATERS: Give us your idea.

Mr. BELL: I know the hon. member for Kelvin Grove advocates Government control of private enterprise. I would remind the hon. member that some years ago Labour members in this House said they were going to make the wool and beef barons squeal, and the Government established State enterprises. The Premier at that time stated he would make the beef barons squeal, and he certainly did to this extent, that as a result of the actions of the Government at that time the primary producers of this State had to make good a total deficit of £1,994,302, which represents the loss on State stations. In addition, the State butcher shops resulted in a loss of £31,410. The capital invested in State enterprises was £5,110,728, and the net loss on them was £4,447,216. To-day we find hon. members sitting behind the Government asking that some little consideration be given to the pastoral and wool industry.

I have a few suggestions to offer from the graziers' point of view with regard to some of the Bills forecast in the Governor's Speech. Before the Bills are introduced I hope the Government will take into their confidence the representatives of that industry with the object of arriving at some equitable basis whereby the future of the industry will be assured. The Income Tax Acts Amendment Bill that, I hope, will be brought forward dealing with the carrying

forward of losses will be a very important one, and I hope that when it comes before the House the Government will not only allow the carrying forward of losses, but will also make the provision retrospective. A very big proportion of the people engaged in the pastoral industry are to-day heavily involved financially, and unless the provision is made retrospective it will not be of any assistance to many who are in urgent need of it. Many of those men who are in a difficult position to-day have given the best years of their lives in endeavouring to establish themselves in the industry, and their success would not only be of advantage to themselves but also for the welfare of the whole of Queensland. These people have not been able to enjoy the conditions that obtain in Brisbane, and owing to the conditions under which they have been working, are carrying very heavy financial responsibilities. Unless assistance and encouragement are given to these men, the wool industry of Queensland will sink into a parlous condition. I will quote figures of one case showing the actual losses incurred, which should give hon. members opposite ample food for thought:—

| Year ending | Loss |
|----------------|---------|
| June 6th, 1930 | 12,046 |
| June 6th, 1931 | 6,336 |
| June 6th, 1932 | 6,215 |
| June 6th, 1933 | 2,903 |
| June 6th, 1934 | 1,619 |
| Total loss | £29,119 |

For the year 1935, with an assumed profit of £9,000 his State income tax would be calculated on that amount, less £5,000 loss carried forward—£1,000 a year loss for each of the five years. He then would be assessed on £4,000, his tax amounting to £765. His unemployment relief tax would be £450. In all he would have to pay in taxation £1,215. If in 1936 he again made a profit of £9,000, the following would be the figures:—

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Income tax | 3,136 |
| Unemployed relief tax | 450 |
| | £3,586 |

For the seven years, although the taxpayer's operations resulted in a loss of £11,117, he has to pay £4,801 under the heading of State taxation. That is the position in which men in the pastoral industry find themselves. No one knows better than you, Mr. Speaker, the position pastoralists are in, and I trust you will, so far as you are able, induce the Government to assist the pastoralists in this very important matter. All they ask is that they be taxed by the State under the same terms and conditions as by the Commonwealth. The Land Settlement Advisory Board in this respect made a recommendation, which, under the present circumstances, should be given effect to by the Government.

The second item of importance to the industry is the abolition of the State land tax. This is a tax upon capital. During the last few years the grazing industry has been taxed upon whatever has been derived from the land, which also attracts State land tax. The matter has been debated at length in this House, and I hope that under the circumstances the Government will seriously consider the necessity for its abolition.

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All we ask in connection with railway freights is that they be commensurate with the industry's ability to pay. During the pre-war years freights were very much lower than at present. Unfortunately the present schedule of rates was framed six to seven years ago at a time when the pastoral industry was in a flourishing condition. They have never been reduced to the extent present conditions warranted. As hon. members well know, cattle and sheep during the past few years have not even paid the cost of production. During the pre-war period the sheep freights were lower by—

| | Per cent. |
|------------------|-----------|
| 200 miles | 94 |
| 300 miles | 86 |
| 400 miles | 85 |
| 500 miles | 71.8 |

The freights are 39 per cent. higher now than in the pre-war times. Cattle freights are in the same category, the increases there, however, being less. The Government should give very serious consideration to this matter with a view to helping to restore the wool and meat industries to what they should be. Then there is another thing—the abolition of the sales tax.

It was very interesting to hear the hon. member for Cairns making a suggestion the other day as to what should be done for the preservation of the natural grasses in Western Queensland. It is a very important question. Until some action is taken Queensland will not progress very far in the conservation of grasses. Some hope should be held out to the man on the land that he will be in a better position at the end of his term than at the commencement. Under the present conditions many pastoralists endeavour to take as much as they possibly can from the land as quickly as possible, realising that it does not pay to improve their properties over a series of years, because if they so highly develop them and they sell to advantage they will be heavily taxed. Whatever hon. members on the Government benches may think, we must give to the owner of the land some encouragement to do something towards preserving the natural conditions of his country. He should be put in such a position that he will realise that by conserving the natural grasses on his property he will be able to sell out at the end of his term at an advantage. Thus he will not only be doing himself a very great benefit but will also prove of value to the State.

For the reason that the hon. member for Dalby has pointed out, I feel that the pastoral industry should not be singled out to carry a bigger burden than is just.

As to the Blackall-Charleville Railway, I am not going to assert, as did the hon. member for Enoggera, that I know every inch of the land from Blackall to the border—that remark goes to show what wild statements are made by hon. members opposite—but I feel that I should state my belief in the importance of this line. The distance from Blackall to Charleville is 160 miles. Yet to get from one place to the other by rail sheep have to travel in the vicinity of 1,000 miles. During drought periods that is a very serious problem. When you pay the freight from your property, and pay to get them back, the value of the sheep has disappeared

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in railway charges. There is another angle from which we have to look at this question, and that is the increase in value of sheep in Central Queensland. It is estimated by people in the industry to be 2s. 6d. a head during drought periods. Further north it would amount to 5s. We could, perhaps, construct a railway into the cattle areas and build up the important chilled beef industry. It is necessary that we should make every endeavour to hold our position in that industry in Great Britain and elsewhere.

Mr. FOLEY: What would it cost to build that line?

Mr. EDWARDS: According to estimates, something under £1,000,000.

Mr. NIMMO: Less than the Kangaroo Point Bridge.

Mr. BELL: It would pay handsomely. Even if it did not you would be creating an asset for the State instead of putting up a white elephant like the Kangaroo Point Bridge. Coming back to the chilled beef business, we have to recognise that you may have drought in North Queensland and at the same time more prosperous and favourable conditions in Southern Queensland and New South Wales. North Queensland will continue to be the great breeding centre for our cattle. If you can move those cattle by such a railway, at about eighteen months or two years, to where the grasses will fatten them for the export trade, you are going to make a big difference in holding the chilled meat business. I hope that for those reasons alone that railway will receive very careful consideration from members of the Government.

The question of living areas is a very big one. Additional areas have been allotted in the past because the original holdings were surveyed when the good times and the wool industry was failing, but the time has arrived when the Government should consider the advisability of giving in the vicinity of 50,000 acres as the maximum rather than 30,000 acres as at present. There, again, we have owners trying to get too much out of too small an area during the time they hold it, and overstocking causes trouble in a drought more quickly than anything else.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What area do you suggest?

Mr. BELL: Anything up to 50,000 acres.

Mr. BEDFORD: That would become two living areas with a return to the old prices of wool.

Mr. BELL: So much the better. It does not matter where the wool comes from so long as it is an asset to this State.

Mr. BEDFORD: There are people continually clamouring for land.

Mr. BELL: You have the ballot to keep a certain number off the land. If you put too many on the land they cannot make a living from it. The time has arrived when we should view these matters in a more statesmanlike way than we have. As a small boy living in New South Wales I always regarded Western Queensland as being the rich man's country, but during the wool boom, when prices soared and the sale of wool was a simple matter, the Government seemed to adopt the mistaken idea that woolgrowers could secure a profitable return from small areas. You, Mr.

Speaker, know perfectly well that unless a man is in a strong financial position and is given a very generous area of land he has little prospect of making good in the western parts of the State.

I also suggest to the Government that they give greater consideration to the methods adopted in arriving at the carrying capacity of our cattle and sheep country, the areas of which were probably assessed in the past without any regard to the cost of development and fluctuations of beef and wool prices.

Speaking in this House last Thursday the Premier accused the Leader of the Opposition and other members on this side of the House of continually indulging in a tirade of abuse against the Government, involving the use principally of half-truths. Such a statement ill-becomes the hon. gentleman. I have always told the people from the platform that the Leader of the Opposition would prefer to remain in Opposition than attempt to mislead the people into giving him their political patronage. I feel very strongly when these false accusations are made against the Leader of the Opposition, because they are also aimed at the members of this party.

I wish to deal particularly with the abattoir strike, which extended over a period of approximately thirty days. What did the Government do? They merely looked on, content to hand over the control of the cattle industry to Mr. Carney. The Premier took great credit unto himself when he said that the strike was settled and the men returned to work on exactly the same conditions as those on which they were employed when they ceased operations. He also seemed to take credit to himself for the fact that during the strike the meat requirements of this city and the Southern States were adequately met. No credit is due to the Government for either achievement. The whole credit is due to the primary producers and their sons and to the master butchers of this city for the excellent way in which they determined that the people of this city and the Southern States should receive their meat requirements. It is all very well to try to cloud the issue; the Premier should at least have told the people that hundreds of pounds were lost as a result of the strike by primary producers who were precluded from forwarding their fat stock to market for thirty days. Sheep and cattle were driven about the country awaiting the termination of the strike, they lost considerably in condition and eventually had to be sold for whatever price could be realised. The attitude of the Premier towards the abattoir strike reflects very little credit upon him or the members of his party.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What would you have done?

Mr. BELL: At any rate, had I been a member of the Government, I would have governed; I would not have given way to a union official in a manner which the hon. member apparently approves. People who are elected as the representatives of the community generally, charged with the responsibility of carrying out the duties of government, should at least stand up to their responsibility; but with the Labour Government, whenever the Labour platform is in jeopardy, the community can whistle for the protection that is definitely due to them. On

every occasion that a strike of this sort has taken place we find that private enterprise and the people of Queensland have been the chief sufferers. I hope the time is approaching when the Government will realise the necessity of showing a firmer hand to prevent the dislocation of industry.

The charge has been hurled at the Leader of the Opposition that during his term of office he did something that was unjustified in order to overcome a strike. He did, however, govern. Notwithstanding the assertion of the Premier, it is certainly a relief to know that even the hon. gentleman realises that our leader possesses the ability to fill the position of leader and general of this State. I am certain that when the full facts are known to the people they will welcome back the hon. member for Aubigny as the general directing the affairs of this country and this Parliament. I hope that the days of strikes are passing but that, if they do occur, the Government will shoulder their responsibilities and face the situation in a manner in which any Government charged with the administration of a great State like Queensland should meet it.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 3.32 p.m.