

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1935

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Friendly Societies Acts Amendment Bill;
 Industrial and Provident Societies Acts
 Amendment Bill;
 Fish and Oyster Acts Amendment Bill;
 Holidays Acts Amendment Bill;
 Medical Acts Amendment Bill;
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration
 Acts Amendment Bill;
 Adoption of Children Bill.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the public accounts for the financial year 1934-35.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

HEAVY VEHICLES REGISTRATIONS.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. What was the total amount of heavy vehicles registration fees collected by the Transport Board—

(a) In January, 1935;

(b) From 1st February, 1935, to 17th May, 1935, inclusive?

“2. How many certificates of registration of heavy vehicles were issued during each of the above periods for goods and passenger-carrying vehicles, respectively—

(a) Assessed at full rates;

(b) Assessed at concession rates amounting to 75 per cent. or more of the scheduled maxima;

(c) Assessed at 50 per cent. and under 75 per cent. of the scheduled maxima;

(d) Assessed below 50 per cent. of the scheduled maxima?

“3. On 30th April, 1935, how many heavy vehicles were registered for the traffic route from Brisbane to Toowoomba and via Toowoomba—

(a) Holding heavy vehicle goods certificates;

(b) Holding heavy vehicle passenger certificates?

“4. How many of the existing certificates on 17th May, 1935, could be described as “current certificates” —

(a) For the traffic routes mentioned in Question 3;

(b) For all other traffic routes and traffic districts in Queensland?

“5. Has he observed that according to the judgment of the Full Court on 8th instant the Board had no authority prior to 18th May, 1935, to impose fees or conditions in respect of the heavy vehicles in question?

“6. Is it his intention to authorise the Board to make refunds to those from whom the Board collected fees without

TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER, 1935.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, intimating His Excellency's assent to the following Bills:—

Infant Life Protection Acts Amendment Bill;
 Main Roads Fund and Heavy Vehicles Road Fund Transfer Approval Bill;
 Maryborough Grammar Schools Transfer Bill;
 Statistics Bill;

authority during the period 1st February, 1935, to 17th May, 1935, inclusive?"

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*) replied—

"1. (a) £349 11s. 2d.; (b) £14,122 6s. 3d.

" 2.—

	Period—January, 1935.			Period—1st Feb.—17th May, 1935.		
	Goods.	Passenger Vehicles.		Goods.	Passenger Vehicles.	
		Service Cars.	Motor Buses.		Service Cars.	Motor Buses.
(a)	53	11	..
(b)	2	..	17
(c)	21	..	16
(d)	5	160	39	210

" 3. (a) 34; (b) 4 service cars.

" 4. (a) 3 goods; (b) 175 goods, 29 service cars, and 243 motor omnibuses.

" 5. The Full Court decided that the power of the board to cancel certificates of registration was quite legal.

" 6. No."

PERMITS FOR LIBERTY FAIRS.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Attorney-General—

"Under what law or regulation does he issue permits to conduct liberty fairs or other gambling concerns in aid of the funds of various branches of the Australian Labour Party?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Carpentaria*) replied—

"Under section 17 of 'The Art Union Regulation Act of 1930,' passed by the Moore Government, I am authorised to issue, in my sole discretion, permits for carnivals, bazaars, or fairs."

MINISTERS' MOTOR CARS.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*): I desire to ask the Premier whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on the 12th September last:—

"What motor cars used by Ministers have been purchased by the Government since 1st July, 1932, stating date of purchase, make of car, and price paid, respectively."

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

Motor Cars used by Ministers purchased by the Government since 1st July, 1932.

Department.	Date of Purchase.	Make of Car.	Price Paid.	Remarks.
Chief Secretary's ..	August, 1933 ..	Morris Isis Six Saloon	£ s. d. 471 12 6	A Buick was traded in. The Morris Isis Six was transferred to Lands Department in February, 1934.
Lands	February, 1934	Morris 25 Saloon ..	355 0 0	A Sunbeam was traded in. The Morris 25 Saloon was transferred to the Chief Secretary's Department in February, 1934.
Justice	July, 1934 ..	Ford V8 De-Luxe Sedan	366 13 9	
Home Secretary's ..	February, 1934	ditto	280 16 6	An Armstrong Siddeley was traded in.
Labour and Industry ..	March, 1934 ..	ditto	347 4 3	
Railways	April, 1934 ..	Buick Sedan ..	350 0 0	A Chrysler Sedan was traded in.
Mines	August, 1934 ..	Ford V8 De-Luxe Sedan	307 1 3	
Public Instruction ..	June, 1934 ..	Pontiac	260 0 0	A Sunbeam was traded in.
Agriculture and Stock ..	February, 1933	Buick Sedan ..	490 0 0	A Buick Tourer was traded in.
Works	December, 1932	Ford V8 Sedan ..	364 10 0	

BEER PURCHASED BY RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

Mr. NICKLIN (*Murrumba*), for Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I desire to ask the Minister for Transport whether he has an answer to the following question, which was addressed to him by the hon. member for Cunningham on the 17th instant:—

“How many dozen bottles of beer—
(a) imported from other States; and (b) locally brewed—were purchased by the Railway Refreshment Rooms during last year?”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*) replied—

“(a) 2,170; (b) 6,760.”

PAPER.

The following paper was laid upon the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Annual report of the Queensland Meat Industry Board for the year 1934-35.

FERTILISERS BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

DISEASES IN PLANTS ACTS AND FRUIT AND VEGETABLES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

STOCK FOODS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—THIRD AND FOURTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1935-36.

PREMIER AND CHIEF SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT. PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER.

Question stated:—

“That £6,264 be granted for ‘Public Service Commissioner.’”

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [10.42 a.m.]: When this vote was under discussion last week, the Leader of the Opposition and some of his colleagues endeavoured to make it appear that the charge frequently made against his Government that they reduced the basic wage and public servants' salaries had not been sustained. He quoted from the report of the Public Service Commissioner with a view to establishing some kind of defence on behalf of his Government. It is necessary that the public should know all the facts.

The wages question is of tremendous importance to the people of any country, because of its paramount bearing upon their spending power. The remuneration that may be paid to Crown employees is controlled to a very large extent by the volume of purchasing power in the community. I have always taken the view that the volume of wages and purchasing power of a community should be the highest that the national income will permit. If we trace the industrial history of any country we shall find that as industrial conditions and remuneration increase so the standard of living of the people improves. I also hold the view that the Crown should provide the best possible industrial conditions, having regard to the general economy of the State. It is said that the Crown should be a model employer. I agree, but I add that the Crown employee should be a model workman—that the two factors must inevitably go together.

The attitude of the Leader of the Opposition towards his tragic administrative record is pathetic. Reductions in salaries and wages were the principal feature of the Moore Administration. In fact, it was the Leader of the Opposition's proud boast that his Government had adopted a policy of deflation of wages long before any Premier's Plan was conceived. I will quote his own words, as published in the “Daily Mail” of 16th February, 1931, on his return from a meeting of a Premier's Conference at Canberra—

“Information laid before the conference on what cuts the various Governments had made was as follows:—

New South Wales, information not available,

Victoria, 4½ to 15 per cent., average 5.3 per cent.

Queensland, 10 to 15 per cent., average 11 per cent.

South Australia, 10 to 16 per cent., average 6 per cent.

Western Australia, 3¾ to 10 per cent., average 6 per cent.

Tasmania, 2½ to 10 per cent., average 7 per cent.

The Commonwealth had averaged a saving of 0.6 per cent., effected by a special tax of 10 to 15 per cent. on salaries exceeding £725.

“It would thus be seen that Queensland and South Australia had made

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the most serious attempt to bring down wages, while Western Australia was waiting for the decision of its Arbitration Court. The Commonwealth had not attempted to bring down salaries under the £725 mark."

The Premiers' Plan was not adopted until May or June, 1931.

The history of wage reductions can be briefly summed up as follows:—

1. The Moore Government took the initiative to bring about wage reductions in their first year of office by approaching the Arbitration Court for a general reduction in the basic wage;
2. There was no definite decision in this matter in the early months of 1930;
3. The view of the Moore Government in this matter can be summed up in the statement of the then Attorney-General, Mr. Macgroarty, who said—

"The Government had allowed the Court to function, but the Court had not functioned in the way it should have done."

That utterance was typical of the attitude of the Moore Government towards the principles of arbitration and wage fixation—

4. At a further hearing of the basic wage claim before the Arbitration Court in 1930, the Moore Government instructed their representatives to ask for a reduction in the basic wage from £4 5s. to £3 16s.
5. A few days later the Crown lodged its own application to the Court, which asked for "a general reduction in all salaries by two grades."
6. An Order in Council was then issued exempting Crown employees from the operations of the Industrial Court, and this was followed by the introduction of the Salaries Act of 1930.

Under the Salaries Act salaries and wages of State employees were reduced from 10 to 15 per cent. This reduction was increased from a 10 to 15 per cent. basis to a 15 to 20 per cent. basis under the Premiers' Plan. The effective result of these arrangements was that the employees of the State of Queensland suffered substantial reductions in salaries and wages approximately one year earlier than the employees of any other State Government. Automatic increases were also withheld by the Moore Government. At the Premiers' Conference held in Melbourne from 28th January to 5th February, 1932, the Premier of Queensland, now the Leader of the Opposition, submitted a further statement, which is contained in the official report of the proceedings. It will be remembered that at this conference the Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, then acting Treasurer of the Federal Government, rebuked the Moore Government for their high deficits and ever-increasing drift towards

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insolvency. The Leader of the Opposition said—

"Though not showing on the table on page 5, the effective reduction in salaries and wages, etc., amounts to 24 per cent. below 1929-30, including rationing and short time. This method was deemed advisable rather than to secure a similar result in another way."

So that the Leader of the Opposition, according to his own statement, by a reduction in wages, rationing, and short time had secured a reduction approximating—using his own figure—24 per cent. That does not tally with the statements made in this Chamber during the debate on this vote last Thursday.

The Leader of the Opposition further stated—

"Should the anticipated decline in revenue prove accurate, and no improvement in oversea prices takes place, the position must of necessity receive the earnest consideration of the Government. As to how it will be met I am unable to say at present. The average salary in the public service is already the lowest of any State in Australia, and the possibility of bridging the gap by taxation is out of the question."

I ask hon. members to note carefully these passages. They are to be found in the official report and reveal the attitude of the Moore Government at that time.

The next step was the Premiers' Conference of April, 1932, at which the experts' report was the principal matter considered. The first recommendation of the experts was this—

"That the principle of a reduction in real wages of 10 per cent. already provided under awards of the Federal Arbitration Court, should be made general, and be given effect to by all wage-fixing tribunals, or by legislation."

The Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, said—

"This recommendation really provides for the carrying out of what was an underlying principle of the Premiers' Plan."

Mr. Lyons also indicated that his Government fully accepted the text of the experts' report, and stated that, provided the States likewise concurred, the Commonwealth would co-operate with the States in negotiating for a loan of £10,000,000 for works and employment. The Leader of the Opposition, according to the official report of the conference, said—

"Queensland's representatives desired to make clear that the Queensland Government had no intention of departing from the spirit of the Premiers' Plan."

"The spirit of the Premiers' Plan"—to which the hon. gentleman there referred—had been previously mentioned by Mr. Lyons, and the experts' report of which he was speaking was a report subsequent to

that plan favouring a further reduction of 10 per cent.—and the Leader of the Opposition concurred with this proposal. The Leader of the Opposition's statement proceeds—

“But it might be difficult for Queensland, with an election pending, to satisfy the Commonwealth in this regard.”

The proposal would have meant an additional reduction in the basic wage from £3 14s. to £2 18s. 6d. in Queensland. It is significant that the reduction would have brought the basic wage in Queensland to the same level as the Federal basic wage of that time which was 10 per cent. below the standard laid down in the “Harvester” judgment by the late Mr. Justice Higgins many years ago. There can be no doubt at all that at that time the Premiers at that conference agreed in principle to that reduction. The Acting Premier of Victoria, Mr. Tunnecliffe, withdrew from the conference and other Premiers, Tory Premiers, continued in conference. It is well known that the understanding was that should the Tory Party be successful in the elections that were due to be held in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland the various States would confer power on the Commonwealth to apply a basic wage for the whole of the Commonwealth, and that basic wage would have been fixed on the basis of the experts' report, the “Harvester” standard, less 10 per cent. Fortunately for Queensland in particular and Australia in general—

“The best laid schemes o' mice and men

Gang aft a-gley;”

And no amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution can be made by this method unless all the States agree. That is the point to remember—these powers could not be conferred on the Commonwealth Government unless all the Parliaments of the various States passed uniform legislation giving it those powers. The return to power of a Labour Government in Queensland—at that time the only Labour Government in Australia—saved not merely the workers of Queensland, but all the workers of Australia—the plan could not be applied. (Opposition dissent.) Hon. members opposite may deny that statement as much as they like—it is a fact. From my discussion with the officers of the various departments of State I know that that was the understanding. As a matter of fact, a draft was prepared by the Railway Department in Queensland showing the effect of a reduction in wages of 10 per cent., and its effect on the budgetary position.

MR. GODFREY MORGAN: I never saw that draft report, and know nothing about it.

The PREMIER: Last year it was tabled.

MR. GODFREY MORGAN: It was not prepared.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: It was prepared, and has been tabled. The point I am making is also evidenced from the following statement

made on behalf of the Moore Government, and published in the “Daily Mail” of 16th February, 1931—

“DANGER OF BILL ISSUES.

“The Federal Arbitration Court, said Mr. Moore, after many months of inquiry and hearing the most voluminous evidence, found that a reduction on the index figure was not sufficient to meet the fall in the national income, and declared that a further 10 per cent. reduction was imperative. That decision now applied to all those industries cited in the hearing, and for Governments to attempt to ignore the finding only meant a continuous dependence on Treasury bills to enable them to continue their employees at rates unavailable to outside industries.”

Hon. members will note that that statement was made by the hon. member for Aubigny twelve months before the report of the experts advocating the further 10 per cent. reduction in real wages was presented. It indicates the desire of the hon. gentleman that the Federal basic wage standard should be the basis of all wage fixations.

The figures I have quoted and the excerpts I have given from the statements of the Leader of the Opposition are a complete refutation of the claim put forward by the hon. member last Thursday evening. Briefly, the facts are these: Immediately the Moore Government attained office they commenced wage reduction. They were proud of the fact that they had brought about a reduction in salaries and wages earlier than any other Government in Australia had done so. It showed that that was their policy, and their intention. Furthermore, the excerpts quoted indicate very clearly that it was the desire and intention of the Moore Government to apply the findings of the expert committee had they been given the opportunity. Had the Moore Government been returned to office in 1932 there would have been six State Premiers and one Prime Minister representing the same party. It would have been a case of—

“Seven hearts that beat as one,

“Seven minds with but a single thought.”

In order that the facts in relation to the basic wage so far as it affects Queensland should be known and placed on record, at my request the Public Service Commissioner has prepared a statement commencing with the first basic wage declaration made by Mr. Justice Macnaughton, and continuing up to the present time. The information contained in this table should be placed on record, so that members will know the position, and have the facts in chronological order.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the table shall be printed in “Hansard”?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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The PREMIER: The table is as follows:—

Date of Hearing.	Application by—	Claim.	Crown Representation.	Decision of Court.
15th and 16th March, 1920	Reference by Judge Macnaughton for opinion of Full Bench	..	Nil	£3 17s. per week for unskilled workers of the Water Supply and Sewerage Board
7th and 8th February, 1921	Reference by President McCawley for opinion of Full Bench	..	Nil	£4 5s. per week as from 1st March, 1921
(Note.—Following this decision the Full Bench decided that certain Awards relating to Crown employees should be varied by adding £10 per annum to all salaries of less than £300.)				
1st and 2nd November, 1921	Reference by President McCawley for opinion of Full Bench	..	Nil	Matter deferred until February, 1922
1st February, 1922	Ditto	Nil	£4 per week as from 1st March, 1922
(Note.—On 1st July, 1922, the Crown made application for variations of certain Awards relating to Crown employees consequent upon the Court's reduction in the basic wage. Broadly speaking, reductions of £10 per annum in the case of males were awarded in salaries up to £300 per annum, thus bringing the salaries into line with the rates which existed prior to the basic wage increase of 1st March, 1921. Following upon the variation of these Awards "The Salaries Act of 1922" was passed, reducing salaries over £300 per annum by 5 per cent. as from 1st July, 1922.)				
10th March, 1924	Australian Workers' Union for revision	..	Nil	No variation
(Note.—"The Public Service Act Amendment Act of 1924" gave all Crown employees access to the Arbitration Court and repealed the provision which was known as "the £300 embargo." State Service Unions quickly lodged claims in the Court for largely increased salaries and substantial increases were awarded as from 1st November, 1924.)				
6th and 7th April, 1925	Australian Workers' Union in conjunction with practically all other Unions for revision	..	Nil	No variation
(Note.—"The Salaries Act of 1922" was repealed as from 1st July, 1925. As from 28th September, 1925, the basic wage was increased to £4 5s. per week by "The Basic Wage Act of 1925.")				
6th and 7th September, 1926	Australian Workers' Union and other Unions for revision	Basic wage to be raised from £4 5s. to £4 15s. per week	Opposed application for increase	No variation. Further review in February, 1927
2nd March, 1927	Ditto	ditto	ditto	No variation
18th March, 1930, and following days	Ordered by Court under "The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1929"	No specified claims made	Reduction from £4 5s. to £4 1s.	No variation. Further declaration in July

Date of Hearing.	Application by—	Claim.	Crown Representation.	Decision of Court.
14th July, 1930, and following days	Ordered by Court under " <i>The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1929</i> "	No specific claims made, but during argument— Employers' Federation urged reduction to £3 16s. Chamber of Manufactures urged reduction to £3 10s.	Reduction from £4 5s. to £3 16s.	Reduction of Basic Wage from £4 5s. to £4 as from 1st August, 1930
28th July, 1930, and following days	Crown	(a) General reduction in all salaries by two grades; (b) Basic wage as previously determined by Court	See previous column	Reduction of 6 per cent. (except where wages were reduced by 5s. per week under July basic wage reduction) as from 1st August, 1930
(Note.—By Order in Council dated 11th September, 1930, Crown employees were excepted from the operations of " <i>The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1929</i> ." On 15th September, 1930, " <i>The Salaries Act of 1930</i> " came into operation imposing reductions in salaries and wages of Crown employees ranging from 10 to 15 per cent.; these reductions took the place of the reductions previously awarded by the Industrial Court. Adult employees working full time did not receive less than the basic wage declared by the Industrial Court.)				
3rd November, 1930	Queensland Employers' Federation and other employers	£3 13s. per week	Nil. Public Servants excepted from operation of " <i>The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1929</i> " by Order in Council dated 11th September, 1930	Reduction from £4 to £3 17s. as from 1st December, 1930
18th May, 1931	Ditto	£3 7s. 6d. per week	ditto	Reduction from £3 17s. to £3 14s. as from 1st July, 1931
(Note.—The basic wage for Crown employees was adjusted to conform to the basic wage declarations of the Court. As from 1st July, 1931, the rates of reduction under " <i>The Salaries Act of 1930</i> " were increased from 10 to 15 per cent. to 15 to 20 per cent.)				
3rd October, 1932	Queensland Employers' Federation and other employers	Revision	Nil. Public Servants excepted from operation of " <i>The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1929</i> " by Order in Council dated 11th September, 1930	No variation. Adjourned to February, 1933
27th and 28th February, 1933	Ditto	£3 4s. per week	Nil	No variation.
29th November, 1933 ..	Ditto	£3 3s. per week	Nil	No variation
(Note.—Under " <i>The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1932</i> ," which came into operation on 1st February, 1933, persons employed by the Government were again given access to the Industrial Court. It was provided that nothing in this Act should prejudice or affect the operation of the Salaries Act. " <i>The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Act of 1934</i> ," however, prescribed that in the making of Awards on or after 1st October, 1934, the Salaries Act was to be disregarded in respect of salaries not exceeding £500. On 26th November, 1934, the Industrial Court decided that the scale of reductions was to be reduced by one-fourth in each case as regards salaried officers (the rates of reduction now range from 11½ to 20 per cent). As regards wages employees the Court decided that the wage rates in operation prior to August, 1930, were to be restored, less a reduction of 11s. per week to conform to the reduction in the State basic wage.)				

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That is all I have to say on the matter. Little good can be done by trying to mislead the public in the manner that was attempted on Thursday last. The facts relating to salaries and wages are as I have stated. The fallacy and futility of the Moore policy was demonstrated by peak unemployment, peak bankruptcy, and record budget deficits. Since that policy has been altered, conditions have improved, and thereby the policy pursued by this Government has been justified.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [11.2 a.m.]: The Premier is evidently hard pressed to find justification for the continuance of the wages that were in operation during the Moore regime. He suggests that had the Moore Government been returned in 1932, wages would have been still further reduced. He cannot support that suggestion by facts. Nothing more can be inferred from the fact that the hon member for Aubigny said that he would abide by the spirit of the Premier's Plan than from the statement made by the present Premier in 1932 that he would abide by the spirit of that Plan. It must not be inferred that the Premier presupposes a reduction in wages when he says he intends to abide by the spirit of the Premier's Plan.

I say again that the Premier is hard pressed to make out a case for himself. He is endeavouring to adopt the attitude of saying, "After all, I recognise that I am paying the workers of Queensland too small a wage, but it is a better wage than that which would have been paid had the Moore Government been returned." That attitude may take political parties a fair distance, but it will not advance the country one step. Despite the statement made by the Premier to-day, the fact cannot be challenged that the wage reduction imposed by the Moore Government was smaller than that imposed by any other State in Australia, many of whom were controlled by Labour Governments, and that the present Government continued the wages that were in operation when the Moore Government went out of office. The basic wage in June, 1932, was £3 14s., and it is still £3 14s. The Public Service Commissioner in his report refers to the restoration of salary cuts and counsels caution in that direction. The restoration of those cuts by the present Government is less than that granted in any other State of Australia. Tory Governments throughout Australia have made contributions towards the restoration of the salary cuts that were effected during the worst depression years. Naturally, the Premier is worried about the condition and he has not been able to do what a National Government have been able to do in the matter. He is endeavouring to make out a case this morning by placing the blame upon the head of the Moore Government. I repeat that that is not going to get the Premier very far; nor will it get this country very far.

The concluding passages of the Premier's remarks this morning indicate that we have passed through the period of stagnation to a period of prosperity; that being so, the public servants of this State are entitled to look for some restoration of their salary cuts. These cuts have been a severe burden upon them and to-day they are seriously affected. I know that public servants in Queensland are expecting a return of the cuts, notwithstanding the fact that they have been given access to the Industrial

Court. They are expecting that they will receive some benefit from the increase in the prosperity of the State that has taken place during the last three years. That increase has not occurred because a Labour Government has been in power in this State, but because of an improvement throughout the whole of Australia.

The Premier is hard pressed and I regret he has endeavoured to make the people believe that the Premier of the day made a statement that was not made. It was never intended to further reduce salaries by the Moore Government.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [11.8 a.m.]: I am one of those who represented the Queensland Government at the conference in April, 1932, to which the Premier referred and I know what happened at it. A report was furnished by the experts, including Professor Copland, but at no time did the Premier of Queensland, now the Leader of the Opposition, express an opinion in that report. He adopted the attitude that he ought not to do so and in that he was quite right. It is not right that any Government in their dying days should agree to any scheme that the people at the forthcoming election might not endorse. It is wrong for any Government during the last six months of their term of office to enter into any large and important undertaking that is likely to tie the hands of the new Government that might be elected by the people. The Premier is not correct in the inference that he has drawn. I was present at the conference and I know the attitude that was adopted by the Leader of the Opposition and the delegates from the other States. The subject of a further reduction in wages and salaries was not discussed. It is wrong for the Premier to say that if the Moore Government had been returned to power wages and salaries would have been reduced still further. That is only an assumption on his part with the object of disseminating political propaganda throughout the country. He has based his statement on a report submitted to a certain authority, which he claims is proof of his assertion. The point is that these things were never adopted, nor even debated.

Mr. WALSH: You did not get an opportunity.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We did have the opportunity. The conference was attended by representatives from the other States, although I think that Mr. Tunnecliffe, the Labour representative from Victoria, later retired from the conference. It is wrong for the Premier to mislead the people by his erroneous statement. It is the duty of a Premier to be fair. The people have favoured him by putting him in the highest position in the State, yet he endeavours to mislead them by making a statement that is absolutely untrue.

Did the present Government take any steps during their three years of office to improve the conditions about which they complain so much? The Premier's Plan provided for reductions in the salaries of public servants. The Industrial Court was approached, and eventually the basic wage was reduced. During their three years of office the present Government took advantage of all the reductions that were made under the Moore regime. Did they restore those reductions to the public servants? So far

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as I can remember, the only restorations were made to public servants receiving £950 per annum, whose salaries were increased to £1,000 per annum, and to public servants receiving £1,000, whose salaries were increased to £1,050 per annum. Although the lower paid workers were getting only what may be described as a bread and butter wage they were not even considered by their alleged political friends. Hon. members opposite were not concerned about restoring wages to workers on the basic wage or less, they were concerned only with greasing the fat pig—increasing the salaries of the highly paid officials.

During the last election campaign the Labour Party issued a political dodger intimating that the Labour Government had administered the Industrial Court so successfully that the State could now claim the highest basic wage of any State in Australia. If that was achieved by political interference with the Industrial Court then it is a reflection upon the court itself. If an Industrial Court can be influenced by a Government it should cease to exist. In fact, no person occupying a high and responsible position on the Industrial Court bench should be capable of being influenced by a Government.

The PREMIER: Who suggests that they are?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The pamphlet issued by the Labour Party during the last election campaign suggested that the Labour Government were responsible for the fact that the basic wage in Queensland was the highest in any of the States of Australia. My point is that while it is true that during the term of office of the present Government the basic wage was the highest in any State in Australia it was also the highest under the Moore regime, and the present Government can claim no credit on that score. The basic wage was fixed by the court without any reference whatsoever to, or influence by, the Moore Government.

The PREMIER: We repealed your Act, and our amending legislation enabled the Court to compute the basic wage on a higher standard.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The present Government took full advantage of the reductions brought into effect by the Moore Government. The reduced basic wage has also continued up to the present moment. The cost of living to-day is higher than it was during the Moore regime. That is indicated by the increase that has taken place in the awards of the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. Those awards rise or fall according to the increase or fall in the cost of living. Therefore, the existing basic wage of £3 14s. has not the same high purchasing power to-day as it had during the Moore regime.

The Premier is also responsible for the statement that a basic wage of £3 14s. now is a more effective wage by 7s. 11d. than the basic wage of £4 5s. formerly was. He based that statement on the fact that the cost of living had been reduced. It is not the amount of the basic wage that counts, but its purchasing power. When we talk of the basic wage we must also take into consideration the cost of living figures. We all know that both the Federal and State courts are approached for a revision of the basic wage as the cost of living

decreases or increases. The basic wage is like a barometer—it fluctuates according to the cost of living figures. It is possible that within the next few weeks, the unions will move the State court for an increase in the basic wage. They will be quite within their rights, because when the cost of living figures show a fall the employers—and rightly so—will move the court for a reduction. We ought not to interfere with the principles laid down for the fixation of the basic wage. No Government, whatever their politics, should influence the court in its decisions. The court should be free and untrammelled. Likewise no Government should claim that the basic wage was increased during its term of office. It is possible that within the next twelve months the Premier and his satellites will proclaim throughout the country that they were responsible for an increase in the basic wage. Doubtless, too, they will distribute pamphlets making a similar claim, when, after all, the increase will be solely due to an increase in the cost of living. That any Government should claim the credit for an increase or decrease in the basic wage is not only humiliating, but also an insult to the members of the court.

The Premier stated that during the period his Government have been in power the cost of living in Queensland has been lower than in any other State of the Commonwealth. Although that statement is correct it may mislead the people into thinking that the present Government are responsible for it. During the whole of the period I have been a member of this Assembly, the cost of living in Queensland—irrespective of the Government in power—has been lower than that in any other State of the Commonwealth. In view of that fact it is ridiculous for the Premier to take credit to his Government when the cost of living goes down. What influence has the Premier or the Government on the price of butter or meat and other products? The prevailing prices are due to influences over which the Premier has no control. If the Government takes credit for a rise in prices they should also take the blame for a fall in prices. The Premier has claimed that the fall in the cost of living was due to the fact that his Government were in power, but I would remind the hon. gentleman that the same conditions prevailed when the Moore Government were in power. At that time the cost of living was lower in Queensland than in any other State in Australia.

During the last State election campaign the Labour Party circulated pamphlets throughout the State claiming that the Smith Government were responsible for the fact that the basic wage was higher in Queensland and the cost of living lower than in any other State in Australia. The Premier knows that his Government had no influence on those matters, and that such statements were entirely misleading. It is regrettable that incorrect statements should be circulated amongst the electors. No doubt that propaganda assisted the Government to regain office, but it is deplorable that a higher standard of political morality does not prevail in this State. The Premier and the Government should endeavour to fight fairly, and not use statements that are not in accordance with facts, and have been denied time after time by hon. members on this side of the Committee.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [11.25 a.m.]: The hon. members for Isis and Dalby have endeavoured to refute the statements of the Premier, showing that industrial conditions in Queensland are better as a result of Labour administration in Queensland than they were during the period of the Moore Government. The statements of the hon. member for Dalby are paradoxical. For the last ten minutes he has endeavoured to show the Assembly that since Brisbane was Brisbane the cost of living in this capital has been lower than in any other in Australia. During the debate on the Address in Reply the same gentleman criticised the Government for putting into effect a policy that had the result of driving capital from the State. He maintained that the cost of production in Queensland was higher than in any other State, and that the cost of production in Brisbane was higher than in any other capital city in Australia. If that is so, how can Brisbane have the lowest cost of living?

The hon. member for Isis this morning stated that the Government were not fair to the public service and the workers of Queensland generally in regard to wages. Queensland has always been regarded as the State wherein the workers have got the highest value for their services. To this, of course, they are entitled. The object of the Labour Party is that the worker shall be paid such a wage as is in conformity with the value of his labour, and will enable him to enjoy a decent standard of living. Queensland has still the highest average basic wage and the shortest working week of all the States. To prove this I shall quote figures as at June, 1935, issued by the Commonwealth Statistician—an officer not under the control of the Queensland Labour Government, but a Commonwealth officer controlled by a Government of the political colour of hon. members opposite. The figures, which give the weekly wage and working hours in a number of industries, are—

Wood, furniture, etc.			
State.	Wage.	Hours.	
	<i>s. d.</i>		
New South Wales ...	87 8	45.74	
Victoria ...	82 11	47.97	
Queensland ...	92 11	44.03	
South Australia ...	78 9	48.00	
Western Australia ...	84 0	46.58	
Tasmania ...	83 10	47.90	
Australia (average) ...	85 11	46.46	
Engineering works, etc. Metal.			
State.	Wage.	Hours.	
	<i>s. d.</i>		
New South Wales ...	85 4	44.03	
Victoria ...	81 3	46.68	
Queensland ...	89 7	44.00	
South Australia ...	78 9	46.63	
Western Australia ...	86 3	44.45	
Tasmania ...	85 6	45.64	
Australia (average) ...	83 9	45.25	

The figures prove that in these two industries alone the workers in Queensland enjoy better wages and conditions than their counterparts in the other States.

[*Mr. Taylor.*

Clothing Trades.

State.	Wage.	Hours.
	<i>s. d.</i>	
New South Wales ...	78 4	44.00
Victoria ...	79 10	45.17
Queensland ...	83 2	44.00
South Australia ...	83 2	44.00
Western Australia ...	86 7	44.00
Tasmania ...	74 7	46.29
Average for Commonwealth ...	79 11	44.54

Another example is this record of the figures for the building industry:—

State.	Wage.	Hours.
	<i>s. d.</i>	
New South Wales ...	97 7	43.66
Victoria ...	90 7	44.38
Queensland ...	102 11	44.00
South Australia ...	86 8	44.44
Western Australia ...	90 9	44.13
Tasmania ...	87 1	44.59
Average for Commonwealth ...	94 1	44.04

Compare the average weekly wage for the Commonwealth with 102s. 11d. for Queensland! The next is the mining industry, in which the figures are—

State.	Wage.	Hours.
	<i>s. d.</i>	
New South Wales ...	103 1	42.95
Victoria ...	85 2	44.76
Queensland ...	108 4	43.47
South Australia ...	71 6	43.79
Western Australia ...	95 5	44.65
Tasmania ...	95 7	44.92
Average for Commonwealth ...	97 10	43.62

Queensland stands out in this industry with an average weekly wage of 108s. 4d.

The weekly wage and hours in the rail and tram services are:—

State.	Wage.	Hours.
	<i>s. d.</i>	
New South Wales ...	82 5	44.38
Victoria ...	83 0	47.59
Queensland ...	88 2	44.00
South Australia ...	77 8	48.00
Western Australia ...	86 4	43.79
Tasmania ...	80 2	48.00
Average for Commonwealth ...	83 4	45.58

and in the pastoral and agricultural industries—

State.	Wage.	Hours.
	<i>s. d.</i>	
New South Wales ...	70 7	—
Victoria ...	71 4	—
Queensland ...	83 0	—
South Australia ...	68 5	—
Western Australia ...	75 0	—
Tasmania ...	74 11	—
Average for Commonwealth ...	73 4	—

Those figures give the lie direct to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Isis. He tried his best to prove that this Government are paying lower wages and providing worse conditions than are the Governments of the other States. The Commonwealth Statistician, who is under the control of a Nationalist Government, shows that the suggestion is incorrect.

The public service know perfectly well that the Queensland Government are prepared to give them every assistance they can.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Whatever they ask for?

Mr. TAYLOR: No, not whatever they ask for. No doubt during the next few months they will get from the Industrial Court an increase that will be justified by the court's decision. The public service in return appreciate very much what the Government are doing for the State in general, and the public service in particular.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [11.37]: I am rather at a loss to know why this speech of propaganda for his own side was delivered by the Premier this morning. He has adopted the very unfair practice, sometimes resorted to by politicians, of taking sentences out of statements and thus using parts for political propaganda purposes. The very first statement I made at the conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Melbourne on the 15th April, 1932, begins—

"The Queensland representatives have given most earnest consideration to both the Committee's report and the statement of the Prime Minister. They desire to make clear that the Queensland Government has no intention of departing from the spirit of the Premiers' Plan, and so far as Government expenditure is concerned has carried out the necessary reductions in the main, and proposes to continue to pursue a progressive policy towards financial equilibrium, and will not relax its efforts until a balanced budget has been achieved. At the same time the representatives are not sufficiently satisfied with all the aspects of the latest report in its relationship to Queensland. Before committing themselves, to any proposal the Queensland representatives desire to remind the conference that on a previous occasion when the question of loan allocation was discussed Queensland was declined assistance owing to her having funds of her own available. It is, therefore, essential that a definite assurance be given that a similar attitude will not be adopted on this occasion. The basis of the allocation of funds available is of utmost importance to Queensland, and its representatives are not prepared to commit their State to any proposal until that question has been definitely and clearly defined.

"Queensland welcomes the Commonwealth Government's offer to assist to the extent of £5,000,000, and will undertake to guarantee the necessary interest on its proportion of the interest bearing money made available from the Unemployed Relief Tax Fund"

that is, when the State's share had been defined.

At the time when I was Premier it was the practice to issue a report at the conclusion of the conference—as instanced by the Premier's quoting from it. This report, although not a very full one, was nevertheless, a report. The complaint of the present Premier is that Star Chamber methods were adopted, and the reports were too meagre. At the present time no reports are issued, and we on this side of the Chamber cannot get any information as to what has happened, or what anyone said at the conference. A

little further on in my statement on that occasion I said—

"The Queensland Government has already passed legislation directing the Arbitration Court to consider the possible and probable economic effect on the community as a whole in any determination it may give. Therefore, the court having full powers, no further legislative action should be required to give effect to that portion of the committee's report."

That is a definite statement that we were not prepared to go further in carrying it out. We stated that the court had power to do it.

Capital has been made of my statement that an election was coming on and that consequently I could not make a definite pronouncement. In that respect I should like to quote another portion of my statement at that same conference—

"The Prime Minister in his speech made clear that any proposals were subject to agreement amongst all the States, and the giving of adequate guarantees of their due performance. It is desired to ascertain more clearly the views of the Commonwealth Government on these points, particularly in regard to New South Wales and Victoria"

Victoria had left the conference, and New South Wales had failed to carry out the scheme. I wanted to know what the guarantees were, and I said—

" . . . as it may be difficult for Queensland—with an election pending—to satisfy the Commonwealth Government in this regard."

How could I give a guarantee with an election in view? No one knew whether we should be returned to power or not. That statement has been twisted by the present Government. I consider it a rather despicable thing to take part of a sentence and use it for political purposes.

The PREMIER: It was not intended.

Mr. MOORE: It is all right to say it was not intended. At page 13 in the report of the previous conference I said this—

"On the bottom of page 6 it is conclusively proved that our obligation has been fulfilled. Queensland, being in the main a primary producing State, has felt the full force of the drastic slump in prices for overseas exports, and the decrease in revenue from taxation, railways, and other sources accounts for £1,600,000, in spite of continuous efforts on the part of the Government."

I further said this—

"Finally, it is abundantly clear that a further drastic cut in controllable governmental expenditure would have a very small appreciable effect on the position, and the falling off in revenue, although taxation has been heavily increased, renders further assistance from that source impracticable."

I stated that if the Government had to make further reductions in controllable governmental expenditure it would have very little effect on the prevailing position. I went on to say—

"In Queensland the State Arbitration Court has been left free and untrammelled to fix the number of hours to

Mr. Moore]

be worked and wages to be paid in the various industries and callings coming within its jurisdiction, after the most careful consideration of the facts placed before it. If the suggestion hinted at would require Parliament to instruct the court as to hours and wages it would be contrary to our conception of an independent court."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: My statement discloses the unprecedentedly difficult times confronting the States and the Commonwealth, and the need for the adoption of a plan to assist in the financial rehabilitation of the country, and proved that Queensland was not shirking her part. In April, 1931, a considered statement was made after the conference had begun, so that Mr. Hill would have ample opportunity to confer with his officers and decide what action he should take. The following appears in the report of the conference—

"South Australia was the first Government seriously to tackle reduction in Government expenditure, and, as the figures submitted to the Premiers' Conference show, the percentage reductions made in South Australia are greater than those made by any other Government. Relative figures of percentage reductions are as follows:—Business undertakings, 30 per cent.; administration and general, 19 per cent.; roads, 59 per cent., making the total (all groups) 29 per cent."

I am not criticising South Australia. The State was in an extraordinarily difficult position. It is largely a primary producing State and severely felt the slump in world prices. It was almost forced into bankruptcy, and on two or three occasions the Commonwealth Government had to come to its rescue to enable it to meet its obligations to its public servants. South Australia was forced to take drastic action, but nobody would dream of taking advantage of her position to make political propaganda now. The action taken by South Australia was absolutely necessary and the State could find no alternative. I regard Mr. Hill as a man who fearlessly carried out his duty to his State and to the Commonwealth of Australia under the most extraordinarily difficult conditions. He had to run counter to principles that he had embraced for years, and he did it not in his interests but in the interests of his own State and the Commonwealth. It is despicable and mean for any person to endeavour to make political propaganda now by holding these men up to public obloquy, because they played a most difficult part during unprecedentedly difficult times. Shortly afterwards, when the present Government were returned to power, the public servants waited upon the Acting Premier, the Secretary for Public Lands, and sought a restoration of salary reductions. What he said in reply to them is indicated in the following Press report:—

"The Acting Premier did not give his hearers any indication of the extent to which they could expect the Government to remit the cuts. The Government's problem is to determine how much it may safely give back to the public servants without arousing the opposition of other sections of the community."

[Mr. Moore.]

He was not concerned with what was fair or what was just, but how much he could restore to the public servants without alienating the political support that he already had elsewhere. That was the difficulty facing him! I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee discussing these matters, but when a portion of a sentence is quoted and distorted for political purposes there is no alternative than to read the whole statement.

The PREMIER: What you have read confirms my statement.

Mr. MOORE: It may confirm the portion read by the Premier, but it does not confirm the impression that he sought to convey—it does the opposite. It showed that it was my contention that any further reduction in controllable government expenditure would have very little effect upon the prevailing position and that we were endeavouring, as far as possible, to make the necessary reductions to carry out the Premiers' Plan in the interests of Australia. Ninety-seven per cent. of the bondholders had voluntarily agreed to accept a reduction in interest on Government stock. They did not urge the Government to accept their money, but the Government had asked them to subscribe to a loan on certain conditions. They agreed, and then in the nation's interest they were asked to vary their terms, but the representatives of the people were also parties to the agreement, we having undertaken to reduce governmental expenditure and to continue to do so until financial rehabilitation had been established. We had to carry out our part of the agreement. Would any person who was reasonable and fair go back on an agreement of that nature?

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

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Bulimba*) [11.45 a.m.]: I was absent from the Committee on Thursday when this vote was under consideration, but I take the present opportunity to add my words of commendation of the excellent services rendered by the Public Service Commissioner and the officers of his department. When the Commissioner reaches the age of seventy years and retires it will be very difficult for the Government to obtain an officer who will bring to the discharge of the duties of the position qualifications similar to those he possesses.

The speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition was rather remarkable. It was a very poor defence of the attitude of his Government towards the employees of the Government when he was in power from 1929 to 1932. The hon. gentleman had the effrontery to say that he did not believe in interfering with the Industrial Court. That statement, coming from the ex-Leader of such a Government, is a most remarkable one, especially when one remembers that his Administration applied to the court seeking a reduction of wages and salaries of their employees approximating 15 per cent. When the court in its wisdom decided that the case presented by the representatives of the unions was sufficient to combat that application, it made an award reducing salaries and wages by 6 per cent.—a percentage it considered equitable. The Leader of the Opposition and his Government almost immediately issued an Order in Council gazetting the whole of the Crown

employees out of the jurisdiction of the court. At the same time another Order in Council was issued reducing wages and salaries of Crown employees by from 10 to 15 per cent. This reduction was subsequently increased to 15 to 20 per cent.

The Leader of the Opposition also endeavoured to explain away a remarkable statement he, as Premier, made at the Loan Council. Anybody who has read the report of the Premiers' Conference of April, 1932, will readily see what happened. Conference appointed a committee of experts to examine the financial position, and make recommendations. This committee recommended that a reduction of 15 per cent. should be made in all real wages.

Mr. MOORE: 10 per cent.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Yes, it would be 10 per cent. The Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, who presided at the conference, made the definite statement that the Commonwealth Government endorsed the report of the experts. He was supported in that statement by other representatives, including the Premier of Queensland, the present Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Lyons said that it would be necessary to give effect to the recommendation either by legislation or through the wage fixing tribunal, whichever course was necessary. It did not matter whether the wage fixation tribunals did it or whether legislation was necessary.

Mr. MOORE: How do you read that out of Mr. Lyon's statement. That is not there.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: It is there.

Mr. MOORE: It is not there. You read the statement.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: I have not got the report here. It has been quoted in this Chamber. He said definitely—either by the wage fixation tribunals or by legislation, whichever was necessary. The hon. member for Aubigny, who was then Leader of the Queensland Government, was one of those who supported the attitude adopted by the Prime Minister. Subsequently, when speaking to the motion, the hon. member for Aubigny, stated—as the Premier stated this morning—that the Commonwealth Government should not expect too much from Queensland in view of the fact an election was near.

Mr. MOORE: I did not say, "Too much"; I said, "I cannot guarantee."

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: That the Commonwealth Government could not expect the Queensland Government to carry out the recommendations to the full, in view of the fact that an election was coming on in this State.

The Leader of the Opposition cannot explain away those statements made by him when he was Leader of the Government. When the Labour Government assumed office in 1932, the Premier and the Secretary for Public Lands attended a Premiers' Conference and a meeting of the Loan Council; they found that was the policy that had been laid down and was to be carried out. Hon. members and the public generally who followed the reports of those proceedings will remember the tremendous fight put up by the Leader of this Government, and recall the resolution that was moved by him, and subsequently became embodied in a motion

moved by the Prime Minister which subsequently became the basis of the new rehabilitation scheme that has been carried out in Australia since 1932.

I have already stated in this Chamber, and I repeat it, that the whole of the improvement in the economic conditions of the people throughout Australia date from the time the present Premier of Queensland attended the Loan Council meeting in 1932.

The Leader of the Opposition must have been very hard put to it to explain many of his actions when he was Premier. He made a futile endeavour to convince public servants that while his Government were in power he was a ministering angel to them. On the contrary, during the three years the Moore Government were in power more than 7,000 Crown employees were either sacked or retired, their jobs not being filled by the appointment of other officers. Moreover, automatic increases were not paid. During that time we had the spectacle of young people, seventeen and eighteen years of age, suffering a 35 per cent. reduction in salaries, whilst Under Secretaries and other high officials on £1,100, £1,200, and £1,500 per annum suffered a 20 per cent. reduction. That indicates the treatment the Moore Government meted out to their employees, and the conception of justice that they held.

The Public Service Commissioner was given definite instructions by the hon. member for Aubigny that under no considerations—irrespective of the merits of the case—were increases in classifications to be even considered. Hon. members should recognise that had the recommendation of the Premiers' Conference at that time been carried out the basic wage in Queensland would have been reduced to £2 18s. 6d. a week. In 1932 the Queensland Government and the Premiers' Conference definitely pledged themselves to a 10 per cent. reduction in real wages. That would have meant a Queensland basic wage of only £2 18s. 6d. The Leader of the Opposition cannot deny that fact, or explain it away.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member should read what was said.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: That was the outlook for Government employees had his Government been returned to power. When dealing with South Australia, the Leader of the Opposition stated that Queensland had carried its full share of the burden of responsibility in connection with the application of the Premiers' Plan—the plan so dear to the hearts of Nationalist Premiers, including the hon. gentleman. The Assistant Treasurer of the Commonwealth, Mr. Bruce, had to castigate the Premier of Queensland, the hon. member for Aubigny in this connection on one occasion. A deputation consisting of Queensland Professional Officers' Association, the Queensland Teachers' Union, and the Queensland State Service Union waited on the Premier at that time. I know that the Premier, the present Leader of the Opposition, then had in his possession a letter from Professor Melville, the economist to the Commonwealth Government, which stated very definitely that the Government of Queensland were not acting in accordance with the letter or the spirit of the Premiers' Plan. The letter was produced by the hon. member for Aubigny at that deputation, and I requested him to allow me to read it.

Mr. W. J. Copley.]

He did so. In fact, every representative at that deputation had that letter in his hands, but it has since disappeared from the Chief Secretary's Department. It is not on the file in that department. During the 1932 election campaign I made a statement in these terms, but the Leader of the Opposition denied it. This is an illustration of the species of administration in use in Queensland from 1929 to 1932.

The Government of the day skulked behind the Premiers' Plan so far as employees of the Government services were concerned. It avails nothing for the Leader of the Opposition to endeavour to mislead the Assembly and the public service as to the attitude of his Government towards the employees of the service.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [11.58 p.m.]: It is very difficult to understand the intention of the Premier. Is it that by his utterances this morning he is endeavouring to support the growing belief of the people of Queensland that the Queensland public service have commenced to rule the Government and the State. Certainly that is what is being said outside of this Chamber, and the opinion is growing year by year. I do not think that the members of the public service desire that that should be the feeling engendered, in spite of what has been said by the Premier. He has definitely proved that that is his objective—with the employees of the public service behind him he will control the State. The Premier made no mention of the conditions of the other sections of the community during the period under discussion. Would the hon. gentleman not have been fairer had he stated that during the time the employees of the public service were reduced in salary, thousands of the people of the State were in receipt of no income at all, owing to the tremendous fall in the prices of our exports and the drying up of the sources of loan money? There was a reduction of the spending power of the community in the Commonwealth of 40 per cent. To be fair to the men and women who are doing their best to develop the country, this fact should have been mentioned.

Is it necessary that statements should be made that breed class-consciousness and cause bitterness? In the ultimate, who are paying the salaries of the public servants? The workers and settlers. It appears to me that the arguments put forward are cowardly and uncalled for in a State such as Queensland. I am sure the public service do not sponsor them. If the Premier were honest in his professions that he is endeavouring to do something in the welfare of this State, he would try to bring the people more together and reconcile their interests. Instead, we find him leading the members of his party in oratory of the ordinary soap-box sort, and propaganda like what we hear during election time.

If the Premier had been fair he would have quoted the conditions existing outside the service. He knows as well as I do that the public servants realised that at the depth of the depression they were in a much better position than most other sections of the community. Prices had fallen in all primary industries. Think of the dairyman slaving from morning till night and receiving only 9d. for a product that was previously returning 20d. and 24d.! Wool prices fell to a

[*Mr. W. J. Copley.*

similar extent. Yet the public servant was secure in his position and receiving regular salary. As a result of propaganda like that "put over" this Committee by the Premier this morning, hundreds of men are sleeping in show buildings and other places—wherever they can get a roof over their heads, refusing to accept work when it is offered to them. The Premier's policy has created a distinct division of thought among the people. A great percentage of the people do not care a two-penny dump whether this State develops or not. They do not care who pays for the food they collect from year to year! The Government, through not having sufficient backbone to see that every man pulls his weight in this great work of development, have allowed that state of affairs to exist. I have come into contact with hundreds of public servants and I know, from my experience of these men, that not one of them would have liked to be getting high wages when he realised the conditions existing outside.

Despite what the Premier may say to the contrary, the condition of other States of Australia was much worse than that of Queensland during the Moore regime. I was in South Australia at the time, and the position there was such that the people had become despondent; they thought they would never get out of the dire straits they were in. It seems to me that the only objective likely to be achieved by the arguments advanced by the Premier this morning is a continuance of the division among the people. That, after all, is contrary to the best interests of the State. He makes speeches like the one he made this morning to keep together men who are at the present time behind him, but men who are perhaps to some extent challenging his power. (Government laughter). He may laugh, but every dog has his day. Premiers come and Premiers go, and some that have gone have been just as big as the hon. gentleman!

The PREMIER: You will neither come nor go.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is something to be proud of, because it means that I am always here. I think that is more than the hon. gentleman can say. We should do everything we can in the interests of the State to bring the people together and see that every section gets a fair "go." That the present Government are not doing. If you want evidence of that statement, go along to the Agricultural Bank and see the number of foreclosures made during the year. Families are being put out of their homes, yet the Government are using these arguments in connection with people who have secure positions. Whilst I have no objection to the Premier's putting forward his party policy I have an objection, as a Queenslander, to his treating the people as he has done this morning. It would be better if he were to try to bring the people together and get them to work one with another in the interests of the State.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [12.7 p.m.]: I listened to the speech of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. All that I can gather from his utterance is that he is in grave danger of dislocating his shoulder by patting himself on the back. His speech indicates that he has a better knowledge of scatology than economics.

I would remind the hon. member that it was the Leader of the Opposition who brought up this subject. He and his party think that whilst they occupy the Opposition benches they are entitled to say what they like. They are intensely annoyed when they are effectively replied to. Whilst the hon. member for Bulimba was addressing the Committee, the Leader of the Opposition asked that member to quote certain parts of the report of a Premiers' Conference. The Leader of the Opposition should know that the hon. member for Bulimba was not able to do so because he, the Leader of the Opposition, had in his possession the only available copy of the report in the Parliamentary Library. In order to quote from the conference report I had to send to my office for another copy. I desire again to call attention to the complaint of the Leader of the Opposition that I only quoted parts of his speech. That is true. I only quoted the relevant parts. Surely the hon. member does not suggest that a clergyman should read the whole Bible before he announces his text? I quoted the relevant point of his speech—and his speeches are, very often, irrelevant.

Mr. CLAYTON interjected.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Wide Bay cannot side track me by his constant irrelevant interjections. In dealing with the report, the Prime Minister made a statement of policy on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. On page 9 he is reported—

"The actual recommendations they make are—

Firstly, that the principle of a reduction in real wages of 10 per cent., already provided under awards of the Federal Arbitration Court, should be made general, and be given effect to by all wage-fixing tribunals, or by legislation."

What did that mean? The "Harvester" standard, which was laid down by the late Mr. Justice Higgins in 1909, was described by the judge himself as only a rough approximation to justice. It was accepted for many years as a standard and the 10 per cent referred to was a 10 per cent. reduction on the "Harvester" standard not to apply to public servants alone, but to all persons in the State in receipt of wages. The 10 per cent. reduction on the "Harvester" standard was to apply legislatively or otherwise, and that was the proposal by the Expert Committee—and which the Prime Minister advocated.

Dealing with the same matter at page 10, he said—

"At the election held some three months ago, the people of Australia gave an overwhelming mandate to the present Government to deal with the existing financial and economic situation, and entrusted to the Government the task of determining the course that should be pursued to get the nation out of its present difficulties. That responsibility the Government accepts, and recommends to this conference the immediate adoption of the proposals which I have just outlined."

The Prime Minister recommended to the States the adoption of a 10 per cent. reduction on the "Harvester" standard, legislatively or otherwise!

He further stated on page 10—

"We, therefore, suggest to the conference that, subject to the acceptance by all of the States of the proposals I have outlined, and guarantees satisfactory to this conference being given that they will be carried out, the Commonwealth Government should co-operate with the States in negotiating for a substantial sum, say, £10,000,000 of loan money, for expenditure in the manner and subject to the safeguards which I shall indicate."

The sum referred to was £10,000,000 and not £5,000,000 as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition by way of interjection. The sum of £3,000,000 was ultimately agreed to, but my quotation of £10,000,000 is correct. My statement is confirmed by my quotation from the remarks of the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister suggested that the States should adopt a 10 per cent. reduction in real wages, and if the States agreed he was prepared to raise £10,000,000 for public works. At page 11 he said—

"My Government is, subject, as I have said, to the general acceptance of the proposals, prepared to become responsible for half of this sum, and to make it available for subsidising approved expenditure under this scheme within the States on generous conditions. We believe that the expenditure of this money in the near future would not only bring relief to great numbers of our distressed people, but that it would have a revivifying effect upon industry and business generally. Such an expenditure of loan money, however, and the Commonwealth's contribution towards it, could not possibly be justified at this time unless it was accompanied by the absolute assurance that the original Premiers' Plan, as supplemented by the present proposals, was to be carried out both in the spirit and the letter."

The phrase, "supplemented by the present proposals," is significant and governs the whole position. The Leader of the Opposition commenced his speech at page 15 by saying—

"They desire to make clear that the Queensland Government has no intention of departing from the spirit of the Premiers' Plan."

What was the spirit of the Premiers' Plan as described by Mr. Lyons? That is the only point we are dealing with. Anything else that the Leader of the Opposition said was merely supplementary. I have never doubted the purpose of the Leader of the Opposition. There is no need for me to repeat again what he said at that conference. I am putting forward the case that a proposal was recommended by the committee of experts, and it was accepted by the representatives of the States at that conference and by the Commonwealth Government "in the spirit and the letter." The Commonwealth Government recommended it to the States.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They did not endorse it.

The PREMIER: They did endorse it. Here we have the Leader of the Opposition using exactly the same words as the Prime Minister—that he accepted the proposals in their spirit and letter. The committee of

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experts reported the adoption of what already was done.

I want to quote the following extract from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition at that conference—

“The Queensland representatives doubt the efficiency of the whole wage-fixing wages paid to families with and without system, particularly the disparity in wages paid to families with and without children, and also the difficulties in regard to young people obtaining employment, and is of the view that flat rate reductions would inflict hardship in quarters where it can least be afforded. They therefore suggest that consideration be given to proposals whereby this inequality could be overcome without any detriment to the necessary industrial recovery.”

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: There is nothing wrong with that.

The PREMIER: There is nothing wrong with that statement provided the words can be taken in their true meaning. What is wrong with the suggestion at the back of the hon. member's mind? The idea of the Moore Government in paying endowments to large families was to rob Peter to pay Paul. It was to bring about a general reduction in wages so that some families would receive some endowment. The childless worker, or the worker with children over fourteen years of age, would pay for the benefits to the small numbers of people who reaped advantages under the proposal.

I was quoting from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition when I was interrupted. I now intend to read the rest of the quotation—

“They are also of the opinion that beneficial results toward further employment would accrue if consideration were given to an alteration of the wage payments, wherever practicable, from weekly to hourly rates.”

In other words, the hon. gentleman wanted to adopt a policy of rationing, and thus bring about a general lowering of standards. He then proceeded to deal with the question of unemployment.

Mr. MOORE: He went on to deal with the question of Queensland's share of the loan.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman then proceeded to deal with Queensland's share of the loan and the problem of unemployment. The Brisbane “Courier” of 22nd April, 1932, the official organ of the Opposition, in dealing with the same conference, said—

“PREMIERS' CONFERENCE ENDS.

“*Meet again in June.*

“Melbourne, 21st April.

“The Premiers' Conference adjourned yesterday until 21st June When the conference reassembles the whole question of economic reconstruction will be discussed, including the possibility of raising the exchange rates It is understood that another Premiers' Conference will begin on 22nd June, when the political position in Queensland and Victoria will have cleared sufficiently to enable the representatives of these States to speak with an authoritative voice on questions of policy relating to the further enforcement of the Premiers' Plan”

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In other words, conference would deal with the question of imposing a further 10 per cent. reduction. What I have quoted, as well as what I have said, is a complete vindication of the case I have put forward. No matter how hon. members opposite may wriggle there is no doubt that they sedulously pursued a certain policy with disastrous results to this State, and that the gradual reversal of this policy has brought about the improvement that has been wrought in this State.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [12.20 p.m.]: I listened with interest to the speeches of the Premier and the hon. member for Bulimba concerning the statements supposedly made at the Premiers' Conference by the Leader of the Opposition. The tactics adopted by the Premier suggest that he is endeavouring to bolster up a very poor case.

Much has been said about the attitude of the various State Governments in regard to the Premiers' Plan. I shall quote reports that appeared in the Labour Press, which indicate what the attitude of the Premier was. A statement in the “Labour Call” of Victoria was quoted by me in this Chamber on a previous occasion, and appears at page 773 of “Hansard” for 1933 in the course of my speech on that occasion—

“These are times where it is imperative that those occupying responsible positions in the name of the Australian Labour Party must place themselves beyond suspicion, if they would command the respect and support of the members of the party. They must make it perfectly clear where they stand at all times when the party's policy is challenged by anti-Labour. They cannot afford to be looked upon as safe propositions by Labour's enemies, nor as weaklings who are always so ready to apologise for what is regarded as Labour's audacity or arrogance. They must be men or women of reasoned conviction and capacity to express themselves clearly and intelligently, and who are courageous enough to stand alone if needs be. Because of the defections of the Hogans and Hills, and because of the bitter disappointments during the past two or three years, these essential qualities are now demanded of those who would lead the way by all intelligent members of the Australian Labour Party. Therefore, Mr. Forgan Smith, like all others similarly situated, must either make his position clear or pay the penalty of being distrusted.”

That is not the view of a Conservative or a Tory paper. Now compare the above comments with this criticism—

“The Premier has tried to twist out of his acceptance of the Premiers' Plan, or rather allowing himself to be swallowed at the first Premiers' Conference he attended by saying that Labour did not agree to the statutory reduction in salaries and wages and social services. The statutory interference under the Moore Government in those matters was confined to salaries and wages of Government employees and social services which were paid by the Government. That was done by ‘The Financial Emergency Act of 1932.’”

The “Labour Daily” of 1st July, 1932, commented in the following manner on the

attitude of the hon. gentleman at the Premiers' Conference:—

“Mr. Forgan Smith has submitted to the dictation of the banks. Faced to-day with the alternative of accepting the banks ultimatum or leaving the Premiers' Conference—the same alternative that previously confronted Mr. Lang—the Premier of Queensland, unlike Mr. Lang, wilted and meekly committed his Government and people to the hideous Premiers' Plan. There was general rejoicing by the Prime Minister and the Nationalist Premiers at the success of their tactics in bringing the Queensland Government into line, and having the Premiers' Plan reaffirmed for general application throughout the Commonwealth by a reduction—at the expense of the workers—of the estimated deficits of £20,000,000 to the absurd figure of £6,000,000 laid down by the banks. Mr. Hill, Premier of South Australia, put the question in a nutshell when he said, ‘It is not a matter of what Mr. Smith would do or what anybody else wanted to do; it was a case of what they had to do—a jibe that Mr. Smith took without a murmur. The conference sat in camera right through the day considering ways and means of reducing the Budget deficits of the various Governments as nearly as possible to the limit laid down by the banks.’”

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

Item (Public Service Commissioner) agreed to.

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION BOARD.

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

“That £2,387 be granted for ‘Public Service Superannuation Board’.”

Item agreed to.

STATE REPORTING BUREAU.

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

“That £9,304 be granted for ‘State Reporting Bureau’.”

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [12.26 p.m.]: Is revenue derived by this sub-department?

The PREMIER: Yes. Last financial year the amount was £954.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: To some extent it is self-supporting?

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [12.27 p.m.]: The officers of the State Reporting Bureau not only report the debates in Parliament, but also the proceedings in the Supreme Court and Industrial Courts. Members of the Bureau are also available to royal commissions in a secretarial capacity, and in addition report the evidence heard by the commissions. They also are available for reporting conferences presided over by Ministers and other officers of the State. For instance, were a conference of the various interests in the grazing industry to be called by the Government two officers of the bureau could be detailed to report the proceedings. It is very essential at times such reports should

be prepared. The revenue of the sub-department is derived from the sale of transcripts of proceedings in the courts, which at times litigants wish to buy.

Item (State Reporting Bureau) agreed to.

STATE STORES BOARD.

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

“That £12,573 be granted for ‘State Stores Board’.”

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [12.28 p.m.]: There is a large increase in the number of employees controlled by this department. Will the Premier give some information as to the necessity for this increase?

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [12.29 p.m.]: There is an increase of £1,430 for salaries and £525 for contingencies. Some temporary officers, formerly paid from contingencies, have been permanently appointed. An additional motor delivery truck has been found necessary, and this involved the appointment of another truck driver, and an increase in the contingency vote this year. With the extension of the activities of the Department of Public Works, it is obvious that the State Stores Board has additional work, inasmuch as it is responsible for all purchases for all Government departments excepting the Railway Department.

Item (State Stores Board) agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [12.30 p.m.]: I move—

“That £27,230 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services.’”

That is a reduction in the vote for this year of £2,665.

At 12.31 p.m.

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

Mr. McLEAN (*Bundaberg*) [12.31 p.m.]: On behalf of the citizens of Bundaberg and district, I desire to take this opportunity of expressing very sincere appreciation of the Government's action in contributing £500 towards the Hinkler Memorial. The best thanks of the community and the mother of that hero, Bert Hinkler, are also due to the Premier for the kind interest he evinced in seeing that Mrs. Hinkler was suitably recompensed by the Commonwealth Government. The Premier's efforts have greatly lightened the work to be performed by the public committee dealing with the erection of this monument. The £500 contributed by the Government, when added to the amount collected by the committee, brought the fund to £990 odd, which will permit of the erection of a fitting memorial to this native of Bundaberg, who pioneered the air route from England to Australia. The way in which the other State Governments of Australia, together with the Commonwealth Government, responded to the appeal by the committee is certainly not to their credit, and one prefers not to think of the monument that would have been erected had the Queensland Government adopted the same attitude. Another regrettable feature of the matter is the poor response the Royal Institute of Australian Architects

Mr. McLean.]

made in the matter of designs. Only 6 designs were received from the architects throughout Australia. The committee finally decided to accept the design submitted by Mr. Cummins, of Brisbane. The contract for the construction of the monument has been let to Mr. A. Armitage, of Bundaberg, and we hope to unveil the memorial in the New Year. Thanks to the assistance rendered by the Queensland Government, we shall be able to erect a monument befitting the splendid example set to the rest of the world by this Queensland-born hero. I desire to conclude by saying that it was due to the efforts of this Government and the efforts of the Premier in particular that a tribute was made to this heroic native-born citizen.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) [12.36 p.m.]: The hon. member for Bundaberg has made reference to the late Squadron Leader Bert Hinkler. I am sure that every member of the community regretted his untimely death, which overtook him in an endeavour to fly to Australia. The maximum cost to the State of the memorial to be erected to his memory is £500 on the basis that the Government subsidise the amount raised by the general public. I think it only fair to say that the mother of the late Mr. Hinkler was left in rather poor circumstances. I got in touch with the Commonwealth Government on the matter and I am pleased to be able to say that they have granted her a civil list pension. She was entitled to the old age pension but had never applied for it, and it is pleasing to know that she has been thus provided for.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I rise to a point of order. I should like a decision by you, Mr. King, as to whether an hon. member is allowed 25 minutes on each one of the items appearing in the "Miscellaneous Services" vote. This vote contains many important items. Other votes, such as that for the State Stores Board are only connected with one subject, but this covers many subjects of importance. Each member of this Committee might desire to speak on each of the subjects covered by the vote.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: An hon. member is only entitled to 25 minutes for the discussion of the vote for "Miscellaneous Services."

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [12.38 p.m.]: I am glad that the hon. the Premier made a statement in connection with the matter raised by the hon. member for Bundaberg. We on this side of the Committee were informed wrongly that the Federal Government had done nothing in the matter of perpetuating the memory of the late Bert Hinkler. After hearing the attack made on the Federal Government by the member for Bundaberg it is also pleasing to hear the Premier say that the Federal Government helped the mother of our hero in a practical manner.

My reason for joining in this debate is to draw attention to the grant that has been made to the Queensland National Art Gallery trustees. I have taken a keen interest in this art gallery, and I should like to know if it is the intention of the Premier to proceed with the erection of the National Art Gallery. The amount of

money provided in the vote is somewhat paltry. I remember that Mr. McCormack once said, "Let the people show the sincerity of their interest in art." The late John Darnell in his will left a certain amount of money to this gallery, conditionally upon the people doing certain things. The Government and the Brisbane City Council, I am glad to say, contributed liberally to the fund, but I should like to know the intention of the Government in connection with the erection of a new public art gallery. The present building cannot be regarded as a suitable one and I am hopeful that the Government may contribute a further sum for this worthy object. The money bequeathed by the late John Darnell is not to be expended in one lump sum on the purchase of pictures, but will be spent from time to time as suitable pictures are bought.

I hope that it is the intention of the Government to proceed with the erection of a new art gallery. I do not expect them to construct an ornate building like the galleries in Sydney and Melbourne. It is true that the gallery in Adelaide is a small one, but it holds a marvellous collection of works of art. Beautiful pictures provide a useful means of education. The pictures that will be purchased by means of the Darnell fund can be lent to local authorities for exhibition.

The PREMIER: They can be shown in any town hall in Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: It would be a good idea if the Government encouraged the people and the local authorities to take an interest in art and art galleries. Let us encourage the people to say, "This is a fine art gallery. We will build up a collection of pictures that will be an education to the rising generation and a credit to the city of Brisbane." I hope that the Premier will see his way clear to proceed with the erection of an art gallery worthy of the city.

Mr. MULLER (*Fassifern*) [12.43 p.m.]: I endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg in connection with the appropriation last year of £500 as a subsidy to the Bert Hinkler memorial. The late Bert Hinkler brought honour not only to himself and to the State, but also to the whole of Australia. I am delighted that the Government made available the sum of £500 so that tribute could be paid to that modest hero.

There are two items in the vote against which I must protest—Life passes over Australian railways to ex-Ministers and railway concessions to public servants on recreation leave. No one can reasonably object to railway passes for Ministers while they hold office but I am concerned as to what these items may lead to in the future. I view with alarm the sums that may be required to meet these costs, say in another twenty-five years. The precedent has been established, but the time has arrived when the practice should be reviewed.

The vote to meet concessions to public servants on recreation leave is nothing short of a public scandal. Public servants are paid salaries fixed by the court and there is no reason why this vote should be continued. If it is right to bestow these concessions on public servants then it is right that every section of the community should

[*Mr. McLean.*

be treated in like manner. I have in mind people living in remote parts of this State who have never been able to afford a holiday, and whose children have never seen the sea. If this vote is allowed to continue it will in a short space of time be in the same class as the vote for passes of members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown. It is most unfair and it is the duty of both parties to reconsider the matter. I for one wish to lodge my protest against it.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [12.47 p.m.]: I desire to make brief reference to the grant of £450 to the trustees of the Queensland Art Gallery. I referred to this subject in 1933, when I expressed the opinion that the amount of £425 provided in that year was rather niggardly. At that time the Premier admitted that the vote was rather small. He said it was dictated by precedent and was similar to the amount that had been voted in past years. The Premier expressed his sympathy with the object but said that money was very scarce. I am pleased to note that since 1933 the Premier has evidently given some consideration to the matter. The people will not bear the hall mark of culture until they have in their midst a gallery in which to hang beautiful works of art from the older countries—which give us glimpses of the life lived by past generations—and examples of the magnificence of Australian art. Each year produces a greater number of artists in Australia. Their work is of ever-increasing volume. It is only right that provision should be made for hanging in our art gallery pictures relating to the progress of our people in the pioneering of Australia and the period of our present development. These will be of absorbing interest to the next generation. There is an obligation on this generation in this respect. I am pleased the vote has been increased and trust that the project of the Premier to establish a national art gallery will bear fruit. It will have the support of all persons who appreciate the finer things in our national life.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [12.51 p.m.]: According to the Treasurer's Financial Statement the Government granted rebates to the Mount Isa Company amounting to £600,000, in the shape of special rates on the Mount Isa Railway—which, by the way, is claimed as being tantamount to a reduction in taxation—and under "Miscellaneous Services" there appears an item of £2,240 for rebate of railway freight on machinery, etc., for Mount Isa Mines Ltd.

The PREMIER: That was a concession granted by your Government.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, at that particular time.

Mr. WALKER: That concession was granted before the Moore Government assumed office.

The PREMIER: This particular concession was given by your Government.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The point I wish to make is that if the Government agree to grant concessions by way of a reduction in railway freights the amount should be paid out of general revenue to the account of the Railway Fund in order that that department may be conducted on business lines. If the Government decide to subsidise an industry, as they subsidised the cattle and sheep industries by granting

a reduction in freights on starving stock in drought time, the Railway Department should not have to carry the burden. The Government have adopted the proper system of subsidising the Railway Department for such concessions.

The PREMIER: What happens is the difference between the ordinary freight and the concession rate is paid out of the Chief Secretary's vote to the Railway Department.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: What I desire to point out is that the Government are doing that in regard to this vote, but in his Financial Statement the Premier said that special rates had been granted to Mount Isa Mines amounting to rebates of £60,000, which he claimed was tantamount to a reduction in taxation. That £60,000 should have been taken out of consolidated revenue and placed to the credit of the Railway Department. Such additional revenue would probably enable the department to reduce freights and fares. If the Railway Department carries stock or produce at a reduced rate it should be subsidised by consolidated revenue to the extent of the difference. I have consistently advocated that policy. When I became Secretary for Railways I put forward a suggestion, which was accepted by the Government of the day, whereby a certain sum—I think about £75 per year—would be paid to the Railway Department from consolidated revenue for each free pass held by members of Parliament, ex-Ministers and other persons.

Thus the Railway Department is paid for the free passes granted to members of Parliament. That is only right. From both the Commissioner's and the employees' point of view it is a good principle.

In the Budget speech the Premier claimed that the £60,000 under the heading of rebates to the Mount Isa Company was a reduction in taxation. In my opinion it is not. The taxpayers have to bear this charge inasmuch as the Railway Department will receive £60,000 less from the company. If the amount were charged to consolidated revenue it would be a right and proper action on the part of the Government. The Mount Isa Company is operating at a loss, and the shareholders are not receiving dividends. The Government have guaranteed the operations of the company to the extent of £500,000, and, in addition, are charging the company exceptionally low railway freights. The Government intend to assist the company still further by allowing rebates on the railway freights on machinery to the amount of £2,240. These concessions are made with the view of enabling the company to continue its operations and thus employ labour. Let us contrast the attitude of the workers employed by the company. The unions approached the Industrial Court and asked for a reduction in the hours of work and an increase in wages. The court granted an increase in wages. The company is not able to pay dividends on the capital invested, and unless there is an advance in the price of metals is not likely to do so. I understand over a thousand men are employed at the works who are in receipt of decent wages, but notwithstanding the present position of the company they applied for and got an increase in wages. Is that any encouragement to capital to make investments in Queensland? My answer is, "No."

Mr. Morgan.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter under discussion is the Vote for Miscellaneous Services, which includes an item to defray the rebate of railway freight on machinery, etc., for Mount Isa Mines, Limited. The hon. member is discussing a matter very wide of the vote.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Is it your ruling, Mr. King, that I cannot say anything further about this particular item. I am referring to the vote on the Estimates, wherein the Government have increased from £1,000 to £2,240 the amount allowed for the rebate of railway freight on machinery for the Mount Isa Company, Limited. Am I not to be allowed to say whether I approve of the increase in the amount of the vote? The Government are endeavouring to assist the Mount Isa Company still further by the increase in this vote, whereas the company is being penalised in another direction—the increase in the wages granted to certain employees.

One thousand pounds is set down for the expenses of the Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming. I take a great interest in the business of horse racing and breeding of race horses. It is of great importance to Queensland, even when compared with such operations as the Mount Isa Company, Limited, and other industries. I venture the opinion that there is no specific industry that provides a livelihood either directly or indirectly for a greater number of persons in Queensland.

At 2 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Secretary for Labour and Industry should have figures at his disposal showing the importance of the industry to this State. Those figures will show that quite a large number of people who were previously making a livelihood from the racing industry are now on the dole or intermittent relief work because that industry has not developed in this State as it should have done. I have figures showing the importance of the racing industry to the agriculturist. They disclose that there are approximately 2,000 racehorses in this State, and the feed bill amounts to something in the vicinity of £70,000 per annum. We all know that motor vehicles are displacing horses in commercial life, and the farmers now depend upon racehorses for some small means of livelihood. When the feed bill runs into £70,000 per annum, one realises the importance of the industry. The Government would certainly be well advised to give consideration to the question of reviving racing in Queensland.

I have no very great objection to the appointment of the Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming, although I consider it is really a waste of public money. There is no necessity for such a commission. Members of the Government Party could have supplied the Premier with details as to what is necessary to restore racing to the position it occupied prior to 1929. In my opinion, a reduction of taxation would have the desired effect. We do not tax people who are playing golf or tennis, and there is no more reason why a man going to a race meeting should be called upon to pay a tax than they. The Premier has said the Moore Government were responsible for increasing the tax to 1s., and I agree with him. The Moore Government came to the conclusion

that when taxation was being increased generally, they could get increased revenue by this tax. It had just the opposite effect, because the amount obtained by direct taxation has considerably decreased since these taxes were increased up to 1s.

The PREMIER: What rate do you think it should be?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We should adopt the system in the other States and have a 3d. and 1d. tax on all parts of the course. If a bet of over £1 is made the tax on that bet should be 3d. irrespective of what part of the course the bet is laid.

The PREMIER: Who do you think should pay it?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I think the bookmakers should pay it. The tax on bets £1 or under should be 1d. Bookmakers do not object to paying the tax. I have met them in conference and I know. They have no desire to pass the tax on. In parts of the State, such as Warwick and other country places where racing is conducted and where the tax of 1s. does not apply, the bookmakers do not collect the tax. Nor do the bookmakers collect the tax in the Leger on Brisbane courses.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why did they come to the Moore Government?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I could never understand that. I had no sympathy with the bookmakers in petitioning the late Treasurer. In fact, I did not know it had taken place. Bookmakers do not seem to care whether it is a 3d. or 1s. tax, because unfortunately, the law provides that they have the right to collect it from the public. Of course the bookmaker may pay the tax and not collect it from the public. There is nothing to prevent me from having an agreement with a bookmaker that he should pay the 1s. It does not matter who pays the tax, so long as it is paid.

Mr. KING: You are not suggesting it is done?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It does not matter if it is being done or not. If I can arrange with a bookmaker for him to pay the tax I am not defrauding the Government of anything. The payment of tax is a matter between the bookmaker and the bettor. The point I desire to emphasize is that there was no necessity to have this general inquiry. The control of racing at present is giving satisfaction, but two changes are necessary. The more important is a reduction of the tax to 1d. and 3d. and the other—also important—is to do away with off-the-course betting. We have an Act of Parliament to say that this class of betting is illegal, and the Government should enforce the law and wipe all this betting out. I have consulted various people and they have expressed the opinion that all this illegal betting could be wiped out within three weeks. I am not going to say that there would not be occasional cases where people would bet—just as we have sly-grog selling. Occasionally a sly-grog shop establishes itself, but it is not very long before the police pounce upon it and wipe it out of existence. People are always prepared to break the law. A few insignificant offenders are prosecuted every week, whereas big bookmakers appear to be protected. According to the evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming yesterday certain big bookmakers betting

[Mr. Morgan.

at clubs and other places can evade the consequences of the law. The Commissioner of Police knows that this is going on every day. He knows that there are places specially fitted up for betting away from the course, with blackboards setting out horses' names, prices, and other essential information. People are walking in and out of the buildings making bets under the very nose of the policemen directing the traffic outside, keeping pedestrians on the move. The policeman in uniform knows what is going on but he cannot enter the betting shops to make an arrest or to serve a summons for illegal betting. There is something wrong somewhere. Why are the Government not enforcing the law? Why not instruct the police to prosecute? Why should it be necessary for the police to engage an unemployed man to act as a police agent and make a bet for a few shillings? Every week one or two persons conducting betting operations in suburban hotels are brought before the court and fined, yet the police know that there are other places openly carrying on betting transactions day and night and that thousands of people enter and leave the premises for betting purposes. Nothing is being done to prevent that.

Mr. NIMMO: Do the police receive any pay for this protection?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am not prepared to say that. Something should be done by the Government in the interests of members of Parliament. It is freely rumoured that someone must be receiving money from someone else. It is suggested in some quarters that a member of Parliament who is prepared to use his influence on behalf of the betting shops can receive some monetary reward. In another quarter it is rumoured that the police receive a weekly payment from the betting shops. I know nothing about that. I am unable to prove that that is so. I feel satisfied that no member of Parliament is receiving any pay for exercising his influence in the interests of the betting shops.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to point out to the hon. member that he cannot discuss police administration on this vote.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I should like to know why the law is not being enforced by the Government. Perhaps the evidence that is now being made public at the hearing of the royal commission may serve a useful purpose in the long run. I should like to emphasise the fact that up to date the evidence undoubtedly confirms the view that the control of racing is satisfactory, but 95 per cent. of the people associated with racing consider that the betting tax should be reduced. Again I urge that the law should be enforced. It is no use passing Acts of Parliament if they are not to be enforced. I do not say that no offence will be committed after an Act has been passed for the purpose of dealing with offenders. I know that we shall still have thefts and murders, no matter what law may be passed—there will always be some offenders against the law. My point is that betting away from the racecourse would largely cease if the Government would only administer the law. I should like the Premier to say why it is not being administered. I have no axe to grind; I am ventilating this matter as a representative of the people.

The PREMIER: What law is not enforced?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The law in regard to illegal betting away from racecourses.

The PREMIER: Of course it is enforced. What Estimates are you discussing—the Home Secretary's or Premier's?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am not concerned whether I discuss the Estimates of the Home Secretary or the Premier. I am discussing the item, "Expenses of Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming, £1,000." I am claiming that the appointment of the commission was unnecessary because two things only were required.

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

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [2.16 p.m.]: The hon. member for Fassifern raised the question of the justice and the wisdom of granting life passes over Australian railways to ex-Ministers. This is only a reiteration of the expression of mean minds outside who like to see members of Parliament treated meanly. The objection of the hon. member was not to the size of the present vote; he was afraid that in twenty-five years this vote would assume tremendous proportions. He neglects the fact that ex-Ministers are not immortal. They die occasionally. He also neglected the fact that during the fifteen years of Labour Government here, owing to there being no change of Government, there were fewer ex-Ministers than in the preceding fifteen years. For instance, during the unfortunate time when the voters of this State went crazy and changed the Government, the end of that three years showed five new ex-Ministers of the Moore Government out of Parliament and carrying life passes on the Australian railways.

If the hon. member for Fassifern wishes to observe truly the economy that he preaches he should see to it that a Labour Government occupies the Treasury benches for the next twenty-five years, because if in the next twenty-five years there was a change of Government every three years there would be forty new ex-Ministers' passes for life at the end of that period. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [2.18 p.m.]: The vote for the expenses of the Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming is not at all necessary. Everyone knows what the position is. Hon. members opposite know that there was some movement afoot towards the end of last session to legislate on this matter. We had continuous statements appearing in the Press that a Racing Bill was to be brought on, that a Racing Board was to be established, that certain members of Parliament were to be members of it, and that they were going to take control of everything; but none of these rumours materialised. Then on the 7th of July this year the statement appeared in the Press that a caucus committee had been appointed to make recommendations to the Cabinet. Those recommendations were even published in the Press. Most minute details were given as to the number of bookmakers to be licensed, the amount of the betting tax, what it represented, and what revenue would be derived from this control of racing. This document was to be presented to the Premier on his return from Mackay. When that hon. gentleman returned from Mackay he said he never heard of such a committee.

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and did not know anything about it. He even said that there was no such committee. The Secretary for Public Instruction also denied that caucus had appointed a committee to go into the question. He went so far as to say that he had never heard of such a thing. But many other people had heard about it! Apparently, caucus took the bit between its teeth and if the Premier and Secretary for Public Instruction were not acquainted with the subject they were very soon told all about it and had to do something.

The PREMIER: You have not a very big imagination but you can do much better than that.

Mr. MOORE: This is not imagination.

The PREMIER: Of course it is. If you believe that, you will believe anything.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of imagination; it is a question of what has appeared in the public Press.

The PREMIER: Who put it there?

Mr. MOORE: Apparently one of the members of the committee appointed by caucus.

Mr. BEDFORD: The committee did not exist. This is a myth just like your £2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs.

Mr. MOORE: The committee must have existed, because to-day we see its results. The Cabinet were made aware of the results of this rebellion in the party. They had come to certain specific conclusions, and although the Premier knew nothing about it on the 7th July—

Mr. TAYLOR: Apparently you have been listening at the keyhole.

Mr. MOORE: I have not had occasion to listen at keyholes. It remains for Labour Ministers to hide people behind curtains and under desks. The Cabinet disclaimed any knowledge of the matter. Evidently the caucus committee got to work and said to Cabinet, "You have to do it," and the Cabinet immediately appointed a Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming—although all the information was available to them. The police have all the information available, and recommendations from the Commissioner of Police have indicated what was going on. Hon. members opposite knew the whole position before the commission was appointed.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did the police do any practical work in connection with the matter?

Mr. MOORE: Are they doing any practical work?

Mr. TAYLOR: Did they give any expression to the ideas?

Mr. MOORE: They have had the opportunity of stating what the facts were. A man with one eye can see what is going on down the street. One can see the crowd going into the shop and the policeman at the door directing the traffic. It is not as though it was conducted like a sly-grog shop. I believe the police have methods of collecting information in regard to what is happening. There is no ground for hon. members to say they do not know what is going on. It appears to me that the commission was appointed for the purpose of delaying matters. A section of the party apparently resolved on certain action being taken. They wanted a finger in a very tempting

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pie, and the Cabinet, not desiring to accede to their request at once, appointed this commission, which is going to cost £1,000.

Mr. BEDFORD: You know nothing about it. If you say there was a split in the party, that is untrue.

Mr. MOORE: There was a desire on the part of certain hon. members opposite that action should be taken.

Mr. BEDFORD: You would argue from nothing to something.

Mr. MOORE: That is all very fine; but the hon. member cannot get away from the statements that appeared in the Press.

Mr. BEDFORD: Press statements are 99 per cent. lies.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very well for the hon. member to talk like that. A committee of the caucus had investigated and insisted on what was to be done, and, judging by subsequent events, there appears to me to be a good deal of truth in the Press statements—where there is smoke there is fire. It appears to me to be a waste of public money to appoint a commission to make investigations when the information sought could be made available by the police and Government members, and the Government could then take whatever action they thought necessary in the interests of racing, putting aside the interests of certain members.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) [2.25 p.m.]: The hon. member for Dalby raised the question under this vote of certain rebates in connection with railway freights on machinery. It has been the practice for some time to charge to the Chief Secretary's Department certain concessions that may be granted on the railways. Of course, it can be argued in favour of that practice that the Railway Department, as a business undertaking, should not be called upon to give any general public concession, but that should be paid out of consolidated revenue. That is all right, and that is the system that is being carried out; but after all is said and done, no great importance attaches to it. It makes no difference to the charge on the State whether it is charged to one department or another. Consolidated revenue is all one fund.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It makes a difference to the balance sheet of the Railway Department.

The PREMIER: If one takes the balance sheet of the State as a whole it makes no difference at all. If one separates the Railway Department from all the other departments it is capable of doing something of the nature mentioned by the hon. member. For instance, the Railway Department has an effect on the revenue of the Department of Public Lands. In fact, the revenue of the latter department would be relatively infinitesimal were it not for the Railway Department. Land values throughout the State increase as the result of railway construction, but in the final analysis and regarding all the departments of State as one—and that is the proper point of view—it matters little or nothing whether the vote is charged to the Chief Secretary's Department or direct to the Railway Department.

The new system of accountancy introduced by the hon. member for Dalby when in charge of the Railway Department is quite interesting. It reminds me of the

story about the hen and the egg—"although that egg might be a breakfast to you it is only a pain to me." That pithily describes the method of accountancy supported by the hon. member for Dalby. For example, while the hon. member was in charge of the Railway Department he wrote off £28,000,000 of capital. Interest and redemption on that amount must now be found, and it is a charge on the revenue of the State.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Do not forget you spoke in favour of it.

The PREMIER: Not on the Bill sponsored by the hon. member.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Before the Bill was introduced. It can be found in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: I did not support the hon. member's Bill.

The transfer of £28,000,000 of indebtedness certainly enabled the Commissioner for Railways to show a better balance sheet. He is able to show a profit, but the Treasurer has to find the difference. The Treasurer has to find the interest and redemption on £28,000,000, so that what is a breakfast to the Commissioner for Railways is a pain in the head to me, as Treasurer, for I find the increased amount. The ultimate result is the same, and there is no advantage to be gained by making any alteration to the system of book-keeping. It would only disturb the method of accountancy that has been laid down and established over a period of years. So long as hon. members do not lose their sense of perspective no bad results can accrue.

The rebate on the machinery for the Mount Isa Company was introduced and approved by the Moore Government. The vote in the Estimates is merely a continuance of that policy. With regard to the reduction in freights allowed to that company, it must not be forgotten that it employs a very large number of men. It is in the interests of the State that the company should continue its operations, but to state that the Government are losing large sums of money and making a present of them to the company is not true. The Government are not losing by the arrangement that has been made. As a Government, we have just as much right to grant concessions to the mining industry as to the pastoral industry. One industry is as good as another—one form of primary production is as good as another—and any industry that employs a large number of men is just as worthy of special support as any other. The Government grant a reduction in the cost of the carriage of starving stock and fodder for starving stock. Special rebates have been allowed in connection with the restocking of holdings denuded as the result of the drought. No one industry should be singled out. The mining industry is valuable to the State, so are the cattle and sheep industries. Where the Government can encourage industry they are entitled to do so.

With reference to the Royal Commission on Racing and Gaming, the Leader of the Opposition is very frequently amusing, but he was never more amusing than when he made a statement, founded on rumour, that there was schism in the Labour Party with regard to the betting laws of the State. He asserted that certain statements appeared in the Press and certain things were done.

He reminds me of the old gossip who was spreading slanders about somebody else. When confronted by the man she said, "So and so's brother-in-law's niece works for an individual whose cousin told me certain things." That is in perfect analogy with the attitude of the hon. gentleman. He makes a number of ill-founded statements, all based on rumour. If the Leader of the Opposition knew anything at all, he would remember the saying that "Rumour is a lying jade." Anyone who has occupied the position of Premier, no matter how incompetent he has been, should have more dignity than to base a speech on idle and oft-times interested rumours. There has been no schism in this party at any time on this or any other matter. The Labour Party, as you know, Mr. Hanson, is not so ungenerous or mean as the organisation known as the Nationalist Country Party. That party suffered very heavy defeat at the last election, and set out to find a scapegoat. Some of the meanest statements ever penned were published in the "Courier-Mail" and other newspapers about the leadership of the hon. member for Aubigny. Because the Moore Party were signally defeated, a number of people wanted to replace Mr. Moore by somebody else! Very mean, very ungenerous! Evidently the hon. member, having smarted under the meanness of his own party, thinks the Labour Party is guilty of the meanness of spirit that his party showed towards him. Be that as it may; I say quite definitely that his statements are based on idle rumour, and have no foundation whatsoever.

In appointing this royal commission, we were actuated by a desire to do the right thing by racing and the public. It will be remembered that the Moore Government, of which the hon. member for Dalby was a member, appointed a racing commission very shortly after they were returned to power. In fact, his initials are on the minute authorising its appointment. Will he argue that that commission was useful and that this one will not be? If that is his contention, we can only arrive at the conclusion that that commission was appointed to enable some of the Nationalist Party's legal friends to obtain fat fees for legal services rendered to that commission. Following on that commission, legislation was passed increasing the taxation on betting and restricting the number of days allotted to racing, not merely in Brisbane, but throughout the State. What has been the result? Racing has declined in Queensland; there has not been the revival in racing in Queensland during the last three years that there has in other parts of the Commonwealth.

I know very little about racing. I know, of course, that the hon. member for Dalby knows all that there is to be known, probably, all there is to be known about the sordid side of racecourses. I want to know what is required. Why has this sport been declining? Some say it is because this betting tax is too heavy. Some put forward other contentions. Certain methods are being carried out in New South Wales and other States, but there is no cohesion of policy as between those States. Many differences of opinion have been already expressed to the racing commission by experts. Mr. O'Shea, President of the Queensland Turf Club, gave evidence in certain directions, and the hon. member for

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Dalby gave evidence in other directions. They showed differences of opinion. I am satisfied that the appointment of this royal commission will enable the Government to devise a policy that will be fair to all those who are honestly engaged in racing, and to the public. That is the idea and aim of the Government, and that is all that is required.

I am not going to give an expression of opinion regarding the policy of the Government until the report of the commission is placed in my hands. When it is available the Government will make up their minds as to the policy to be pursued, and Parliament will be asked to give effect to that policy.

Item (Miscellaneous Services) agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.
CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

“That £56,773 be granted for ‘Department of Public Lands—Chief Office.’”

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [2.36 p.m.]: Notwithstanding results of the last drought and other causes—which were exaggerated, chiefly, I think, on account of the fact that the droughts were largely sectional, but also because we are given to overlooking the marvellously rapid recuperative power of the country—the total number of cattle in Queensland as at the 1st January, 1934, was 5,781,000, and at the 1st January, 1935, 6,052,000. There has been an increase in the same period in the number of sheep up to 21,574,000, or by 1,501,000. The work that the Government have decided upon in the direction of making stock routes more efficient will be an admirable move. The question is whether drought relief will be secured by the proposal of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for feeding stock. Drought amelioration largely depends upon the people most interested, that is to say, the squatters themselves. The whole question of artificial feeding depends largely on irrigation; the lessening of the results of drought depends largely on the present railway system being made more effective by north-south lines joining up those to the far West of the State.

In this connection the Charleville-Blackall line is, in my opinion, exceedingly necessary, and most of the expert opinion on the subject I have already indicated. We have seen in the West of this country the disadvantages of company ownership of pastures as compared with individual ownership. The effects of the recent drought have been accentuated by over-stocking. It was mentioned by the hon. member for Cook the other day that the flocks and herds of this country are no greater now than they were forty-five years ago. That can be put down to over-stocking. New pests have come into the country, and we find in a bad fly time that some of the company-owned concerns will not face the costs of dipping, but prefer to take the chance of mortality in the sheep. Similarly, in my own electorate, which is the safest pastoral country, I suppose, in Australia, owing to the large areas of mulga reserves, there were stations that were not stocked up to 10 per cent. of their capacity, and although there was plenty of grass no attempt had been made to increase water facilities. In point of fact, the existing water facilities of tanks and dams were made inoperable by being silted

up, and no attempt was made to unsilt them, so that when rain did come the water simply ran in and ran out again. In my opinion the State will have to provide stronger safeguards against those people who over-stock and allow the public estate to get into a worse condition than when they took it over. The old breed of pastoralists, especially the cattlemen, used their country on the run-down principle, taking all they could out of it while they were on it. That is only human nature, but it should also be the nature of the State to prevent spoliation.

Mr. MAHER: The leasehold system has a lot to do with that.

Mr. BEDFORD: Would the hon. member make the country freehold and thus allow the owners to do what they like with it?

Mr. MAHER: There is no incentive—

Mr. BEDFORD: It is no use the hon. member stressing the incentive that may follow the adoption of the freehold system. This State is already committed and will be committed, I think, for all time to the principle of never selling another acre of land. It is better for the pastoral industry that that should be so, for in bad times—no matter how far they themselves may have conduced to those conditions—the tenants find a much more kindly landlord in the State than they ever found in the private individual.

Mr. MAHER: With four or five years of the lease to run the tendency is to neglect the holding.

Mr. BEDFORD: Naturally, the tendency is to work the country on the run-down principle, but the tendency of the State should be to see that that is not done. There should be closer supervision to prevent over-stocking. Penalties should be imposed for over-stocking and for failing to make the best of the natural water facilities on the land and to keep tanks and dams unsilted. There should be a lower rental for the man who is doing his best by the public estate as against the man who is doing his worst.

The sheep man is compelled to pay the cost of destroying dingoes bred by the cattle man. In almost every State of Australia the Alsatian has been proved a menace and it should be dealt with immediately. There should be a different method of dealing with the dingo. I believe that a new method has been proposed. At least we should maintain the present local authority price for scalps, but increase it by levying on the pastoralists themselves.

Speaking of the State as a landlord, we have during the last few days seen a reiteration of the proposal for the old chartered company method for the development of the Northern Territory, which we thought had been squelched two years ago. The Barkly Tableland is now occupied entirely by sheep. The Queensland pastoralist is at a disadvantage by reason of the fact that he has to pay a reasonable rent compared with a rental of 1s. a square mile for a lease in the Northern Territory of 42 years. When these leases were about to fall in some years ago the Bruce Government issued new leases for 42 years, again carrying a rental of 1s. a square mile. The advantages of low rentals and easy conditions are not sufficient for the leaseholders in the Northern Territory. It is now proposed

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

that there should issue to them "company" leases of sixty years' duration and the alleged "company" is also asking the Commonwealth Government for a loan of £1,000,000 for the purpose of financing something that the company mongers of this particular concern call progress. The people on the other side of the border are to do away with the sheep blocks they now have and convert them to cattle; and in return that country will be freed of rent, industrial legislation, taxes, and even Customs dues. It is not possible that this proposition should go through for the reason that it is entirely against the Federal Constitution inasmuch as it gives the State—or one part of Australia—an advantage over another. Mr. A. J. Cotton, a man who knows the country well, and who is an experienced pastoralist, writes in the "Courier Mail" to-day—

"Mr. Cramsie, who gives his estimate of the carrying capacity as 720,000 head of cattle, has not, to my knowledge, ever been there, and I have been connected with the country for twenty years. It is significant that the project which Mr. Cramsie reported on for the Moore Government—the purchase of Swift's Works as abattoirs—although a good thing for the metropolitan area meat consumers, has not turned out to be the best thing for the meat industry of Queensland, inasmuch as it has thrown the control of the industry into the hands of a few of the big meat vendors of the world."

Yet in spite of such facts the proposal, which we thought we had scotched two years ago, is to come up again. Although it is an impudent proposal it is an excellent indication of the opinion held by these impudent people of the Government which they are about to approach. All sorts and conditions of people who live in Queensland should protest against this disadvantage to the Queensland cattle grower, whose stock now approaches 7,000,000, and the great injustice which it is proposed shall be done to them in order that the country now carrying a large number of sheep and 226,000 cattle should carry something under 750,000 cattle only at the expense of Australia's money and in breach of the Australian Constitution.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [2.49 p.m.]: The matter I intend to refer to is one in which a number of citizens of Toowoomba are interested. It concerns provision for the propagation of certain species of bird life on Lake Clarendon, which is situated on a reserve under the control of the Department of Public Lands. The reserve is less than 1,000 acres in extent, while the actual area of the water is about 160 acres. During most of the year this is the habitat of about 10,000 birds of various species. The minds of the people are becoming agitated because the rarer birds are gradually becoming extinct. It is with the object of encouraging the birds to remain and propagate that the action I have in mind is contemplated.

Interest in this matter was awakened during the visit of Lord Huntingfield, the present Governor of Victoria, to the Gatton district, who promised to lend his support by way of a subscription of £25. Prominent citizens of Toowoomba and other centres have taken a prominent interest in the matter. A committee has been appointed,

including Dr. Spencer Roberts (Government medical officer), Mr. Mark Harrison, His Excellency Lord Huntingfield, Mr. T. P. O'Brien, Mr. F. Pigott, Dr. Hurworth, and Professor Murray, of Gatton College. The trust has agreed to allow a certain portion of this reserve, to be devoted to this purpose. The major difficulty is the matter of expenses, and I appeal to the Secretary for Public Lands to give sympathetic consideration to any request he may receive for financial help for this project. The object is to fence off the reserve and run the fence down into the lake itself, which would eliminate a good deal of the alarm to which the birds are subjected and which is inimical to propagation. The fence would prevent cattle and other animals from grazing on that portion, and the growth of natural herbage would encourage bird life. Lake Clarendon is situated in proximity to Gatton, about 29 miles from Toowoomba, and the same distance from Ipswich; and in future it will be attractive to tourists between Brisbane and Toowoomba. Now that the matter has been brought under the notice of the Minister, I know he will give it his fullest consideration. The people are prepared to help with their own money.

I do not wish it to be understood that I am criticising any lack of effort by the Government to protect bird life. There are a very large number of bird sanctuaries throughout the State, but a closer supervision would appear to be desirable. The protection of bird life should not be merely a policy of negation—the mere provision of bird sanctuaries and leaving it at that. The law relating to bird protection should be policed, and the feathered friends of man should receive the maximum of protection. In the brochure, "The Animals and Birds Acts, 1921 to 1924," issued by the Secretary for Agriculture, is to be found the following:—

"THE FEATHERED FRIENDS OF MAN.

"The service that birds perform in protecting woodland trees, writes E. H. Forbush, State Entomologist of Massachusetts, is more nearly indispensable to man than any other benefit they confer on him. . . . Were the natural enemies of forest insects annihilated, every tree in our woods would be threatened with destruction, and man would be powerless to prevent the calamity.

"He might make shift to save some orchard or shade trees; he might find means to raise some garden crops; but the protection of all the trees in all the woods would be beyond his powers. Yet this herculean task ordinarily is accomplished as a matter of course by birds and other insectivorous creatures, without trouble or expense to man, and without appreciable injury to his great woodland interests."

Mr. Hardacre, an ex-Secretary for Public Lands, on one occasion quoted in the Chamber the motto of English sportsmen. "It is a lovely day. Let us go out and kill something." Certainly the gentleman was treating the matter satirically. There are other members in this Chamber who are interested in the protection of our bird life, and now that the matter has been raised, I am sure the Secretary for Public Lands will give it his serious consideration.

Mr. Llewelyn.]

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [2.59 p.m.]: Lake Clarendon is in my electorate. It was the old home of the Vannecks, one of the pioneering pastoral families of Queensland. The present Governor of Victoria, Lord Huntingfield, is a member of this family and was born on this property. On his recent visit to the Gatton district His Excellency was distressed to find the bird life of the lake being destroyed, because cattle and horses, when wandering through the reserve, trampled on the nests of the birds. Lord Huntingfield spent a very enjoyable hour or so on the shores of Lake Clarendon, which he had not seen for over forty years. It was the scene of his boyhood, and he was very anxious that the area should be preserved, not only because of its own natural beauty, but also because of the bird life to be found around this lovely stretch of water. Lord Huntingfield interviewed some of the members of the trust that controls this lake and told them that he would donate £25 to any fund that could be raised to fence off a portion of the lake to prevent stock trampling on the birds' nests and so make a suitable sanctuary for the propagation of bird life.

It must be remembered, however, that the lake is held in terms of a trust. The five members of that trust are Mr. Westergaard Neilsen (chairman), Councillor George Muller, Councillor L. T. Lester, Mr. C. W. Sanger, and Mr. J. K. Ebert. Those trustees are in a rather unusual position in that they are operating under a deed of grant, which dedicates the lake to the trustees for the purposes of recreation, under control, and that, in addition, a number of the Lake Clarendon settlers have the right to graze a certain quantity of stock in the area surrounding the lake and coming under the control of the trust. So that the rights of the settlers have to be considered. Whilst I am prepared fully to support the request made by the hon. member for Toowoomba, I hope that the Minister will do nothing that will in any way interfere with the powers and responsibilities of the existing trustees. The request, as I understand it, is for an amount to help the trustees to fence off a portion of the lake. They are prepared to donate £50—accepting their share of the responsibility—Lord Huntingfield will donate £25, and it is thought that the cost of the fencing will run into approximately £200, although £500 could quite easily be spent there. If the Government could see their way clear to earmark the sum of £150, or thereabouts, to assist the trustees in this very laudable object, it would be very helpful indeed. I support the request made by the hon. member for Toowoomba in that respect.

A project to ensure that bird life will have every chance of propagation is indeed a very worthy one. The gentlemen of the Toowoomba and Gatton districts, particularly members of the Taramba Shire Council and the trustees, have been very anxious to assure the protection of bird life. The lake has already been proclaimed a sanctuary for birds. Like Lord Huntingfield, I certainly wish to see that the lake is preserved, not only for recreation purposes, but also for the purpose of allowing the beautiful birds found in that part of the district to have every opportunity of increasing without disturbance by stock trampling down their nests.

[*Mr. Maher.*]

The farmers, too, are anxious to see the bird life protected. There is no doubt that the bird life and farming interests go hand in hand. Birds destroy many of the pests that affect crops, and it is only right that every effort be made to see that our beautiful bush birds are given every opportunity to multiply. I have much pleasure in supporting the request by the hon. member for Toowoomba, and I hope that the Minister will seriously consider the matter and make funds available for this very desirable object.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS (*Port Curtis*) [3.6 p.m.]: As one very interested in the welfare of our youths, I wish to pay a tribute to the Minister in charge of this Vote for the furtherance of the scheme for the training of boys of this State in forestry work. The scheme has been successful up to the present, and well over 100 boys are now satisfactorily employed. The Minister is to be complimented on finding an avenue where the young men of this State can be employed. In my electorate at Watalgan a number of boys have been employed. They are fortunate in that the officer in charge of the work there is a very capable man and able to give them the training they so much desired.

As I said in my speech on the Address in Reply, it is pleasing to notice the improvement in forestry activities that has taken place during the last twelve months. In this connection the Minister and his officers are again to be congratulated on the pursuance of a policy that has proved to be successful. I still maintain—perhaps it has become an obsession with me—that too many forestry areas are locked up and not enough such land is made available for farmers' sons who desire to engage in dairying and other occupations.

I am pleased that the hon. member for Toowoomba, supported by the hon. member for West Moreton, touched on the matter of wild bird life. For many years I have been a member of the Wild Bird Protection League of Australia, and I have addressed many gatherings in various parts of the State, including centres in the electorate of West Moreton. The ravages of natural fauna and flora in the mountainous area of that district led to the formation of a sub-branch of the league there. This is a matter that demands the attention, not only of members of Parliament, but also of every individual interested in the preservation of our natural fauna and flora. I am pleased to know that quite recently the Chamber of Commerce at Monto decided to get in touch with the Minister and ask him to use every effort to suppress the denuding of various areas of staghorns, ferns, and the plant life existing in the scrubs there.

The hon. member for Warrego spoke of the dingo menace. At the last half-yearly meeting of the Western Downs Local Producers' Association at Dalby in June, a resolution was passed—

“That the question of a State-wide scheme for the destruction of the dingo pest be again urged upon the Government.”

Press reports practically every day indicate the growth of this menace. I have a Press

report here—I am sorry I could not obtain the date of it—that says—

“ALARMING INCREASE OF DINGOES.

“BIGGER SUBSIDY ON SCALPS SOUGHT.

“Dingoes in the cattle and sheep country were increasing at an alarming rate, and graziers were unable to cope with them.”

That was the complaint of a deputation to the hon. the Home Secretary from the Local Authorities Association. The request was made that the amount paid for dingo scalps should be increased from 5s. to 10s. The Press report continues—

“Councillor T. J. Campbell (Kolan) said the local authorities were prepared to increase their share of the subsidy from 2s. 6d. to 5s. if the Government would do the same. So far as they could see, it was the only solution of the problem.”

Letters are published in the Press practically every day pointing out the damage suffered by the ravages of dingoes throughout the State.

Another matter of concern to country areas, and probably coastal areas, too, is the alarming spread of the lantana. I have a letter from a grazier in my electorate asking me to use my best endeavours in securing its destruction. He points out that it practically rivals pear in its menacing spread, affecting the eastern coast and spreading rapidly without check to the most valuable areas. I hope that the Minister will be able to extend some assistance to the settlers who desire to combat the spread of this pest.

In conclusion, I should like to refer to the recently established Country Land Development Assistance Fund. Already a sum of £100,000 has been made available in this fund to help land holders to develop their country. The new fund will be under the control of the Secretary for Public Lands. Advances will be made available at 4 per cent., repayable over twenty-five years, for the first five years interest only being charged, and thereafter interest and redemption in half-yearly instalments. The scheme is a good one, and the Government are to be congratulated upon making the fund available.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to point out to the hon. member that he is now dealing with loan funds, whereas the vote under discussion deals with the Consolidated Revenue Account.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: I merely wanted to congratulate the Minister and the Government on their action in inaugurating the scheme and making the fund available.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [3.13 p.m.]: The puzzling and almost mysterious silence of hon. members opposite astounds me. They call themselves the Country Party, and apparently they are satisfied with the work that the present Government are doing in relation to land settlement. I should like to congratulate the Minister and the Government upon the success of their land settlement policy. Under the present Government land activities have shown a gratifying improvement, and evidence of that is available in the Budget and other documents. I propose to deal with two or three problems that have a vital bearing on

the Rockhampton and surrounding districts. I propose to deal with the problems of drought losses, the need for bigger home markets for Queensland primary producers, and the threatened restrictions on exports. I shall deal with them in a non-party spirit.

The problem of drought losses is a very serious one, and I offer my congratulations to the Government upon their suggestions for drought amelioration. I hope that they will persevere with their suggestions until a solution has been found. The question is one that affects not only the grazier and the Government, but also the State and the nation. Drought losses deplete assets, dissipate capital, and reduce income, and the consummation of any practicable proposal for drought insurance will be welcomed, I am sure, by the people in general and the graziers in particular. One great authority has said that he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew formerly is a greater benefactor to the human race than the whole race of politicians. Any administration that can reduce the drought loss to one sheep where two died formerly will be a benefactor to Australia, and Queensland in particular.

We need an entirely new outlook and a new policy in regard to drought problems. It is the tendency to accept drought as an abnormal feature of our agricultural, grazing, and climatic life, whereas as a matter of fact it should be regarded as a normal feature, varying in intensity but occurring periodically, and just as natural as good seasons. Each succeeding drought seems to find us in the same unfortunate and unprotected position. I know the effect of these droughts upon Rockhampton and the Central District. Although there is a difference of opinion as to how drought insurance should be effected, there is a strong and growing desire on the part of the people of Central Queensland that some form of such insurance should be founded. It is quite a natural suggestion, especially as insurance schemes have been evolved against such losses as those by fire. No scheme has been evolved to protect our great pastoral industry against losses from recurring droughts, which are just as certain as the rising of the sun and good seasons. Therefore, I commend the Government for the proposals they have tentatively placed before the country.

The Rockhampton “Evening News” expressed its appreciation of the spirit contained in the gesture of the Government. In an article written in August last the editor remarked—

“It is too early yet to assume that the drought insurance scheme will not be acceptable in some form to the industry which it is designed to benefit.

“There can be no question of the Government’s sincere desire to do something to save the State and the people engaged in the grazing industry from such gruelling experiences as they have just gone through.

“Even if the fodder proposals do not appeal to a majority surely there are some points in the scheme that can be adopted with beneficial results.”

That is excellent comment. The writer approached the subject in a proper spirit, and I hope that other newspapers will do similarly.

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The Secretary for Agriculture is to be commended for his zeal, energy and ability in putting forward these tentative proposals. Naturally, they are not to be regarded as a fixed, definite and unalterable scheme. They can be developed, varied and elaborated as the circumstances and conditions require, and can be ultimately moulded into a sound scheme for the mitigation of drought losses. Any scheme that reduces the severity of our drought losses is of national importance. The proposal of the Minister is a very excellent one, and should be carefully considered by the graziers as well as other interests.

Obviously, there will be many objections to any scheme which may be devised, but the objections are not unsurmountable. They are inevitably associated with all great schemes. Objections are raised to all great proposals. Dr. Johnson reminds us that if we wait to overcome all objections nothing will be attempted. As Thomas Carlyle remarked, "All noble work is at first impossible." So to-day we must bear in mind there will be objections to the constructive proposal put forward by the Government, but if the objections are met in the right spirit it can be accomplished. If we could only rid ourselves of that cynical complex that sets up the conviction that nothing can be done—it can be done. The Central district of the State can be saved much needless loss by a scheme such as that suggested by the Government.

The nature of the Government's contribution to drought relief justifies their request for better organisation in the pastoral industry to combat the disastrous results of droughts. The Government have spent millions of pounds by way of drought relief railways throughout Queensland, notably on the Longreach railway, where a large sum of money was spent on a line that would not justify its existence except that it is largely used to provide relief in times of drought. During the recent drought the Railway Department carried millions of sheep with a minimum of loss. These sheep were transported long distances, in one instance, from Oorindi to Goondiwindi—a distance of 1,500 miles—and there were other cases where sheep were transported similarly long distances. The Government have spent a large amount of money in assisting the pastoral industry, and because of that great expenditure by the taxpayers of the State we can expect greater attention to the problem of relief insurance and drought relief.

The Government have rendered great assistance to the pastoral industry by granting concessions in freights. The following percentage reductions indicate the magnitude of the assistance rendered in this respect: starving stock, 35 per cent.; fodder for starving stock, 50 per cent.; and stock being railed to drought-stricken areas for restocking purposes, 35 per cent.

In the past three years the Government have granted freight concessions to the pastoral industry amounting to £175,000, and in the past twenty years, apart from the reduction in wool rates, the concessions to this industry and others affected by drought conditions in this State have amounted to £800,000 per annum; whilst taking into consideration the reduction in wool rates from 1930, the concessions granted in the past thirty years have amounted to over £1,000,000. It is quite obvious the expenditure of that large sum of money in help to

the pastoral industry by the taxpayers of the State justifies the Government's request for better organisation in that industry. It is a question that vitally affects not only the people in the district I represent, but the people of the State generally; and I hope the Government's commendable proposals will ultimately materialise in a sound and effective scheme that will develop a new outlook in Queensland in regard to droughts in this State.

The supplementary proposal of the department regarding the provision of water on stock routes must appeal to members as being very desirable. That will be of immense advantage to the pastoral industry, and a further link in a scheme of drought insurance and ensure greater safety when starving stock are travelling. I understand it is proposed to provide for a chain of water links stretching from Eromanga to Normanton by the sinking of bores at strategical points and generally providing dams and bores throughout the State. This provision will be of great advantage when it is necessary to travel starving stock.

Dealing with the question of providing a greater home market for our produce, I desire to emphasise the point that it is obvious that nothing is to be gained by producing if a market cannot be found for the product. That is an obvious truism—a simple but fundamental truth. The need for a greater Australian market for Queensland and Australian producers is being emphasised by the policy of restriction of exports from Australia, and in addition by the lapse to lower overseas prices that took place in 1934-35 as compared with 1933-34. There was a recovery of prices for Australian products overseas in 1933-34, but there was a relapse in the following year. Butter, cheese, sugar, wool, hides, and sheepskins were affected.

It is true that there is already a substantial Australian market for the primary products of the Commonwealth. Over £100,000,000 worth of primary products produced in Australia are consumed annually within her shores. That demonstrates the possibility of greater expansion and shows that there is within Australia the prospect of a greater market with less fluctuation, greater certainty, and greater stability than there is beyond her shores. What is more important—higher prices are obtained internally.

Associated with the problem of a greater home market is obviously the question of secondary industries. Australia requires to build up her secondary industries in order to accommodate a larger population and provide a greater demand and a greater market for the products of the primary producers and to ensure greater purchasing power to her citizens. There should be no suggestion of antagonism between the city and the country. During this morning's debate an hon. member contended that there was a gulf dividing the city and the country. That suggestion was not correct. There should be the greatest co-operation and interdependence between the city and the country, and if that spirit is manifested in Australian secondary industries can be built up and an enormously increased market provided for the products of the primary producers of Queensland and the other Australian States. Australia is certainly a wonderful country, large in area and rich in resources, but she will never realise her true destiny

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until her secondary industries receive greater consideration than they are being shown at the present time.

At 3.29 p.m.,

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

Mr. LARCOMBE: The fiscal policy of the Commonwealth is closely associated with this question of secondary industries of primary production and of markets for the producers. In making that contention it must not be understood that I am underestimating the importance of primary production. In fact, the whole point of my contention is that the development of secondary industries should be advanced in order to absorb the produce of our primary industries. Economists have time and again pointed out that a top-heavy city population is a danger to the nation. I do not suggest for a moment that we should build up our cities at the expense of the country. The two should advance simultaneously and in sympathy. There is much wisdom in the admonitory question of George Essex Evans—

“How can we make Australia great and strong when danger calls,

When half the people of the State are crammed in city walls?”

I am not suggesting that we should cram the people within the city walls.

Mr. RUSSELL: Your policy does that.

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is entirely wrong. Our policy does not. Time will not permit of my entering into a lengthy argument with the hon. member for Hamilton, but I most emphatically submit that our policy does not do that. As a matter of fact, there was an increase of 17,000 persons engaged in farming and cultivating in Queensland between the years 1915 and 1929 under Labour Government. In no other State of Australia was there such an increase. In many States there were decreases. How can the hon. member contend that our policy unduly fosters the city at the expense of the country when the statistics for 1915 to 1929 show that while we were building up the city we were also building up the country, and had the splendid record of 17,000 additional persons cultivating and dairying during that period?

The immigration figures under the Labour Government were the best in the whole Commonwealth, which shows that Labour has a true conception of statesmanship and that Labour's policy is all embracing. We recognise and act on the important principles of political economy that embrace all interests, the country as well as the city.

I now pass on to the third difficulty confronting the primary producer; that is, the threatened restriction of primary exports. That is a difficulty that will affect Australia next year unless we bestir ourselves. For next year the question will be decided by the British Government, and unless there is a full and effective protest from Australia in the meantime, we shall inevitably suffer a restriction of exports.

Mr. BRAND: It will go if Labour gets into power in the old country.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I have endeavoured to keep this discussion free of party politics,

but the interjection by the hon. member for Isis reminds me of the fact that his own leader was responsible for fostering the policy of restriction of exports. Last year he strongly supported it, as did the Federal Prime Minister and the High Commissioner of Australia. They are all responsible for this conspiracy. They surrendered to the seductive siren of South American interests. Australia has been sacrificed on the altar of alien interests that have no other concern in the British Empire than that of sordid profit. The proposal is unbusinesslike, disgraceful, and unpatriotic, and one to which the people of Australia should not submit without effective protest.

On what grounds do we base our protest? First of all, on the financial and trade relationship between Australia and Great Britain. We have large trade and financial relationships with the United Kingdom. We import heavily from the United Kingdom. We have heavy obligations in London—about half our national debt is payable in London. How are we to pay in full without default, if the means by which we pay are to be restricted? If we are to meet our obligations in full, as we desire to do, this policy of restriction of exports should not be tolerated. And it is not proposed, as we are told at times, in the interests of the British producer.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The Leader of the Opposition advocated it. The “*Courier-Mail*” of the 10th May, 1934, quotes him as having done so at the Crow's Nest show. The paragraph reads—

“RESTRICTION OF EXPORTS.

MR. MOORE SUPPORTS PROPOSALS.

“Speaking at the opening of the Crow's Nest show to-day, Mr. A. E. Moore indicated that he strongly supported the proposal to restrict the export of produce to Great Britain. We have had Mr. Bruce out here, and he has not only met the different Governments but also the primary producers. Mr. Bruce is quite right. We have Governments with the exception of the Federal Government strongly opposing a policy of restriction.”

That is the pronouncement of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition! I say that the restriction of exports, if forced upon us, would be tragic enough, but when we are likely to have it foisted upon us by the acquiescence and surrender of certain so-called statesmen in Australia, the possibility is tragic beyond description and beggars one's powers of expression. The Australian producers are being sacrificed in the manner I have indicated because of the actions of leaders in the anti-Labour ranks. Fortunately the Press, regarding it apart from party politics, have taken up an attitude antagonistic to these proposals. I quote again from the “*Courier-Mail*”—

“The time is opportune, therefore, to tell Britain that the capacity of Australia to absorb new population must depend very considerably upon freedom to dispose of surplus production. In short, if the United Kingdom prefers foreign to Australian meat, strangling, or at least hampering development here,

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the chances of reinforcing the population by immigration from the mother country must be correspondingly destroyed."

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

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [3.38 p.m.]: It has been generally recognised by most people who settle on the land that the Labour Party's policy of land settlement has been pretty rotten, and does not appeal to them. It is not in the interests of good settlement. The present Secretary for Public Lands is the most successful Labour Minister to hold that portfolio. He has endeavoured to recognise that his job is one that calls for a good deal of practical help to the man on the land. He has recognised that the "rule of thumb" policy of the Labour platform should be cast on one side. He has, moreover, been honest in his administration. Approximately eight months ago at Warwick he paid a tribute to the ex-Minister for Public Lands, Mr. Deacon, for he said, in effect: "I am only doing what Mr. Deacon initiated. I am trying to do what I can to settle people on the land." Mr. Deacon initiated that policy and the present Minister is endeavouring to carry it out! He is making every endeavour to settle people on the land in a satisfactory way. The hon. member for Rockhampton contended that the return from primary products during the year 1934-35 was the lowest on record.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I did not say the lowest on record.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member pointed out that it was lower in that year than it had been for many years past. But the Secretary for Public Lands claims that during that year his department was able to attract to the Treasury the highest amount of land revenue since 1929. The Government should recognise the fundamental principle that primary producers cannot progress if they are called upon to meet heavy Crown rents and other excessive governmental charges during a time when they are unable to get a reasonable price for their commodities. Again we urge the Government to reduce land rentals to the lowest possible level.

The hon. member for Warrego complained that leases on the Barkly Tableland and elsewhere in the Northern Territory were made available at a rental of 1s. a square mile and that the Queensland Crown tenants were at a disadvantage in having to pay higher rentals. I should like to present the reverse side of the case to the Minister by warning him not to handicap Queensland tenants by imposing heavy Crown rentals as compared with those charged in the Northern Territory.

I thoroughly understand that a Secretary for Public Lands has many problems to tackle and that they vary from year to year, but I should like to support the request by the hon. member for Port Curtis that action be taken by the Government to combat the spread of the lantana. It is true that it is rapidly spreading along our coastal areas, threatening some of the best pastoral land. Many hundreds of acres have been overrun during the past few years. The trouble does not lie so much in the spread of the lantana itself as in the fact that it provides a harbourage for wallabies who devour the grass

and thus render many areas almost useless. The Commonwealth Government recognise their responsibility in the matter, but unless something is done, especially along the lines of employing biological agents, many hundreds of acres of our best land must succumb to the onward march of this pest, as many thousands of acres of valuable pastoral country succumbed to the spread of prickly pear before it was ultimately checked. Steps should be taken to stop its onward progress. While owners of land are waiting for some biological method of doing so the Minister should help owners of alienated land to destroy the pest by present known methods, such as burning, digging, and the flame thrower. The department will earn the gratitude of graziers, and agriculturists particularly, if they can devise means whereby many fine areas of our coastal land can be reclaimed from the pest.

Reference has been made to our stock losses in the drought from which the State has just emerged, and the construction of certain railways to expedite the transport of stock to and from drought-stricken areas. To-day sheep are compelled to travel 1,200 miles by rail from relief country to Western Queensland, whereas if the south-western and central railway systems were linked this distance would be reduced to 400 or 500 miles. This link would afford tremendous relief to our pastoralists and be of great national value. That being so, the Government would be justified in approaching the Federal Government for help to construct it as a great national asset. I support the suggestion of the hon. member for Warrego, and I feel that the Commonwealth Government have some responsibility in this matter.

The debate on these Estimates invariably revolves round the respective merits of the perpetual freehold and leasehold systems. That subject is still a live one with my party. We claim the right of selectors to make their lands freehold if they wish. The Moore Government gave settlers the option to convert their agricultural farms from perpetual leasehold to freehold tenure. Quite a number availed themselves of the opportunity. Although the policy of the Government is that of leasehold tenure, we know that many of their followers personally favour the freehold system. We believe that freehold tenure is the right tenure in closely settled areas. It makes for the development and prosperity of a district. It gives the selector an incentive to work to this end. The greatest prosperity and development have taken place in the closely settled areas of the State where freehold tenure abounds.

Mr. FOLEY: Anyone would think you belonged to the Middle Ages.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member, who is continually foisting the doctrines of Russia upon us, is in the advanced age. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber recognise that every man on the land wants to own his own farm; he does not wish to farm it under the leasehold system. People who are developing the country are entitled to freehold. Hon. members opposite have a great deal to say about the rights of other sections of the community. I stand for the rights of the men on the land—and I say they should have the right to own freehold. The man who settles on the land has a perfect right to look for the tenure

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that has been recognised as a proper one throughout the ages—and that is freehold.

Mr. FOLEY: The land belongs to the people, and you have no right to give it away.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member would purchase a freehold right in preference to a leasehold right. The present Secretary for Public Lands gives greater weight to the practical side of land settlement—greater than most of his predecessors—and that is of great help to the settlers. There are many difficulties to be overcome, some of which are met with especially in the closer settled areas, and I hope the Minister will give sympathetic consideration to requests from these settlers who are passing through difficult times, and who, notwithstanding the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton, are carrying out the real work of this country.

The men on the land desire the development of secondary industries. The Leader of the Opposition has stressed that time and again, and endeavoured to get a discussion in this Parliament on the need for the development of secondary industries. It is useless to endeavour to persuade the people of this State that fiscal matters prevent it when secondary industries prosper in other States of the Commonwealth. The primary industries in our State look forward to the development of a healthy secondary industry that will provide a home market for their product. We recognise that the home market is the best market we can have for our own products, and particularly our primary products; and we will assist the Government in any policy that will tend to bring that about.

The Minister in charge of the Lands Department has a very important portfolio, and we hope he will give yet greater help to settlers who are labouring under difficulties, because unless something is done to induce them to carry on they will leave the land and come to the cities.

The Secretary for Public Lands should not countenance the policy of cutting up selections into areas that are over-small. Such a policy is not a good one for the State, but was followed by previous Labour Administrations. He should adopt the policy advocated by members on this side on every opportunity of providing a living area. The Minister has certainly had a number of difficulties to contend with. Even during the past twelve months he has had to face many difficulties in an endeavour to overcome the troubles that follow the settlement of people on small areas. It must be said that these difficulties were not the result of anything done by the Moore Government. In all future settlements the Minister should recognise the wisdom of making the area adequate to enable the settler to obtain a livelihood.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [3.56 p.m.]: The hon. member for Warrego has stated that the great problem confronting land settlement to-day is water conservation. I desire to assure the hon. member and all others interested that the Government have attempted to grapple with that position. I have the results of my own observations, made during extensive travelling in the State. At the commencement of the drought menace I and other hon. members made an inspection. The problem has caused the Government grave concern. We want to

face it properly. So we have appointed as a royal commissioner an officer of the department, whom we regard as the most suitable to make the investigation, as a result of which we shall have something tangible upon which to work. Land Commissioner Leahy is a man of very wide experience, and the terms of reference in the commission under which he is appointed cover every phase of the question. They are the most comprehensive of any terms that have been drawn up by the Lands Administration Board, the members of which thoroughly understand land settlement.

The hon. member for Warrego and other hon. members advocated the construction of a railway from Charleville to Blackall. A strong plea was made generally for the linking of railway communication in the West. These matters, together with the question of over-stocking, will be fully dealt with by the commissioner. The Government are not in any way hurrying or hampering his investigations. He is personally inspecting every portion of the State. At intervals he forwards interim reports, and any matters that can be attended to immediately are promptly dealt with. On the receipt of the final report something definite and comprehensive will be done.

I am sorry that owing to circumstances the report of the Land Administration Board is not before hon. members. This is due to the reorganisation of the department. This year's report contains an innovation that will be of considerable assistance to hon. members. By a series of graphs they will be able to ascertain our exact position in land matters. The drawing and printing of these graphs is one of the reasons why the report is not before the House. One graph will show the number of sheep and cattle and stock throughout the State of Queensland. It will be an eye-opener to hon. members to see the numbers of sheep and cattle that are now depastured throughout the State. They will observe that much of the talk of the further development of pastoral lands is idle, inasmuch as it is quite evident, even taking into account the results of the drought, that the pastoral lands of Queensland are on the point of being over-stocked. More especially does this apply to sheep land. As a matter of fact, Mr. Leahy's report will show that much of the loss in certain areas was due to over-stocking. I can assure the hon. member for Warrego that that question will have the Government's serious consideration.

We proposed to bring down amendments to the land laws this session, but we are holding them over because we want to include the various measures that will be found necessary after reading Land Commissioner Leahy's report. As the hon. member for Warrego points out, over-stocking does exist, and the Government will have to take some steps to prevent it. Some people say, "The pastoralists have the land: why can they not do what they like?" The land belongs to the people, and there is an onus on the Government to see that those who are using the national asset do so in the proper manner. I can assure the hon. member for Warrego that the question of over-stocking will be dealt with when we amend the land laws of the State.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Restrict it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but the problem is to devise

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a reasonable restriction. In this investigation we have the opinions of experts, and no doubt when we receive the report the department will be able to lay down a limit for stocking.

The hon. member for Warrego also spoke about company-owned pastures on which companies would not incur the expense necessary to protect stock against disease, and allowed water facilities to deteriorate. Labour Governments cannot repudiate existing contracts, and there are existing contracts, by which the department is bound. We shall attend to that matter when we are considering the necessary legislation.

Quite recently we transferred practically every Crown land ranger in Queensland, the idea being to bring about greater efficiency in the department. Rangers have been allowed to remain in one area for many years, but we have now had a survey made by the Land Administration Board, and we have transferred practically every one. They are now in positions where they will be of most benefit to the State. These rangers, and the land commissioners, many of whom have also been transferred, furnish monthly reports. Those reports are very illuminating to the department, and we intend taking action as soon as possible to bring about certain reforms that they show to be necessary.

When Mr. McCormack was Secretary for Public Lands, the Government of that time introduced a pastoral developmental lease, which, in my opinion, is one of the best methods of controlling the pastoral lands of the State. We have found that where we have given pastoral developmental leases, setting out the terms of development and conditions for preserving our national asset—which at the same time provides greater employment—the lands have been properly managed. We contend that by prescribing proper conditions for the conservation of water, and ringbarking, and other improvement of the land, we increase its productivity, with the result that the pastoralist is able to stand up to drought conditions and the assets of the State are preserved.

The hon. member for Warrego has again mentioned the question of Alsatian dogs, a matter with which he has always been concerned. He has voiced the opinion in this Chamber for many years that Alsatis should be dealt with. We have gone into the matter and we consider that this is a Commonwealth responsibility. What is the good of dealing with Alsatis in Queensland if they are allowed in all the other States of the Commonwealth. Suppose, for argument sake, we said, "No Alsatis shall be allowed in Queensland"? We cannot prevent the other States from sending Alsatis here. When the Commonwealth Government deal with this matter it will be time for this State to give legislative effect to what is required. I had a deputation from a Graziers' Association some time ago, who asked me to deal with the Alsatian. I asked them if it was not a fact that every other large dog constituted a menace to them and they answered in the affirmative. Then why legislate against one particular breed of dog? The Alsatian has certainly been given a bad name, and, to vary the old saying a little, although not its meaning, "Give a dog a bad name, and it sticks to him!" Immediately, this is a question for the local authorities in the areas con-

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cerned. The Government have given local authorities certain powers as district improvement boards, including the power to deal with vermin and dogs. I have a good deal of correspondence regarding the danger of dogs in various parts of the West. A well-known grazier wrote that it was not so much the Alsatian that was worrying him as the mongrel dog. These mongrel dogs had done a considerable amount of damage to this man's sheep and were a danger generally in the district. All these things can be dealt with by the local authorities. Dingoes are causing a great deal of concern to the Government. The sub-department of the Prickly-Pear Land Commission, which has not now so much work to do in the eradication of pear blastis, has been given other work to perform, and is dealing with various animal and vegetable pests. The Government proposed to bring in a Bill this session to deal with animal and vegetable pests, but here also we are waiting for Commissioner Leahy's report before taking action. He has been asked to investigate at first-hand dingo and animal and vegetable pests throughout the areas he traverses.

The hon. member for Warrego spoke about the proposal to develop the Northern Territory by a chartered company. That is a matter of Federal concern.

The hon. member for Toowoomba spoke of bird sanctuaries, particularising Lake Clarendon, and stressed the necessity of protecting our native birds. This is not only necessary, from the point of view of protecting the fauna and flora of the State. There is another danger if we do not look after our native birds. Nature gave us the birds to deal with insect and other pests which otherwise might become a serious menace. The problem arises in many parts of the State. In many districts, foreigners kill every bird they see, not caring what it is. In most cases they kill and eat it. The result is that our birds, especially in the far North and the sugar areas, are becoming extinct. The Government wish to protect Queensland's native birds, and I can assure the hon. member for Toowoomba that the power of the department will be exercised to protect our native birds and declare bird sanctuaries. This action will be taken in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture. We are doing our best to enforce the Acts relating to our native birds and animals. Every forest officer, particularly the outside officers, has been appointed a ranger under the Animals and Birds Act in order that he may help to protect our native birds.

Another menace was brought under my notice to-day by the Director of Forests, who has just returned from a tour of Northern Queensland, and says that the mistletoe is becoming a serious pest in forest operations in North Queensland.

At 4.10 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He informed me that in the march of progress the mar-upials, which hitherto fed on the mistletoe, have been destroyed, and the Government are now faced with a considerable expense in eradicating it.

Mr. MAHER: Is it true that crocodiles are increasing because the blackfellows have ceased to eat their eggs?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That may be so, but I am not dealing with that subject just now. For some time the Government have been considering what department was the most suitable to control national parks, but it has now been decided that they should be placed under the control of the Sub-Department of Forestry. Recently an officer was appointed to exercise administrative control over the national parks in North Queensland, and it is intended to appoint a suitable officer to perform similar duties in respect of national parks in Southern Queensland. I can assure hon. members that close supervision will be exercised over national parks, which are proving such a valuable asset to the State. During the past few years there has been a heavy influx of tourists to see their scenic beauties and animal and bird life.

The hon. member for West Moreton referred to the efforts of public-spirited men in his electorate to preserve the natural beauties of the forest. I can assure him that the Department of Public Lands is co-operating with the Department of Agriculture to the utmost degree in furthering the interests of the State by preserving our natural flora and fauna. I express my appreciation of the actions of people who, without any remuneration, have assisted in this direction. I congratulate the hon. member for West Moreton and the people of his electorate on the interest they have taken in endeavouring to preserve the beauty spots; and I promise them—and the hon. member for Toowoomba—that the Government will help them in every possible way. The hon. member for Toowoomba even mentioned that these people were prepared to pay for certain work in the preservation of beauty spots out of their own pockets, and I applaud them for their action. The Government are prepared at all times to make reasonable amounts of money available for the preservation of these areas.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Port Curtis refer to the boys engaged in forestry activities. Personally, I should like to arrange to take hon. members to see these boys at work. Only to-day the Director of Forests—who, as I have said, has returned from North Queensland—reported to me that he was very pleased indeed with the way they were shaping and with the work that they were doing. He is firmly of the opinion that everything that is being done in this respect is worth while. The boys appear to be heart and soul in their work, only two out of 100 odd having expressed a desire to return home. I hope to be able to arrange a suitable time when hon. members may be able to see the boys at work in the areas close to Brisbane. I am satisfied that they will approve of what is being done by the department, and agree that it is a tangible way of "giving the boy a chance." The Premier has laid it down that wherever possible cadets are to be placed in positions in forestry and other land areas, and I am pleased to be able to say that the officer in charge reports that the boys have lived up to our highest expectations.

The hon. member for Port Curtis and other hon. members have referred to the spread of the lantana. The Prickly-Pear Land Commission, which, I repeat, has not so much work to do now as it had in the past when the prickly-pear pest was of such vital concern to the State, is now devoting its

attention to the destruction of other vegetable pests. Before the chairman of the Land Administration Board, Mr. Payne, went overseas, he, as chairman of the Commonwealth Prickly-Pear Board, brought the question of the destruction of the lantana pest under the notice of that board, and it is hoped that with the assistance of the Secretary for Agriculture a biological agent may be discovered to deal as effectively with the lantana as the cactoblastis did with the prickly-pear.

We have imported insects. They have been developed to a certain stage and then liberated in country areas infested with the lantana. They have not done as well as they do in Brazil and other places from which we have imported them. We hope to acclimatise these insects. The Secretary for Agriculture is assisting us to do so, and we hope in a short space of time to have an acclimatised insect that will deal with lantana in much the same way as cactoblastis did with the prickly-pear. We have been experimenting with flame throwers, of which we have had two or three different kinds. Various firms are developing them, and implements of improved types are now being made. One of an improved type is now being tested and issued throughout the country. Wherever the department can induce a local authority to experiment with a flame thrower it is lent free of cost, together with the oil at cost. The results obtained are very good.

The hon. member for Rockhampton praised the department for the work it was carrying out. The co-ordination of the department and its sub-departments has been very successful. The administration of the department in this my fourth year as administrator is very much easier than when I assumed office. I have a very fine staff, from the head to the smallest boy or girl. I pay tribute to them because, as the hon. member for Rockhampton said, their work has been very satisfactory.

I was also pleased to hear the praise bestowed on the special provision made for watering stock routes. We have begun that work. Officers of the department carried out a survey of all stock routes, extending over several months. We are linking up every stock route in Queensland with proper and efficient water facilities. The provision of these facilities was formerly in the hands of the local authorities. We found that although one or two local authorities attended to this work exceedingly well, principally by making application for subsidy-loans, eight or ten others took no action. As a result there was no co-ordination. In certain areas there were splendid water facilities for both cattle and sheep; in other areas there were long dry stages. Those dry stages have all been investigated. The Irrigation and Water Supply Sub-Department furnished a report, with the result that the Treasurer has placed £70,000 on the Estimates this year to provide water facilities on them. When I am dealing with the Estimates of that sub-department, I shall show exactly where we are making water facilities on stock routes.

The hon. member for Rockhampton spoke on one of our great problems—that of home markets, and the increasing use of primary production in developing secondary industries. We do not open up lands in a haphazard fashion.

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The Premier has laid down a definite rule that no land is to be opened to selection unless the settler has road access and a market for his products, and thus a chance to earn a living. We are carrying out those instructions.

The Government are not idle in this matter. We have tried to make the Bureau of Industry something worth while. The Premier is the chairman, and every head official a member of the bureau, and special committees are working—and I can assure members they are working—every week. One of these special committees has been dealing with the very problem of which the hon. member for Rockhampton has spoken. The heads of each department co-operate with the head of the bureau, and they are all doing their best to find some method of increasing the use of primary products in our secondary industries. When one considers that the various officers of the Departments of Public Lands and Agriculture and Stock are co-operating with the experts, one feels confident that we shall get somewhere. A good deal of work has been done by the Bureau of Industry, with which I think hon. members should be made acquainted, although it is impossible to report on everything that is going on. The problems connected with land development and the use of the land for the relief of unemployment have been the subject of investigation by these sub-committees. The Premier attends general meetings, when the reports from the sub-committees are placed before the full bureau committee, and any suggestion he considers practicable is adopted by the Government.

The hon. member for Rockhampton also spoke about the difficulties confronting the producers, and he referred to the Federal Government, more particularly in reference to overseas markets and what is called restriction of exports. I had the honour of attending a conference when Mr. Bruce came over from England, and gave an account of what was going on overseas. To give him due credit, he told his story very well—he did not burke the question. At that time the Commonwealth Government took the stand that no such thing as restriction of exports was contemplated, and practically told the people that Mr. Bruce had no authority to say what he did, so far as the Federal Government were concerned. Our Premier happened to be overseas at the time, and everybody knows how he sprang into the breach, although the full measure of what he did for this State and Australia generally is not properly recognised.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is an exaggeration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not an exaggeration. I know what happened at this end, and I know what happened at the other end. I say the presence of our Premier in England at that time was vital to Queensland, and time will show that it was so. Everyone realises that in industry organisation is essential. I know a good deal about the sugar industry, and I consider that its preservation in Queensland is due to its intensive organisation. Hon. members opposite who know something about that industry must realise the truth of that assertion. It is organised from top to bottom; and the time will come when all our primary industries will have to be organised to the same extent.

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An OPPOSITION MEMBER: We need sympathetic government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The State has the most sympathetic Government it ever had regarding the sugar industry, and in our Premier a man who is recognised as the world's best expert so far as sugar is concerned—the sugar organisations themselves pay him that tribute. The sugar organisations, who asked the Premier to go overseas, knew what they were doing. They are asking the Premier to journey overseas again—they are asking the Federal Government to see that he is one of the representatives of Australia at the Sugar Conference in England early next year. The hon. member for Isis will recollect what happened at a previous conference when Queensland was not allowed even a voice. To-day the sugar interests have requested the Premier of Queensland to attend to their interests overseas.

And my remarks are not confined to sugar. The hon. member for Rockhampton drew attention to a difficulty in connection with cotton. At one time the price of cotton was fixed and the growers were satisfied. Cotton enjoyed a measure of protection. The Federal Government, without consulting the Queensland Government—the State mainly concerned in cotton growing—removed that protection. It was a case of being thrown to the wolves. The result is that the Queensland Government are faced with the problem of helping the growers in the Upper Burnett and Callide district. Hon. members who represent those electorates are continually approaching the Government with requests that something shall be done. Had the Commonwealth Government done their duty the cotton growers would not be in such financial straits. The industry was getting on very well. The Queensland Government were getting a revenue and the producers a fair living. The Commonwealth Government caused the industry to be scrapped. The same remark can be made of the tobacco industry. In company with the hon. member for Cook and others, I visited the tobacco-growing districts in North Queensland. The finest tobacco in the world is grown at Mareeba. But what do we find? The Commonwealth Government, instead of doing their duty, have thrown that industry also to the wolves. A survey of the industry will show that the Commonwealth authorities dealt with the question from the point of view of over-production. That was apparently the only matter that concerned them. They contended that, as everybody was rushing into tobacco-growing, within a year or so there would be over-production on a larger scale than in the sugar and butter industries. What is the position to-day? There is no over-production; in fact, the tobacco-growing industry of Queensland and Australia has "gone phut." And why? Because of the failure of the Commonwealth Government to protect it. The whole matter is wrapped up in protection. In Mareeba can be grown the finest pipe tobacco in the world. An overseas buyer told me that the yellow-leaf that produces a highly sought after pipe tobacco is grown in Mareeba—that it is what the world is looking for. Like Virginia cigarette tobacco, it required certain climatic conditions, and these were to be found at Mareeba. The Commonwealth Government allowed the Queensland

tobacco industry to collapse because of the fear of over-production.

The hon. member for Rockhampton did the right thing in drawing pointed attention to the matter. The Commonwealth Government have allowed restrictions to be placed on the exportable quota of such primary products as are chiefly produced in Queensland—sugar, tobacco, cotton, and so on. The other States are not concerned with these industries. If it were wheat that was involved, it would be a different matter altogether. No State in Australia has suffered more at the hands of the Commonwealth Government than has Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: My difficulty in administering the Department of Public Lands at the present time is to induce our settlers to remain on the land. The actions of the Commonwealth Government do not enable them to remain there on a remunerative basis. If the Commonwealth Government adopted a policy of assisting the Queensland producers then the State would certainly be in a much better position. As regards sugar, what did that Government do? Without consulting the Queensland Government they took away £1,000,000 from our sugar industry. Who cares about the ½d. per lb. reduction in the price of sugar? The Premier informed the sugar producers they were unwise in allowing the ½d. per lb. reduction in the price of sugar to be made. The problem that I have to face to-day is to collect the Government rent for the lands that have been leased out to the various producers of the State.

My job to-day is not so much the opening of new areas for settlement, as keeping the people on the land who are there. I receive appeals for help from all classes of primary producers in various parts of the State, so that they may remain on the land, be able to pay their rentals, and make a decent living. Every time we consider a vital point, such as the reduction in the price of sugar that meant £1,000,000 to that industry, we find that inaction of the Federal Government is the cause of the trouble. The people of Queensland realise this just as much as we do, and I am pleased that the hon. member for Rockhampton raised the question. In the cotton-producing areas, where the men now have more land than previously, they are unable to make a living, and investigation has shown that the Federal Government's inaction is the source of all the trouble. In every case Queensland has been the "Cinderella." If hon. members opposite were to cast aside their political views and survey the position impartially they would find that all our Queensland industries are in a very parlous condition as a result of the Federal Government's inactivity.

The hon. member for Isis said that we should do something with regard to land rentals. We are opening land to-day at the lowest rentals in the history of the State. Quite recently we opened the finest dairying land in the world, with an average rainfall of 60 inches and an average temperature of 60 degrees—that is, in the Palmerston area—and those members who know something about butter production will realise that with such a rainfall and temperature that it is

possible to dairy all the year round, which cannot be done in any other part of the world—

Mr. MAHER: What price?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have opened them at under 6d. an acre.

Mr. MAHER: What tenure?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Perpetual lease tenure with a condition of five years' occupation, and all the timber in the area is to be used at the discretion of the settler. If he wishes to buy cattle or do fencing he may apply the value of the timber to that purpose. If that value is not used on the selection he must pay royalty. As I said before, we are opening land at the cheapest price in the history of Queensland.

Mr. MAHER: What about the pastoralists in the West who are faced with drought conditions?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Pastoral lands are opened under conditions laid down by past Governments. Rents of pastoral holdings are reviewed every ten years, and those of grazing lands every seven years, by the Land Court. That court is a fair tribunal. My officials inform me that, if anything, the court has acted on the generous side in these reviews. Everybody must agree that the judges of the Land Court are men who know their work. We did not appoint all of them. Everybody realises theirs were not political appointments. Those men have been appointed because of their general knowledge, and the Land Court, if anything, is erring on the side of the selector. We do not mind that, however, because our main job now is to keep the men on the land.

The hon. member for Isis also referred to the vexed question of freehold and leasehold and the granting of option of conversion.

The Labour Government and the Labour Party have definite principles. We believe that the land belongs to the people, and it shall not be sold. If anyone examines land tenures to-day he will find that the man who holds perpetual lease is not in any worse a position—in fact he is in a better position—than the man with freehold. Where would we be in Queensland to-day if we were like New South Wales and Victoria, where all the land is freehold and has passed out of the control of the State? The only reason the Government are able to give relief in Queensland is because the great majority of the land is held by the State. Can any hon. member argue that the land holders of the other States are getting concessions from the Government that sold them the land years ago? No freeholder can get concessions. In this State we are able—and the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Premier was able—to give great concessions to people holding pastoral lands and people dealing in pastoral ventures because the Government had control. That is really a chief argument against freehold.

In these times of depression the Government are doing great things. Look at the concessions made by previous Governments—and continued by this Government—to help the wool industry. How could we have granted this assistance had the land been freehold? We have a complete mandate from the people of Queensland regarding perpetual leasehold tenure. It is in the forefront of Labour's platform and it was

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expounded by every hon. member on this side of the House who got up on the hustings and explained Labour's land policy. What is the result? Our huge majority. When we have a policy we put it to the people and we do not attempt to side-track it. In every part of Queensland where I went I spoke on the issue of leasehold tenure versus freehold, and I explained how, if the tenure was leasehold, we could give the leaseholders assistance. What would be the good of having a land commissioner touring the West if all the land was held under freehold conditions? What would the landlord do? Would the landlord give the occupier of the land anything back? The Government are able to give him something back. That is the complete answer to the hon. member for Isis. We have a complete mandate from the people of Queensland for leasehold tenure, and I am satisfied that it is a good thing in the interests of the people.

Mr. BELL (*Stanley*) [4.39 p.m.]: The Minister made reference to the pastoral industry, and I desire to refer particularly to the State and super land tax on freehold land. We have to recognise, as the hon. member for Rockhampton pointed out, the necessity for a continuity of supplies of primary products, and particularly of chilled meat. The industry I speak of is a very important one, and the Government should realise its importance, especially its development in the coastal areas of Queensland. The landholders should be relieved of that tax if they are to develop that industry to the extent it deserves. On the other hand the Minister referred to the fact that restrictions might be imposed on the stocking of the pastoral lands in Queensland. I was very sorry to hear him make that statement. If the land settlement conditions laid down by the present Government are satisfactory there will be no need to place those restrictions on the pastoral industry.

During this session I asked the Minister what were the arrears of land rentals in the pastoral industry up to 30th June, 1935, and I received this reply—

	£	s.	d.
" Pastoral holdings ...	11,341	13	2
Prickly-pear leases ...	957	5	8
Occupation licenses ...	3,975	18	5
Selection rents ...	164,404	3	10
	£180,679	1	1"

I should like to point out, as I have done on previous occasions, that the method adopted in arriving at the areas of selections is fundamentally unsound, and that the rental and carrying capacity are decided when wool prices are not at a normal level. When wool prices fall, the owner is unable to carry a greater number of sheep with safety, but as his area is too small he endeavours to make a living by taking the risk of increasing his flock, with detriment to himself and eventually to the industry.

I should also like to suggest again that the method of levying income tax on profit received from the sale of a pastoral lease after it has been held by one person for seven years should be the same as that adopted in connection with land under freehold tenure. I make that suggestion because I believe it will be an incentive to the owner to conserve the grass on his property, and encourage him to improve it and increase

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its carrying capacity, knowing that he may reap the full reward of his labour after seven years if he wishes to sell. At the present time he is subject to an exorbitant tax and there is no encouragement for him to improve his property. He must be content with the income that he is able to earn during his occupancy of the land.

The Government are to be congratulated on their proposal to improve water facilities on stock routes, but—as was pointed out by the hon. member for Dalby—it will also be necessary to conserve the grass for travelling stock. Much of the benefit that may be secured by improved watering facilities may be lost unless some attempt is made by the Government to preserve the grass too.

The pastoral industry has suffered many serious setbacks and on practically every occasion that it has endeavoured to expand it has been called upon to meet a heavy expense, in many cases through no fault of its own. I refer particularly to the recent abattoirs strike. The strike occurred during the infancy of the chilled meat trade. The meat workers discovered that a certain amount of money was lying at the credit of the Meat Industry Board and based their claim for higher wages on this fact. Let me pass on to the wool industry. Recently a small rise occurred in the price of wool. A large number of men on the land will not benefit from this rise, owing to the depletion of their flocks by drought. Yet we find the shearers applying to the court for higher rates! Is it wise, every time there is an upward trend in prices, even of a temporary character, that the employees should endeavour to take more out of industry than they are entitled to?

Mr. HILTON: The court will decide that.

Mr. BELL: That is all very well, but the Government did not stand up to their obligations in the abattoirs strike. A factor that operated to terminate that strike was the proof afforded to slaughtermen that their task was one for experts only was untenable. Meat producers and their sons undertook the task of slaughtering and demonstrated that they were able to place chilled meat on the boats to the satisfaction of the industry. That fact had the greatest effect in terminating the strike.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Warrego and also other hon. members stressing the importance of the construction of the Charleville-Blackall railway. As I have stated before, this is a most important railway link, and would serve one of our greatest assets. I do not wish to repeat my argument, but I hope the Minister, in the interests of his department, the pastoral industry, and the interests of Queensland generally will help in the furtherance of this project.

I also sincerely hope that the Minister will consider a reduction in rents of pastoral leases and grazing selections. It is most important that we should conserve the interests of these men, so that we may keep them on the land. I have shown that they have their backs to the wall, and unless they receive favourable consideration from the Government there is no hope of their holding the land to the advantage of the State and themselves.

There is just one other point which I wish to allude to—that is the proposal of the Government to amend the Income Tax Acts to permit pastoralists and selectors to carry forward their losses. It is a step in the

right direction. I congratulate the Government on their intention, but would point out that unless this proposal is made retrospective—like many other legislative enactments of Labour Governments—the desired effect will be lost. That is because the man on the land, especially the small selectors, will not receive the benefits to which they are entitled. If this legislation is not made retrospective financial institutions will hesitate to finance these men in future. The reason is very simple. If they finance them and are fortunate in having a good year the Government claim approximately 40 per cent. of the profits of that year if provision is not made for carrying forward of losses for the recent disastrous years.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in referring to prospective legislation. He will be in order only in referring to the operations of the department.

Mr. BELL: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Hanson, and will content myself with saying that I hope that when Mr. Leahy's report is received it will not be mutilated or pigeonholed. He is a man of knowledge.

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [4.50 p.m.]: The subject of land settlement has been so thoroughly discussed that I shall have difficulty in breaking new ground. The Minister has replied to many of the questions hon. members have raised, and has pointed out the need for attention to many matters that are of pressing importance in Queensland to-day. When one comes to consider the enormous amount of money that has been spent by Governments in Queensland for the encouragement of land settlement, and the concessions that have been given in the way of rebates, reduction in capital values, rent reductions, and extension of leases, it is apparent that everything is not as it should be in regard to land settlement in this State.

The Minister has referred to the fact that an officer of his department has been appointed for the purpose of making an extensive survey of Queensland with a view to reporting to the Minister on matters appertaining to land settlement. The department in the past made a remarkable mess of things in a number of its settlements. I have in mind the Callide Valley and Upper Burnett settlement, in the survey of which apparently little consideration was given to what constituted a living area, with the result that after that settlement had been in existence a few years a commission was appointed to investigate complaints by the settlers, which, after hearing evidence, reported that a very big percentage of the settlers had not a sufficient area of land. It is a question whether the mistakes that were made in the past are not being repeated. I had a visit the other day from a man who left the Theodore area after toiling hard for eight years, and was offered a priority right over one of the Eungella blocks in the Central-North. He informed me that after inspecting the block he decided not to take it up, because he considered that any man who took it up would need subsidising by the Government for at least seven years. I am not vouching for the soundness of the man's opinion; but he pointed out that the land was too rugged, and it would take a man seven or eight years to develop it to a stage of production that would enable

him to obtain a fair livelihood from dairying. If that statement is true, it behoves the Land Administration Board to adopt a different system when areas are being cut up for land settlement. Instead of attempting to settle as many as possible on a particular area, the object of the board should be to investigate the possibilities of the soil and fix an area that will enable a settler to make a living.

There is no co-operation between departments. The experts of the Department of Agriculture are not called into consultation—at least, I am not aware that that is done. There should be a system of conferences between the various departments so that no factor would be overlooked and the mistakes of the past would not recur. I have in mind the Upper Burnett settlement. A conference was arranged between various officers of the different departments. They recommended that cheap tanks and dams be provided on that settlement to obviate the necessity of sinking expensive bores. Yet notwithstanding those recommendations the officers of the Department of Public Lands established an Irrigation and Water Supply Department. That new department expanded to such an extent that many settlers on that settlement were actually bluffed by the field officers and decided against sinking their own dams or tanks. They were forced to accept the bores put down by the department. My reason for raising this matter is interwoven with the appointment of Mr. Leahy. There should be consultation and co-operation with the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Leahy may have a fair amount of experience in the West and in the coastal areas, but from the scientific point of view I question whether that gentleman has the slightest knowledge regarding the improving of our pasturage resources. Certainly he may have some general ideas as to what should be done; on the other hand, he may not have the slightest knowledge. The Department of Agriculture has recently appointed an officer to investigate this question. A sum of money has been specially allotted for that purpose. That department realises that owing to overstocking in the past our pastoral resources have been depeted and desires to find ways and means of restoring them. There is a necessity for the officers of the two departments to work in co-operation instead of each adopting the attitude that they and they alone are conversant with land settlement problems. It is wrong that that should be the attitude of officers of the State, but such is the case. The result of efforts at land settlement in the past is proof of my contention.

Numerous mistakes have been made by past Land Administration Boards and, in fact, the present board. I doubt whether the attempt being made to extend operations in the Theodore land settlement scheme has received the careful consideration that it warrants in the matter of granting sufficient areas to enable settlers to meet existing conditions. This applies more particularly to the area at some distance from the railway. Mr. Leahy is confronted with many difficulties, considering he is being called upon to investigate the problems of all the districts of Queensland. From complaints and reports that have been made to me since I have represented the Callide area I am sure Mr. Leahy could be profitably engaged in that district for at least twelve months.

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There is room for special investigation into the reason why the smaller selectors and farmers are £160,000 in arrears with their rents, while the bigger pastoralists and graziers are in arrears to the extent of only about £18,000 or £19,000. I realise that the main reason is the enormous fall in the market price of their products, but coupled with that is the fact that many of them are unable to adopt modern methods owing to the small areas they hold—they must continue along the old rut, which is now universally recognised as being out of date.

Notwithstanding the fact that mistakes have been made, the present Minister has done much to overcome that trouble in giving the bigger area to which I have referred. When selections have been forfeited, the Minister has instructed that wherever possible the land shall be allotted to a selector who has what is considered to be less than the living area for that district. The result is that these smaller men have a greater scope for their operations and more chance of making a reasonable living.

The Minister has also done much towards rectifying the terrible bungle committed by the Irrigation and Water Supply Department. Apparently there was no watch dog there. Even the Land Administration Board did not know what was happening until this commission was appointed. The result was that £16,000 had to be written off because the commission realised that it was impossible for those selectors to bear the cost of installing a big water facility and that an ordinary dam costing about £100 or £200 would have been sufficient to meet all requirements.

I raise these points in an endeavour to impress upon the Minister the necessity of careful inquiry into all factors in future land settlement and administration. While it may be possible to farm all the year round in some of the areas now being settled, further co-operation is necessary between the Department of Public Lands and other Government departments. Marketing difficulties, low price levels, possibilities of the soil and protection against forcing a selector to over-stock are all factors that need to be considered.

In reference to the difficulties to be faced by the selector in scrub areas, I think the Minister could take into consideration the need for recommending to the Government free rental over the pioneering stage. He mentioned in his reply that the Government were opening land at the cheapest rate in the world. He said it was 6d. an acre for some of the good land in the North. I desire to point out to the Minister that the selector very often is not able to use the whole of his area immediately he goes on to it. It takes years and years—sometimes ten or twelve years—of pioneering work before he is in a position to say he can use it all. The result of this is that in the initial stages he is paying the full rental for the whole of his land; and that, to a certain extent in some settlements I know of, has been responsible for crippling him. With the first reverse he gets he is put back years. Particularly is this the case in the irrigation areas. We find instances of men settling on areas that are too small and using the land for two or three years continuously in the production of cotton or some other single crop, with the result that the land becomes sick and the selector cannot allow

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a portion of it to lie fallow or put it under manures, which is necessary. He has to keep on working and put up with poor results, and when the first reverse comes in the shape of a bad crop he has no margin to work on and therefore cannot meet his commitments. That is a difficulty that arises in many areas. For that reason I suggest that where there is hard pioneering work such as the clearing of scrub to be contended with, land should be free of rental for at least a few years. I have come to that conclusion as a result of realising what many men in my district have had to go through. After ten or twelve years they have not even had a decent cottage to live in! They owe huge debts to the Government, as the result of a few reversals. If consideration in this respect had been given to selectors, arrears of dues to the Crown would not have accrued as they have done to-day.

I commend these suggestions to the Minister for his consideration.

Mr. DANIEL (Keppel) [5.9 p.m.]: I listened with great interest to the speech delivered by the Minister this afternoon. It is very gratifying indeed to hear him say that he has appointed a commission to go into the matter of the conservation of water in the West—on roads where cattle and sheep travel. He said that the sum of £70,000 had been allotted for this purpose, but I think it would have been better if the sum was £1,000,000. If £1,000,000 was spent every year in the West, for the purpose of conserving water, it would be a productive proposition. Last year £4,000,000 was obtained from the back of the sheep that was not obtained the year before. If improved water facilities were provided, there would probably be no need to travel stock in many cases. I mentioned a few days ago, in another debate, that a friend of mine had informed me that there was an abundance of grass on many areas in the West but no water supply and the sheep had to be shifted. The Government should consider an expenditure not of £70,000 but of £1,000,000 per annum for the next ten years on the improvement of water facilities on stock routes. This proposal is a reproductive, one, it will give work for thousands of men, and will return the outlay to the Government.

I hope that the Government will soon introduce a Bill to allow primary producers to average their losses over a period of five years for income tax purposes. I know that I shall be out of order if I pursue that subject any further.

I agree with the suggestion of the hon. member for Normanby that new settlers should be exempt from the payment of rent for some years. I have advocated that from my place in this Chamber time and time again during the past six years. The new settler is entitled to every consideration from the Government. He is the man who ploughs the furrow and helps to sustain the people in the cities, and I hope that the Minister will give favourable consideration to the suggestion.

The hon. gentleman intimated that the Government were making land available for settlement at a rental as low as 6d. an acre. It is a great pity that they do not investigate the conditions of settlers who are paying 25s. an acre. I know people paying 25s. an acre who are unable to provide suitable drinking water for stock on their properties. Many

wells have been put down, but in all cases the results have been brine or brackish water. I know that in some cases the Government have extended assistance to these settlers, and it is absurd to charge 25s. an acre for land, especially when the tenants are unable to provide suitable drinking water for their stock.

When Sir Robert Philp was Premier of Queensland, land was opened for selection in my district at 2s. 6d. an acre, and although I cannot claim that the people who took up those areas are well-to-do to-day, I do know that they have made reasonable progress. The Moore Government also made land available at the same figure.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What type of land?

Mr. DANIEL: It was prickly-pear land, but it was cleared largely at the expense of the Government. I ask the Minister to give consideration to those areas on which 25s. per acre is now being charged.

Mr. HILTON: Are you arguing against freehold?

Mr. DANIEL: It all depends on whether it is a large area in the West or a small area in our closely settled districts. I do not believe in alienating large areas of this State.

As the population of our cities and towns increases, so the demand for public reserves increases. It is only right that the public should have these breathing places. Yeppoon, a seaside resort in my electorate, has not one yard of public reserve. If the people were not able to forgather on the sandy beaches it would be a very congested area. In 1931 I suggested to the Secretary for Public Lands that the reserves in No. 3 division of the shire of Livingstone should be sold and the money allocated to the purchase of a private property in Yeppoon to be used as a reserve for public purposes. The Minister agreed to the proposal, the areas were surveyed, and everything was in order for their sale. Unfortunately we were defeated in 1932, and the present Minister refused to entertain the proposal. I ask the Minister to reconsider his decision because every city or town has a right to recreation grounds.

I believe that local authorities should be vested with the administration of the lands in their areas. It is almost impossible for the department to control efficiently land situated, say, in the area of the hon. member for Cairns. I do not suggest that the department should be abolished, simply that the Government should vest in local authorities for administrative purposes the land in their areas, permitting them to retain a certain amount of the revenue received for developmental purposes. Greater justice would be done to these areas than at present. I am not belittling the work of the department. In fact, I congratulate the Minister on certain phases of his policy. I recognise that without proper administration no department can be successfully administered, and I believe in giving credit where credit is due. I have placed many proposals before the department, which has viewed them in the proper light. The Minister is therefore to be commended for giving that service to the electors that they deserve. I never bring a request before the Minister or an Under Secretary unless I am firmly convinced of

its merits, and would grant it myself. Then I expect him to grant it.

The Bajool irrigation scheme has been a source of annoyance for the last five years. I received a letter this afternoon informing me the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply is sending one of its officers out to deal with the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When was that scheme put into operation?

Mr. DANIEL: During the time the Moore Government were in power. I was the father of that scheme. Great difficulty is experienced because of the nature of the soil, which contracts and expands very quickly, and breaks the corners of the pipes. In my opinion galvanised iron pipes are the only ones that will be found suitable in that country.

The Minister stated the Department would supply a flame thrower to destroy lantana and the oil for fuel. What will the department charge the councils for these things?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no charge for the thrower or the oil.

Mr. DANIEL: The use of these throwers will be of great benefit to many councils.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The offer is not for an indefinite period. You need to get in quick and lively.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Bulimba*) [5.24 p.m.]: I desire to bring under the notice of the Minister a matter of considerable importance to the residents of the further south side of Brisbane, that is, the acquisition of the Colmslie beach. It is the only natural beach on the Brisbane River, but, unfortunately, with the exception of a small area, the land has been allowed to pass into the hands of private individuals. On Sunday afternoons and holidays it is not an uncommon sight to see as many as 700 to 1,000 people—men, women, and children—on that beach, and on Sunday afternoons one may see 300 to 400 young people enjoying themselves in health giving recreation. It is a very popular rendezvous for those people who follow skiff racing and other sailing.

The Secretary for Public Lands is sympathetic to the acquisition of this property as a public reserve. The Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Jones, is also in accord with the proposal. Both gentlemen have done whatever has been asked of them by either myself, Alderman McAuliffe, or the Colmslie Beach organisation, composed of residents of Murarrie, Cannon Hill, and Morningside. Unfortunately, the Quarantine Station, the property of the Commonwealth Government, is located on the river in the vicinity of the beach, and in order to make a proper public reserve the land owned by the Commonwealth Government would have to be acquired. I understand that the Secretary for Public Lands has put to the Commonwealth Government a generous proposal as a basis for negotiation, but that the Commonwealth Government have adopted an entirely unreasonable attitude. They not only ask for a substantial sum of money for the ground but also demand that the Queensland Government shall be responsible for the transfer of the quarantine buildings to Lytton and their re-erection at that site, or, alternatively, adequate compensation for the construction of new quarantine buildings at Lytton.

Mr. W. J. Copley.]

There can be no doubt that Colmslie is an unsuitable site for a quarantine station. The Commonwealth authorities should realise that fact. A quarantine station should never have been built in such a locality. The Minister for Health in the Commonwealth Government should realise that he has some responsibilities. Both the State Government and the council of the city of Brisbane have admitted that some responsibility devolves on them. I sincerely trust that the Minister will continue negotiations with the Commonwealth Minister for Health and that the latter will recognise the tremendous value to the people of the Greater Brisbane area of the acquisition of Colmslie, and that any obstacles that may be raised will not prove to be insuperable. As a matter of fact, at the present time the Queensland Government and the council of the city of Brisbane have an opportunity of securing a very important block of land at Colmslie, adjacent to the area I have been discussing. This opportunity may not occur again, and steps should be taken to purchase it for the citizens of Brisbane.

At 5.30 p.m.,

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*): The Secretary for Public Lands and his officers are to be congratulated on the excellent work accomplished during the past year. But for the efficient work of the department the task of settling Queensland would be considerably more difficult. The directions of the Minister and their efficient fulfilment by his officers have borne fruit. It is to be hoped that Queensland will see a continuance during the coming twelve months of the policy that has been carried out over the past two years.

The question of droughts considerably affects the revenue of the department and the revenue of both State and Commonwealth. It therefore behoves the Government and the pastoralists to consider very carefully the happenings of the past decade. When prices for primary products on the local and overseas market are rising, it is easy for a pastoralist to forget that there ever was a drought. But the main problem confronting us to-day is the question whether our lands are being denuded of the grasses that have been the mainstay of the country for a century. Some thirty years ago I made a trip from Menindie on the Darling River to the Balonne country in Queensland. As that trip was made with pack horses, I had a very fair opportunity of noticing the country through which I passed. I particularly noticed that the Mitchell grass in what is known as the corner of New South Wales, round Mount Woods, Mount Poole, Mount Sturt, and other stations adjoining the Queensland border, was more prolific than it was on the northern side of the fence, the Adelaide gate, and the south Comonogin Station. The reason seemed to be that the Queensland stations were allowed to carry more stock than the stations on the New South Wales side of the border. It was really a question of whether the continual eating out of the Mitchell and other grasses reduced the quantity of natural seed that was necessary to maintain those lands in a condition suitable to carry a certain number of stock. If we have a drought in the country away

from the natural watercourses such as the Warrego or Balonne Rivers, the grass does not last out the period between rainy seasons. I recollect being on the Albarum Station on the Darling River in 1907 when a drought occurred in the back country and the owners were able to shift every hoof on to the Darling River frontage, maintain the stock there until shearing time, and turn them on to the same pastures after shearing. The reason was that they did not allow them to eat out the frontages. At the time, they had water and feed in the back country. Then again, they were able, in conjunction with the New South Wales Government, to put down a series of box tanks that were flumed to stop them from silting up. And when one comes to consider it, a tank of 60,000 or 80,000 yards would probably carry 10,000 or 12,000 sheep over a period of two years. One can understand that a station thus equipped could withstand a drought running into ten or twelve months. There is no doubt that the back country in Queensland, if properly handled, offers just as good an inducement to the stockowner as various areas of land in the other States.

The preponderance of stock in those years in Queensland was due to the very good climatic conditions that had preceded the 1902 drought and the two or three good years which followed. Losses due to the last drought will seriously deplete the stocks of the pastoralists for some years to come and we can safely say that there will be no question of over-stocking for some time. By the combined efforts of the pastoralists and the Government water conservation systems might be established away from the river frontages, where stock could be kept until such time as it was necessary to shift them to the river frontage blocks in the worst times. Thus the necessity for a huge transportation of stock from one district to another by rail might be obviated. That question in itself offers a problem to which the pastoralists and the Government might very well give serious consideration.

I know that the depletion of the Western land of sheep is due to two or three factors. Cattle have to a great extent taken the place of sheep. Holdings that previously ran 250,000 sheep are now running 60,000 or 70,000 cattle. That is the case in the south-eastern portion of the State. Thirty years ago, on Milo station, over 250,000 sheep—even 300,000—were shorn yearly. On the same area to-day not 180,000 sheep are being shorn. That goes to show that there are two or three factors militating against the success of the pastoralists of the far West in the struggle with droughts. I know perfectly well that there is no opportunity for water conservation on rivers like the Warrego and the Balonne—in fact, any of the rivers in the south-western portion of Queensland. They flow too slowly to wash out the silt. There is plenty of water in them at the time of the wet season—probably more water than one would imagine. I remember seeing the Warrego outside of Charleville over 2 miles wide. Some of the larger holes in that river have not been known to be dry. A water conservation scheme would be possible in Queensland if the rivers of the State could be used for the purpose. There can be no question of conservation of river water in the drier areas; it might be better to go in for a system of tanks, which were used on the old stock routes thirty, forty,

[*Mr. W. J. Copley.*

and fifty years ago. That is one of the safest means of solving the problem of a water supply in a time of drought.

I should like to congratulate the Minister on having given some attention to the settlement of lands in the northern coastal belt. These lands are now coming into their own as dairying districts and Clump Point, Eungella, and the Palmerston areas may with confidence be recommended to prospective settlers. The problem to be tackled by any Government is that of securing land of the right type for suitable settlers and making it available in reasonable living areas. The question of reasonable living areas has not received sufficient consideration from Governments in the past. Soldier settlements were made available in areas far too small, and in a number of cases the same mistake was repeated in making pastoral areas available for closer settlement. The new settlers soon discovered that the areas were too small to permit them to make a living, and they were compelled to come to the Government for relief. In many instances the latter had to group two or three contiguous blocks to enable one man to earn a reasonable living. I spent a considerable portion of my boyhood days in the western districts of New South Wales, and I know that after the leases of some of the pastoral properties expired—including Alumarle, Cuthero, Polio, Anabranch, and Netley—land was subdivided into areas of 20,000, 30,000, and 40,000 acres according to type and the amount of salt-bush and scrub that it carried. In some cases the land was sufficient to carry 2,000, 3,000, 5,000, and even 10,000 sheep. A reasonable living can be made from 5,000 sheep. The Government of Queensland will have to give very serious consideration to the areas that are to be made available for closer settlement in the future. We cannot afford to repeat the mistake made in connection with soldier settlements, which cost the country £2,000,000. The money was absolutely wasted.

I do not wish to deal at length with the question of forestry, because there is a separate vote for that sub-department, but I congratulate the Minister on his foresight in connection with reforestation. He has been careful to create sufficient timber reserves to cater for the future timber needs of the people.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS (*Cook*) [5.44 p.m.]: I offer the Minister my congratulations on the sympathetic way he has administered his department. People on the land throughout Queensland who have approached the Minister with their difficulties have received every consideration and, in many cases, a measure of relief. I have no desire to give special attention to any department, but as a man from the land I naturally come more in contact with the staff of this department than of others. I have always received the utmost attention and courtesy in my business with the departments. In addition to congratulating the Minister on his administration, I congratulate him upon his staff, for they are of great assistance to him in the discharge of his onerous duties.

This department is one of the most important that come under our purview. It has a bearing on the welfare of this State, whose importance cannot be over-estimated, for all our wealth comes from the land. Hon. members opposite have criticised the

land policy of the Government—wrongly. Leasehold is the only tenure that is consistent with our policy, which has the well-being of the community at heart.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Is your farm free hold or leasehold?

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: Freehold.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Like every one of your party!

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: Not necessarily. I shall deal with that point at a later stage. Land does not belong to a particular section of the people or to a particular generation. Therefore it is the duty of the Government to protect, not the present generation alone, but also future generations. Land values do not stand still, because they are directly influenced by the value of the product grown. These values change from time to time. For instance, some land may have very little value at the present time, because we know of no useful crop it will grow, but who can say that in fifteen years' time or less a crop of value will not be grown on it?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Will the farmer not be responsible for that?

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: Not the farmer necessarily; it may be the scientist, or plant breeder—these people are continually evolving new crops. It is the Government's duty to protect the public estate, for it is an estate worth protecting. It is for the reasons I indicated that the Government from time to time find it necessary to revalue land. At all times the Government are recognised as a sympathetic landlord. The western pastoral leases afford a striking example in that respect. The Government have afforded pastoral lessees drought relief where necessary. If that land were freehold its owners could not obtain drought relief. Many pastoral lessees are unable to meet their obligations to the Crown because they purchased their properties when the value of their product was high and later that value fell. That is a very serious factor in the exchange of land from one person to another.

There are many hon. members in this Committee, and many people who have gone on the land who have not a proper view of land settlement. My idea of settling people on the land is to enable them to make a living from working the land. I venture to say that more money has been made by people selling the land than by people working it, and that practice is wrong in principle. Labour has done a great deal to make it more profitable to work the land, and it is desirable that more consideration should be given to that aspect of the matter. The working of the land should be made a profitable occupation, but in most instances the people derived most profit from the land when they sold it.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: After thirty years' work on it.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: If they had been working the land for thirty years on profitable values they would not have been looking for the profit to be derived from selling it.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The profit they derived from selling it was the only nest egg they had after thirty years of hard work.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: I do not say they are not entitled to something; they are entitled to a profit out of working the land

Mr. H. H. Collins.]

That is the principle that governs Labour's land settlement policy. Very often the value of land is increased owing to its transfer from the classification of country land to that of town and city land. A city is created as a result of the building of roads, railways and harbour facilities, and the increase in land values as a result of that community effort should belong to the people generally and not to some fortunate person who secured it on a freehold basis before the city was built. The land on which the city of Brisbane was built was one time classed as country land, and I do not think any hon. member in this Committee will argue that the tremendous increase in the value of that land—which is due to community effort—should belong to some person who was fortunate enough to obtain freehold rights to it some fifty or sixty years ago. The system of leasehold preserves the right to the land for future generations, and that is a right to which they are entitled.

In 1929 the Opposition Party promised that if returned to power they would give the returned soldier settlers on the Atherton Tableland the right to convert their holdings into freehold, and only three out of ninety settlers took advantage of that offer, and those three were sorry for it. Those settlers recognised they were on a better footing under the leasehold system.

The pastoral holdings in the western portion of the State afford one of the best examples of the advantage of the leasehold principle. The hon. member for Dalby would not suggest that those pastoral leases should be convertible to freehold.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am against freehold for pastoral holdings.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: The same principle applies to the smaller areas. The fact that these leasehold rentals can be varied from time to time as the land increases in value indicates that leasehold is the correct policy for any Government to pursue.

The Secretary for Public Lands has introduced a scheme whereby suitable roads are built to areas before they are taken up by settlers. That is a very commendable system, and one that was long overdue.

Hon. members know of many settlers who have had to transport their produce and necessities over roads well nigh impassable for vehicular traffic. Settlers are opening up new avenues of wealth for the State, and they should not be asked to undergo unnecessary hardships. The Minister in his wisdom has done much to alleviate the distressing hardships that beset many of our older primary producers.

The hon. gentleman is to be commended for opening up a passage over the tablelands of North Queensland, from Hughenden to Cairns. This will give our Western settlers access to the better climatic conditions prevailing on the tablelands, and the opportunity of enjoying the advantages of sea bathing on the coast. In addition, the Western people will be able to obtain supplies of fresh fruit, vegetables, milk, and many other necessary articles of diet previously denied to them. The lack of the necessary quantity of these commodities has been a handicap in the rearing of children in the Western parts of the State. The highway will also prove a veritable boon in the transportation of fodder to starving stock

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in the Western country. It is work such as this that demonstrates the national outlook of the present head of the Department of Public Lands, and I am sure hon. members fully appreciate the very valuable work he is doing. When new lands are to be thrown open for settlement a very great responsibility rests on the Government to see that the areas allotted to the settlers are sufficient to enable them to make a livelihood. The Government invite people to invest their money in settlement. This invitation implies that the project is sound, and in order that the new settlers shall be protected and the public estate also, the Government should make certain that the project is a payable one. The Government should be prepared to back up their invitation by financial assistance from the Agricultural Bank to a greater extent than has been the case in the past. If the project is considered a sound investment for the money of individuals, it should also be a sound one for that of the Government.

Mr. MOORE: The settlers will have to be picked.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: It may be necessary to pick them to a certain extent. Public money is expended in the construction of roads, railways and harbours, all for the purpose of developing the land, and all this work would be futile if people who could make the best use of the land were not allowed to settle on it. There should be some grading of settlers, and I am sure that the Minister in his wisdom has done so where the occasion has demanded it.

At 7 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: The ever-recurring problem of drought must be faced in a very determined manner. Drought is one of the difficulties with which the pastoralist has had to contend ever since Queensland has been a State. It is no use saying, "Leave it to this" and "Leave it to that, the problem will be solved." So far it has not been solved, and it never will be solved until definite action is taken. This is a problem that cries aloud for solution. The fact that a problem is difficult to solve is no reason why a solution should not be sought. I am very pleased that the Minister is making full investigation into this matter because a solution of this difficulty will greatly increase our wool output and, to a certain extent, our cattle production.

The maize industry will also benefit in certain cases. I believe that maize could be economically and profitably used in the pastoral industry. The main consideration is that the people concerned as buyers should be able to purchase their maize at a reasonable price, and one at which the producer can afford to sell. An intelligent system bringing the pastoral industry into close contact with that of the farmer will assist both the Western people and the maize growers. Queensland is more suited to the growing of maize than any other State in the Commonwealth, but we are producing only very small quantities because of the difficulty of finding a market for it over a period of years. It is possible to double our maize production in Queensland, and at the same time, render very great service to the western sheep industry.

I am not satisfied that the possibilities of irrigation in the western country have been fully investigated. It may be that the possibilities are not great, but at the same time I believe the Government could well spend money on a very exhaustive inquiry to see what can be done for the conservation of water in the pastoral districts so that lucerne and other crops of value to our sheep in times of drought may be grown.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Can you grow maize by irrigation?

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: Yes.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I thought maize needed rain on the top at certain periods?

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: You could irrigate the ground and I think the other would be all right. Possibly some of the sorghums could be grown more easily than maize in the drier western areas. In any system of fodder conservation for the purpose of saving the pastoral industry, it is better to grow the bulky products in the country where the stock are reared, because of the high cost of transport. Maize, being more highly concentrated, can be, and is, transported much more cheaply.

I am very pleased to know that the Minister is having investigation made into the possibilities of irrigating our Northern tobacco lands. It has been proved that the Mareeba district is capable of growing the best tobacco in Australia, but the difficulty we have to overcome is the uncertain rainy season. Rain comes, but not at regular intervals. Irrigation to enable growers to establish their crops in the field would aid tremendously in overcoming many of the problems of the industry. I am satisfied that it will yet become one of very great importance to the State and profitable to the growers in it. Up to the present time they have had a very bad time.

I hope that the Federal Government will give the industry the consideration it warrants. We have proved that we can grow in this country tobacco suitable to the smoker's palate. During the period of sympathetic administration by the Scullin Government, the tobacco crop increased from 400,000 lb. a year to something over 12,000,000 lb., all of which went into consumption. With the return of the Lyons Government and the imposition of adverse duties, that production has fallen back till last year it was only a little over 1,000,000 lb. The Federal Government have not given the industry the support to which it is entitled, particularly when one considers that the Federal Government take over £7,000,000 a year out of the tobacco industry.

The tobacco-grower has had much to learn, and he has not been guided as fully as he might by the experts. No doubt they have given valuable assistance, but, like everybody else in a new industry, have a good deal to learn.

The grower, in many instances, after having invested his money, has found that he has bought land entirely unsuitable for the production of the best leaf. That should have been foreseen, and great care should have been exercised in opening land for tobacco growing. Mistakes occur from time to time, and they cannot always be avoided. Tremendous pressure was brought to bear

on the Government at the time to open up this land. In many cases growers were put in an unfortunate position. The best thing to do is to try to see what can be done by irrigation in that country, which has proved itself to be most successful for tobacco growing. I have no fear that many of the growers who have had a very lean time in the tobacco industry will eventually be rewarded and that the industry will come into its own.

Reforestation is one of the things that have claimed the attention of the Government. I would urge the necessity of inquiring into every phase of the possibilities of our great Northern scrubs with a view to seeing if some better use cannot be made of them than by destroying them to make the land available for other purposes. I believe that those scrubs have possibilities that we do not realise at the present time. I do not propose that we should lock up the land and leave it idle. My idea is that an exhaustive inquiry should be made into the possibility of making paper from those scrubs, by which a greater amount of labour would be employed than by merely destroying them to make the land available for other uses.

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

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Dalby*) [7.9 p.m.]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat is a practical farmer and he has introduced the evergreen topic of freehold versus perpetual leasehold. I suppose that we shall have conflicting views on this subject for many years to come. It is purely a matter of opinion. The hon. member for Cook should know that agriculturists generally are confronted with a difficult economic task. Unlike the men in most other industries, they have no control over the prices of their products and are at the mercy of the markets. When prices are good a reasonable living may be made, but, unfortunately, farmers usually show a loss. Very few people would be induced to settle on the land if the opportunities for profit were the only attraction. They would prefer to remain in the city to enter the Government service or to engage in some other profitable occupation. The important inducement held out to prospective land settlers is the opportunity to make their land freehold under certain conditions laid down by the Government in power. It is true that the Governments of Queensland have, generally speaking, deemed it unwise to make large pastoral holdings available with freehold tenures, but they made freehold land available in agricultural districts. They realised that it would be in the undoubted interests of future generations not to alienate large aggregations of pastoral properties. I have had a lifelong experience on the land, not only in Queensland but also in Victoria, whence I came, and if I had not had the opportunity to secure land in this State on a freehold basis I should not have taken it up. I came to this State with my wife and children in a group of fourteen settlers. We had a certain amount of capital and we all settled in the district where I live. We do not regret for a moment that we left Victoria to settle in this State, but if we had not been allowed to take up freehold land there would have

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been the same difficulty in promoting land settlement as there is to-day.

Mr. WELLINGTON: You all made good in Queensland.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We did, and we have no regrets about our coming. Many thousands of settlers also came from New Zealand to take advantage of land that was available on a freehold tenure. They settled in Queensland first under the Kidston regime, then the Philp regime, and later under the Denham Government. So attractive were the land settlement conditions that were offered by those Governments that thousands of people flocked to this State, and they have done their share in developing it. That cannot be denied. Wherever one goes in any part of Queensland one will find Southerners and people from overseas who have done their share to develop this country and are now excellent Queenslanders. Generally speaking, they are satisfied with their lot, but always remember that they would not have been attracted to this country if it had not been for the fact that land was made available on freehold conditions.

Mr. H. H. COLLINS: Would not an increased profit have offered a greater inducement?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is all very well to speak like that.

Mr. JESSON: What about the sugar industry?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The sugar industry is an exception. The hon. member knows what they have to contend with. The sugar industry nestles in the lap of the politician.

Mr. JESSON: You know nothing about sugar.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I know this much about it: that the moment the Southern politicians decide not to renew the present Sugar Agreement the retail price of sugar will be reduced by 1d. a lb. The sugar industry will then be on the same basis as any other primary producing industry. We all know the agitation that is continually arising in Victoria against the renewal of the Sugar Agreement, and the hon. member must not overlook the possibility that some day there may be a party in the Commonwealth Parliament sufficiently strong to prevent it. The sugar industry then will not be in its present flourishing condition.

The hon. member for Cook and myself own our own properties. The owner of a freehold property works and develops it with the idea of doing the best with it. If one worked a perpetual leasehold property one would naturally feel that it was not his property and instead of putting profits back into the land and thus developing it he would put them away as a nest egg. The hon. member for Cook says that the land belongs to the people, and that none should have been alienated. My point is if one improves perpetual leasehold land he is improving somebody else's property. The unfortunate result then is that instead of the savings being replaced in the property they are put into the bank or used to purchase an additional property. I always put some of the money I make from my property back into it instead of in the bank. I realise that by expending these savings in ring-barking, water conservation, fencing, and other improvements I am increasing its

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carrying capacity. I improve my property with the idea that some day I shall be able to sell it at an appreciated price. My property was worth about £1,000 when I selected it and after I have worked it for twenty-five years its value is £10,000. I claim that the money invested in it has been responsible for growing two blades of grass where only one previously grew, and, therefore, I am entitled to that money and no one should prevent me from having it. A leasehold property is a different proposition altogether. I observe from experience in travelling through the State—and the hon. member for Cook has no doubt had the same experience—that the man on a freehold property has a better homestead and better improvements, and that the property itself is kept in better order and condition than a similar property held under perpetual leasehold. It is a more progressive property in every way.

Whenever I come to a place and I observe that the gates are good, the wire in the fences is well strained, and the buildings are in a good state of repair, I come to the conclusion that that property is freehold; and when I come to a property that has a barbed wire gate and the fences and buildings are in a state of disrepair I have no hesitation in saying that it is leasehold.

If the hon. member for Normanby leased a property at a certain rental and a panel fell off the front fence, would he get a nail and hammer and put it on again? Or if the house fell into a state of disrepair would he repair it? No, he would rely on the landlord to do that. He would say to himself, "I am paying a rental." If a man improves a place for which he is paying a rental he may be forced to vacate it at any time. The leasehold system will not work, human nature being what it is. A man who owns his own property has some incentive to improve it, he takes a pride in it. The freehold system tends to make a better citizen because it encourages the owner of land to improve his property when he has money to spare, with the result that more employment is given and the State benefits.

It is all very well to be wedded to a principle. It is all very well for Karl Marx and the Labour Party to say, "The land belongs to the people and no individual has a right to own it." That does not work out in practice. If the hon. member for Cook spent his time on a leasehold property he would probably discover that after all his years of labour the only wealth he had was the leasehold value of his property.

The Moore Government told the people that they would allow them to convert their holdings to freehold, with the result that practically all of the people holding land under the leasehold system converted it to freehold, and there were only one or two instances where people reconverted to leasehold. The present Government may be in power for four, five, ten, or twenty years, but there will be a change some day, and when that change takes place the new Government will give those people who are now compelled to take up land under the leasehold system the opportunity of converting it to freehold, and I venture to say that 90 per cent. of them will avail themselves of that opportunity.

In New Zealand at one time they had perpetual leasehold, but the Government allowed a conversion to freehold, the result being

that now the majority of holdings are freehold.

During the Labour regime the number of perpetual leaseholds will accumulate, but immediately on a change of Government that tenure will be converted to freehold. In a great number of instances the only inducement to settlers to remain on their holdings is the fact that in a period of years the value of the land will increase. A property worth £1,000 to-day may, after a lifetime, be worth £10,000. It is not the amount that the settler obtains yearly from his land but the anticipated accumulation of wealth that causes him to retain it. A property increased in value from £1,000 to £10,000 in three or four decades will be the result of a lifetime of labour for a farmer, his wife, and several children.

The Land Act passed by the Moore Government has been responsible for the appreciable increase in land settlement that has taken place during the last three years. That Act was the best of its kind ever passed by any State in the Commonwealth. The proof of this is that the present Government have not seen fit to make any amendment, with one exception—the making of perpetual leasehold compulsory, as against optional perpetual leasehold or freehold. During the administration of the Moore Government it was left to the discretion of the selector to take up land on either of these tenures, and the number of applications for freehold proved that leasehold was not popular with settlers. The present Government made perpetual leasehold a compulsory condition, and selectors accepted that form of tenure, knowing that some day there would be a change of Government, and their tenure could be changed to that of freehold.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It is hardly correct to say that.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: A number of people sought my advice before sending in applications for perpetual leasehold land. I advised them to make application, and on a change of Government they could convert to the freehold tenure. That was quite a legitimate thing to do. There is no electorate where more settlement has taken place than that I represent in this Chamber. That remark applies more particularly to my former electorate, Murilla, where, owing to the destruction of prickly-pear, vast areas are now available for sheep and cattle. The hon. member for Enoggera was of the opinion that pastoralists were neglecting sheep and going in for cattle raising. I find that the opposite is the case in my district, where there is a change over from cattle to sheep.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What about the Burnett? At one time that was all under sheep.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Burnett district at one time was devoted to wool growing, but at the present time dairying is chiefly occupying the attention of the settlers. There is a difference between dairying country and cattle country. The hon. member for Enoggera was referring to beef cattle grazing. In my district the settlers are going in for wool growing, and in my opinion they are wise. Wool production has increased enormously in recent years.

Mr. TAYLOR: Because a lot of the prickly-pear land is now available for sheep.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That is so, but the increase in wool production will be reflected in decreased cattle production.

I cannot understand why the Secretary for Public Lands has such a love for the Alsatian dog. The Speaker of this Assembly and other Government members representing sheep areas are definitely in favour of banishing it from those districts. I cannot understand why the members of the Government Party are not sufficiently strong to compel the Minister to introduce a Bill authorising local authorities to prohibit its introduction into sheep areas. I have no objection to the citizens of Brisbane keeping wolves in their back yards if they so desire, but I do object to the wolf being allowed in the country to cross with the dingo and produce a breed that is intelligent, strong, and capable of causing enormous damage to stock. These dogs may kill a thousand sheep in one night. Although it is the individual owner that may lose, the problem is a national one, because the dogs are destroying one of the sources of the State's revenue. The Alsatian dog is shrewd and cunning and when it crosses with the dingo a much more vicious, intelligent and dangerous breed than the ordinary dingo is produced. The New South Wales Government have passed an Act authorising local authorities to prohibit the introduction of the Alsatian into sheep areas, and we should do the same.

The Minister suggested that the problem was one for the Commonwealth. Dingoes are not found all over Australia. I doubt whether they exist in Victoria. There the Alsatians cross with the ordinary town dog. These cross breeds go out from the towns and destroy the sheep, but the owner in that State has a remedy. He takes the law into his own hands and distributes baits round the town. The sad part about that is that although he destroys the killer, the well-kept innocent dogs suffer also. It is only right that the Minister should reconsider this matter and give the local authorities in Queensland the same power as they have in New South Wales. This is not a Commonwealth matter. The Government have taken steps to remedy the nuisance in New South Wales, and what does it matter whether there are Alsatian dogs in Victoria or not?

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

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [7.35 p.m.]: I think the hon. member for Dalby really made out a case for perpetual leasehold, which is the Labour Party's policy. We had three years of the Moore Government, when a change was made from the policy that the Labour Government had carried out for so many years, and very few people on the Atherton Tableland took advantage of the offer of freehold. It was pointed out by the hon. member for Cook that in that portion of the State only about two or three returned soldiers took advantage of the change. In the 1929 election campaign, when I was representing Chillagoe, I remember the Nationalist Party organiser, Mr. J. McDonald, making a great mouthful about Labour's policy and endeavouring to get the votes of soldier settlers by offering them a change of tenure by a change of Government—which did take place—yet whilst he was advocating that system I had a letter

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from that gentleman asking me to get the Agricultural Bank to purchase land under freehold so that it might be made available to him on perpetual leasehold tenure. That goes to show that even the Nationalist Party agree that Labour's policy is the best.

The hon. member for Dalby argues that if a person has a perpetual leasehold he will neglect his land—allow the fences to go to ruin and the gates of the homestead to fall to pieces. That is not so. I say under that tenure the more a man works his farm or selection, whichever it may be, the better the price he is likely to get when selling it.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He cannot pay his rent.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That applies when the public purse is used to improve the surroundings of his property. If a railway is constructed through his property, it is improved, and he must be prepared to meet the Government's demand for a higher rental. He knows that when he rents the property from the Government. As a matter of fact, the statements made by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat are altogether false, as applied to the people who leave the country and go to live in the cities. The Minister in charge of the department will point out that in most cases in the north-western portion of the State, when land is offered under our tenure, there are hundreds of applicants for one of perhaps forty or fifty blocks. That goes to show that the people are prepared to accept Labour's policy, which, to my mind, is right. It protects the unfortunate chap who gets into financial difficulties through no fault of his own from being fleeced by those people who come to his help by giving him a few pounds and are only too ready to grab his possessions from him. That state of affairs does not apply only to the small man. It was done in the past by banking and financial institutions with cattle stations, as is well known to every member in this Chamber. I congratulate the Minister on the wonderful results he has achieved since he has been in charge of the department. I am confident that he will continue to give excellent service.

I hold the view that we should make the maximum area available for settlement, but I should also like to see a sum of money appropriated to assist the existing settlers who are endeavouring to carry on in the far-Western portions of the State in defiance of the ravages of drought. The Government are to be commended for their proposal to provide water facilities on stock routes. I know from experience that water is of the utmost importance to travelling stock, especially over long stages. There are times when stock routes carry a reasonable body of feed, but because of the scarcity of water it is impossible to drive sheep and cattle. The proposal by the Government will assist sheep and cattle owners to a very material extent. If stock routes are in close proximity to railway lines and water is available but natural feed is scarce, fodder can be conveyed by the railway to certain points where the sheep may be watered and fed perhaps while resting for a couple of days. I have no doubt that the proposal by the Government will be specially welcomed by owners who travel their stock long distances.

I should like to refer again to the necessity for constructing a railway link from Charleville to Blackall. The construction of

this line would give the greatest measure of help to stockowners and afford a wonderful opportunity to provide work for our unemployed. It would give a good return to the Government and assist stockowners very considerably during periods of drought. I do not think that the Government could possibly make a mistake by the construction of this line. The report of the Royal Commission on Public Works, which inquired into the construction of this line in 1920, is very interesting, and I urge hon. members to read it. Nearly every witness who gave evidence before the commission fifteen years ago contended that 10,000 to 30,000 and 40,000 acres of land would be required in the neighbourhood of the line to enable a landowner to make a reasonable living. No doubt hon. members know that a smaller area of well-grassed and well-watered land is required to make a living than of land of inferior quality. When I read the report of the royal commission it occurred to me that a considerable change has taken place since that time. Practically every experienced landholder will contend to-day that 60,000 acres are required to make a living from sheep raising in the area. The Government would be well advised to hold a further inquiry into the matter and to ascertain the value of the land. They would do a good service to the State, provide undoubted assistance to the people already on the land, and save on an average at least £1,000,000 worth of sheep every year.

On the Address in Reply I pointed out that in a major drought, which occurs once in every five years, sheep approximating £6,000,000 in value perished. Therefore, if the Government by the construction of this railway connection could save a national asset of the value of £1,000,000 in a year they would be making a wise investment.

On behalf of the people in the far North and myself, I thank the Minister for the good work he has done in the past and is doing at the present time. The policy of reduced rentals, especially in respect of new land, has met with warm approval. New settlers appear to be well satisfied with their conditions. I hope that land that will be opened for selection in the future will be opened at rates that will enable intending selectors to make a comfortable living.

A week or two ago I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister for Transport, the hon. member for Isis, and several of my own colleagues to the Bundaberg district. The Minister received a number of deputations, one of which urged the construction of a small length of railway to give transport facilities to settlers. Statements were made that forced me to the conclusion that the suggestion was well worth investigating. I understand, as the hon. member for Normanby states, that it is the practice of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Public Lands to co-operate in matters of common policy. They should co-operate in reference to this request. I was surprised to hear one member of the deputation inform the Minister that he had cleared £400 in six months from a small area on which he grew sugar-cane and cotton, and did a little dairying. He also made the further statement that he expected to make a similar amount in the ensuing six months. If those results are possible from a farm situated some miles away from a railway they would be enhanced if this settler and others in the district had railway communication. There

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are great opportunities for people to settle on the land and make good like this settler. I understand that the Minister recently paid a visit to this centre, and I hope that he will confer with the Minister for Transport.

It affords me pleasure to know that the Minister has done such good work in his department. I hope he will continue to give his good services to the State, and that the results will be even greater than those he has achieved in the past. I am quite satisfied that when the hon. gentleman gets a proper insight into the conditions of the selectors in the far-western and central-western districts he will do something for the sheep industry along the lines I have indicated.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [7.50 p.m.]: I was interested to hear the Minister give as the reason for the perpetual leasehold system that under it the Crown could give relief to settlers during difficult periods.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was one reason.

Mr. BRAND: I thought the hon. gentleman said that was the main reason. This is the first time a Labour member or a Labour Minister has stated that as a reason. I thought the reason why Labour adopted the perpetual leasehold system was that the State might secure an annual rental from the land and, as it increased in value, greater revenue by the reappraisements. The Opposition have always recognised the merits of the freehold system because they realise that it provides a greater incentive for the settler and enables him to make a better livelihood. During the Moore regime, 1,847 settlers who held land under the perpetual leasehold system availed themselves of the opportunity of converting it into freehold tenure—which indicates the popularity of the freehold system—and thus benefited to the extent of £375,645; and only 8 out of 882 converted freehold tenures to perpetual leasehold tenures, and in those cases the land in question was not suited to agricultural purposes and the settlers desired to benefit from the immediate cheaper rental. People engaged in agricultural pursuits regard freehold tenure as the most advantageous for them. We recognise that leasehold is the better form of tenure for the pastoral industry, and during the time the Moore Government were in office they recognised that fact; but as far as the farming community is concerned the freehold system is more suitable.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why is the perpetual leasehold system better for the pastoralist?

Mr. BRAND: He utilises a much larger area than the agricultural farmer, and under a grazing lease has the right to convert a certain area to a secure tenure on the completion of his lease.

The Moore Government gave great assistance to the pastoral and grazing farmers of this State. During their period of office it was recognised the land laws were the best that Queensland had experienced. I am pleased to know that the Minister is continuing the system of relief in operation from 1929 to 1932, which was vastly different from the policy of previous Governments, who extracted as much as possible from the producers. Again in this session of Parlia-

ment we urge that the Government will recognise the rights of the people engaged on the land and give to them the tenure that they consider will not only give the best service to the State, but also afford them the best chance of earning a livelihood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [7.55 p.m.]: The hon. member for Stanley questioned the wisdom of the suggestion made from this side of the Chamber regarding an investigation of the necessity to restrict the stocking of pastoral areas. The Government purpose investigating that problem. The hon. member is wrong in his statement that such a restriction would be against the interests of the man on the land, particularly the pastoralist. In many instances people have to be protected from themselves, and I am quite satisfied, as a result of the last drought, that any settler who carries more stock than his land really should carry is doing an injury to himself.

The hon. member also spoke of selection rents as being based on unsound valuations. Hon. members have listened to an interesting discussion of freehold tenure as against leasehold tenure; but it would be interesting to ascertain exactly on what those who advocate freehold tenure would base their valuations. The owner of freehold land sells it at the highest price obtainable, and not on the capacity of the land to produce. If the whole of the land in Queensland were held on freehold, where could the hon. member for Stanley obtain any basis for the valuation of new land? The basis should be a fair valuation and not a speculative valuation. The basis should be the productive capacity of the land. The value adopted by the Government is the result of the recommendation of their officers, whose duty it is to take a basis that will enable men going on the land a chance of earning a living. The hon. member advocates the freehold tenure, and then complains of the valuation of selection rentals made by a Government that stands for leasehold tenure. He is really destroying his own argument. Where would the people on the land be to-day were it not for the selection rentals based on fair valuation and not on speculative valuation? An inspection and comparison of the freehold land of Queensland to-day with adjoining leaseholds will prove that the freeholder is paying perhaps ten times more for his land than his neighbours on leasehold land.

The Labour Government can extend consideration to the men on the land because of our admitted policy of leasehold tenure. The hon. member for Isis crossed swords with me for stating that it was on account of leasehold tenure that the Government were able to do something for the men on the land. We always endeavour to do something for the primary producers. A Labour Government will always do more for the man on the land than any other administration. No Government can do more for him than a Labour Government with a policy of perpetual lease tenure. We realise that the primary producers are the backbone of the State, and it is not our desire to have that backbone reduced to jelly. More to-day than at any other time does the man on the land realise what has been done for him by the Labour Government in Queensland. He realises that all the help and attention given by the Labour Government is the result of our land tenure system. Freeholders are

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constantly coming to the department complaining. It was only to-day that a lady came to me complaining that she had paid an exorbitant price for her freehold land. The lady who made a demonstration in the gallery by chaining herself to the back of the seat held her land on a freehold and not a perpetual leasehold tenure. I refer to the friend of the hon. member for Cooroola. That lady came to Queensland and paid an excessive price for freehold land. The result was that we had that demonstration from her in the gallery. Had she held the land on perpetual leasehold as advocated by a Labour Government there would have been no necessity for her to make such an exhibition. There is a very good illustration of our point. Had that lady waited and not paid an exorbitant price to some land speculator, she would not be in the position in which she finds herself to-day. We stand for giving the people on the land a fair deal. The speculator would not care if that lady paid £10,000 for the land. He is only concerned with how much he can get. There is another instance where these victims become a burden on the State. After that lady had invested all her capital on this land, she had to go to the Agricultural Bank for assistance before she could develop the land. She was not able to keep up her payments, and then the trouble started.

The hon. member for Stanley spoke about the land tax. Although that tax is called a land tax it is administered by the Treasurer's department, and so I cannot discuss it now.

The hon. member knows a good deal about the pastoral industry, and I was very pleased to hear him commending the Government for making provision for the conservation of water on stock routes. We are doing good for the people who are trying to make a living in the pastoral area. I was also pleased to hear him say that another problem on stock routes is the conservation of grass. Stock routes to-day are controlled by local authorities, acting as District Improvement Boards, each controlling that portion of the stock route that runs through its area. It is its duty to see that water and grass are conserved along that portion of the route, and authority is vested in it to levy on the stockholders in their district for any cost incurred. Certain of these local authorities are not discharging their duties as district improvement boards, and the Bill to come before the Chamber will empower the Government to take control of such areas. I can assure the hon. member for Stanley and other members in this Committee that we will deal with the question of conserving water and grass along these routes.

The hon. member also stated that industrial conditions affected the man on the land. He said that when the industrial workers see that the primary producer is getting a high price for his products they go to the court and obtain more wages. The hon. member for Dalby pointed out that the Government had nothing whatever to do with the wages of the workers: that that was a matter for the Industrial Court. I agree with him there. This is purely a question for the court. The Industrial Court is there to investigate the position, and we trust it. We do not hobble it, nor do we hamstring or ringbark it. The suggestion that industrial conditions affect the man on

the land cannot hold water, because each side has the right to put a case to the court.

He also spoke about the Charleville-Blackall railway. Many members on both sides of the Committee have spoken about that railway as a means of assisting the pastoralist and the men on the land in those areas in times of drought. There is no vote on the Estimates this year for new railways, but that matter will also be amongst those investigated by the commissioner who is now inquiring into drought conditions.

We have been asked by many hon. members to consider a reduction of rentals. The rentals of land under various tenures have been fixed under statute. There is a statutory authority for each kind of land tenure, and the conditions cannot be altered. Everyone realises that we cannot vary rentals with variation in conditions. All past Governments have fixed land tenures on certain lines and reappraised rents at certain times. The legislation passed by the Government last year enables any settler who is two years or more in arrears to put a case to the Government and have all conditions, including the rent, investigated.

I would ask all hon. members: what, after all, does the rent matter? Except in big pastoral properties the rent is only a fleabite. The other day a gentleman from another State with his two sons on the land in Queensland came along to me to consolidate his selections. He wanted to provide for the future of his two boys. The land was valued at a certain price, and the rental was so much a year. The Land Administration Board went into the matter, and was quite prepared to do what this man required. It was a good thing to see a man from another State bringing his boys to Queensland to earn their living from the land. We like to have men like that coming here. The board pointed out that the rent of the area was small, and if he wanted certain conditions he would have to agree to the rent's being increased. They doubled the rent on the property, and he said, "After all, what does it matter? It is only a small thing." I have had a good deal to do with applications regarding reductions of rent, and I repeat that, in nearly all cases, with the exception of big pastoral properties, the rent is only a fleabite. If we could give them the land rent-free, it would not be a great matter. That is because of the Labour Party's perpetual leasehold policy based on the living value of the land—on what a man can produce from it. I found in all cases put before me for reductions of rent that the people concerned were seeking reductions to meet outside commitments. Rent constitutes a very little amount of the overhead costs such people have to pay.

The hon. member for Stanley spoke also in connection with income tax and the proposal of the Government to allow the carrying forward of losses. This department has nothing to do with the incidence of income tax. Mr. Leahy, in his interim report, said that the Government might assist settlers very much by allowing them to carry over losses. That will be dealt with by legislation shortly to come before the House. I was amused to hear the hon. member mention the word "retrospectivity." I remember sitting on this side of the Chamber when previous Labour Governments were in power, and whenever an hon. member

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on this side mentioned the word he was howled down by members of the present Opposition. This Government do not believe in retrospectivity now. The revenue of the State is being affected. How can the Government consider retrospectivity in a matter involving a considerable sum of money when we are already complaining about the amount of the deficit? The deficit would be increased if it were granted.

The hon. member for Normanby raised several questions affecting the Upper Burnett and Cailide settlements, which have caused the Government of the day more worry than any other settlement. When hon. members get the report of the Land Administration Board for this year they will find quite a long explanation regarding that settlement.

The hon. member spoke about the Eungella land, and expressed his fear that the Government were allowing the land to be opened up without making the investigation that, in connection with the Burnett land was proved to have been so necessary. The original investigation of the Eungella land was undertaken in 1929 by the then Government. At that time the Government appointed a committee consisting of Mr. T. K. Harvey, then Land Commissioner at Roma, but now Chief Land Commissioner, Brisbane, Mr. G. B. Brooks, then Senior Instructor in Agriculture, and now holding an important position in the Department of Agriculture, and Mr. Twine, of the Forestry Department, to make an investigation.

Mr. DEACON: That committee was appointed by the previous Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was appointed in 1929, and the report was submitted to the Moore Government. The hon. member for Normanby expressed the hope that before any land was made available in the future the Land Administration Board would co-operate with the Department of Agriculture and other departments so that the mistakes that he claimed were made in the past would not be repeated. The committee that was appointed in 1929 submitted reports to both the McCormack Government and the Moore Government. In 1932 another committee was appointed, consisting of Mr. J. P. Harvey, Surveyor-General, Mr. Clydesdale, Senior Inspector of Agriculture, Rockhampton, Mr. Webster, of the Mackay Butter Factory, and Mr. Grenning, Director of Forests. Mr. Gurney, senior analyst, Department of Agriculture, made several analyses of soil from the area, and later also made analyses of soils from Atherton and Maleny, and found them very comparable. I am pointing out for the benefit of hon. members that the Department of Public Lands, the Department of Agriculture and other departments do confer before lands are opened for settlement. We certainly agree with the hon. member for Normanby that mistakes must not be repeated. There is the utmost co-operation between the various departments.

As further proof of my assertion I should like to point out that in 1933 the Land Administration Board asked me to co-operate with the Department of Agriculture in connection with the opening of certain lands. It was pointed out that in order successfully to settle these lands as dairy farms it would be necessary to have experi-

ments carried out so that farmers might be advised as to the best artificial grasses to grow. If the farmers were left to their own resources much loss would result, and the success of the settlement would be marred. The Land Administration Board strongly recommended that the Department of Agriculture and Stock be invited to establish grass experiment plots in the locality to demonstrate the best grasses for the dairy industry in that centre. The Secretary for Agriculture was good enough to see that that was done, and experimental grass plots are being laid down in different centres so that settlers may have the benefit of the results derived from these experiments. The Secretary for Agriculture may deal more fully with this matter during the consideration of his Estimates. As a matter of fact, many matters controlled by that department have been discussed on this vote, but I must admit that they are practically inseparable. After land is made available for settlement the Department of Agriculture comes into the picture.

The hon. member for Keppel commended the Government for their proposal to provide water facilities on stock routes, but I should also like to add that it is the intention of the Irrigation and Water Supply Sub-Department to make a survey of the water supplies throughout the pastoral area.

The hon. member referred to the necessity of averaging income losses for income tax purposes, and stressed the need for making land available for settlement free of rent for a certain number of years. It is a fair question to ask hon. members opposite why they did not do it while they were in power. I do not know of one occasion where land was made available by the previous Government free of rent for a certain period.

The hon. member also suggested that the department should consider the question of making recreation reserves available in local authority areas. I promise the hon. member that when he submits details of what he requires to the department the matter will be investigated.

He also referred to the Bajool irrigation scheme, a legacy left to me by the ex-Minister, the hon. member for Cunningham. I admit that it was not a very pleasing legacy. I do not know whether the hon. member for Cunningham knows what has happened. I can assure him it is going to cause the Treasurer bad headaches. The Treasurer and officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Sub-Department are now making investigations, and I shall be pleased to let the hon. member for Keppel know the exact position.

The hon. member for Keppel also appealed for assistance in the destruction of lantana. A local authority in any area that undertakes to go ahead with the destruction of lantana will have made available to it by my department a flame thrower and oil, under certain conditions. That offer is not open for an indefinite period. We have proved by departmental investigations that flame throwers are useful in the destruction of lantana.

Mr. BRAND: Are they cheap?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, and they are getting cheaper. Various firms are undertaking their manufacture and

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not only are the prices coming down but they are becoming increasingly efficient.

Mr. BRAND: On what terms do you supply them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The department lends the flame thrower and supplies the oil at cost. We are anxious that these flame throwers should be tried. The department in this matter is working in conjunction with the Sugar Cane Pests Board.

Mr. BRAND: Will you extend that offer to private landholders?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It all depends on how they stand. It also depends on whether they are freeholders or leaseholders. In other words, it depends on whether the applicant is a Crown tenant. We are especially helping the sugar growers. Lantana is becoming a serious menace in the Mourilyan area. The lantana also offers a harbourage for pests. There is a very live body of canegrowers in that area, who have offered their services free provided the Government supplies the flame throwers and oil. They have also offered to treat the surrounding country, which contains pests that menace the sugar lands. If Crown tenants in forest areas, as well as other areas, are prepared to supply the labour the department will supply the flame thrower and oil.

The remarks of the hon. member for Enoggera respecting land settlement were very interesting. As he pointed out, whatever else the policy of the Government has achieved it has increased the number of settlers. That is quite true. He also pointed out how our revenue had been affected by the drought. That being so the department has given much thought to the question of what can be done to restore the revenue to its previous figure. I want to inform him and other hon. members that before opening land to selection the closest investigations are made. The activities of all departments are co-ordinated. In this connection I desire to pay a tribute to the Bureau of Industry. The sub-committees of this body are doing splendid work associated with the opening of new lands. The department has caused some of its problems to be investigated by the sub-committee of the bureau.

Mr. WALKER: We had a similar arrangement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is so, but we have a much better one. The hon. member for Normanby said he did not want the mistakes of the past repeated. We do not want the mistakes that occurred during the three years of the Moore Government repeated. But I do not want to introduce politics into this debate. We have ready access to the sub-committees of the Bureau of Industry. The ex-Minister and other hon. members will realise that when we secure the co-ordination of officers in the various departments whose lives have been devoted to tackling these problems good results. Every matter involved in land settlement is discussed in all its phases and necessary inquiries are made by the Bureau of Industry.

The hon. member for Enoggera, having had an opportunity of seeing the work that is being carried out by the Forestry Sub-Department, paid a tribute to it. The reforestation programme that is being carried out by that department is very commendable,

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the department is efficient from top to bottom, and nothing is done without careful planning. The sub-department is planning a long way ahead, and we are establishing records, as I shall prove when the Forestry vote is being discussed.

The hon. member for Bulimba touched on a very important matter with which members may not be conversant. Ever since he has represented the electorate of Bulimba he has done everything he possibly could to finalise this matter. The Federal Government have a quarantine reserve at Colmslie. They first of all approached this Government—and my department controlled the matter—with the offer that we could have the land free if we undertook to remove the buildings at Colmslie down to Lytton. The department does not get many offers of free land, and when it does it accepts, provided the offer has not a string attached to it. We immediately accepted the offer with both hands, but something else happened. Our old friend, the Right Hon. William Morris Hughes, assumed control of the Federal Health Department and decided that he would not allow us to take the land unless we not only removed the buildings, but also paid to the Federal department the amount the land cost it some years ago. Meanwhile the hon. member for Bulimba, the Federal member, and the council member representing that district had interviewed the Lord Mayor, and had arranged for the Brisbane City Council to take over the Colmslie river beach as a reserve if they accepted full responsibility for the cost of removing the buildings to Lytton. I understand it is a beautiful place eminently suitable for a park. It is the best landing ground down the river and a beautiful place for picnics and for watching regattas. Unfortunately, our friend Mr. Hughes does not believe in the policy of giving something for nothing. When he assumed control of the Federal Health Department he ascertained the Federal authorities had paid a certain sum of money for this land some years ago, and, in addition to the State's undertaking to shift the buildings he has asked for the payment of the cost of the land.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: He does not want to charge you the increased value.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. He is prepared to hand it over at the actual cost of the land to the Federal Government. We have no fund for that purpose in the Department of Public Lands, and we would not think of inflating the Treasury deficit to the extent of some thousands of pounds, because the Opposition would then have something to talk about, particularly the financial expert, the hon. member for Hamilton. My department has no fund out of which it could purchase reserves, nor has the Brisbane City Council. The Lord Mayor would be pleased to take over this property if he had the necessary money; and until Mr. Hughes reverts to the original offer by the Federal authorities the matter will not be finalised. The irony of it is that the land and buildings are unoccupied and two Governments are fighting about who is going to pay the money. I commend the hon. member for Bulimba for his efforts to finalise this matter. He did his utmost to persuade Mr. Hughes to hand it over under the original agreement; but, unfortunately, William Morris Hughes is a Welshman and he said, "No."

The hon. member for Cook has a good knowledge of what the Government have done in regard to relief to settlers, and if there is any area where settlers have had good attention from the Government it is that represented by the hon. member for Cook. The hon. member has been good enough to give the Government credit for their work in that respect, and we appreciate it. Whatever relief the Government could give to settlers under the terms of the Land Act has been given, and on many occasions we have stretched the Act to do so.

I appreciate the praise given to the staff of the Lands Department because, after all, if one has a staff working in harmony one is getting good work done.

The returned soldier was entitled to everything the State could offer, but when the Moore Government offered him freehold tenure he refused it, and asked for leasehold. He was not going to put himself in the position of the lady who made the demonstration in the gallery! He did not intend to pay out all his capital to acquire freehold. He realised that the country for which he had fought should give him the land under special conditions. The Labour Government of the day stood up to their responsibilities to the returned soldiers. I know a good deal about the land on the Atherton Tableland that was resumed for soldier settlement. I was a resident there at the time, although not a representative in this Chamber. The late Mr. Gillies decided that the land allocated for a soldier settlement should not be inferior land. In fact, that land is some of the finest in Queensland. A considerable sum of money was paid for it. Much of the land that had to be resumed was held under freehold tenure, and it was at considerable cost that the land was made available to the settlers. I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Cook say that the soldier settler was quite satisfied with the deal he got from the Labour Government.

The provision of access roads was also mentioned by the same hon. member. It is very necessary that they should be provided. The Premier has laid down the condition that the department shall not open up any land unless an access road is first made. He has gone further. In his capacity as Treasurer he is making loan money available to build these roads. That is something done by the present Administration for which hon. members opposite should give us credit. Many of the access roads were provided out of loan funds, but the Government are not loading the land with that expenditure. In the past, when money was allocated for the construction of access roads the lands in the area concerned were loaded with that expenditure. In other words, the capital value of the land was increased by the amount expended for roads in the area. In many cases thousands of pounds were spent, and the expenditure was spread over the settlers at so much an acre. That is now a thing of the past. Although the necessary money is provided from loan fund the settler is regarded as a national asset, and the whole of the State has to bear the interest on that money.

I am sorry the hon. member for Dalby is not present. He gave me a very fine peg on which to hang a speech. During the first part of his speech he made the wonderful discovery that the major portion of the

problem of land settlement was due to the present price levels for farmers' produce. That is quite true. Everybody knows that the price levels have fallen. Had the level been maintained at that which prevailed in 1929 no trouble would be facing the man on the land or the Department of Public Lands. But the question I desire to ask is: how much worse would that trouble be had it not been for the initiation by a Labour Government of the primary producers' organisation? Labour initiated and carried through this policy which has enabled the primary producers to weather the economic storm. Where would the sugar grower be were it not for the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act and other legislation passed by a Labour Government, Labour initiated and gave to the sugar farmer the organisation that has enabled him to weather the storm. In fact, the sugar grower has been enabled to face the present economic depression with a greater degree of confidence than any other producer—because of the completeness of his organisation. The dairy farmer has at least been able to maintain some semblance of a price level—also because of the protection afforded him by a Labour Government. I am sorry the hon. member for Cunningham, an ex-Secretary for Public Lands, is not in his place. He is on this side of the Chamber conversing with the Secretary for Agriculture, and it is easy to guess the topic of conversation. It is the proposed Wheat Bill. The wheat-grower in Queensland—again because of the Primary Producers Organisation and Marketing Acts, initiated by Labour and only possible because a Labour Government was in control—is receiving at least 4d. a bushel more for his product than any other wheat-grower in Australia.

The hon. member for Cunningham is very much concerned, having realised that the Federal Government are doing something that certainly will not give that protection which we have given to the wheat-grower. I appreciate the kindness of the hon. member for Dalby in giving me the opportunity of proving to members of this Committee that had it not been for the organisation of the primary producers, initiated by Labour and copied all over the world—as pointed out by the hon. member for Cook in an earlier debate—we should be in dire straits to-day.

At 8.31 p.m.,

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Price levels are worrying me more than anything else, because every man who comes to me seeking a reduction of rent quotes them as the cause of his troubles. He says that the Government gave him more land and he was able to carry on while prices were good, but that they are now so low that he cannot make a living. I always say how much worse his position would have been had it not been for Labour! I am very pleased to be a member of the Labour Government that have done so much good for the man on the land. His worries are ours. The hon. member for Dalby put his finger right on the spot—our great trouble to-day is price levels!

The hon. member for Dalby also referred to freeholds and leaseholds. I know that you, Mr. Brand, do not believe what he

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said. The word for "freeholder" should be "speculator." The policy of every Labour Government with whom I have been connected is to induce settlers to adopt the land as a means of livelihood. We do not want people to use it as a medium for speculation. We want the people to stop there and earn a good living.

The hon. member also referred to the Alsatian dog. I am sorry that he is not here, because I desire to ask him why he did not deal with the question during his three years of office.

Mr. WALKER: I can tell you why.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why?

Mr. WALKER: The Brisbane members would not let us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Cairns also had something to say on the question of perpetual leasehold and freehold. He has been all over the State, and he knows that perpetual leasehold has made for more new settlement than has freehold. The problem confronting the department to-day is one not of opening new land, but of keeping on the land the man who is now there, and giving him an opportunity of making a living.

The Auditor-General's report shows that the total proportion of our land now in occupation is 84.29 per cent. That is to say, nearly 84.29 per cent. of the land in Queensland to-day is now in occupancy. He points out that 57.02 per cent. is under pastoral occupation and 18.79 per cent. under grazing occupation, or a total of 75.81 per cent. of the whole land of Queensland is under occupation for pastoral and grazing purposes. In other words, there are 325,250,000 acres of land to-day out of a total area in the State of 429,000,000 acres under occupancy for pastoral and grazing purposes, without all the other tenures, and towns. Where is there any chance for land opening? There are only 48,000,000 acres of land unoccupied in this vast State and that land is such that with the exception of 38,000,000 acres, it is uninhabitable. The thing I want this Committee to realise is that to-day's problem is not one of land settlement or of opening up new land. We have reached a saturation point in land settlement. If hon. members will examine the maps that will shortly be available in the Land Administration Board's report, they will see that what I say is correct. We have more cattle on the land in Queensland to-day than should be there—that is to say, allowing for sheep and cattle lost in consequence of the drought. People say that the solution of the unemployment position lies in placing people on the land. Where are you going to put them? Quite recently we had a demand for putting boys on the land and providing certain money. The Bureau of Industry examined the proposal from A to Z. I ask: where is the land? I do not know where it is. The only land in the State that I am able to make available for selection to-day is remote unoccupied land, reclaimed prickly-pear land and subdivisions of existing tenures when the current leases expire. If one resumed land from pastoral holdings to-day and opened up a few blocks one would have a thousand people asking for a block.

Mr. EDWARDS: You can get some real good land at Yarraman.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have been up there and I would class that amongst the land I have described as remote and unoccupied land. It is not fit to put a settler on under present-day conditions. We have had this land investigated and it would not do to allow anyone to go on to the land to make a living.

Our great trouble is to keep the people on the land who are there. I want to bring home the fact to this Committee that this Government are faced with saturation in land settlement in this State. We had a commission from the Federal Government here not so long ago wanting to know how many million acres I could give them close to Brisbane or a seaport where they could develop the chilled beef trade? They thought there existed in Queensland millions of acres of land quite adjacent to the coast that would be suitable for grazing cattle for the chilled meat trade. We have not got that land. We have no areas of pastoral land in Queensland that are not already occupied. Our problem is to keep the people on the land who are already there.

We have a good many resumption rights falling in. During the present year we have granted additional areas to 491 settlers, totalling 370,340 acres. We have a million acres of resumptions from pastoral holdings, and we are considering what we should do with them. There is a great urge from the Settlers' League, and people who want land opened for settlement, to make them available to new settlers, but on the other hand we have thousands of settlers who to-day do not possess living areas and cannot make a living on their present holdings. Last year legislation was passed to give the department the right to grant additional areas to people who had not living areas, and were more than one or two removes from the resumed areas. We obtained from Parliament the right to grant additional areas to people within a radius of twenty or thirty miles of their existing areas. One of the greatest problems of the department to-day is to comply with the requests for additional areas by settlers whose areas in 1929 could be regarded as living areas, but cannot be so regarded to-day.

I do want hon. members to understand that our main difficulty lies in opening land for new settlement. With the exception of the areas now being opened in North Queensland as good dairying lands we have no new land available for settlement. There is no land that I could instruct my officers to investigate at the present time with a view to making it available for settlement. If new lands, reasonably secure from drought, were offered for settlement to-day there would be at least 1,000 applicants for them—which shows the rush that there is for land settlement—but we have not got that land. My problem is to take care of the people already on the land.

I promised to give some information in connection with the new lands now being made available for settlement in North Queensland—the only remaining areas available for mixed farming and dairying purposes. In the Eungella district 39 portions comprising an area of 8,815 acres were selected by approved applicants. The areas of the portions ranged from 172 to 305 acres, and the capital values from £1 to £2 5s.

per acre, or from 3 3-5d. to 8 1-10d. per acre per annum respectively. In the Clump Point district an area of 8,024 acres, comprising 32 portions ranging from 169 to 391 acres, was made available for ballot amongst approved applicants, at capital values from 16s. 8d. to £1 10s. an acre, or from 3d. to 5 2-5d. per acre per annum respectively. Half this area has been taken up. In the Palmerston district an area of 9,170 acres at East Palmerston, comprising 53 portions ranging from 152 to 258 acres, was made available for ballot amongst approved applicants at capital values of £1 15s. to £3 per acre, or from 6 3-10d. to 10 4-5d. per acre per annum respectively. Fifty portions have been taken up. We are also designating certain portions in the West Palmerston district.

I should like hon. members on both sides of the Chamber to realise that the problem of the department to-day is not to open new lands for settlement. Again I say that we have not got the land. Every hon. member opposite also knows that. It is absurd to continue the loose talk and encourage the urge in the Press to solve the unemployment problem by placing people on the land. We carried out a land settlement policy at Beerburum in all good faith. What we did there was in the interests of the unemployed, but it did no good.

Mr. EDWARDS: You were warned about it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members opposite did not tell us about it.

Mr. MAHER: You did it with your eyes open.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Beerburum is fairly decent land.

Mr. EDWARDS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is just as good land as that mentioned by the hon. member for Nanango in the Yarraman district. I visited Beerburum the other day, and I saw a number of settlers who were doing all right. Some of the land at Beerburum is good land. It is no use suggesting that the unemployment problem may be solved by settling adults or youths on the land. That would only mean throwing good money away. The man on the land has to face low price levels and he must possess a certain amount of capital to enable him to develop his holding. In addition he has a hard time ahead of him for a number of years. One of the problems of the department is to keep the men on the land. We have to solve it.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [8.45 p.m.]: Shades of Joe Lesina and all the mighty talkers in this Parliament in the past! The Minister, by his two vigorous stonewalling efforts on his own Estimates, shows that he is equal to those men whose long-winded speeches made history in this Assembly.

I should like to secure information from the Minister concerning the increase in the appropriation for his department as compared with last year. Increased provision is made for seventeen hands in the Chief Office alone. That involves an additional annual expenditure of £11,600. Last week I made reference to the inflation in the public service. Here is an example of that inflation. The Minister can give no sound

argument to justify an increase of seventeen hands in the Chief Office this year as against last year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a reflection on the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. MAHER: It is all very well to put the blame on the Public Service Commissioner. That is sometimes rather cowardly. After all, the Government call the tune, and very frequently the Public Service Commissioner has to dance to that tune. Where is the evidence that the work is increasing? If the Minister can produce that evidence it is all right, but in his speech this afternoon he indicated that on account of the success attending the work of the sub-department of the Prickly-pear Commission very little work was available for these officers, and work had to be found for them in other branches. Having a surplus of employees there, where is the need for an extra seventeen hands, involving an additional expenditure of £11,600 per annum? As the Minister stated, there is no land available for selection to any extent. The inference is that the whole of the land in Queensland is settled. We can only assume that during the past year things have been quiet in the opening of land for selection, and that work in the office has been on the quiet side. Where is the evidence to support the increase in staff?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will make another speech on Thursday.

Mr. MAHER: I shall be glad to hear the explanation. There is another matter I desire to comment on, and that is the reference on page 22 of the report to the Public Estate Improvement Branch. That shows that £84,000 was expended in the central and northern areas of the State.

Land has been thrown open on a fairly large scale in other parts of the State, and no money has been made available from the Public Estate Improvement Fund for those lands. It is rather singular that the whole of the money that is being spent in this way—in relieving local authorities of the cost of constructing main roads—has been spent in the northern and central areas, which are represented by members of the Government party.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those are the only places where the land has been thrown open.

Mr. MAHER: Large areas of reclaimed land have been thrown open at Goondiwindi, and expenditure by the Public Estate Improvement Branch on those lands would be welcomed by the local authorities concerned, especially by the new settlers. Prickly-pear lands have been thrown open in the Tara district and at Chinchilla and Dulacca, and I do not think any money has been expended there.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing that matter on the Chief Office vote.

Mr. MAHER: I stand corrected.

Another matter that is of great importance to this State is our artesian waters. On page 29 of the report there is a reference to this question, but it is very brief, considering its importance to the State. Apparently the Minister has had officers of his department investigating the diminution

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of supplies of artesian waters, but I consider the report of their activities is too brief. The question of a water supply for the West of Queensland in future years is of the greatest importance. There is abundant evidence to indicate that each year there is a definite diminution in the flow of water from the various artesian and sub-artesian bores throughout the State, and it is only a matter of time when those bores will cease to flow altogether. If no action is taken to provide for water supplies in those western areas a great belt of the State will become uninhabited. The Minister and the Government recognise that an adequate water supply is of vital importance, and officers should be employed to study the whole problem, not only with a view to maintaining the availability of existing supplies, but the conservation of water in our existing streams by weirs and also by transporting it from the mountains to the far inland areas.

The Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie water scheme in Western Australia affords a fine example of what can be accomplished in pumping large quantities of water over long distances. The Western Australian scheme was established by Sir John Forrest many years ago, and it has been most successful. Unlike State undertakings generally, it has paid its way, and at the present time the whole of the debt incurred in putting the scheme into operation has been liquidated under the sinking fund provisions laid down by Sir John Forrest when he was Premier of that State. Under the scheme water is pumped from Mundaring, in the Darling Ranges on the west coast of Australia, 375 miles inland to Kalgoorlie, and provides thirty-three towns en route, subsidiary pipes leading out to the north and south. Eleven hundred farmers are served. It is a big scheme, and vital to Western Australia. Something along those lines should be considered for the purpose of assisting in the development of Queensland.

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

Mr. JESSON (*Kennedy*) [8.55 p.m.]: The hon. member for Dalby levelled some unfair criticism at the Land Administration Board. Referring to the Alsatian dog he made a comparison between Queensland and Victoria, but omitted to take into consideration the relative size of the two States. The representative of the Country Party cannot be commended for bringing such a relatively small matter into the discussion. Although the pastoralists and graziers have my sympathy in many things, I am not at all sympathetic towards them on the question of the Alsatian dog and dingo menace. They have failed to help themselves. The alleged menace has been gradually creeping over the State, but they took no action to create a fund for the purpose of combating it.

At 8.56 p.m.,

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Brand in the chair.

Mr. JESSON: Other industries, such as the sugar industry, have expended and are still expending many thousands of pounds for the purpose of eradicating various pests interfering with the growth of cane. Vast pastoral areas of the State are controlled by

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vested interests overseas, and the local pastoralists allow themselves to be exploited by these companies. This is proved by the wool prices operating at the present time. The wool industry is not controlled, and overseas buyers make their own prices for the purchase of the Australian clip.

Of the land opened for settlement recently by the Land Administration Board, I can foresee a great future for the areas opened in North Queensland, despite statements that have been made to the contrary. North Queensland offers a wonderful opportunity for the development of the chilled beef trade. It is the nearest point in Australia to our best customer, Great Britain. At the present time access roads are being constructed by the Public Estate Improvement Branch into the Kirrama lands. When the timber has been removed one can visualise the benefit these lands will be to the dairying and chilled-beef industry. Cardwell is the natural port for this area and is blest with a deep-water harbour capable of accommodating the British fleet. The construction of a jetty at Cardwell would be of immense benefit to the Kirrama lands. The obstacle at present is the lack of money for the financing of a project of that description or the construction of a road leading from the Kirrama lands to Normanton. This would enable cattle raised in the area north of Townsville being brought to the coastal and Tableland districts for fattening purposes before being despatched to the chilling works and consigned overseas in steamers loading at the Cardwell jetty.

As has already been stated by the Minister, the opening of the Clump Point area has been the means of putting more settlers on the land. The Silkwood butter factory, which is adjacent to that area, has a pasteurising plant and is sending milk to various parts of North Queensland. I cannot allow this opportunity to go by without paying a tribute to Messrs. Frank Fraser, Limited, of Ingham, who, without any Government assistance, opened up a butter factory with a pasteurising plant in that town. There are lands around Ingham eminently suited for pig raising and dairying. Messrs. Frank Fraser, Limited, are exporting many hundreds of gallons of pasteurised milk to Mt. Isa and New Guinea. When one considers that fresh milk in New Guinea and other places further east realises as much as 2 and 3 dollars a gallon, and the actual cost in Queensland is 9d. or 1s. a gallon, one realises what possibilities there are for this industry.

The hon. member for Cairns mentioned a trip that he made a fortnight ago with the Minister for Transport to the Goodnight Scrub. I have seen various other pine scrubs in Queensland and throughout the Commonwealth, but not one with such a wealth and continuity of timber as the Goodnight Scrub. Pine is growing there in all stages from 3-inch or 4-inch high to trees of full growth. It would appear to me that the continuity of growth in that scrub is such that the supply will last for many years, and will be worth many thousands of pounds to Queensland. I notice that the Land Administration Board realises the possibilities of this timber. It has a land ranger there and various gangs are clearing the under-growth from the trees and building fire breaks to guard

against destruction by that menace. It certainly will be a wonderful asset to the State.

The hon. member for Dalby during his ramblings took us for a trip to New Zealand, and he brought thousands of settlers back. He declared that the freehold system operates in New Zealand. That is not the case. The New Zealand Government carry out exactly the same policy as do the Queensland Government—that of leasehold. Nearly all the land is owned by the Crown and leased to the settlers. That method has been satisfactory in New Zealand and there is no reason why it should not be so here.

Mr. MOORE: You are twenty years behind the times. They used to be but that is not the position now.

Mr. JESSON: I do not take much notice of the Leader of the Opposition. The Public Estate Improvement Branch of the department has been the means of providing roads in all parts of the State and has been instrumental in opening up land for closer settlement. At the top of the range in the mountainous part of the Ingham district, before we get to the mining areas, there is a wonderful patch of scrub land that will grow practically anything. The whole trouble is due to the road over Mount Fox range, a matter of 12 miles. This land is a very rich district that would grow sugar-cane. People touring to Cairns all use this road, and it has not been a profitable concern to the council. We put a proposal by the council to the Public Estate Improvement Branch, which sent up its engineer to investigate and came to the assistance of the council with a grant of £500. There was a grant of £500, a loan and a subsidy from the Government, which will open up that land. I understand that the construction of the road is about to start next week, and before Christmas or shortly after Christmas the road will be completed. There are many people who will be able to get off the dole or cease living on their relations who will go up there and open up the land. That is only one instance of a loan and a subsidy by the Government and a straight out grant of £500 by the Public Estate Improvement Branch. It sent up an officer to investigate the conditions and the productivity of the land, and upon that report this grant was made.

The road from Hughenden to Cairns is one of the greatest brain waves that the Minister administering that department has had. The road is not a macadamised road, but a trafficable road and the people in the hinterland can use it to come to the seaside. I hope to see the day when the Hinchinbrook Shire Council will wake up to the facts and build a road to tap that country. I hope the members of other shires along the coast will make roads on to that road so that people can come into the railway. From a health point of view it means that people can come to the coast from the dry inland places of Queensland. Furthermore, it will be the means of permitting people on the Atherton Tableland of getting rid of their produce. At the present time they are in the hands of a few exploiting Chinamen who give them what they think for their produce in Cairns. I have been in the business and I know. The farmers of that district send their produce down to Cairns and only receive what the Chinamen will give them. Work of the

class done by the Public Estate Improvement Branch, with the assistance of the Federal Government, will open up that country and allow those farmers on the Atherton Tableland to enlarge their holdings. More people will go on the land knowing that they can get their produce out to the West where people pay three and four shillings for a cabbage.

I should like to bring under the notice of the Minister the fact that nut grass is becoming a very grave menace to the people in North Queensland, especially in the sugar-cane areas. I do not know how this pest can be eradicated. Chippers have very great difficulty indeed in being able to see small plants like young corn growing amongst the nut grass. Of course, in the cane areas where it is also a nuisance the sugar-cane is able to out-grow the nut grass rather quickly. I have seen acres and acres of beautiful country covered with nut grass, and it is becoming such a grave menace that I feel it my duty to call on the Minister to give the pest very careful consideration.

The Opposition cannot justly criticise the administration of the department by the present Minister. I know from personal experience that he has carried out his duties in the interests of the primary producers and that every officer of his department has treated me, and other members of the public, with the utmost courtesy. Prior to my return as member for the Kennedy electorate, I visited the department frequently and I always received the best attention. I am satisfied that the interests of the primary producers can be safely left in the capable hands of the present Secretary for Public Lands.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [9.12 p.m.]: I was very forcibly impressed by the statements of the Minister concerning the shortage of land available for settlement. That fact has been apparent to most intelligent people who have travelled throughout the State. We are inclined to give the impression that much of our land is worth more than it really is. I do not suggest that we should have a lesser natural love for it, but we must admit that a very big percentage of it is inferior land. We are inclined to lead people to believe that a considerable portion of it is good land, whereas that is not the case. There is a considerable area of good land in Western Queensland, but, unfortunately, it does not come under the beneficial influence of the eastern rainfall. If we could shift the eastern rainfall further West I daresay we could settle a larger number of people on our Western land. I realise that what the Minister has said in this connection is true, but his remark reminded me that our best land settlement days were in the time of Kidston, when considerable settlement took place on the North Coast. It was surprising to see the progress that was made by those settlers and it is astounding to know the number of people who were able to make good, owing to the fact that rich scrub land was made available in coastal districts, well watered by the eastern rainfall. Prior to that time we knew very little about the propagation of artificial grasses. We relied upon the natural couch for fodder for dairying cattle. At that time settlers came from the Northern Rivers districts of New South Wales, where they had had experience with the growing of *paspalum* and other exotic grasses.

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The Queenslanders became educated to the benefits of these grasses, and now we are on exactly the same footing in this respect as the settlers in New South Wales. A trip up the North Coast to the Mary Valley, Kin Kin, and Skyring Creek districts, which were settled by the Kidston Government, will force an acknowledgement that no finer land or settlers can be seen in this State.

It is no use advocating the further settlement of land when admittedly good land is scarce. Our statements are appearing in the Press in other parts of the world. We must be candid, as the Minister was tonight, and let it be known that most of our lands have been settled so far as local conditions will allow them to be settled. We know that in the course of years there may be some method or crops that will enable us to compete with other countries and alter the whole method of settlement.

Because we are very short of good land the people ought to know that good land is now locked up for reforestation purposes. I have investigated this matter over a number of years. I have been doing my utmost to secure the opening of one or two of these areas in my electorate, but not with a view to securing a few extra votes at election time. Many years ago, when we had an abundance of soft timber, large areas were mapped out and reserved as timber areas or State forests, which cannot be altered except by Act of Parliament. During my twenty-eight years in Parliament, only one of these small State forests has been thrown open to selection. Some of them have no timber growing on them. It is much preferable that these areas should be inspected by officers of the Department of Agriculture and the Sub-Department of Forestry, because if they are not used to grow timber, it is preferable to have them settled by twenty or thirty prosperous settlers. It is the policy of the Minister to settle people on the land. He has intimated to this Committee how 100 people have been settled on the Palmerston and adjacent areas. Here is an opportunity for him to settle a further twenty-five or thirty people without injuring the work of reforestation. Even if the Sub-Department of Forestry continues its planting at the present rate for another 100 years, it will not plant the areas under its control. During the Moore regime an officer was sent from the Department of Agriculture and another from the Department of Public Lands to investigate some of these areas. They arrived at the decision that certain lands should be thrown open to selection. That recommendation should be acted upon. I can take the Minister through the whole area and prove that what I am saying is correct. I had nothing to do with the officer sent from the Department of Agriculture. I was merely asked to send my most capable officer. That was Mr. McKeon, and he reported to me that the land he inspected was suitable for agricultural purposes, and was growing no young timber. There are 315,414 acres locked up in the Gympie district as State forests or timber reserves. That is an enormous area. Many people have agitated for the opening of some of these lands. Possibly some of them occupy adjacent country and are anxious to increase their holdings by securing areas on which good hardwood and young trees are growing. I particularly refer to Kandanga and Imbil districts, which includes

[*Mr. Walker.*]

Brooloo, where State forests have been thrown open for settlement purposes without any injury to the work of reforestation.

I have inspected the Imbil, Kin Kin, and Beerburum reforestation settlements, and I am quite content to admit that those three settlements are a huge success. They are doing wonderful work, and they are going to beat New Zealand in a few years. Let us continue with that policy, but on no account should we keep land lying idle when it is needed for farming purposes. I should like the Minister to state what he intends to do. I venture to say, if he sends an officer out to report on these lands, he will endorse what I have said. It is very difficult to express an authoritative opinion unless one has inspected the land in question. These lands I am referring to will grow anything of a tropical nature, and there is a market waiting for such products. The restrictions of exports is one of the evils of the world, but by the judicious handling of products within the Empire that difficulty will be overcome, and we can go on producing.

A great deal has been said about maize-growing lands. There is no restriction by the Commonwealth in regard to maize-growing. In years gone by our maize was grown on our low lands. Maize can be grown on a certain portion of the Atherton Tableland; but in that area it has a very high water content and is difficult to dry. Most of our maize lands have gone out of production, because it was found more profitable to utilise the land for dairying purposes. Given a stabilised price, maize could be grown in abundance, but the difficulty is that there are no horses to eat it. The Kingaroy district is the best for maize-growing purposes; but there is no land available for settlement worth talking about in that area at the present time.

The Minister referred to the Federal Government's interference with his policy by alterations in the tariff. Apparently the tariff does not affect the matter, because the Minister has stated that he has no land to throw open. The tariff has interfered to a certain extent with cotton-growing. Reference has been made to the policy of the Moore Government relating to cotton. As a matter of fact, the policy in regard to cotton that was carried out by the Scullin Government was handed to Mr. Scullin by me. The man who is responsible for the tariff that has adversely affected cotton-growing is Sir Henry Gullett, and I have no hesitation in saying that he was no friend of the Moore Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not condemn the Moore Government.

MR. WALKER: We did not get any bouquets. The Federal Government accepted the policy of the Moore Government in regard to cotton, and the same thing applies to tobacco.

The hon. member for Cook referred to the action of the Moore Government relating to the throwing open of land in the Mareeba district. The Moore Government got to work and established twenty-seven men there, and they could profitably grow tobacco for 3s. a lb., and now they cannot do it for 4s. a lb. What is the trouble? The trouble is that tobacco is subject to many diseases. The Secretary for Agriculture has done everything he can to combat those diseases.

If the diseases attacking the plants could be overcome, at 4s. a lb. for the prolific crop that can be grown in the North and other parts of Queensland, the industry would be a payable proposition at the prices charged for land by the Moore Government, which was 2s. 6d. an acre. The Government, of course, had no control over private land, and private land considered to be suitable for tobacco-growing changed hands at £6 to £7 an acre. That shows that the industry would have been profitable with tobacco at even 3s. a lb.

The Minister has stated that he has no land for sale at the present time, but when the late Hon. J. T. Bell was Secretary for Public Lands there were wonderful opportunities on the land and a great number of sales were effected. I venture to say that that was accomplished with a smaller staff than the Minister has. He should take note of the great increase in the number of the staff.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you mean?

Mr. WALKER: The administrative costs are £24,000 more than last year. If there is no land for sale why the necessity for the increased cost? I should like to have some explanation. It may be that portion of the extra expense is accounted for by the Forestry sub-Department, but that we do not know. It appears that a number of new officials have been appointed and this is not a right policy to adopt, especially as the economic depression is still with us. I clearly understand that no official should be sweated but there appear to be many men appointed to carry out duties that cannot exist, according to the statement made by the Minister to-night.

The hon. member who has just resumed his seat needs to be corrected on one point. He mentioned the work being done by the Public Estate Improvement Branch Fund. I would remind the hon. member that that branch was inaugurated during the time of the Kidston Government, when the late Hon. J. T. Bell administered the department. The Public Estate Improvement Branch did wonderful work for Queensland. It proved a splendid idea, particularly in large areas where the extra expense could be spread over a number of settlers. Under the perpetual leasehold form of tenure it is very difficult to do such work with any degree of success. When the cost of £2 or £3 an acre was spread over many settlers and a number of years, another 10s. did not impose an extra heavy burden by reason of the fact that it also was charged over a period. The hon. gentleman should not make statements that are not in accordance with facts.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [9.29 p.m.]: The Secretary for Public Lands has stated that he has instituted reforms. I am glad to hear it. Certainly, remembering some of his predecessors in Labour Administrations, there was a big need for reform. The present Minister is somewhat extravagant in the matter of his staff. The staff of the Department of Public Lands is very efficient and on the whole they are a capable lot of officers and have done their work well, but I can see no reason why the same staff cannot cope with practically the same amount of work during the coming financial year as in the past. The Minister has

advanced no reason for the increased number. He has not pointed out that there will be any increase in the work, nor given any other reason why he should increase the expenditure. Why should we increase the expenditure unless it is necessary to do so? There is one appointment that I think was entirely wrong, that of Mr. G. P. Barber to the position of clerk in the Sub-Department of Forestry. That was purely a political appointment.

Mr. WATERS: You are vindictive.

Mr. DEACON: Not at all. If Mr. Barber had not been an ex-politician he could never have secured that position. The work would have been given to a cadet clerk.

Mr. WATERS: What about your nephew? He got a job there.

Mr. DEACON: There is no nephew of mine in that department.

Mr. WATERS: Yes, there was.

Mr. DEACON: There was no relation of mine in the department.

Mr. WATERS: That is not a fact.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member is telling untruths when he says that, and he knows that they are untrue. He is saying things that he would not dare to say outside this Chamber.

Mr. WATERS: What about your nephew?

Mr. DEACON: As I told the hon. member, I have no nephew there. Many hon. members on the Government side endeavour to get away from the argument by throwing mud and making untrue suggestions. The Minister did not do that. He did refer to certain legacies left by past Governments, but he made the mistake of suggesting that the Moore Government were responsible for them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I said "past Governments."

Mr. DEACON: I would remind him of some legacies his department has to carry. There is the Burnett settlement, with its terrific extravagance in early settlement. Money was unnecessarily spent in several directions in that settlement, and the settlers could not stand the burden. The amount had to be written-off as a loss. Then there was the tragedy of the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme. I wish to quote from the speech delivered by Mr. Lacombe, then Secretary for Railways, on the original debate. He said—

"One could go on for a long time emphasising the virtues of this great scheme. Without using extravagant language, one can say that it certainly is a wonderful scheme. It makes the imagination reel to attempt to describe the wealth and magnitude of the possibilities of this Dawson Valley water conservation and irrigation proposal. It reminds me of a few lines from Dante. During my studies of that poet many years ago, I read of the spirit of Beatrice leading Dante through the wonders of heaven and his saying—

'Oh, speech! how feeble and how faint art thou

To give conception birth!'

Speech is too faint and too feeble to explain the wonders of this great scheme which we are developing in the Central district."

Mr. Deacon.]

That speech is worth remembering when we come to think of the fate of that settlement, and the fate of the people there, and the amount of public money wasted on it. It is well worth quoting for fear the present Minister might be persuaded to do something similar. He is, of course, not the Minister who originated that settlement. In the last year or two there have been two or three other unsuccessful settlements. There was the Beerburum tobacco settlement and one or two banana settlements, all not only a waste of money but a hopeless proposition from the start for the people who went there.

It is from the past that politicians should try and learn something. Hon. members on this side have spoken of extravagance, and we have the right to remind the hon. the Minister of some of the errors of his predecessors of the same political faith. There were errors during our term; nobody will claim that he is free from error. I am not claiming that I did not make errors, but they were smaller than those I have cited of past Labour Governments.

The Minister said that there was no future for land settlement in Queensland, and that we had come to the end of our resources. We have some land yet. He did not mention some of the land in North Queensland, especially the country in the Culpa area, where the present Government set out to build a road. That area is a pretty large one, and the land is good for the purpose of close settlement. The Moore Government had a scheme before them for developing that area. The present Government would not go on with the proposition. Four years ago that scheme was under consideration, but we hear nothing about it now. There are other areas in Queensland available for settlement—not the best, but still land that could be opened if access were given to them. It might be better to make terms with private companies than not to settle the land at all. The private company I refer to was willing to go on and to put settlers there, and clear the land for a lease over a term of years, all improvements at the end of the term becoming the property of the Government.

Mr. JESSON: What would be the term? Would it be ninety-nine years?

Mr. DEACON: Nothing of the kind. That land is good for settlement—as good as can be obtained in North Queensland. This land could be made accessible by road or railway, and it is time that it was done. There are settlers looking for the land.

Just before I left office about three and a-half years ago it was reported to me that Clump Point lands were almost ready for settlement and that all that was required was the construction of a road by the Main Roads Commission. The years have gone and the Government have had plenty of money to make the land available. Why has it not been done? It could not be on account of lack of funds. The settlers have been waiting all that time.

Mr. WATERS interjected.

Mr. DEACON: I am really afraid that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove is going "dotty." I hope that he is not, but he gives everybody that impression. I am sure that there are very eminent doctors who would be prepared to give him advice if

[*Mr. Deacon.*]

he consulted them. I recommend him to consult one of them. I agree with the Minister that there is certainly need to improve the stock routes. He complained that when they were under the control of local authorities the latter did not do their work well.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not say that.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister said that he was not satisfied with their work, that he preferred something better. There are local influences that sometimes prevent local authorities from protecting the stock routes and we all know what that is. There are people in every district who are anxious to graze their cattle on all the stock routes and being taxpayers in the area have sufficient influence to prevent the local authorities from clearing the stock routes of straying stock. The straying stock do all the mischief—they eat the grass. There is no greater need in this State than that for the improvement of stock routes by providing adequate watering facilities and ensuring sufficient grass for travelling stock. We must make up our minds to end the indiscriminate free grazing that takes place on stock routes to-day. At one time the stock routes were controlled by district improvement boards, some of which did good work. Some are still operating.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Some are doing good work even yet.

Mr. DEACON: It is impossible to judge the results of a system after it has been in existence for only one year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is now five years.

Mr. DEACON: They were abolished after they had been in operation for one year. They were abolished during the first year that the present Government were in power after the defeat of the Moore Government. They were knocked out in 1932.

Mr. WATERS: You were knocked out in 1932.

Mr. DEACON: As the hon. member for Kelvin Grove says, they were knocked out in 1932. They did not have much of a start. The Minister admits some of them did good work. On his own statement, it seems they did better work than the local authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were the local authorities.

Mr. DEACON: That is so, and the Land Commissioner. The other members of the board were elected, not by the local authority, but by the landholders. They were charged with the sole care of the stock routes. It was their duty to look after them in the interests of travelling stock. If a mistake was made, why not revert to the old methods?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We never go back; we go forward.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister has gone back in his own way by delegating the work to the local authorities. If he can do nothing else, he can draw on the same idea and put an independent body in charge of these matters. It is quite an easy matter for the Minister who introduced the legislation to get such a body. I am arguing for this

change because it would be an improvement on the present system.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: While you are arguing we are doing.

Mr. DEACON: I should like to know what the Minister is doing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Putting water on the stock routes where it is necessary.

Mr. DEACON: Is the Minister doing the one thing that is essential—that is, maintaining the grass on those stock routes by keeping off the stray stock? As long as that duty is left to the local authority, stray stock will not be kept off the stock routes. Too many of the ratepayers are interested in getting that grass for nothing. The members of the local authority are elected by the people who are not altogether interested in keeping stock routes in proper order.

The Minister has spoken of the prosperity of his department. It has certainly collected a good deal of revenue. Although the department may be prosperous, and the officials have collected much revenue, the people on the land are not prosperous. That is not altogether the fault of the officials, as the cause is beyond their control. Nevertheless, the department must take notice of the fact that its tenants are not prosperous.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have many testimonials from our tenants saying how well they are treated.

Mr. DEACON: I am not blaming the Minister or his officials. The cause is beyond their control; at the same time during the coming year they should bear in mind the fact that the people from whom they derive their revenue need consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We give them every consideration.

Mr. DEACON: They are worthy of a little bit more than that. The whole prosperity of the State depends on the people who are working the land. We cannot be too good to them. Although the Secretary for Public Lands may make concessions to his tenants it does not relieve them of the heavy burden of excessive taxation. I hope the Minister will use his influence with the Treasurer and point out to him that it is no use granting concessions by way of reduction in land rents to the people on the land if the latter takes away the benefit of that concession in taxation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Treasurer has been very good.

Mr. DEACON: I am entitled to judge the Treasurer on his past performances.

The PREMIER: We are not dealing with Treasury Estimates now.

Mr. DEACON: Taxation is intermingled with this matter. These are Crown tenants that one department is interested in assisting. On the other hand, there is another department that is not giving them consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have been considered.

Mr. DEACON: The Secretary for Public Lands can help these tenants by his voice in the Cabinet—by pointing out their difficulties. Unfortunately it does not lie with

him, but with such hon. members as the hon. member for Kelvin Grove.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are sympathetic.

Mr. DEACON: They may be sympathetic but when they do not show their sympathy in this Chamber they have no right to complain when they are told they are unsympathetic. However, the Minister can help in the way I have indicated. The hon. gentleman has stated that he has no Crown land available or likely to be available in the near future. For argument's sake we will take his statement as being correct. There is plenty of freehold land available in Queensland. Large areas on the Downs and the coast have been proved suitable for closer settlement. Although it may not be Crown land it is land the Government could obtain for the purpose of making it available for settlement and assisting the people.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of the Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 23rd August and 16th October, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

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

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.