

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST 1937

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WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST, 1937.

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

QUESTIONS.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE, MAIN ROADS FUND AND UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF FUND. JULY, 1937; TREASURY BILLS CANCELLED, 31ST JULY, 1937.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) asked the Treasurer—

“1. What were the receipts and expenditure for July last under the following headings:—(a) Main Roads Fund, (b) Unemployment Relief Fund?”

“2. What was the amount of Treasury bills temporarily cancelled as at 31st July last?”

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

	Receipts.	Expenditure.
	£	£
“1.—		
(a) Main Roads Fund	110,358	94,421
(b) Unemployment Relief Fund	... 165,427	176,423

The monthly expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Fund cannot be taken as a basis for estimating the yearly commitments of this fund.

“2. £740,000.”

PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY INCREASES.

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

“Will an officer of the public service having a maximum classification of (say) £550 be eligible for automatic increases up to that salary, less the amount of the basic wage reduction from £4 5s. to £3 18s. per week?”

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

“All officers will, subject to satisfactory reports as to conduct and efficiency, be paid automatic increases in accordance with the awards of the Industrial Court.”

FODDER RELIEF SCHEME.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. What was the total amount expended by the Government through the dairy associations on fodder relief during 1936-1937?”

“2. What amount was paid to each co-operative dairy association availing itself of the Government's fodder relief scheme?”

“3. Did the Government pay each individual factory in full?”

“4. If not, what amount was owing to each co-operative dairy association as at 31st March and 30th June, 1937?”

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

“1 and 2. See the information laid on the table of the House to-day by me

regarding the Fodder Relief Scheme in answer to the question of the hon. member for Isis."

"3. All admissible claims by factories under the scheme were paid in full.

"4. See answer to 3."

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on 11th August:—

"Will he kindly supply the following particulars of the Fodder Relief Scheme in respect of each factory:—(a) Number who obtained fodder; (b) the total amount involved; (c) the total repayments to date; (d) the total amount still outstanding?"

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

"DROUGHT RELIEF SCHEME AT 12TH AUGUST, 1937.

Factory.	Suppliers Assisted.	Amount Advanced.	Amount Repaid.	Balance Outstanding.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Aubigny Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	7	47 9 2	29 19 3	17 9 11
Biddeston Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	31	150 8 1	..	150 8 1
Queensland Farmers' Co-op. Assn., Ltd., Booval (Booval, Boonah, Grantham, and Laidley Factories)	978	24,782 6 0	148 14 9	24,633 11 3
Caboottle Co-op. Assn., Ltd. (Caboottle, Bumundi, and Pomona Factories)	250	3,869 6 3	1,017 3 6	2,852 2 9
Chinchilla Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	266	6,906 13 0	439 1 3	6,467 11 9
Dayboro' Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	38	797 7 1	102 14 4	694 12 9
Downs Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Toowoomba, Miles, Clifton, Dalby, Crow's Nest, Goom-bungee, and Cheese Factories)	1,214	11,904 0 1	3,058 10 5	8,845 9 8
Esk Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	208	7,650 11 2	236 12 10	7,413 18 4
Felton Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	1	19 10 0	7 18 0	11 12 0
Queensland Agricultural High School and College, Gatton, account Public Instruction	3	59 8 6	21 11 10	37 16 8
Gayndah Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	253	6,474 8 5	..	6,474 8 5
Gomorrnan Cheese Factory	7	292 17 3	..	292 17 3
Irongate Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	10	58 1 9	2 11 0	55 10 9
Killarney Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	125	3,651 3 10	52 5 7	3,598 18 3
South Queensland Dairy Co., Ltd., Kingston	86	1,623 18 0	203 1 6	1,420 16 6
Kin Kin Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	23	383 0 9	40 11 3	342 9 6
Logan and Albert Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	35	508 18 0	..	508 18 0
A. C. Munro and Sons Pty., Ltd., Lowood	45	865 7 10	168 14 1	696 13 9
Macclagan Valley Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Macclagan, Macclagan North, Kulpi, and Rangemore Factories)	17	554 7 9	39 3 0	515 4 9
Maleny Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	38	840 15 7	..	840 15 7
Maryborough Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Maryborough, Kingaroy, Biggenden, Mundubera, and Wondai Factories)	1,022	21,684 8 1	1,997 8 5	19,686 19 8
Max Cheese Factory	9	84 11 1	21 10 4	63 0 9
Milmeran Dairy Co-op. Assn., Ltd.	86	1,642 13 0	389 5 3	1,253 7 9
Moola Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	13	451 1 11	264 6 5	186 15 6
Mt. Tyson Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	5	188 19 2	44 0 5	144 18 9
Nanango Cheese Co-op. Assn., Ltd.	185	2,944 9 3	128 2 4	2,816 6 11
Oakey District Co-op. Butter Assn., Ltd.	250	4,913 13 8	162 19 3	4,750 14 5
Pittsworth Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Pittsworth, Brookstead, Linthorpe, Scrubby Mt., Springside, and Yarranea Factories)	59	707 2 1	76 11 5	630 10 8
Port Curtis Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Gladstone, Bundaberg, Biloela, Mackay, Monto, Rockhampton, and Wowan Factories)	301	1,765 12 5	596 3 5	1,169 9 0
Rockview Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	7	193 11 7	66 15 0	126 16 7
Rocky Creek Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	2	39 2 0	..	39 2 0
Roma Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	4	36 5 6	36 5 6	..
Southbrook Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	26	815 10 5	132 12 7	682 17 10
South Burnett Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Murgon, and Preston Factories)	153	2,710 13 4	915 14 9	1,794 18 7
Stanley River Co-op. Assn., Ltd.	20	241 15 10	175 8 11	66 6 11
Warwick Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Mill Hill, Allora, Goondiwindi, and Texas Factories)	624	12,607 17 5	1,407 11 8	11,200 5 9
Wellcamp Cheese Co.	2	39 17 3	..	39 17 3
Wide Bay Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd. (Gympie and Cooroy Factories)	206	4,208 7 3	1,814 13 11	2,393 13 4
Woodleigh Cheese Factory	17	541 15 1	..	541 15 1
Yamison Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	10	452 2 11	85 18 4	366 4 7
Coalstoun Lakes Co-op. Dairy Assn., Ltd.	5	122 12 2	..	122 12 2
	6,641	127,831 19 11	13,884 0 6	113,947 19 5

"In addition 46 suppliers were assisted to the extent of £1,287 2s. 1d. through the Agricultural Bank.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Total as above	127,831 19 11	127,831 19 11
Agricultural Bank . . . . .	..	1,287 2 1
		129,119 2 0
Repayments above	13,884 0 6	13,884 0 6
Agricultural Bank	171 7 8	14,055 8 2
Balance outstanding 12th August, 1937 . . . . .	..	£115,063 13 10"

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—SECOND ALLOTTED DAY.

Question stated—

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

‘May it please Your Excellency,—

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

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

On which Mr. Maher had moved the following amendment:—

“Add to the resolution the following paragraph—

‘We desire, however, to inform Your Excellency that the maladministration of the affairs of Queensland by the present Government is seriously retarding the recovery of industry and prejudicing the welfare of the people, particularly in the following directions:—

(a) Its retention of the emergency unemployment relief taxation, at rates substantially higher than during the depression years;

(b) Its action in transferring portion of the Unemployment Relief Fund to consolidated revenue, thus creating a new form of ordinary taxation;

(c) Its failure to encourage and assist wealth production in primary and secondary industries.

‘For these and other reasons, the Government does not possess the confidence of this House.’”

Mr. KANE (*East Toowoomba*) [10.40 a.m.]: I rise to speak in opposition to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, in which he charged the Government with prejudicing the welfare of the people. The amendment is based on the following grounds:—

(a) Its retention of the emergency unemployment relief taxation;

(b) Its action in transferring portion of the Unemployment Relief Fund to consolidated revenue;

(c) Its failure to encourage and assist wealth production in primary and secondary industries.

If the hon. gentleman can prove that the Government have failed to consider the

welfare of the people he need not go any further with his indictment, because, after all, it is the paramount duty of the Government to attend to their needs. Therefore, apart from taxation, if the Government have neglected to look after the people they have failed, and are deserving of censure. But the Government have not failed. They have given the utmost consideration to the welfare of the people, especially those most in need of it, and therefore are deserving of the highest commendation from the public generally.

Hon. members opposite have had enough parliamentary experience to appreciate the difficulties that the Government have had to overcome, and they should know why the increased taxation of which they complain was imposed on the people. In support of their contention they have adopted the antiquated method of comparing this State with the other States, and in doing so have used only those figures that bolster their argument. But it is a dangerous practice to quote figures that may detrimentally affect any phase of industry and obscure the true state of other phases. For that reason I am tempted not to indulge in the use of figures, and if I do so, it will be merely in passing in order to arrive at the true position. I have discovered in studying our statistical publications that they are so arranged that even those who run may read them. We may, therefore, be able to use some of them to our advantage. Some of the comparisons made by our opponents were of specially chosen sets of statistics. I have taken out a comparison in respect of maturing loans, the interest and other charges on which account to a great extent for our present budgetary position. It shows that from 1932 to 1936 New South Wales made ten loan conversions, by which £1,561,000 was saved in interest and exchange. In the same period Victoria had three loan conversions, and made similar savings of £426,000. The Commonwealth, too, made four loan conversions, which benefited its consolidated revenue by £860,000. The small State of South Australia made six loan conversions with an advantage to its revenue of £346,000. Western Australia made five loan conversions, from which £245,000 was saved in interest and exchange. Tasmania in four loan conversions during the same period made a saving of £104,000. Owing to the position of her oversea loans Queensland during the same period was able to make only three loan conversions at the comparatively small advantage of £202,000. Those are the facts referred to by the Premier when replying to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. The outstanding fact is that Queensland has had less advantage from loan conversions than any other State, except Tasmania.

We have also been indicted for imposing heavy income taxation, especially a heavy tax on companies. So much has been said in this respect that I find it necessary to resort again to comparison. The income and dividend tax paid in proportion to the general revenue in the three principal States is—

	Per cent.
New South Wales	... 26.63
Victoria	... 28.95
Queensland	... 27.50

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Those figures show a distinct advantage in Queensland, and disclose that other States impose a heavy tax on incomes and dividends.

It is a fact that our unemployment relief tax per head is in excess of that of other States—we admit that—but we insist on the necessity of it, and claim that we use the money for the benefit of the general community. The percentage of unemployment relief taxation to the general revenue of the three principal States is—

	Per cent.
New South Wales	... 37.69
Victoria	... 13.84
Queensland	... 36.88

What of all this talk about our unemployment relief tax's being heavier than those of the other States? Our opponents may be able to show that the tax per head of population is greater in this State than in other States, but there is another angle from which the matter must be judged. A large part of the unemployment relief tax collected in New South Wales is derived from those we call the small man, that is to say, the proportion of the people paying the tax in New South Wales is greater than in this State. If any explanation is required for that, one has only to study the policies of the various political parties. We believe in a higher exemption in unemployment relief tax, ours being £78, which is higher than those of other States. We believe in placing the burden of taxation on a different section of the people from those whom the Government of New South Wales believe in taxing most. So that, although New South Wales can show a lower percentage of income tax to total revenue we, on the other hand, can show that a greater number of our people are exempted from this taxation.

The complaint of the Opposition is that private enterprise should be nursed and cared for by the Government. We say that if private enterprise promotes industry, and industry in turn makes profits for individuals these must contribute to the State's expenditure on social services. They cannot evade their obligations merely because they invest their capital in business, and by their business training and acumen accumulate profits. We believe that the payment of taxation is a social duty. Nowadays some people want to set up the principle that the only method by which the country can be developed is to promote industry by enriching the few. My idea of government is to spread the social taxation over the whole of the people in proportion to their ability to pay, and to accord greater social justice to all the people. That also is a point that was referred to by the Premier. That can only be achieved by the circulation of the revenue produced by private enterprise. If more profits meant higher wages, as they should, the money would eventually find its way into the pockets of the people. It is the poorer classes who need money more, and spend it more freely, because their endeavour is always to improve their standard of living, which calls for improvement. If it is found that private enterprise makes profits it is our duty, as the controllers of the State, to levy taxation sufficient to meet the general needs of the State. We believe that private enterprise should shoulder its obligations just as other people,

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and that can be done only by taxation, which promotes the circulation of money.

We were told that the shortage of money caused the depression. There was no shortage of money during the depression—gold, notes, and all other forms of currency were in existence—it was the neglect to use the currency that caused the depression. Out-of-date methods of finance that called for sacrifices from the poorer people caused a decrease in circulation, which brought about the depression. The only way to remedy that condition is to place more money in the hands of the people who want to buy the necessities of life, and thus increase the velocity of circulation that is so necessary if money is to perform its natural function. Unfortunately, there are gentlemen on the Opposition side who are very estimable in their own spheres, who believe that business principles should be applied to government. The hon. member for Hamilton, who has returned to this House in apparent good health—which is pleasing to all hon. members—and the hon. member for Oxley are in this class. It sounds all right to say that business principles should be applied to government, but I point out that business men are in a position to sell goods to people who are able to buy, at a profit to the seller and with advantage to the buyer, and they imagine that the Government can do likewise. When the Government receives the money it takes from the taxpayers it has to spread it over all the people, including a section of people who otherwise have nothing with which to buy anything. It is, moreover, the duty of the Government to provide these people with money to satisfy not merely their minimum wants, but also to enable them to attain to a higher standard of living and enjoy the citizenship that other people more fortunately circumstanced are enjoying. When a Government is faced with that position it would be futile to act on the orthodox principles of business, as hon. members in this House and men outside ask them to do. Such critics say the Government should reduce taxation and allow the money to remain in the hands of the people who control industry, quite forgetting the social responsibility of industry to the people.

Apart from any difference of opinion on that plane, when we consider whether a certain set of principles should be applied to a State we, of necessity, judge them by their results. After all, the welfare of the people is the test; and, one cannot consider their welfare without looking at unemployment figures, basic-wage figures and cost-of-living figures. We find, then, that the unemployment figure in Queensland is the lowest of all the States with the exception of Western Australia. Our official publications also tell us that Queensland has the lowest cost of living and the highest basic wage. The figures, indeed, provide a striking contrast. They show that the Brisbane cost-of-living index figure for December, 1936, was 828, the lowest of all the States, and the actual basic wage was £3 18s., the highest of all the States. Those figures speak volumes for the efficacy of the methods adopted in this State. It is not so much larger banking accounts of companies and individuals or the favoured positions of a few that is to be aimed at as the welfare of the people generally. Instead of the dissent of the Opposition, those in control of the State richly deserve their

commendation for the policy they have carried out. After all, the Government are operating under a system that does not encourage Government expenditure as a general rule. In the face of the prevailing financial difficulties I believe that the Government have done exceedingly well.

The general complaint about relief work is directed at the unemployment relief tax. Hon. members opposite ask if Queensland has the lowest unemployment figures, why does it maintain the highest unemployment relief tax? I think the answer is contained in the question. If we did not have a high taxation figure for the relief of unemployment we should have a large unemployment figure. When this State was faced with unemployment it had to create a fund in order to provide useful work for those men who were unemployed. Our high taxation figures are necessary in order to obtain the very low unemployment figures.

Hon. members opposite also complain that the money collected for the purpose of relief of unemployment should not be placed to the credit of consolidated revenue. The Unemployment Relief Fund in the first place was not a large one and it was incapable of providing a great amount of relief. In order to increase those benefits, an increased number of contributors was brought to strengthen the fund in such a way as to make it possible to devote it, with the help of other funds, to constructive industry. If a part of the Unemployment Relief Fund is combined with other moneys from loan funds in such a way that it employs men on constructive work, to some extent the difficulty is solved.

There are those who ask, "Why should not relief workers do constructive work?" If the question is looked at in the right light, it will be seen that to use relief workers on constructive work would make the relief scheme a permanent fixture. Once it was realised that permanent constructive work for the general advantage of the State was being done by relief workers it would be immediately regarded as an advantageous thing and treated as a permanency. The way the Government have attempted to solve the problem is by combining some of the Unemployment Relief Fund with loan funds and employing the total in general work. That has been done to a large extent. This was explained by the Premier on the Appropriation Bill the other day, and good results have accrued.

Hon. members opposite assert that the unemployment relief tax was introduced as an emergency measure and as such it should not remain any longer; that there is not an emergency any longer. I would remind hon. members opposite that many other measures introduced by Governments have had to be regarded in a different light in the course of time, to meet the changed conditions. But the Opposition are not alone in their view. We, too, think it is only an expedient to cope with an emergency and that is why we are striving to alter it, but if relief work were to be cut off immediately what would be the result? If relief work was abolished on Saturday afternoon what would be the position on the Monday morning? The State would be faced with an army of workers out of employment and with no hope of assistance either through sustenance or rations or any claim on any fund in Queensland. The policy suggested

by hon. members opposite is purely negative. It is impossible to cut out relief immediately. Such a course would also reduce the number of men on the pay rolls of industry and altogether create a volume of unemployment in this State that would simply have to be grappled with.

There is one feature of relief work, however, that should be considered. Before me I have the report from the Commonwealth Government Advisory Council on Nutrition, which states—

"There is no evidence of any general under-nourishment of the people, but Australians do not consume as much milk as would be physiologically beneficial especially for children and nursing mothers."

If it is true it is an important point and calls for a plan to overcome the difficulty. I suggest that an amount from the Unemployment Relief Fund could be credited to a fund to allow of milk's being delivered to the homes of relief workers in proportion to the numbers of their dependants. This would guarantee that each relief worker's family got milk and that the producers were paid for it. To some extent that would offset the under-nourishment and the baneful effects that may have occurred as the result of the depression, and will continue so long as we have relief work.

I propose to speak now on the subject of agricultural products. Some of my remarks may not be popular for I suggest that some arrangement be made by which primary industries such as meat and wool growing should be encouraged to contribute towards the dairying industry, which is languishing. After all, it is no use having a lop-sided revival of prosperity. The wool and meat industries are showing signs of revival; they have had considerable increases of output and their markets have improved. On the other hand the dairying industry has been seriously damaged by adverse climatic conditions. This disadvantage could be considerably off-set by a contribution of part of the surplus from this year's wool cheque. The following reports are an indication of the conditions in the meat and dairying industries:—

"The chairman of the Queensland Meat Industry Board (Mr. E. F. Sunners) has been advised by the Australian Meat Board that Great Britain has increased the Australian beef export quota for 1937 to slightly more than 2,300,000 cwt. The quota for this year has been gradually enlarged and recently the Australian Meat Board made a request, which has now been granted, that it be increased to 2,300,000 cwt."

"In 1936-37 the butter output was the lowest in this State for any year since 1929-30. Adverse seasonal conditions also affected production considerably in the other States."

Nobody can help that. The farmer himself cannot help it, and certainly the Government cannot help it. We could probably so control the advantages that have accrued to some industries as to offset the disadvantages suffered by the others. In the wool industry, floods will provide a whole year's grass and water. On the other hand, the dairying industry needs continuous good weather and rainfall spread throughout the

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year. That is a tall order, and it is becoming less and less likely as the years go by. It is necessary for us to survey all industries in the State to see to what extent we can help those that suffer from disabilities. I know that this suggestion is probably not the view of an expert. I am quite aware that practical men will pooh-pooh the idea. After all, we have given our experts a fairly good chance to develop their ideas, not only in the agricultural realm, but also in the economic realm, and they have left much still to be done towards the solution of our problems. Bad suggestions are sometimes not welcomed, but it is from bad suggestions that good ones flow. They stimulate inquiry.

We have at the present time no means of offsetting and controlling the effects of a drought. I met a leader of primary industry in the train the other day, and in reply to my proposal he said that much of the fault rests on the farmers themselves. That may be so. I suppose the remainder rests on the Government. But it is not much use trying to apportion the blame. The thing is to apply the remedy. We know that the farmer in favourable seasons is apt to let things drift. Indeed, this is a human weakness we all possess at times. We should encourage him to do things—force him to look after his own interests better than he does. We should, for example, go in for the compulsory growing of fodder. We all know that in bad times Queensland has to import fodder from the Southern States and take it at whatever figure the sellers like to charge for it. We never think, in good times, of the need for providing for bad times. When seasons are good we should be compelled to grow fodder.

I do not know the exact method to be adopted, but it occurs to me that the Government could acquire certain areas of land and by its officers see that each year a percentage of the acreage available for fodder was devoted to the growing of it. That fodder could be taken off the land and stored in depots in appropriate places in the Western pastoral areas and in the dairying areas. The Government could finance the scheme, and when fodder was needed in bad seasons ration it out to necessitous farmers. Fodder could thus be supplied at the beginning of a drought, and not at the end when stock had got in such a poor condition that they could not reap the fullest benefits from it. According to people who know, and who have made a living in industry, it is more beneficial to feed stock in the beginning of a drought than to realise the need for it later on, when the stock are weak.

That is one method by which we could solve the problem of drought relief. We could probably also develop other industries by undertaking a campaign such as the Premier told us of in regard to sugar. He said that if European countries consumed as much sugar as the British people there would probably be a shortage of 5,000,000 tons a year. I have not heard of any "Eat More Butter" campaign in this country. Butter is an essential food stuff, and it is impossible for us to exist without it and some of its allied products. People get accustomed to taking each week the quantity of a commodity they consider sufficient. If a campaign was carried through about butter along the lines of that suggested for

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milk there would be a greater demand for it and consequently a greater production.

I come now to the wheat industry. In 1935-36 220,000 acres of land yielded 4,076,000 bushels. In 1932-33 the same area gave only 2,490,000 bushels. In other words, nearly double the amount of wheat came from the same acreage of land. The explanation is the dry seasons. Cannot artificial means, such as fertilization and dry farming, be adopted in this country, as in other countries, to diminish the effect of unfavourable seasons?

If we cannot reach the ideal figure of 4,000,000 bushels in a good season, at least we should be able to mitigate losses and prevent the figure from falling to 2,500,000 bushels, the quantity produced during the dry season. It is said that the farmers themselves do not apply themselves to the subject as they should, and that they say, "In a good season we do not need these methods, and if we adopt them and the season is good our work goes for nothing." They forget that if they do not adopt those methods and the season is not good they are worse off than ever. The safer practice is to engage in dry farming to some extent so as to counteract the consequences of bad weather. The Department of Agriculture should encourage the people to adopt these methods and if necessary compel them to do so in their own interests. No one likes compulsion, but every citizen is more or less subject to it, and there is no reason why it should not be extended in the direction I have indicated, and so improve the lot of those concerned.

Mr. DEACON: They are doing it in Russia.

Mr. KANE: Compulsion is exercised in this country, too, as in all countries. Perhaps it is applied to a greater extent in Russia in the cultivation of the land because prior to the advent of the present system of control in that country the land was shockingly neglected. It was realised by the new controllers that the people there were not land-minded and that in the best interests of the country it was necessary that they should be encouraged to become land-minded so as to provide for their total requirements. But it does not follow that because the right thing is done in a country not otherwise admired it is wrong to do it in this country. I believe that the disinclination to adopt the methods that I am suggesting is shared by the hon. member for Cunningham, an expert farmer, whose views, perhaps, are reflected throughout the industry, and so there have been no voluntary efforts in this direction. I do not think it would be wrong for the Department of Agriculture and Stock, on behalf of the Government, to undertake a campaign in an endeavour to encourage the farmers, in their own interests, to adopt dry farming and other means of combating adverse seasons.

Mr. DEACON: Would you shoot a few of them?

Mr. KANE: That remark is typical of the ridiculousness of the statements made by the hon. member from time to time. He hates anyone else to embark upon a discussion of the problems affecting primary industries. He has been a primary producer all his life, but he denies to me the right to study and speak on those subjects because I have not been a farmer myself. That is a very poor and very narrow view for any farmer to take. I always thought that the

man on the land took the wide view, that only the horizon was the limit of his vision, that he gazed at the cloudless sky, the broad acres of the countryside with its waving green crops, with a mind expanded and a soul that was unhampered and a mind that developed. Now we find him taking the childish, kindergarten view of a big and important industry.

It has been said by our opponents that industries have not developed to the same extent in this State as in other States, but I make bold to say that the progress in secondary industries has not been less in this State than in other States. The other States were well established with a big population and important industries before Queensland was able to develop, and it should be remembered that this State was handicapped to some extent because of its vast area and the lack of a big population to create the very welcome home market. The same cannot be said of New South Wales and Victoria, but the progress in this State from the point when a comparison may reasonably be made has not been less than that in the other States. Our progress has been just as good as theirs. It is all very well for people to discuss this subject without giving attention to underlying causes, and those that fail to do so are prompted only by political partisanship. They are not prepared to consider the subject as true Queenslanders. Our rate of progress has not been slower. It is quite understandable that Brisbane cannot have steel works like those in Newcastle or ship-building yards like those in Sydney. The natural facilities for those undertakings are not available to us here, but there is no doubt that if they were similar industries would have been established here. A complaint that amounted almost to a moan came from the Opposition benches yesterday, when one hon. member said, "I bought machinery from the South, and it is disgraceful to think that I had to do so." He failed to explain that the people in the South who helped to make this machinery bought the product that his machinery helped to produce. He also failed to point out that this interchange of goods made for the healthy growth of trade and thus helped to develop commerce between this and other countries. So that it is not a terrible disability to find that he had to purchase machinery from the South. As a matter of fact, the Toowoomba Foundry Company sends machinery all over Australia, and Western Australia is one of its best markets for windmills and other implements. Therefore, his remark is but little proof that industries in this State have not developed.

We probably could reach an ideal position by shifting the manufacturing industries of Ipswich to Toowoomba, which is mostly a primary-producing centre, and combining the two industries. We thus should enlarge Toowoomba exceedingly at the expense of Ipswich. It would not benefit Queensland one iota to bring about such a combination of industries that the Opposition believe we are ruining; the Opposition fail to look at the general advantage to the State in order to apply the real test of our administration. We could not shift the primary industries in the Toowoomba district to Ipswich, but we could take the railway workshops and woollen mills at Ipswich to Toowoomba, but what advantage would accrue to the people as a whole if that was done? Queensland ships

its raw sugar to the South to be refined, but at the same time protects her State rights by seeing to it that the beet sugar interests are not developed to our disadvantage. In that way we supply the wants of the Southern States and so the spirit of reciprocal trade is preserved. The only alternative is to construct an economic wall round each State, virtually saying, "You have got all you want and we have got all we want." That policy could be extended to the trade between Australia and European countries, and reach that degree of economic nationalism that is feared by all the world. We can proceed too far along the road of little nationalism, even in our States.

Despite what may be said in political campaigns and what the newspapers may say in seconding the efforts of the Opposition, the "Courier-Mail" recently produced cogent figures to show the advance Queensland has made in secondary industries. It disclosed that the gross value of Queensland factory output per head of their population was—

				£	s.	d.
1932	...	...	...	42	17	11
1936	...	...	...	49	0	8
Increase				...	...	6 2 9

The "Courier-Mail" also disclosed that the average weekly expenditure in Queensland factories in 1935-36 was £786,324, and that the average weekly wages in Queensland factories in 1935-36 was £171,288. These figures speak for themselves. They show distinct increases despite the conditions industry was in in 1934, immediately following on the big depression. One hon. member carried his comparisons back to 1892, but the figures quoted exhibit that in the period I quote—and the "Courier-Mail" is big enough to admit it—the Government's administration has been such as to cause a great improvement in secondary industry.

The "Courier-Mail" also paid this glowing tribute to the condition of our factories—

"Factory owners in four years put 3½ millions additional capital into their enterprises. They built new factories and enlarged others; they installed the latest machinery; they improved their technique. By these means they provided 9,329 more situations for operatives and increased the yearly distribution of wages by £2.2 millions, also raising the average standard of pay."

It proceeded to say—

"All those concerned in the operation and development of the secondary industries of Queensland are worthy of both congratulation and commendation. They are public assets, which means, that they merit public support."

I do not wish to take away credit from those people who by their business ability, energy and training, and the expenditure of their capital have brought about that position of affairs, but I do not wish them to take from the Government the credit that is due to them for wise administration and wisely keeping a tight hand on expenditure, whilst, at the same time protecting industry socially and otherwise. A true test of business progress is bank clearances. They cover all sections—manufactures and distributing, and rural industries. It is by this means that we are able to judge that the people have been brought to a state of comparative prosperity.

Mr. Kane.]

The hon. member for Aubigny complained that subsidy-loan money from the Unemployment Relief Fund had been forced on the Aubigny Shire Council. He seemed to discount the advantage obtained by shires in having access to that money. Right alongside Toowoomba in my electorate is the Highfields shire of the electorate of Aubigny, which is sharing in this particular benefit. The farmers in that area have not been able to pay their way, consequently the revenue of the shire has dropped so heavily that recently the council has been endeavouring to make arrangements to reduce the overdraft to comply with the Local Government Act, which provides new methods of finance commencing this year. Therefore, some shires have not been able to do any real work from their own resources, and the only real work they can do is by means of subsidy-loans. These have enabled good roads to be constructed in farming areas, which we all know are necessary in the interests of production to give access to markets. Bitumen roads are finding their way into the Highfields shire merely because of the subsidy-loan policy of the Government. Ratepayers in that division have written letters expressing their gratitude for the assistance rendered in this direction by the Treasury.

Mr. MOORE: Are they not paying the tax?

Mr. KANE: Of course they are. The hon. member for Aubigny has said that it is not right to force the money on the shires. The scheme that was placed before the shires met with their approval and they have eagerly accepted every penny the Government were able to give them, because they needed it for developmental work. Some people think the only way to help the farmer is to place money in a bank account for him. That would not be a permanent solution of the problem. It is essential to do something to enable the farmer to bring his industry to such a state of efficiency that there will be no necessity for him to get into debt with the bank. It has also been suggested that the only way to help the pastoral industry is to reduce the debts of landholders. I have also suggested that irrigation be undertaken on the Downs, although it is an unsuitable area. If it could be done, it would be a permanent and practical help. The Government have helped country towns to install sewerage works to the value of £2,000,000, yet hon. members opposite have the temerity to say we are doing nothing for the country. They still say we should give the farmer money. That would be a negative and destructive way of helping him. The Government do not believe in an antiquated method of finance that would enrich the individual, but are adopting a method that will do the best for the people as a whole. It is an experiment in the search for new solutions of old problems. So long as the Government continue the policy of distributing its available money amongst the people, they will continue to receive their support and attract their admiration, and as a supporter I shall continue to be very proud of them.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [11.20 a.m.]: I support the amendment of censure moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It is rather humorous and very regrettable to hear hon. members of the Government rising one after the other to apologise for their administration. After five years in office all they can

do is to tell the House how impossible it is to carry on.

The hon. member who just resumed his seat has put forward some startling suggestions. I do not know how the woolgrowers will view the suggestion that when they have a prosperous year they should hand out some of their funds for the benefit of the wheatgrowers and dairymen. I do not know how the dairymen will take the suggestion that the Government should compel them to grow certain crops to be stored for fodder in drought times. Then the hon. member talks of dry farming. The majority of the farmers on the Darling Downs had to go in for dry farming to get any crops. Years ago one could go to Oakey and other places on the Downs and find the wheat crops were a failure. It was through dry farming methods that the wheatgrowers there have succeeded. The farmers contend there is no safer crop than wheat—they get a crop almost every year—but it is only by dry farming that they have been able to do so.

After five years of office all the Government have done is to increase the public debt tremendously and add to the interest bill. We have very little tangible proof of any return to prosperity. The very heavy burden of taxation placed on industry is preventing any forward move in our secondary industries. The other day the Premier said that he must have the whole of the Unemployment Relief Fund, plus £3,000,000 loan money, in order to keep people in employment. That may be a great scheme for the ordinary working man; but the method of taking from those who do the employing will bring about its own destruction. It will eventually bring us to straight-out Socialism. If this policy is persisted in it will mean a further increase in taxation, until the Government will be the sole employer of labour. Since the Government assumed office in 1931-32 income tax collections have increased by £696,103. The super land tax took £110,000 from the people last year, and the increased railway fares and freights amounted to £325,000. Motor transport fees increased by £61,103 and the unemployment relief tax by £1,404,993. Since that Government assumed office the total additional amount taken from the pockets of the people amounts to £2,597,193 yearly. Industry cannot carry on with this huge burden of taxation reducing the spending power of the people. Of course such an increase in taxation has made for a buoyant revenue, but how does it actually affect the people? These figures show the result—

	Taxable income.	Tax assessed.
	£	£
1931-32 ...	17,681,860	1,491,489
1935-36 ...	17,677,000	2,187,592

They indicate a smaller taxable income but an increase of taxation collected of £696,000.

Mr. WALSH: Due to an alteration of assessment.

Mr. NIMMO: That can only account for a very small amount. However, notwithstanding that argument, the money has been taken from the people and not left in their own hands to spend. While on this subject I point to some of the incidences of taxation that are injuring industry very seriously. For instance, take a company working with a small capital of £8,000. In an endeavour

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to make the industry safe a reserve fund is created of £2,000 which is invested in Commonwealth loans. When arriving at the rate of tax the Commissioner of Taxes allows that company a capital of only £6,000, and, consequently, a much higher rate of taxation is attracted than would otherwise be the case.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is all that is in the business.

Mr. NIMMO: A company that is not creating some reserves and so caring for the future of its employees is not doing the right thing. However, I mention this only in passing to show how the higher rates of taxation are applied—I was going to say "sharp practice," but I will not do so, but will say by carrying out the strict letter of the law.

Crown fees throughout the State have been considerably increased since the advent of this Government. To-day the working man when he buys a piece of ground finds that to get his deeds he has to pay excessive charges. The Government have very nearly doubled the fees for all such things. The other day a man went to register a trade name. He was told that the fees were doubled. All these increases have to be borne by the people and reduce their spending power, which in turn reduces employment. The poorer people have to disgorge every penny they can get hold of. Everyone realises that this huge burden of taxation will create further unemployment. Naturally the people have less to spend, industry receives less, and consequently has less from which to purchase machinery. Industry is frightened away from the State by the heavy taxation being levied on it.

Mr. JESSON: Tell us one instance.

Mr. NIMMO: I have here a letter from Messrs. J. B. Were, the largest stock and share brokers in Australia, and incidentally the brokers who really find money for the Brisbane City Council. The letter is dated as late as twentieth of this month and reads—

"A pertinent remark by the chairman of the Queensland National Bank at an annual meeting was that taxation was impeding the inflow into Queensland of capital essential for expansion and development. Queensland taxation certainly ranks higher than any other in the Commonwealth, but at this season of income tax payments the general feeling would be that it impedes the inflow of capital anywhere, except to the Commissioner. A comparison of rates of taxation paid by companies shows that Victoria is the lightest with a flat rate of 1s. 10.75d. and no unemployment tax, ranging up to Queensland's maximum rate of 5s. 3d., plus 20 per cent., plus unemployment tax of 11d. These charges, of course, are per £1 of taxable income."

I think that effectively answers the interjection of the hon. member.

The time is ripe for the Government to do something of a progressive nature that will encourage people to establish industries in this State. We can manufacture goods here. We have the workpeople and the raw materials, but nothing is done by the Government to encourage the expansion of existing industries and attract new ones. Some time ago I made a suggestion to the Premier that we should have an officer in the South

whose duty it would be to meet people who came to Australia with a view to establishing an industry, and lay before them the advantages they would derive by coming to this State.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: So there are advantages to be gained by coming to Queensland!

Mr. NIMMO: Yes, except the heavy taxation. With a change of Government I contend that a progressive reduction could be made in taxation. Industries coming here would employ many hundreds of people, and it is the duty of a Government when an entirely new industry is about to establish itself here to give the people concerned great privileges in order to enable them to do so. A prospectus of a company for the manufacture of carpets in Australia was published the other day. Surely the best place for that industry would be Queensland, even Brisbane.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why?

Mr. NIMMO: Because we produce beautiful wool and flax here, we have the coal supply and a wonderful climate. In fact, every facility is here, and encouragement should be given by the Government to entice an industry here. There are areas of land around Brisbane that could be acquired at negligible cost. People who think of establishing a new industry should be told of these facts by the Government. The Government should say, "Yes, taxation is high, but we will give you exemption from taxation for five years so that you may establish your industry." New industries would mean the employment of a considerable number of people.

Nothing along the lines I have suggested has been done by the Government. All the Government think of is the spending of borrowed money, while they can get it—keeping men in temporary employment with no security. They say, "If you do not vote for the Labour Party the borrowing policy will stop and you will be out of employment." That is altogether wrong. There is no statesmanship in that policy, and no possibility of eventually alleviating the trouble that besets the State.

I think hon. members recognise that it is best to employ people in the manufacturing industries. Twenty years ago we had a population of 670,000 people, and we had 42,000 factory employees. To-day, when we have a population of 970,000, we have only 44,000 factory employees. The population has increased by 50 per cent., but the number of factory employees has only increased by 6 per cent. Surely there is something wrong! It is remarkable that that period of twenty years coincides with Labour administration in this State.

No one can deny that with proper encouragement industry will flourish. Two industries have been fostered by the present Government in every way. I refer to beer and gambling. We can see the results of the encouragement given to those industries by this Government. The beer industry is right at the top of the market, and gambling is sapping the morale of the people. Gambling is encouraged at every street corner, and "Bingo" is taking the workmen's "few bob." "Golden Caskets" are running every week, and business people recognise that the money spent in "Casket" tickets should go towards the purchase of the ordinary

Mr. Nimmo.]

necessaries of life. These are facts. I admit that we have some industries in the State, but the capital and savings of the people are going out of the State to encourage industries in other States. Supposing a man walked into a stock and sharebroker's office in Brisbane and said, "I have £500 I want to invest"—

Mr. WATERS: Do you mean gamble?

Mr. NIMMO: I said invest.

Mr. WATERS: What is the difference between investing and gambling?

Mr. NIMMO: The sharebroker would say, "What about Broken Hill Proprietary or Mittons, the silverware people in Victoria?" The investor would ask, "Is there nothing in Queensland for me to invest my money in?" The reply would be, "No. I can put you on to the City Electric Light Company. That is a very good investment, but the Government have an axe hanging over the head of the company and there might be a doubt about your capital. You could go into the Brisbane Gas Company, but the Government have an axe hanging over that company, too. There might be some doubt as to your capital in that company." The broker mentions that other companies are not progressing and that the companies in the South perhaps offer greater attractions, with the result that the investor turns his attention there. I speak very feelingly on this subject because I am satisfied that we shall have to encourage big capital issues for the development of industry here, but before we can hope for success we must take every step to make their capital secure so that it will earn a reasonable return. Hornbrook Highway Limited was floated mainly on Victorian capital, but the debentures, for which the Victorian people paid £1 each, are selling to-day for 14s. and 14s. 6d. The company is paying 4½ per cent. on the debentures, so why should they be on sale at a discount? It is because taxation in Queensland is taking the gilt off the gingerbread and the people concerned are anxious to get their money out so as to put it into something solid in the Southern States. These are very regrettable facts to have to state to-day, but the Government will have to take heed and reduce taxation, otherwise we are heading straight for disaster.

When the Prime Minister visited Queensland he quoted figures to show the growth of new industries in Australia during the past five years. Exception was taken to them by the Premier, but the more he kicks, and the more he complains that they are not true, the better he makes the case for Mr. Lyons, and the more he confirms the contention that industry has progressed in the other States under the stable Commonwealth Nationalist Government. These figures show the increase in the number of employees in new manufacturing industries—

New South Wales	...	14,479
Victoria	...	6,623
Queensland	...	32
South Australia	...	1,941
Western Australia	...	126
Tasmania	...	99

Mr. Lyons expressed regret that the figures had not been more evenly distributed and that the biggest proportion of the increase had taken place in Victoria and New South Wales alone.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: He admitted that it was only a limited survey of the position.

[Mr. Nimmo.

Mr. NIMMO: It was only a limited survey, but it sums up the position pretty accurately.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: It suits you.

Mr. NIMMO: It does not suit me at all. The manufacturers in this State were asked to fill in a form giving the information, and if the survey was not exhaustive enough could not Mr. Lyons have used the figures to give a more glowing account for his own particular purpose? As I have said, the figures sum up the position fairly accurately. I know that people are leaving this State to seek employment in New South Wales. That is well known to hon. members opposite, too. They know that employment can be obtained fairly easily in the South. Quite a number of people have left my electorate and have obtained employment in Newcastle, good solid employment, too. They have been engaged by private enterprise, and their employment is not of a temporary nature such as working on a building for a short time and then being compelled to run to a member of Parliament to get another job when that is finished.

Mr. TAYLOR: Give us the particulars concerning the number of people who have left your electorate and have got good solid employment in Newcastle.

Mr. NIMMO: I am not trying to disparage our State in any way.

Mr. HILTON: You are doing it.

Mr. NIMMO: I am criticising the Government. If they had any sense they would adopt a policy contrary to the one that they have pursued during the past five years. They must discuss this matter in their caucus. They must say amongst themselves, "The position does not look too good; we shall have to effect some economies. We shall have to alter certain things that are wrong." The Premier must tell them that to-day, after five years in office. They have spent a lot of loan money, approximating £15,000,000, yet the State is no more productive than before they spent it. It is true that they have improved the conditions of life for some of us by extending the sewerage system and things like that, but the expenditure of that money has not added £1 to the productivity of the State.

I should like to refer briefly to the treatment meted out by the Government to the unemployed. There is no doubt that they have not treated them as they should be treated. The Government contend that they have tackled the problem of unemployment so successfully that to-day it is almost non-existent, but the people who are still unemployed and can look for an income only from unemployment relief schemes are paid less than the amount paid to an old-age pensioner and his wife, who, I understand, get 19s. a week each. The relief worker is worse off, and when one takes into consideration the increased cost of living, his wage to-day is less than that paid under the Moore regime.

Mr. TAYLOR: Finish your statement. You said that an old-age pensioner and his wife got 19s. a week each.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: We must admit that the cost of living has gone up.

Mr. TAYLOR again interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Enoggera to obey my call to order. He must know he has no right to interrupt a speaker and that he must obey my call to order.

Mr. NIMMO: I think it was the hon. member for Brisbane who said he hated to think that a son receiving the basic wage living at home with his parents should be the means of debarring his father from participating in relief work. We have worse cases than that. Recently I had a case where a son, twenty years of age, got a job at the basic wage. His father was supporting his wife and three younger children on relief work. He was promptly notified that this relief work must cease because the basic wage was coming into the home. I interviewed the Minister in regard to this case and he told me nothing could be done while the son lived at home, the inference being that if he left home and lived in a tent or another place, his father would be eligible for relief work again. The hon. member for Brisbane referred to these cases recently and said he regretted that nothing could be done to alter the position. We all know that when Government members were on the hustings they promised men engaged on relief work that the Government would pay them the full basic wage.

Mr. KEUGH: For the work they did.

Mr. NIMMO: They were told that they would be paid the basic wage. I could quote from speeches delivered by the Secretary for Labour and Industry and you, Mr. Speaker, in which it was said that the full basic wage would be paid for relief work.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will not take advantage of my occupancy of the chair to make inaccurate statements concerning me.

Mr. NIMMO: I will not pursue that line of argument, but I still contend that the inference to be drawn from speeches delivered by present members of the Government party when sitting in opposition was that the full basic wage would be paid, and no reference was made to the time worked. Hon. members opposite can wriggle and squeal in order to try to evade that conclusion, but there can be no questioning of the fact that the men engaged on relief work inferred from the statements made on the floor of this House that they would be paid not merely the basic wage, but, as the hon. member for Aubigny reminds me, the weekly basic wage.

The hon. member for Rockhampton was fulsome in his apologies because the Government could not help the unemployed any further, and endeavoured to prove that unemployment was a national problem, but when he was on the hustings in Rockhampton he claimed that if his party were returned to power they would bring sunshine and happiness into the homes of those people who were unfortunately unemployed by creating full-time employment for them. Yet, after five years' occupancy of the Treasury benches we have witnessed demonstrations by unemployed outside the Belle Vue Hotel, opposite Parliament House, clamouring for greater benefits and improved conditions. I do not suppose that such a demonstration has occurred in any other State in Australia within the last two years.

To my mind, the treatment of unemployed in this State is almost inhuman. I have

in my possession a letter that denies to a man earning a few shillings a week the right to do relief work. That letter was written by a Labour Government. As a matter of fact, many things that have been done by the present Labour Government have almost driven men like myself to Communism. We feel for the man who is unable to help himself. Here is a letter I received the other day from the Relief Ration Branch, Department of Labour and Industry—

“Recently inquiries were made into your case. You are assisting a man named Woods on a fruit run, and you have declared to the investigating officer that your earnings range from 5s. to 8s. per week.

“I am continuing you on ration assistance up to week ended 31st July, 1937, when assistance to you will cease, as it is not intended to subsidise the business of fruit hawking.”

I cite this case to show that when these unfortunate people get a little bit of work they are immediately deprived of work under the intermittent relief scheme, and told they must go on rations. I previously quoted in this House a case in which a woman, whose husband was out of work, got 17s. 6d. a week for cleaning a school, and the husband was immediately informed that he would not be entitled to any further intermittent relief work, as a regular income was coming into his house, and he must go on rations. The Government virtually told that man that he must sit on his veranda while his wife went to work.

The Government have lost the confidence of the people, and although there is no hope of the amendments being carried, Government members must realise their responsibility, they must perceive that the path they have been pursuing is leading to direct Socialism, and unless they change their methods we shall have the spectacle of every employee being a supporter of the Government. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [11.48 a.m.]: I rise to support the amendment. There are one hundred and one reasons why the Government should not have the confidence of the people. I appreciate the fact that during the time they have been in power a severe drought occurred, as during the period their predecessors were in office, and it required a great deal of thought to overcome the difficulties confronting them, but their work has been made easier by the loan money made available through the Loan Council, in regard to which, by the way, much good work was done by the ex-Premier, the hon. member for Aubigny.

Listening to the Premier the other day one would imagine that he brought a new era into existence at the Loan Council, but the fact is there was very little alteration in the policy of that Council. The increase in the loan money coming into the State has resulted in a false buoyancy. The public debt is being increased to an alarming extent and there must be a breaking point. As responsible citizens we must draw attention to the fact there is a limit to the burden the country can carry. If our population were increasing at such a rate that the repayment of our public debt would be easier in the future it would be a different matter, but migrants are coming here in very small numbers and with our low birth rate it will

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be a long time before we reach the figure that will make it easy for the country to carry even the present burden of public debt.

I listened with amusement to the remarks of the hon. member for East Toowoomba. He made some astounding statements. I give the hon. member credit for devoting considerable thought to the preparation of his speech, but his energy like that of other persons who have never been on the land, was misdirected. If the hon. member could read other works besides those on the wheat industry he would realise that his suggestions were quite unpractical—in other words, they were silly—and could never be put into operation.

The hon. member said that during the time the Moore Government were in power there was depression on account of the lack of circulation of currency, but he forgot to say that our national income went down by £200 000 000. The hon. member gave us to understand that there was no alteration in the national income. The trouble that afflicted Queensland at that time was common to every country in the world. The drop in our national income was brought about by the fall in trade and the tightness of money. For those reasons the Premiers' Plan was proposed by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Scullin. The economies agreed upon at the conference of the Prime Minister and Premiers were carried out by every Government in Australia. Hon. members opposite are well aware of the fact that they were proposed by Mr. Scullin, who is a very conscientious man with a great love of his country, and who played the game. He realised that there was no alternative but to economise. There is not the slightest doubt that the action of the Moore Government during that depression period saved Queensland from going broke. If we had carried out a policy on the lines advocated by the hon. member for East Toowoomba this morning we should have been alongside Mr. Lang. Where did his actions lead to? He caused untold misery in New South Wales. Numbers of people lost their money. Speculators came in and bought at ridiculous prices and made big profits.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba also suggested that the wheat and meat industries should contribute towards the dairying industry when the dairyman was having a bad time. Imagine men of such independence of character as the farmers sitting down and allowing other industries to support them! You, Mr. Speaker, and other western members who have taken a great deal of interest in the wool industry can realise the absurdity of the suggestion when you remember that a few years ago the depression hit us so hard that the graziers did not earn enough to become liable for income tax.

Mr. KANE: I am glad I disturbed you.

Mr. WALKER: The meat industry dovetails with the dairying industry, and it has been passing through the same conditions.

Mr. KANE: No.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member says, "No," but that only emphasises the lack of knowledge that he displayed this morning. The meat industry is interlocked and dovetailed with the dairying industry. One has only to look at the sources of the exhibits at the Brisbane Exhibition to see that the two industries are dovetailed and find con-

clusive evidence that the adverse climatic conditions treated them alike.

The hon. member asks that the grazier, who has gone through a period of torture during the last few years, shall contribute help to the dairying industry because the latter has gone through a drought period. They are both sections of the cattle industry. It is only because there is no grazing property in his electorate that he put forward such a suggestion.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba also propounded the idea of compelling the farmer to conserve fodder. Can anybody imagine such a thing—compelling him to do something that he knows perfectly well is the right thing to do but cannot do because of lack of finance? The Agricultural Bank and other banks were used to endeavour to help him in this respect, but no man knows better than the farmer himself whether he can shoulder such a responsibility or not. Another factor that must be taken into consideration, but would be overlooked by a layman, is that some of our greatest dairying land will grow only grass. Yet the hon. member suggests that the dairyman should be compelled to grow some other fodder that cannot be grown.

Mr. KANE: Not at all.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member would compel him to do something that cannot be done.

Mr. KANE: That is silly.

Mr. WALKER: All these things make very pretty reading in the paper and such things may be possible in Russia where natural conditions are different, but they cannot be done here. It is a question of Government policy whether primary producers should be helped by being compelled to do certain things. Just imagine a practical farmer, the backbone of Australia, being advised in his work by a Government official, probably one whose only knowledge of agricultural produce has been obtained at an agricultural college! Fancy the farmer being compelled by such a man to do a particular thing! The only thing farmers want at present is no compulsion at all. For instance, owing to the attack made by the Opposition on the dairying regulations brought forward by the Government the other day, the regulations have not been brought into force.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba also mentioned the growing of wheat on the Darling Downs. Why, the Darling Downs has grown wheat for the last fifty or sixty years. If the hon. member knew anything at all about the business he would know that the Darling Downs does not require fertilizer. Under normal conditions growth is so great there that it requires no fertilizer to produce a crop. Coming now to the question of dry farming—

Mr. KANE interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for East Toowoomba must cease his interruption—

Mr. KANE: I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. WALKER: We have continued to advocate dry farming in Australia, and the Department of Agriculture and Stock has carried out research work on experimental crops continually since wheat has been grown on the Darling Downs. At one time it was

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thought that farmers could launch out in dry farming, but it was found that this could not be done. Dry farming can never be put into force at the present time, and when the hon. member quoted Russia—

Mr. KANE: I didn't.

Mr. WALKER: He did.

Mr. KANE: Your colleague quoted Russia.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member quoted Russia.

Mr. KANE: I rise to a point of order. I did speak on Russia, owing to an interjection by an hon. member of the Opposition. I think it was the hon. member for Cunningham. I then replied by referring to Russia, too.

Mr. WALKER: I accept the denial of the hon. member, but he certainly said "Russia." At all events, I will quote Russia. It is the greatest wheat-producing country in the world and would probably be able to meet the world's requirements.

I pass now to the want of business knowledge and acumen shown by the present Government. In the list of proposed measures enumerated in the Lieutenant-Governor's speech, there is none that has for its object the relief of unemployment, or will assist it in any way. There are a few agricultural Bills, an Electricity Bill, and a few others, but they will not put men on the land. I will give the Government a few practical suggestions and see if they can put them into force.

In the first place, I should like to see some protection given to the farmer in a direction I mentioned to the Premier a little time ago. I also had a letter written to the Department of Justice to which I have received no reply although the matter is one that should receive urgent consideration and be made the subject of legislation at once. Take the question of a man in the country engaging with an agent for the purchase of machinery. The farmer does not know the character or standing of the agent. He may buy £200 worth, paying £100 down and giving promissory notes over twelve months for the payment of the balance. The agent assigns those promissory notes to some banking institution, and so ties them up. The farmer, after hearing that a fraud has been perpetrated upon him, cannot recover his deposit money and can get no redress whatever because the promissory notes have been assigned. I am of the opinion that legislation should be brought in to protect a farmer in such a case. Deposits and promissory notes so given should be placed into a trust account so that in the event of trouble they may be returned to the farmer. I wrote to the Premier concerning this matter some twelve months ago, but nothing has been done.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That is a matter the co-operative organisations should attend to.

Mr. WALKER: What is the good of dragging in such organisations? Surely other men require machinery besides the dairy farmers. The wheatgrower and the maize-grower require it, and when they buy it under the conditions I describe they have no protection. I know a case not many miles away from the hon. member's electorate where a man lost £200 by dealing with a man of straw. The farmer thought the

man was reputable, but he was so shrewd that he out-talked the farmer.

There was a good deal of discussion last session about certain dairy regulations. I should like to refer to the following clause in those regulations:—

"All levy stamps, receipt forms, license forms, and/or any form which, in the opinion of the Auditor-General, is a money form, shall be obtained from the Government Printer, who shall submit for the approval of the Auditor-General all requisitions for such levy stamps and money forms before printing or supplying the same."

I ask, is it a fair thing to compel a co-operative concern requiring receipts or dockets of any description to send to the Government Printer for supplies? The Government is taking away from private enterprise something it is entitled to. Hon. members may shake their head. Let me tell them that members of the Opposition will certainly take this question up because the country Press needs protection. Look at what the country Press agencies do for us! It is not a question of profit, but a question of getting certain news and putting that news into print for the benefit of the subscribers. A lot of this silly interference should be cut out. We do not want to be compelled to do these things. We want to be left alone. It is unfortunate that that regulation was not disallowed by Parliament.

Mr. JESSON: Do you not think it right to have a uniform form?

Mr. WALKER: I refer the hon. member to the regulation itself.

I should also like to refer to the recent referendum held in Australia. We heard hon. members opposite give advice as to what the farmer should do. They said, "Let us stick together in Queensland and march forward hand in hand. We are convinced that the proposal is a good thing for the primary producer." What took place? The Premier delivered a speech in the City Hall—and not a very convincing speech at that. It was somewhat hostile, one not intended to convince the electors here, with the result that the rest of his party fled and were never heard of again during the whole of the campaign, with the exception of perhaps one or two. When I invited hon. members opposite to join me on the platform in a certain electorate they distinctly told me that they were not allowed to do so, which shows conclusively that some arrangement had been come to before the campaign was launched. There are only about a dozen hon. members on this side of the House, but during that campaign we travelled throughout Queensland and we were so successful that in Wide Bay we obtained an affirmative vote. That proved conclusively that if hon. members opposite had helped the farmers we might have had an affirmative vote throughout the State, but unfortunately the big organisation against us operated so successfully throughout the Commonwealth that we did not get a fair "go" at all. The result was that the people were misled. They anxiously sought for information, but when they saw that the Labour Party did not throw its weight in behind the Country Party, as it promised to do, they concluded that there was some joke behind it, and the result was an adverse vote in Queensland. More shame to hon. members

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opposite! They have continually urged that we should support the Sugar Agreement, but when we asked them to help us to win the battle for organised marketing on behalf of the dairymen and other primary producers they sat down. Apart from the speech delivered by the Premier in the City Hall, I do not think that a speech was delivered by hon. members opposite in the metropolitan area. What a deplorable state of affairs, especially when there was the understanding that all political parties would stick together and fight the battle shoulder to shoulder!

I think it will be admitted by everybody, and especially by the man on the land, that the farmers are called upon to furnish too many returns to the Government. It is almost beyond the capacity of the ordinary layman and even members of Parliament associated with the land to furnish income tax returns in a proper way, and so there is growing up in our midst an army of professional men who undertake to prepare them. A farmer would be very lucky if he got his return prepared for less than £2 2s. In some cases the charge is as high as £10 10s. and £12 12s. The time has arrived when the Government should consider the simplification of these forms. There are too many forms to be returned. We have to fill in Form "A" and then forms with half a dozen other letters and we do not know where we are. At times I have to seek advice myself, although I am a member of Parliament and take part in the debates in this House concerning these very subjects.

Much has been said concerning income tax and unemployment relief tax, and reference has also been made to the income earned by the man on the land. I have obtained the figures from two big dairy companies in Queensland showing the average dairy farmer's return during 1936-37. At factory No. 1, the average return for cream was £208 gross, or £258 gross if the value of pigs is added. In the case of No. 2 factory the figures are £177 and £227 respectively. Can anyone here contend that that is a fair return to the man on the land, especially when the capital value of his farm is in the vicinity of £1,500 to £2,000? The figure of £2,000 would be nearer the mark. It is only right that he should be allowed to earn 4 per cent. on his capital, plus the cost of living. Out of that he has to pay taxation. I wish to draw the attention of the House particularly to these small amounts and to stress the fact that they were earned under so-called stabilised conditions. The man on the land is under-paid, but at the same time other workers, such as public servants, members of Parliament and others, are clamouring for more and more salary. Is it any wonder that there is discontent? An increase in the basic wage was granted a few months ago, but shortly afterwards the people who enjoyed it asked for a further increase. A reduction in the weekly working hours was granted to other people and still they wanted a further reduction.

Mr. COLLINS: Your party has said that they are not getting enough.

Mr. WALKER: The small man is not getting enough, but all that you have done since you have been a member of Parliament has been to support a Government that has increased the salaries of Under Secretaries by large amounts. The Moore

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Government have been described as wage-slashers, but you have slashed the wages of some of the public servants during the last five years.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope that the hon. member will address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. WALKER: Naturally, I get a little heated at times, but the more heated I get the more sincere I become, and the time has come when we members of Parliament must be more sincere.

Every section of the people is grasping for something, mainly for shorter hours and bigger wages. That agitation has been created by erroneous Press reports and speeches of their leaders. We have no right to create erroneous impressions. Last year we had the spectacle of hon. members increasing their own salaries, which was an incentive to workers to agitate to achieve the same purpose. Hon. members proclaimed that the depression was non-existent, and men engaged in industry naturally accepted their statement. Then we had the spectacle of hon. members joy-riding all over the country, and to other parts of the world, and the purchase of expensive motor cars. In the face of these happenings one cannot blame the underpaid for wanting more money, but where is all this going to take us? I have quoted figures showing that the gross earnings of a certain class of farmer are £3 10s. a week. We must remember that from this amount he must finance his home as well as pay his many taxes. In the face of this we have wages increasing and hours decreasing. That policy will get the State nowhere. The city dweller may receive a wage concession, which will probably enable him to live in more comfort, but it naturally follows that he must pay more for his food. We can only overcome the difficulty by placing all classes of workers on the same footing and giving them all an increase. This is a matter that requires careful study, because the increase in our secondary industries is not in keeping with the increased production of wealth from the land. I know that our income last year was greater, owing principally to increases in the prices for wool and sugar because the market was buoyant, but we must not forget that increased costs lead to dearer food and higher prices generally, so that manufacturers cannot compete with the output of Southern factories. The hon. member for East Toowoomba spoke of reciprocal trade, but how can we engage in reciprocal trade when production costs are much cheaper in the Southern States than Queensland? Retailers in this State will not stock locally manufactured goods when they can import the same article cheaper.

Our revenue last year increased by £1,800,000, principally owing to the increased price for wool. If the price of wool is not sustained depression must again overcome the West, and if such a depression is followed by drought, as it was recently, much of our land will remain unstocked. One of our biggest problems at the present time is the depletion of stock on some of our north-western lands. We want all our grazing lands stocked to their full capacity. That would be economic administration of the right sort. It is not economic administration to transfer £490,000 from the Unemployment Relief Fund and £250,000 from the Main Roads Fund to balance the Budget.

Those transfers materially assisted the Treasurer to bring about the present budgetary position, which is misleading to everyone concerned.

Other States have given relief in taxation amounting to £16,000,000 sterling. They have also given relief in the unemployment relief tax. Something must be done in that direction in Queensland. I have an idea, and I am satisfied it is a good one, on the question of land settlement. I am with the Minister in saying that there is not as much good land in Queensland available for settlement as some people would lead us to believe, but some of our inferior land is capable of being put to good use. Take our tobacco industry, to which the hon. members for Warrego and Rockhampton alluded. Will any one tell me that the tobacco-growing industry cannot be extended? The men now engaged in the tobacco-growing industry began in 1930.

Mr. COLLINS: The Lyons Government crucified the tobacco industry.

Mr. WALKER: I cannot hear the hon. member. Queensland produces tobacco leaf of a very fine quality. We can double our tobacco production without any great effort. The question of good land does not arise when we talk of extending this industry, and the Government could launch a scheme to settle 500 persons at tobacco growing and make them really prosperous, first giving them enough help from the Unemployment Relief Fund to become established. I venture to say that they would become a prosperous settlement within twelve months. I base my remarks on the experience gained by the settlement of the first twenty-six tobacco growers in the Mareeba district. They are prosperous people in that area to-day. The following year we launched out on a big scheme, and those men, too, are successful farmers to-day. I venture to say that with a price of 48d. a lb. for the best tobacco that industry offers possibilities that are unequalled in any other industry.

Mr. COLLINS: What proportion of the crop brings 48d. a lb.?

Mr. WALKER: Reference was made to approximately 48d. a lb. All I can say is it is a good price, and if it prevails those engaged in the industry have nothing to fear.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What proportion of it is sold at 48d. a lb.?

Mr. WALKER: The same proportion as any other primary product on the market. I realise that climatic conditions have a considerable effect on the quality of the tobacco. We should have but one object, that is, to produce the best. I realise that the percentage is not as high as 100 per cent. first cure. It may be 50 per cent. first cure, but with the aid of the experts from the Department of Agriculture and Stock we should be able to achieve 80 per cent. first cure.

People are quibbling about the excise duty on tobacco. I point out that there is encouragement for the manufacturer to use Australian tobacco. It has been stated that the tobacco grower is paying the excise, but that is not the case. The man who is making it, the manufacturer, pays the excise. He obtains a reduction in excise if he uses 13 per cent. of Australian leaf in the manufacture of his tobacco. We should continue our efforts to stimulate the industry till produc-

tion is increased by 50 per cent., because at the present time we are only supplying 25 per cent. of Australia's requirements. There is no reason why the Government should not select from amongst the unemployed 500 of the most suitable men for farming—and there are many good men amongst them who would welcome the opportunity to go on the land—and make land available for them for the production of tobacco. Our production would be so increased by this method that it would obviate the necessity of importing American or West African tobacco, which is produced by black labour at a cost of about 8d. a lb.

I listened attentively to the able speech of the hon. member for Warrego yesterday. I realise that the hon. member had an object in view—as we all have at times—when he made certain remarks. He made reference to the Farmers' Assistance (Debts Adjustment) Fund. I agree with his statement that £20,000,000 was set aside for that purpose by the Commonwealth Government, but I maintain that Queensland has got her share. She has got more than she can spend.

Mr. WALSH: There was not £20,000,000.

Mr. WALKER: At all events, there was a considerable sum. The amount does not alter the force of my argument. Queensland has more of that fund than she can spend. If any blame attaches to anyone it is to the State Government for not having brought forward legislation to bring Crown debts within the scope of the scheme. The Crown has not given one penny of reduction in Crown debts, whereas the butcher, the baker, and grocer have agreed to a reduction of as much as 50 per cent. in the amounts owing to them by various farmers in order that the debts may be pooled and the Act complied with. I say, "Shame on the Government." If the Government honestly desired to help the man on the land, then they would make provision for the composition of Crown debts. When the first Bill was introduced they did not include the Crown, and then they got over the difficulty by including the Crown, but they got over that difficulty in turn by not subscribing towards the liquidation of that amount.

Mr. COLLINS: They do subscribe towards it.

Mr. WALKER: Well, then, all I can say is that the question asked by an hon. member on this side of the House the other day must have been answered wrongly. The Commonwealth money is available, but the State has not used it.

The hon. member for Warrego made reference to the effect on the wool industry of the duties imposed at the instance of Sir Henry Gullett. We know that the Commonwealth Government were negotiating with Japan in regard not only to wool, but also other matters seriously affecting Australia. It was a question of protecting Australian manufacturers. The Commonwealth Government had enough backbone to put Japan in her place.

It is said that we lost the value of the wool that was not sold to Japan, but that is not so, inasmuch as other countries bought a greater quantity of our crop. From the returns it appears that England took over 100,000 bales in 1936-37 more than in 1935-36. Was it not better to have the wool milled in England than in Japan?

As for the cotton industry's being ruined by the black labour of India, it must not be forgotten that this is a new industry, and the

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drought is the reason for the small output of 9,000 bales. Otherwise the production could have been 15,000 bales. The greatest menace to our cotton industry comes from Japan, which can put cotton goods on the Australian market at a lower price than the cost of sending the Queensland yarn south. When all is said and done the cotton industry has received no help from the State Government. Certainly the Government have sent a few experts into the cotton-growing districts to endeavour to combat diseases, and credit must be given the Government for that, but financially the Government have not assisted. The Commonwealth Government paid £70,000 to the cotton growers in the form of a bounty, a fact that proves conclusively that they did go out of their way to help the cotton growers. I venture to say it is only a question of time when, with a little encouragement, we shall be able to supply the whole of the requirements of the Australian mills. And remember that in Australia we can only consume about 25,000 bales, and naturally no more would be required because the goods could not be exported. So far as the cotton industry is concerned, we have done remarkably well.

An hon. member also made the statement that the Commonwealth Government did not grant financial assistance for various pools unless the accounts were guaranteed by the State. The action of the Commonwealth Government was quite right. The peanut and wheat pools had all to be guaranteed by the State Government. That is good banking. It is idle to say that the Commonwealth Bank has slipped in this direction. The Commonwealth Bank insisted on such guarantees during Mr. Scullin's term of office.

In the relief of unemployment cotton and tobacco growing offer good possibilities. Something should be done to encourage some of our unemployed to go into these industries. If I were a young man and in need of employment or wanted to change my occupation I should launch out into tobacco growing, knowing full well that I should make a decent living out of it. Certainly, the fact that young men are on relief work proves conclusively that they have no money to launch out in these directions, and I suggest that such of them as show any aptitude for the work should be financed. With judicious handling £200 would do. It could be expended on improvements on the land and buying the first necessary equipment, and financing them for the time being. In a comparatively brief period Queensland would have 500 men in these industries prosperous enough to say good-bye to poverty. The same remarks apply to cotton growing, but it will be found that more finance is required there. The cost of picking has gone up. These are two directions in which something could be done by the Government. It is no use sitting down and endeavouring to reduce the number of unemployed by mystical means. The only method adopted by the Government is to spend borrowed money on huge public works such as the Stanley River Dam, the Story Bridge, and the Mackay Harbour. Goodness knows where such a policy will lead! Those three projects will prove the three biggest failures in Queensland.

Mr. MULLER (*Fassifern*) [12.29 p.m.]: I rise to support the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I regret it was necessary for the hon. gentleman to submit it.

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I cannot subscribe to the contentions of hon. members opposite. An attempt has been made by them to prove that the financial position of Queensland is remarkably better. That is not so. From practical experience we are of opinion that the State is getting deeper and deeper into the mire. The law of economics can no more be altered than can the law of gravitation. The legislation under which we are living to-day proves conclusively that unemployment will and must continue to increase.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why is it decreasing?

Mr. MULLER: I disagree with the hon. member. I claim that the figures submitted by the "Economic News" are more and more disregarded by the people of Queensland. My regard for them is becoming nil. It is absurd for the Government Statistician to claim that our unemployment has been reduced from 23.6 per cent. to 6 per cent., when the Government are collecting record sums of money to relieve unemployment, and have spent during the year something like £3,100,000. It is difficult to reconcile those two things. How on earth is it possible to claim successfully that unemployment is being relieved when we tax the community to a greater extent each year to get enough money for our unemployment relief work? The Government have transferred to consolidated revenue amounts of £407,000 and £260,000—money collected for an entirely different purpose from that to which it is being put—with the idea of relieving the unemployment position. It has not improved things one iota. One would have to be blind, deaf and dumb to believe that the unemployment problem has been relieved. Let each hon. member go into the matter in his own electorate. I challenge every hon. member opposite to make an investigation in his own electorate, and inquire from his own local authority as to the facts. It will be found that the number of unemployed has increased very considerably during the past five years.

At 12.32 p.m.,

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

Mr. O'KEEFE: I say, no. I can speak so far as the Cairns district is concerned.

Mr. MULLER: My statement applies to the whole of the State. The Beaudesert shire has almost doubled its number of unemployed. I have here a newspaper article, dated 16th June, referring to the position so far as the Ipswich City Council is concerned—

"Substantial increases which have occurred in the past twelve months in Ipswich and Moreton shire relief employment figures are attributed almost exclusively to an influx of jobless men attracted by the possibilities of work on the municipal sewerage scheme. In a year the number has risen by approximately 300 though business and industry in the city have shown an increase in staffs in that time.

"The rate of the rise is illustrated by the following figures relating to relief workers under the supervision of the City Council—

	Married.	Single.	Total.
13/6/36 ...	309	312	621
12/12/36 ...	352	349	701
12/6/37 ...	399	405	804

"In Moreton shire the total has risen from 420 to 500 since the beginning of this year.

"Between the two councils the weekly pay to the relief workers now is over £1,500."

That statement shows a progressive increase all along the line, and it reflects the position throughout the State of Queensland. Can anyone argue that the position is becoming better? I am one of those who refuse to accept the statement that the percentage of unemployment has fallen from 23.6 per cent. to 6 per cent. If you tell yourself a story often enough you begin to believe it. That is actually what is happening with the Government. During the past twelve months the Government have spent about £4,000,000 of loan money and over £3,000,000 of unemployment relief money, yet we see greater unemployment than ever. There must be a reason for that.

No one will argue, in view of the changed conditions during the past year or two, that some recovery should not have taken place. There has been general recovery in the other States, and there must be some reason why Queensland has not shown some recovery during the past twelve months. It is expected that the Commonwealth Government will be able to reduce their public debt by £10,000,000 during their term of office, but Queensland is sinking deeper and deeper into the mire every day. The primary producer in this State is in a worse plight than ever, and there must be some reason for it. We have a State with an area eight times the size of Victoria, and we have a population of nearly 1,000,000. Surely it is possible to bring about the same ratio of recovery as there has been in Victoria and New South Wales?

Mr. JESSON: How do you account for the increased number of motor cars in farming areas?

Mr. MULLER: It does not follow that because a farmer has a motor car it is paid for. There are other people besides farmers who have motor cars. I know that statistics disclose that only 8 per cent. of the farms in Queensland are actually owned by the farmers engaged upon them. There must be some reason why that unsatisfactory financial position should continue. I want to stress the fact that we cannot hope to improve conditions by taking money from the community for one purpose and transferring it to another purpose. If the Government are going to administer the affairs of the State along those lines the position will not be improved one iota.

It was contended by hon. members opposite that the community are not over-taxed, but I disagree with that contention. The manufacturing industries in Australia are expected to operate in accordance with Australian industrial conditions, but they are compelled to sell in competition with industries in other parts of the world. The question was asked a few moments ago: what had the Government done to improve the lot of the primary producer? When the Premier spoke during this debate he assured the House that it was the policy of the Government to provide work and wages for all, but we know that the wages are available only if a person can get a job. Nothing has been done to improve the position of the

primary producer. He is in a more desperate plight than ever before in the history of farming in this State. This morning I received a letter—it is just one of similar letters that we receive from time to time—in which the writer complained of the desperate plight of himself and his family and said that he had received no help from the Government. The fact that a man is a farmer should not condemn him as a criminal, nevertheless we find that the Government mete out one form of treatment to the industrial worker and another form to the unfortunate individual who happens to be tied to a farm. The writer refers to the fact that he has been refused sustenance by the Government, except in the form of a loan. I shall read one or two paragraphs from the letter so that hon. members opposite may know just what is happening outside. I do not want to use the letter for the purpose of party-politics.

The PREMIER: Oh, no. Perish the thought!

Mr. MULLER: Now that the Premier has come into the Chamber I will read what this writer has to say. He says—

"I always voted Labour all my life, but now, if anyone mentions Labour I feel like giving him a punch on the jaw. The letter I sent to the 'Telegraph' not half of my comments are printed. I give you now one part of it, it may be some use to you in bringing it before the Minister or on the floor of the House.

"After waiting ten days Mr. M. P. Hynes, Department of Labour and Industry, granted me rations for twelve weeks (and here comes the rub) at 9s. a week, just enough for bread. It might be that Mr. M. P. Hynes drew the attention of his department to a statement by the Deputy Price Fixing Commissioner. The position actually is that the index number covering the cost of food, groceries, and rent is now lower than it was at the time of the basic wage hearing in March."

He goes on to say—

"He also could give data for the basic wage court when it sat, seeing that I should keep six persons in food for 9s. a week, the basic wage should be 10s. a week."

Mr. MULLER: How is it possible?

Mr. POWER: Who signed the letter?

Mr. MULLER: I will give the hon. member the name of the writer. It is signed by a man named Kistowski. (Government laughter.) It is most unfair for Government hon. members to cast reflections on a man's nationality. Mr. Kistowski is a good British subject.

Mr. POWER: He is not naturalised.

Mr. MULLER: He is naturalised and is an honest man, and up to the last twelve months has been a great advocate of the policy of Labour. He is one of those unfortunates nailed to a farm. This is the first intimation I have received that he has changed his politics.

Hon. members opposite interjected that there was no poverty in North Queensland. I myself have seen settlers in North Queensland settled on the land under similar conditions. I never saw such poverty as I saw there.

Mr. O'KEEFE: You never said that to the Press before you left Cairns.

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Mr. MULLER I am not referring to those remarks, but to those people who have been settled on the land.

The PREMIER: Lay that letter on the table of the House so that we may have a look at it.

Mr. MULLER: I will give the hon. gentleman the letter if he wishes to have a look at it.

I will give the House another instance of the disability suffered by people on the land. The Department of Public Lands opened an area to settlement in North Queensland, but before doing so took every stick of timber off it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true.

Mr. MULLER: I disagree with the Minister. I was there on the land and saw it. I will give the House my word of honour that every settler going on that land has selected it on almost impossible conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true, either.

Mr. MULLER: I know it is true. It is almost impossible to convince the Minister, but I am prepared to go with him to the locality and show him. I have been there; the Minister has not been there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have lived there.

Mr. MULLER: The hon. gentleman knows the remarks I am making are perfectly true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not true.

Mr. MULLER: These selectors have first to cut down a dense scrub, and by the time they have done that and grassed their land they are almost destitute. I have given the House two or three instances of the unfortunate position of our settlers, and such conditions are general. In order to show that I am not using the parish rump I shall quote a statement made at a recent conference of the Queens and Council of Agriculture. I know this statement to be true, as I was present listening to the discussion. The statement was made by Mr. W. E. Ashford, Western Downs. The incident is reported in the "Telegraph" thus—

"When the Queensland Council of Agriculture discussed what were termed injustices under which it was said farmers and their sons were suffering, through the administration of unemployment relief, Mr. W. E. Ashford (Western Downs) said he was going to issue a warning—a very serious warning—that there were ominous rumblings, that there was discontent and dissatisfaction, and that there were already men working with the ulterior motive of causing disruption. There was a body which was advocating militancy, he said, and a branch which was formerly an L.P.A. was following that body.

"The meeting carried the resolution that in the opinion of the conference farmers' sons, whether living at home or elsewhere, and, in extreme cases, farmers themselves, should be eligible for relief work. In the event of farmers being in destitute circumstances and needing relief, it was asked that rations should be supplied on the same conditions as in the case of other workers.

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"The scheme as carried out by the present Government was such, said Mr. Ashford, that the farmers were not allowed to sell their labour and earn an honest living. Not only were the farmers and their sons, but also other placid workers of the farmers were seething with uncertainty and active discontent at the outrageous injustice that was being carried out. He was expressing the feeling that it was going to cause a lot of trouble in Queensland if not alleviated.

"Speakers contended that there should not be any difference between the man on the land and the industrial worker. One speaker asked, 'What is the good of a man's farm to him when he is destitute?'"

I had no desire to refer to these cases at length until my word was doubted. Those are the conditions generally of the man on the land throughout Queensland.

If it is the policy of the Government to improve the position by providing work and wages for the people, as the Premier has been boasting during the last few years, we must first improve our primary industries. If not, all the people in the State will be in financial difficulties. We cannot camouflage the issue. The people are becoming sick of that sort of thing. They know that the prospect to-day is not nearly so bright and rosy as the Government and their supporters have attempted to make out. The question was raised whether it was advisable to take money from the Unemployment Relief Fund and transfer it to the account that was used to subsidise local authorities. After all, a close examination of the position discloses that that money is still used for the purpose of relieving unemployment, but the money is not spent as efficiently as if it were used to give real work at real wages.

Mr. MULLER: I have a case in point. A council within 50 miles of Brisbane a few weeks ago refused to ask for a loan and subsidy. They preferred to ask for a straightout loan on the ground that on account of inefficiency caused through the conditions that governed the loan and subsidy they lost more than they saved in subsidy. These men must know their job. They are not a pack of fools.

The PREMIER: What council was that?

Mr. MULLER: The Beenleigh council. That council preferred to have a straightout loan rather than a loan and subsidy.

The PREMIER: They never told me that.

Mr. MULLER: They told me that. I suggested they ask for a loan and subsidy, and they said they did not require it, they preferred to ask for a straightout loan.

The PREMIER: It was probably for work for which subsidy was not available.

At 12.51 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. MULLER: That was not the position. They understand the position as well as the Premier or I. They preferred to apply for a straightout loan rather than a loan and subsidy, which would bind them to certain conditions.

I often wonder whether hon. members opposite realise the favourable position we

are placed in because of the magnitude of our primary industries compared with those in the other States. First of all, about half the total number of cattle in Australia are in Queensland. That industry and the industries handling its by-products provide work for thousands of our people. Take our tanneries and our leather manufactories. A perusal of the "Queensland Year Book" discloses that for the year ended June, 1936, we imported from Victoria £586,000 worth of footwear, for the manufacture of which almost the whole of the raw material was drawn from Queensland. The hon. member for East Toowoomba endeavoured to convince the House that it was good to encourage these industries in the Southern States because it would result in increased consumption of our products. If that policy was carried to its logical conclusion it would result in the elimination of secondary industries in Queensland.

The Premier has repeatedly told us—and I thoroughly agree with his remark—

Mr. JESSON: What about our sugar?

Mr. MULLER: The hon. member will be sorry when he hears the story about sugar. The Premier has told us repeatedly that after all our local market is our best market. I quite agree. It is essential for us to encourage our secondary industries in order to create a home consumption. If we fail to do that we encourage consumption in the Southern States, which is slightly better than sending our goods overseas. The hon. member for Kennedy interjected "What about sugar?" We have a virtual monopoly of sugar. We grow enough for the requirements of the whole of Australia.

The PREMIER: More than that.

Mr. MULLER: We are the greatest exporters of all the States of dairy products, which are the means of bringing more money to Queensland. The same applies to the wool industry. We also have the cotton industry and the timber industry. We have those natural advantages, which should enable us to carry a population of 5,000,000 instead of 1,000,000; but with 1,000,000 people in this huge area of country we find many of our people are without a job.

Mr. TAYLOR: How much of that area is arid country?

Mr. MULLER: Almost the whole of it is adaptable to some purpose or other. The areas on the coast are mostly used for general agriculture.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Would you say the dairying industry ought to employ double the number of producers?

Mr. MULLER: Definitely it could if it were given a chance. But what assistance do we get from the Government?

The PREMIER: Do you say the Government have never assisted the dairying industry?

Mr. MULLER: Yes, and I will tell you why they have not. Immediately we launched a campaign to try to secure an affirmative vote to the referendum you yourself after one meeting in the Town Hall dropped your bundle.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: You are not only inaccurate in your statement but you are offensive in your speech.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Fassifern must address the Chair.

Mr. MULLER: I am sorry but I have been sidetracked by hon. members opposite and I could not help being drawn into that little discussion.

The PREMIER: Your party did more to damage that referendum than anything else.

Mr. MULLER: I was referring to the help we received when conducting the campaign in support of the referendum. The members of the Government gave very little help. In the Ipswich district the Secretary for Public Instruction addressed two or three meetings in the farming area where he knew the proposal would be met favourably, but in these centres of population where the hon. gentleman's help was needed he refrained from addressing meetings. The Government have not given any sympathetic consideration to the primary producer, who is taxed in a number of ways.

Another burden that has been placed on manufacturers during the last year or so and prevented secondary industries from expanding is the Coal Board regulations. A few weeks since I read with interest a Press report of the remarks of the chairman of the Brisbane Gas Company. He indicated that the expenses of that company were increased by £10,000 because it was harassed and hampered by restrictions placed upon it by the regulations of the Central Coal Board. The supply of coal to secondary industries is a very serious matter. I have an intimate knowledge of what is going on in my own district. The board will not allow industry to buy coal when and where it likes. Despite repeated complaints industries are compelled in a great many cases to take supplies of coal that are not suitable for their purpose. The result is that costs are doubled—I am speaking of co-operative associations—these costs are passed on to the primary producers. Why should this interference be persisted in? At one time supplies of coal could be obtained when and from where one liked. We require a coal that is suitable for our purpose, but to-day we are not permitted to buy that coal but have to take the supply allotted by the board. In a great many instances it is not suitable for the purpose. I do not say that it is inferior in quality but it does not suit the purpose. Such things are affecting our primary industries and in turn also the secondary industries.

Mr. DUNSTAN: The coal industry was dead before that.

Mr. MULLER: The coal industry is being strangled. In the Ipswich district we find more than half of the men in the coal industry have lost their employment. In a great many instances industries are being compelled to import fuel for motive power for their machinery, such as crude oil.

Our secondary industries will require some form of assistance if they are to progress. To a large number of people the Kangaroo Point bridge is regarded as being very good for political purposes. We are told that it will cost £2,000,000. In the Press I notice that the hon. member for Dalby claimed that this money could have been expended to greater advantage had it been spent in the country. I agree that if a similar amount of money had been spent in the country you could probably have built five irrigation schemes of reasonable size. These would be reproductive, and would

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return compound interest added. I venture to say that every £1 in cash put into water conservation would remain a lasting asset, and would have the effect of creating permanent employment, the real problem we are faced with to-day. I was disappointed to see no mention made of water conservation in the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor. I felt confident that an effort would be made by the Government to try at some form of water conservation and irrigation. The question, of course, is too big for the individual, but I believe it is one of the means by which the Government could create employment. I do not wish to criticise the construction of the Kangaroo Point bridge, other than to say that its construction could have been delayed until a later date. Had the money entailed in the cost of that bridge been invested in the country it would have brought money into circulation, created employment, and returned an immediate gain. I hope we shall have the opportunity of discussing the question of water conservation at a later stage in this session.

I want to stress the lack of interest the Government have shown in the creation of employment by their refusal to allow companies to build electricity transmission lines into country districts, and provide cheaper electric current for country residents. There has been, to my mind, a lack of sense of duty on the part of the Government in refusing to grant some of these companies the necessary Orders in Council to supply electric current to country areas. This failure on the part of the Government has imposed a severe penalty on the people residing in those districts. I have a case in mind where a company proposed to spend £30,000 in the building of 30 miles of transmission lines. That money would have been spent in something that would have relieved unemployment, but the Government withheld the franchise. The people who would have been affected by these transmission lines are compelled to pay 1s. a unit for current, whereas if the lines had been built they would be paying only 5d. a unit. I have another case in mind of a suggestion to build transmission lines to within 8 miles of a progressive township. Had the necessary Order in Council been issued those transmission lines would have been built at a cost of £1,000 a mile and the whole of the area served by them would have benefited by a reduced cost of current. I think that area is paying 1s. 5d. a unit for current, but, if the company had been allowed to supply it, they would have been receiving that power at 5d. a unit. I therefore claim that a great injustice has been done to country people. This is a matter that deserves the immediate attention of the Premier and the Cabinet. I notice from the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech that an Electricity Bill will be presented to this House. It is imperative that something should be done.

I was previously endeavouring to describe the plight of the farmer under existing circumstances. We are trying to tide over a very difficult period. At the present time, if he is without some means of irrigation, the farmer has to haul water from the creeks; and if he has a plant the cost of power is so great as to make its operation almost prohibitive. Unless something is done the Government will have the countryside form-

ing deputations asking for assistance in this connection.

Recently figures compiled by the Department of Commerce covering a survey of our primary and secondary industries were made available by the Prime Minister, but when the matter was mentioned in this House one hon. member opposite interjected that Mr. Lyons had crucified the tobacco industry. Mr. Lyons has rendered a greater service to the country than that. He may have crucified the present State Government. The Premier had objected to Mr. Lyons's survey on the ground that it covers only part of the field, but I remind him that the further the investigation is carried the more the present Administration in Queensland are shown up in an unfavourable light. When the history of Queensland is written it will be found that the Government at least have collected record taxation and disbursed record expenditure, and I am sure they will be dismissed by the people at the next election. I cannot imagine any Government's continuing to receive the support of the electors unless they do something to relieve unemployment. It is one that we have to face, whether we be members of the Government or of the Opposition, and it is the duty of the Government to sit up and take notice of the points that we have made. We all realise its seriousness. We all agree that it is the duty of the Government to provide work and wages for everybody. The onus is on us to care for our youth, for example. What are we to do with the boys and girls who leave school each year? Unless we are prepared to start at the root of our troubles by stabilising the primary industries and assisting secondary industries, unemployment is going to increase, and before very long as many people will be engaged on relief work as there are in permanent employment. Two years ago I uttered the warning that unless something was done to stop this retrogression eventually only 50 per cent. of our people would be employed and that they would be called upon to pay taxation to enable the other 50 per cent. to be maintained. That is a serious matter, not only from the point of view of the loss of income but also the destruction of the morale of the people. One hon. member said the other day that the present system only encouraged laziness. It is true that there are people who are willing to loaf on others, and so it is our duty to stop the rot before it is too late. We have a wonderful heritage, and I am confident that with sound legislation in the interests not only of one class but of all and sundry, we can put the State back on a sound basis again.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. A. Cooper, *Bremser*) [2.9 p.m.]: I should not have spoken at this juncture had I not happened to catch the statement by the hon. member for Fassfern that the Assistant Treasurer had not addressed meetings in industrial centres during the referendum campaign in connection with the marketing proposals, and had only addressed meetings in agricultural centres. I admit the truth of half the statement, that I addressed meetings in agricultural centres, and I did that by invitation. I went out of my own electorate because the people in outside centres asked me to do so, and I admit that in asking me to do that they paid me the compliment of saying that I could put the case very well in favour of the referendum proposals, and I did that to the

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best of my ability. I should like to remind the hon. member for Fassifern, however, that there is such a thing as truth, and that the late Christopher Morley told us that truth was not a diet, that it was only a condiment. I regard that as a very wise saying, but it pains me to think that the hon. member for Fassifern does not indulge even in the condiment. Another very learned man told us that truth was a very deep sea, a profound sea. If that is so, then I am afraid that the hon. member for Fassifern does not even paddle on the edge. One needs to go deep, particularly when one wishes to give the real position to the electors in the country and when one has to have regard to what really has happened and what will be the actual result. We decide to do certain things so that we may get a yield, and if the yield is satisfactory we are satisfied. I know that there are people who regard the truth as a sort of a cow. When the yield is good they stick to the cow, but when the yield falls off they decide to milk the bull. If the hon. member for Fassifern has no knowledge of truth I am sorry for him.

The hon. member for Fassifern went out of his way to make that remark about me. In justice to myself I should say that during the referendum campaign I addressed a large number of meetings. I addressed meetings in the following centres:—Brassall, within a mile of the Ipswich workshops, the residents of which are mostly industrial workers in the Ipswich workshops; North Ipswich—the railway workshops happen to be in the heart of North Ipswich, and as we know the residents are chiefly employed there; Bundamba, Booval, Di more, Redbank, and Mount Crosby, all of which are industrial centres.

Mr. MULLER: Did you speak in Ipswich?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Are they not Ipswich? If not, in the name of fortune what are they? Brassall is an industrial centre within the city of Ipswich. Bundamba, Dimmore, Booval, Redbank, are also industrial centres in the Bremer electorate, which is an industrial area, but because I did not stand on the particular stump the hon. member stood upon, and because I did not happen to be in the particularly favourable circumstances in which he spoke, he criticises me, I did not speak in Ipswich. The hon. member for Fassifern spoke in the heart of his own people at Boonah. I had a distinct recollection of his saying at the outset of his remarks, "It is with intense pain that I view the lack of interest in this referendum, particularly in the agricultural areas." After making that remark at his own meeting at Boonah, he attempts to blame me for a lack of interest in the referendum in my electorate. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. The interest I took in the issue was not only active but appreciated. On many occasions I was told that I had changed the views of many people.

There was something else that the hon. member for Fassifern should remember. Although he spoke of this subject there is the old saw, which I think was given to us by Goethe, that says—

"Actions speak louder than words."

Now, just for a moment let me review the actions of the hon. member. For many years the people of this State have been educated in many directions. We have educated them in the broadening of their outlook. We have

educated them by making them quicker on the uptake. We have educated them also in the use of their hands; in the use of their eyes, and the use of their physical attainments. We have also educated them in the matter of taste. I suppose no State, and no Government have done more than the Labour Government in Queensland to educate the taste of the people in this State in all those directions, as well in literary taste as in the actual taste when the tongue comes in touch with the palate, and there is something between the tongue and the palate.

Mr. MAHER: You have given most of them a nasty taste.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have not the slightest doubt that the Leader of the Opposition has a nasty taste in his mouth. (Laughter.) I believe, too, that very many people who have seen his methods have been left with a nasty taste in their mouths, but I do not want to pursue that question further. I was about to say that we have educated the people of this State to acquire a taste for butter. If there is one thing that the people have learned to like it is a good, rich-flavoured butter. There are certain people in various parts of the world, who, I understand, can taste various brands of whisky and say this one is this and that is something else, and if you give them something that is not up to the standard, they exclaim, "That is the stuff I wash my teeth with." The people are educated in matters of the palate, and we have educated the people of Queensland in the taste of butter. For years and years we have built up this taste. Speaking for myself I like the Jacaranda brand; I do not like the Kingston brand, although some people tell me they like the Kingston brand better than the Jacaranda brand. Therefore, there are people who have been educated up to the Kingston taste, but I have been educated to the Jacaranda taste, although Gympie people tell me that their butter is the finest flavoured and of the best texture in the world. Kilkivan people tell me something similar. I do not know which is the best, but all I know is that we have all a good taste for butter.

Mr. MULLER: You don't know one from the other.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I know the Jacaranda brand, but I know that just before this referendum when we were trying to convince the people of Queensland of the wisdom of agreeing to the referendum question, and when the action of the Government in giving primary producers the right to form boards and pools to operate for the benefit of producers had awakened other States to a similar desire, the hon. member for Fassifern and his cohorts attempted to do something to interfere with the taste of the people of Queensland. They began to blend butter and attempted to hold it up to the people of Queensland, who had acquired a taste for particular kinds of butter, as the butter they ought to eat.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Your Government gave them the power to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Somebody put the axe into George Washington's hand. Of course, the hon. member saw no axe of power in their hands. Perhaps we did. We were probably deluded into believing they were decent, ordinary, common-sense citizens—the best of

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us make mistakes. We should be foolish if we said that we never made a mistake. This board had the opportunity of convincing the people—particularly the people of Brisbane—that they were good, sound, common-sense people who could be entrusted with this work of bettering the primary producers' business. What did they do? They attempted to foist on to the people a conglomeration they called butter—blended, welded, mixed—I do not know what they called it. All I know is that it was revolting to the taste of most of the people of Brisbane and of the people who came in contact with it. Those people said, "If this is the sort of thing the butter boards are going to do for us, if this is what is going to come if we carry the referendum proposals, then my vote is 'No.'"

The hon. member for Fassifern spoke to the people of Boonah and urged them with all his might and main to give a "Yes" vote. But actions speak louder than words and by his actions he asked the people of the metropolitan area to do the other thing and to take notice of what those industrial controllers would do if they were given the opportunity of controlling the butter industry. That is answer enough to the hon. member in that particular instance.

Mr. MULLER: They did not blend butter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That makes it worse and worse. If they did not blend butter one simply does not know what they did.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Department of Agriculture and Stock started it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Blame the Department of Agriculture and Stock! I think it is known in polite circles as "passing the buck." The hon. member is attempting to pass it now.

There is one other matter I wish to mention in order to draw further attention to the inconsistency of the hon. member for Fassifern. The hon. member said the Government were not doing the right thing by not allowing an extension of electricity supplies to various parts of the State, thereby enabling the farmer to get cheaper electricity and do much good work. I refer the hon. member to the columns of the "Queensland Times" and the Brisbane "Courier-Mail" published during show week, in which he will see a big advertisement setting out that the local electricity company that had a supply carried through not to Darra, not to Sunnybank, not to Sandgate, but right up to Gatton, enabled potatoes to be grown by means of the electricity supply provided by that company, thus enabling Mr. Logan to obtain the special prize in the potato section at the Brisbane Exhibition.

Mr. MULLER: Why don't you let everybody get it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member complained that what they get is dear and then he says "Why don't you let everybody get it?" The hon. member is connected with the co-operative society that owns the butter factory at Boonah, which supplies the local town of Boonah with its electricity.

Mr. MULLER: At too high a cost.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member says "At too high a cost." If the hon. member wants

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it extended all over Queensland, if he believes in the supply of electricity to the country by one big electricity authority, let him say so. Let the hon. member advocate such a Government scheme.

Mr. MULLER: We do not want a Government scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member only wants what he thinks will serve his own ends. All I can say is that in the matter of extension of electricity this Government have opened up a good service throughout the State that was never given before. They have given opportunities for the use of electricity and are now doing a work that will show to the country that there is an opportunity that would not have been given had hon. members opposite been in power in this State.

I have no fear that this amendment will be added to the resolution, for various reasons. After all, truth will prevail; and none of the blandishments that have been uttered by the Opposition could convince the person who was most willing to be convinced that the case they have put forward is the correct one. The people know that no State in the Commonwealth has progressed as Queensland has progressed since 1932. No State had such leeway to make up. No State had to do what this State had to do. It had to make up a fearful leeway. It has made that up and it now stands in the forefront of the States. And if one more proof is required, it is that Queensland is the only State that shows a decent improvement in population. Within the next week or two Queensland will have reached the point of having 1,000,000 regular residents within her boundaries. No doubt there are over 1,000,000 people in Queensland to-day if one counts Southern tourists, but as I have stated we shall shortly reach the 1,000,000-citizen mark.

Mr. MAHER: Can we not do something for the millionth because we are not doing too much for some of those already here?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The fact that people are coming to Queensland from other States and other parts of the world is ample evidence that there are opportunities for them in this State.

The PREMIER: If the Opposition were in power there would be nobody remaining in the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is true. They are continually crying that Queensland is a doleful place, with no opportunities, and right on the verge of bankruptcy. Hon. members opposite are for ever adopting the policy of crying "stinking fish." They are the people who are despoiling their own nests. But they will find that the people of Queensland know better, and are utterly tired of the cry, "Wolf, wolf," that has come from the Opposition benches since 1932.

The time spent on this debate has been well spent. It is not waste of time. Time occupied in exposing a fallacy is always time well spent. The period occupied by this House in exposing the fallacy of hon. members opposite is all to the good. The good sense of hon. members will defeat the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Question—"That the paragraph proposed to be added (*Mr. Maher's amendment*) be so added"—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 13.

Mr. Bell	Mr. Moore
" Brand	" Morgan
" Clayton	" Walker
" Daniel	
" Deacon	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Edwards	" Muller
" Maher	" Nimmo
" Maxwell	

NOES, 39.

Mr. Brassington	Mr. Hislop
" Brown	" Hynes
" Bruce	" Jesson
" Bulcock	" Keogh
" Clark	" Larcombe
" Collins	" Mann
" Conroy	" Mullan
" Cooper	" O'Keefe
" Copley, W. J.	" Pease
" Dash	" Power
" Demaine	" Riordan
" Donnelly	" Smith
" Dunstan	" Walsh
" Foley	" Waters
" Gair	" Williams, H.
" Gledson	" Williams, T. L.
" Hanlon	
" Hanson	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hayes	" Duggan
" Healy	" Kane
" Hilton	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Plunkett	Mr. King
" Nicklin	" McLean
" Russell	" Taylor

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS (*Port Curtis*) [2.33 p.m.]: I should like to add to those of previous speakers my quota of congratulations to both the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. We have in the mover age and youth; age in years and association with the Labour movement and youth in time in this House.

Reading through the speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir James Blair, one sees reference to the visit—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that those hon. members who wish to indulge in loud conversation should take the opportunity of going to some of the rooms set apart for that purpose. This Chamber is certainly not the place for it.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: As I was saying, in looking through the Address delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor, one sees reference to the visit of our Premier overseas. I desire to say something with regard to that visit. I want, in common with people in Queensland generally, and particularly members on this side of the House, to congratulate the Premier on the success of his mission. It is generally recognised that his visit will prove of considerable benefit not merely to the sugar interests in this State, but to the State generally. It is recognised that in his recent visit and in his previous visits the Premier has served his State well.

Commenting on his visit overseas, the "Telegraph" said in its leading article published the day before his return to Brisbane—

"Another extremely useful visit to Britain by the Premier of Queensland reaches its appropriate climax to-morrow when Brisbane will extend a citizens'

welcome home to Mr. Forgan Smith. It is an occasion for remembering the man and his office, and for gratefully recognising that the head of the Government has again served his State well. One proof of that is the fact that metaphorically speaking he brings back in his pocket a renewal of the sugar preference for another five years, an outcome of the World Sugar Conference which may be traced very directly to the influence of the Premier's presence and advocacy in London."

Mr. NIMMO: What did that advertisement cost?

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: It is not an advertisement, it is a quotation from the "Telegraph's" leading article published the day prior to the return of the Premier. It makes pleasing reading, all the more because it is genuine and true. Even Mr. Lyons, when in Brisbane last week attending the Royal National Show, saw fit to make special reference to the good work by the Premier overseas. I feel, as do others, that the success of that mission—I include the representatives of the Commonwealth—will be of great advantage to Queensland.

In commenting upon the speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor in opening Parliament the "Telegraph" also said—

"The first duty is to acknowledge the ample grounds which exist for the note of congratulation struck in the review of the results of the Government's administration. The showing is a good one, affording evidence of faithful stewardship during some anxious years, and though we may not agree with all the means adopted for making possible what has been achieved, it is not to be questioned that the State has been solidly helped along the road of economic recovery and is now in a position to benefit by the opportunities for development which offer on all hands and which need only the fostering which modification of taxation exactions would ensure.

"Some substantial facts are properly emphasised. Notable among these is the recording of the most satisfactory budgetary position for eight years. Unfortunately there still is a deficit in the consolidated revenue account, but it is considerably less than was anticipated a year ago, and it represents a gradual overtaking of expenditure by revenue which argues both good management and the increasing ability of the State to bear the burden of government."

Recently Sir James Murdoch, who is managing director of several large companies, visited this State, and his observations are contained in the following newspaper extract:—

"Brisbane, June 25.

"Sir James Murdoch, director of many large companies, stated to-night that there was no reason for investors in sound dividend-paying companies to have misgivings despite the uncasiness that had been displayed on the Stock Exchange recently.

"Sir James and Lady Murdoch are passengers by the 'Kanimbla,' bound for northern ports.

"Discussing the unemployment problem, Sir James revealed that recently his mills advertised in Brisbane, Sydney,

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and Melbourne for young men and women, but could not get sufficient labour.

"I have a great confidence in the Commonwealth, particularly in the future of Queensland. I have watched closely the development of the Atherton Tableland, and I believe that the Barkly Tableland is destined to play an even greater part."

That indicates that the State of Queensland is not always bad or always rotten, as hon. members opposite would have us believe. Listening to hon. members opposite one would think that Queensland was the worst State in the Commonwealth in which to live, that it was the worst governed, and if not already a complete wreck, financially and otherwise, it was well on the way to that lamentable state. The people know differently. I come in contact with them as much as any other hon. member, and those who are competent to express an opinion know that the position is not as hon. members opposite would lead them to believe. They know just how much credence and faith they can place in the contentions of the Leader of the Opposition, to mention one of them in particular.

The balance-sheets of businesses show definitely that Queensland is in a much better position than she was. There are increased banking returns, increased deposits, and increased attendances at country shows throughout the State. The attendance at the Royal National Show was not quite up to the usual mark, but what the show lacked in that respect it made up in the number and quality of its exhibits. Railway passenger and goods traffic are in a healthy state, and this again reveals the favourable position of the people and their finances. All these things indicate to me and to every other sensible-minded hon. member of the House and the people generally that Queensland has nothing to be ashamed of or afraid of under the present Government.

One could quote many instances to show that there has been a steady improvement in industry, in employment, and in the financial position as a whole, but one may be sufficient. A few days ago the Brisbane Press recorded that no fewer than 1,685 new homes had been built in two years. If the people are not prosperous and not satisfied with their country and their Government they do not rush into the building of homes. In the report to which I refer it is said—

"In the two-year period ended on 30th June last plans for 1,685 new homes in the metropolitan area were approved by the city council. The aggregate cost has been £992,513.

"Figures made available yesterday by the City Architect (Mr. H. A. Erwood) showed that plans of 870 new homes were approved in 1936, and 815 in the twelve months ended on 30th June last.

"More than half the new buildings constructed in Brisbane were dwellings, as the total outlay on all works for the two-year period was £1,838,097."

As I stated, unless the people are prosperous and have money, they will not build homes. They must have confidence before they build.

The amendment moved by the Opposition, which has just been defeated, referred in one clause to the alleged lack of Government

assistance to secondary industries and factories. I have an extract, which I will not read now, giving a list of factory statistics for 1935-36, and showing that there is an improved outlook generally in this regard in Queensland. All this disproves the contention of the Leader of the Opposition and his followers that politically nothing is right and everything is wrong with the State of Queensland. As a matter of fact, during his visit to North Queensland, and since his return, he has taken every opportunity to more or less belittle the Government. It seems to me that he is never happy unless he is miserable about something. Does he and those who support him realise that in this action he is doing disservice to the State? The other day when addressing the Rotary Conference the Premier—and it sums up the whole position—said—

"Despite what our critics say of Queensland there is a large majority of honest-to-God, decent folk in this State."

One concurs whole-heartedly with that expression of opinion.

Mr. Curtin, the Leader of the Federal Labour Party, shortly after arriving in Brisbane, said there was a greater need for political partisans and political opponents to pull together, and later on in his address at a meeting of welcome in the City Hall he said—

"We should not all the time be pre-disposed with political disputation and not all the time preparing for the next election. There were industrial development problems (both primary and secondary), as well as major social problems calling for a maximum of activity on the part of our legislators to-day."

That of course included hon. members opposite. Mr. Semple, the Minister for Works and Transport in New Zealand, said something of a like nature in this very Chamber, to which the Leader of the Opposition said, "Hear, hear!" It is remarkable how soon the hon. gentleman has forgotten the advice given by Mr. Semple.

Taxation is something that everyone feels and everyone more or less speaks about. As I have said before, would that we could do without it in all its forms! The Leader of the Opposition claimed, quite wrongly, that the present buoyancy in State revenue is due to increased taxation by the Government. He loses sight of the fact that more people are in employment in Queensland than formerly, that their earnings have increased, and therefore the taxable incomes are greater, which of course means a greater revenue from those earning taxable incomes or salaries. I repeat that there is no use in trying to blind the people of Queensland to this very evident and pleasing fact. The Government's works policy, the conversion where possible of part-time and relief work into full-time jobs at increased rates of wages, the upward trend of business (according to all statistics), and the other hundred and one signs of progress all tend to improve Treasury returns.

There has not been an increase in taxation—there has been a decrease if anything—but the taxable incomes of the people are greater and more people are able to pay taxation to-day than two years ago. The Premier dealt with the increased earnings of the people, which is a definite proof that Queensland is on the right track. Take for

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instance the unemployment relief tax. I with others shall welcome the day when it can be wiped out altogether. I do not agree with hon. members opposite that the money received from this tax is wasted. The hon. member for Keppel complained that the unemployment relief system made money available to create a class of loafers. It does not matter what class of work one may go into, we shall probably find some of the workers doing a little malingering and loafing. We also know that it is not right to include all workers in that class. I am quite sure that the hon. member for Keppel, whose electorate adjoins my own, knows of the good work that is being carried out with money set aside from this fund. Many fine works, and reproductive works at that—the “*Courier-Mail*” published it in big headlines the other day—have been carried out on the subsidy-loan basis. Sewerage work has been carried out in the cities, roads and bridges built in the country, money made available to harbour boards for harbour improvement schemes, and for country water supply schemes. Grants and assistance are given to mining prospectors, and in a hundred and one other ways the best use possible is being made of the money available. Taken by and large and viewing things fairly and impartially, I think the Government are to be commended on their careful and economic administration. They cannot be fairly and squarely criticised.

Reference is made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to cotton growing. I am pleased the Government again saw fit to come to the aid of necessitous cotton growers who desired to continue in that occupation, because it is an industry that deserves to be helped and fostered; and from a defence point of view is worthy of greater assistance than the Federal Government have given it in the past. I believe that during the last five years an amount between £90,000 and £100,000 has been advanced to cotton growers, and most of it has been refunded by those successful growers. To my knowledge no request has come from the cotton growers for a rebate on the money lent to them.

The recent annual conference of the Council of Agriculture spent some time in discussing the cotton industry. One of the delegates, Mr. Jamieson, who represents the Upper Burnett, where cotton is largely grown, viewed with some concern the falling off in the acreage under cultivation, and in the supplies. This delegate was responsible for a motion that read—

“That the Council of Agriculture bring before the Minister for Agriculture and Stock the precarious position of the cotton industry, with the request that he have it placed on a sound economic basis.”

I am indebted to this delegate for providing me with some interesting figures and information relating to this industry. In his address to the Council of Agriculture, Mr. Jamieson said—

“Eighty-five per cent of the total crop was harvested by hired labour. The average net return for seed cotton for the years 1927 to 1930 was 3.17d. per lb. The estimated net return for 1937 had been placed at 2.312d. per lb., or .858d. per lb. less, a decrease of 27 per cent. From this net return the grower

had to pay the whole cost of growing, the bales, bags twine, baling, cartage, overhead expenses, land rents, interest and depreciation of his machinery.”

With all those costs to meet it is encumbent upon the powers that be, whether State or Federal Government, to give all possible aid to this industry.

Mr. Jamieson also said—

“For 1937 the Commonwealth bounty payment had been reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb., plus fumigation charges of .25d. per lb., and if there was any emergency deduction taken into account the deduction amounted to .65d. per lb.

“£141,000 was paid in wages in 1934, £109,000 in 1935, and £110,000 in 1936. Railway freights amounted to £13,246, and shipping and road freights to £16,100.

“Many growers he claimed were turning from cotton to wheat and dairying. In 1935 there were 3,195 growers, and the acreage totalled 57,017 acres, whereas for 1937 the figures were 2,600 and 49,000 respectively.”

Those figures indicate how essential it is that this industry should be assisted as far as it is possible for Governments to do so.

For the benefit of hon. members who live outside cotton areas—cotton is grown mainly in the electorates represented by the Secretary for Mines and myself—it may be just as well to quote some figures dealing with the cost of production.

Mr. MOORE: We are not supplying our manufacturers.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: That is so. Reference has been made to the drought-relief scheme fostered by the Government. A number of factories in my area, in adjacent areas, and probably in other parts of the State, saw fit to take advantage of the scheme on behalf of their suppliers. Now, in one or two instances requests have been made for the Government to make a rebate of 40 per cent. I am sure that if anything on those lines had been at all possible the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock would have seen fit to bring the suggestion before the Premier. I have attended a number of meetings held in my electorate, where this matter is more or less a burning question, and on returning to Brisbane I interviewed the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock and the Acting Premier, and in each instance was informed that there was no intention on the part of the Government to be at all harsh or call on these farmers to refund the full amount whilst the effects of drought still affected them. The replies were very sympathetic, but in spite of these assurances some farmers still hold that the Government have been harsh. The majority of the farmers knew clearly that they were entering into a contractual obligation and had to pay back the money. They are quite prepared to do so. I think the proportion of those who are willing to do this, who have paid or still continue to pay, is 83 per cent. Much of the trouble arises because some of them believed they had not to pay it back. Others thought it would be free of interest for twelve months. Many of them were talked into believing that it would be entirely free and need not be refunded. Some of them were talked into it by commission agents and took greater sums than they could reasonably expect to repay. They were given the

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impression that ultimately, with a little bit of pressure, it would be wiped off. This was unfortunate. Quite apart from their loading themselves up with something they never would be able to repay, they have been hit badly enough by the drought, and the consequent loss of valuable stock, and unless they get further relief—and I am quite sure the Premier will keep on helping them in the way the Government have done in recent years—it will take them years to recover and get back to normal.

Reverting to the fact that the farmers believed or were led to believe that the money would be advanced to them free of interest for twelve months I shall give hon. members the benefit of some information I have in my possession. In a conference held in Brisbane in October when representatives of the dairying association conferred with the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock it was made perfectly clear that the money was a loan and would have to be paid back. From the various speeches made last session I find that a number of hon. members opposite were in accord with the scheme, and said they knew the farmers would have to pay it back. Two representatives of country districts, the hon. members for Albert and Fassifern, were present, I understand, at the conference to which I refer, as farmers' representatives, and as farmers they readily accepted the terms and conditions. After the conference there was a meeting of the executive committee of the associated dairying companies in Brisbane, at which the hon. member for Albert was present, and I believe also was the hon. member for Fassifern. The chairman of the Maryborough Co-operative Dairy Association, Ltd., Mr. J. P. Mahoney, referred at some length to the drought conditions in many parts of the area served by this company. He suggested that as conditions had not improved in these drought-stricken areas no deductions be made from cream cheques for some time. What was the result? Neither the hon. member for Albert nor the hon. member for Fassifern, if the latter was present, supported Mr. Mahoney in his suggestion. I have that definitely. I have spoken to Mr. Mahoney, who was present at one of the mass meetings of farmers to protest against the repayment, and he assures me that neither of the two hon. members supported him in that request in the interests of the farming community they represent. Both hon. members are or will be present at this session of Parliament—the hon. member for Albert is not in the House now, but he will have an opportunity of denying the charge. If the Minister is to be charged with lack of interest in and sympathy with the unfortunate dairymen in the drought he was no less sympathetic than were the hon. members who were present as representatives of the farmers. In the past and at the present time the Government are proving to be the friends of the farmers, and are probably better friends to the man on the land than were the previous Government.

Where does all this talk and discussion lead us to? It leads us to the fact that the State needs a State-wide fodder-conservation scheme controlled by a board and operating in conjunction with butter factories for the relief of drought-stricken farmers. Such a scheme should be, more or less, nationally controlled. No State should be expected to conduct or control such a huge undertaking without national aid. I know the Minister recognises the growing need for such a

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scheme, and I feel sure the time is not far distant when something more than a mere expression of sympathy from the State Government will end the deliberations that from time to time take place on the subject. The day has come when that Government might be able—and I hope it is not far distant—to give practical assistance based on the most efficient method of dealing with such a scheme of drought relief. As I said before, all hon. members on this side of the House who represent farming areas, and I honestly believe those representing farming areas on the Opposition side, too, will welcome the day when such a scheme can be brought into operation.

In his speech on the Address in Reply, the Leader of the Opposition wanted the Government to do something for the man on the land—to propound a scheme from which the people could benefit. Then we had the unfortunate spectacle of an hon. member of his party being forced into asking a question as to what it cost three hon. members on this side of the House to go to the South to obtain evidence as to what should be done and submit a report to the Minister concerned. The reply given to that question was that we went South at our own expense, on our own initiative, and in our own time. As a matter of fact, we invited hon. members of the Opposition to accompany us, and from only one did we get a favourable reply. Through illness, unfortunately, that gentleman was unable to fulfil his promise.

The suggestion has been made through the Press, I understand, that on the resumption of migration people be brought from overseas and established in little groups in areas suitable for cotton-growing. I think, if I may use the words, that charity should begin at home. We have unemployed here, many of whom are used to conditions on the land and would be quite willing to do that work, instead of bringing others from overseas. I do not want to enter into a discussion on the merits of migration. It is sufficient for the present purpose that we have our own men here. I throw out the suggestion that a considerable sum from our unemployed relief tax money might with advantage be used in taking many of our unemployed from the larger centres of population and settling them on the land for the purpose of cotton growing, with no obligation to pay back money received by them for this purpose. That would help to revive the industry and keep it on the basis on which we like to see it.

Mr. MOORE: Are you not going to give us something in connection with costs?

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: I had intended to do so, but unfortunately I have mislaid my figures.

With a need to making a concrete proposal for the development of our rural industries, I desire to suggest that as a slight measure of relief to all farmers suffering from the continued effects of drought or from any other causes over which they had no control, and whose income for the past two years has been less than the basic wage (with due and reasonable allowance for foodstuffs, etc., produced on the land, and consumed by the farmer and his family), they should be allowed to convert any amount or amounts owing for rents etc., into a form of a rural developmental loan, bearing a small rate of interest, say, not greater than 5 per cent., and repayable at, say, the end of each financial year in equal

half-yearly instalments during a period of seven or ten years, provided the applicant undertook to carry out substantial and permanent improvements calculated to increase the carrying or productive capacity of the land, such as ringbarking, scrubfalling, water conservation, or the erection of silos for the conservation of silage, to a value equal to the amount so converted.

My reasons for advancing this proposal are, briefly—

1. It may tend to relieve the farmer and grazier by overcoming the necessity of paying rents at such times as he is unable to meet them most, together with the 10 per cent. penalty (which cannot be waived or altered for a number of reasons), thereby helping in no small measure to keep him on the land.
2. It will incidentally benefit the bona fide wage-earner by discouraging the man on the land in his desire to leave his farm in order to seek unemployment relief work or any other form of work that belongs chiefly to the labourer, to the ultimate disadvantage of the taxpayer generally, the landowner, and the farmer himself.
3. It will enhance the value of the land, thus giving the Department of Public Lands greater security for the amounts already owing; and
4. It will further benefit the farmer or grazier by increasing the productivity of his selection, thus making future payments of Crown rents lighter in proportion and correspondingly easier to meet.

I make that suggestion believing that when it meets the eye of the Ministers concerned they may do something along those lines

Mr. DEACON: You are very optimistic.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: I believe that at any time it is better to be an unsuccessful optimist than a successful pessimist. The hon. members of the Opposition are mostly pessimists. They have no good thing to say of Queensland, whereas I am very optimistic about her future under Labour administration.

Mr. POWER (*Baroona*) [3.8 p.m.]: I listened with a good deal of interest to the speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor and also to the criticism by the Opposition concerning the financial position of the State. It is amusing to listen to hon. members opposite, especially when we know that when they were in power they had such a large deficit that the Federal Treasurer of the day found it necessary to call the attention of the then Premier to the financial drift and to warn him that it was time that he took action to improve the financial position of the State.

The Lieutenant-Governor in his Opening Speech said—

“The transactions of the consolidated revenue fund for the financial year just closed resulted in a deficit of £230,190 which was £370,474 less than the Budget estimate, and was the best Budget result recorded since the financial year 1928-29.”

That paragraph in itself indicates that by the adoption of sound financial principles the position is being gradually improved and

that if we continue along these lines the Budget will be balanced within a few years.

We know that the Government spent £4,000,000 from loan funds and altogether £7,825,239 last year in the relief of unemployment. We also know that unemployment has been considerably reduced.

The hon. member for Oxley said that during the past five years the Government had increased the public debt, but it must be admitted that the Government cannot possibly develop a State unless they spend loan money. I also know that the Premier has repeatedly asked the Loan Council to make more loan money available to Queensland. It has been wisely spent, and always with the object of providing work for our people. It is the duty of the Government to develop the State along sound and progressive lines, and in addition find work for its unemployed. Every citizen has the right to live and work. The Moore Government were elected on the distinct promise to find employment for the unemployed, but instead, considerably added to their numbers. The hon. member for Dalby referred the other day to a gathering of men outside Parliament House seeking employment, but he quite conveniently forgot that when he was Secretary for Railways he sacked 5,000 railway employees, and thereby increased the number of unemployed by that number. Loan money was made available to the Moore Government by the Loan Council, but instead of spending it within the State they lent it to New South Wales to assist in building the North Shore bridge while our own unemployed walked the streets. The debt of Queensland has been increased, the reason being that the Government were prepared to borrow money to find work for the unemployed. The Government will continue that policy. We cannot accept the oft-repeated statement that private enterprise will absorb all unemployed. Private enterprise has done a good deal in this direction since this Government came into power. That was one result of the Government's spending of loan money on public works, as it enabled that money to go into circulation and stimulate business. Under the Moore Administration the State was on the verge of bankruptcy. We know that in that period there were more bankruptcies than ever previously in the history of the State. Statistics will show that.

The Government have been condemned for not remitting the unemployment relief tax. The Leader of the Opposition said that if this tax were removed more people could be placed in employment. If that is the case, why did his Government ever introduce the tax? Their desire in advocating a remission of that tax is to revert to the conditions existing between 1929 and 1932. While there are some objections to the unemployment relief tax, I maintain that every man in employment should be prepared to contribute some small amount each week to enable those men less fortunate than himself to have the wherewithal to live. I see nothing wrong in the retention of the tax. It is used for the purpose of placing men in employment. It has enabled many local authorities to get from the Government subsidy-loans to carry out needed public works and improvements. If these subsidy-loans were not forthcoming, the Government would not be approached for loans to carry out the work. There are

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2,000 men employed on sewerage works, storm-water channels, and electricity services in Brisbane alone, as a result of subsidy-loans. Take away the subsidy-loans and it will be found that local authorities would not carry out such works as sewerage and storm-water channelling, which are essential in the interest of the health of the people, and also provide work for the workless. No Government, whether Labour or anti-Labour, who are alive to their responsibilities, would remove this tax. If the Government desired to achieve popularity of a kind they might remove the tax or part of it.

The position of the political parties in this House is a true reflex of the opinions of the people and a striking illustration that what Labour has attempted to achieve over a number of years has been endorsed by the people. Trade is better to-day than it has been for years. One has only to examine the balance-sheets of various firms or note the number of people in work to-day who were previously out of work to obtain confirmation of this fact. Evidence of increased prosperity in the State can be found in the balance-sheets of the various businesses. Responsible business men will admit candidly that conditions are much better. It is interesting to note that at the last municipal election the number of votes recorded for the Labour Party represented the highest Labour vote polled by Labour in the metropolitan area. That was an endorsement of the party's policy.

The Government are also accused by the hon. member for Oxley of not improving the conditions of the intermittent relief workers. I remind the hon. member that during the term of the Moore Government a single man was compelled to travel many miles to a police station, and then, perhaps, be asked to chop wood for the police officer before he could obtain 6s. worth of rations. The Labour Government altered that regulation, and a single man is no longer compelled to travel from one police station to another and live like a nomad before he can obtain rations. He can now live at the home of his parents and get the award rate of pay for one day's work in each week. Although I do not contend that the conditions governing intermittent relief workers are all they could be, I say that they are 400 per cent. better than they were under the Moore Government. I recollect that the former Home Secretary in the Moore Administration made a statement to the effect that it cost £208 a year to keep a prisoner in gaol. At the same time, when the Moore Government inaugurated the intermittent relief work scheme, 17s. a week was all that was provided for a man and his wife. Apparently the Government were prepared to give greater consideration to the people behind prison bars than to decent, honest citizens who were battling hard for their wives and children.

The suggestion that the Government should reduce taxation is all very well. Anyone can get on the hustings and win publicity for himself by making such a statement—I could say, for instance, that I was a staunch supporter of a 30-hour week and thus gain applause—but hon. members must have a due sense of responsibility. It is all very well for hon. members to endeavour to make themselves popular by making such suggestions, but it is not wise to destroy a building

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without a plan of reconstruction. Although hon. members opposite asked the Government to reduce taxation, they have not put forward one constructive suggestion as to how it should be done. Do hon. members suggest we should reduce social services? Do they suggest we should do what they did when they were in power—take 1s. a week from the unfortunate widows and orphans of the State, and reduce subsidies to social institutions? The Governments of Queensland and the other States and the Commonwealth have certain commitments to make; and if we reduce taxation we may be forced to repudiate some of the contracts we have made. This party does not stand for repudiation. I have been waiting to hear some tangible suggestion from the Opposition as to how this reduction in taxation can be brought about.

The statement made by the hon. member for Oxley that people were leaving Queensland and going to other States to obtain employment is not correct. On the contrary, day after day men are coming over the border seeking employment in Queensland. They interview me from time to time, asking me to obtain intermittent relief work for them, or if that is not available that they be given rations. The Queensland Government have enough to do to maintain its own unemployed without supporting the unemployed who come from the other States. Apparently the hon. member for Oxley did not make investigations before he made that statement.

The Government have also been accused by the Opposition of doing very little for the country districts. The contrary is the case. During the time I have been an hon. member of this Assembly I have taken the opportunity to visit the North-West and Central-West and make myself conversant with conditions in those areas. In view of what I saw in those far-distant parts of the State I say unhesitatingly that the Government have not spent the money available entirely in the metropolitan areas. Every day one may see in the Press that the Department of Public Works has approved of certain works in country districts. I have been endeavouring to persuade the Secretary for Public Works to carry out some public works in my own electorate, but he has pointed out that certain country districts were more in need of them. I also asked the Secretary for Public Instruction for a new school in my electorate and he pointed out that although some of the buildings in my electorate were not as good as he would like them to be, there were many towns in Queensland that had no schools at all and it was the policy of the department to provide proper facilities for the education of the children in the remote parts of the State, and that they should receive the first consideration. That is a policy with which I entirely agree.

We are told that the farmers are being over-taxed and that they are leaving the land. In Queensland no farmer is paying a tax who is not liable to pay it and who cannot pay it. The law makes provision that all who receive a certain income shall be assessed. The workers in industry in the city are subject to the same conditions as are the farmers, but the latter have an advantage that is not available to the city dweller. After a period of unemployment a city worker has to make up much leeway such as arrears of rent and accounts with the local storekeepers. Unlike

the farmer or man engaged in business, he has no opportunity to carry over losses from one year to another. Of course, I do not object to that concession to the farmer or business man, but merely point out that it is something that the average worker does not get.

In its report the Land Administration Board points out that 386 new selections, comprising 921,315 acres, were opened last year and taken up. This proves that the people are satisfied with the conditions the Government offer and are prepared to take up lands made available for them. The Public Estate Improvement Branch has carried out fine work. Some time ago I had the opportunity of accompanying the Secretary for Public Lands on a visit to the Eungella settlement, in which access roads have been constructed to allow the settlers to get to their properties. Similar work has been done in other rural areas. At Sandgate and Coolangatta reclamation work is in progress, and on its completion the land will be sold and the Government will obtain some return for it.

The Department of Public Works spent £576,147 during the year in erecting many very fine buildings. But hon. members opposite say that such work is not of a reproductive nature. It certainly is. Moreover, the State is being developed on sound and progressive lines. The secret is that members of the Opposition are opposed to the policy of day labour adopted by the Government, and consequently must find something to criticise.

The Stanley River project was undertaken by the Government as part of the scheme to relieve unemployment. Good work is being done there.

I should like to see further moneys made available for the very important work of constructing additional workers' dwellings. At the last few meetings of the Loan Council the Premier asked that further loan moneys be made available to Queensland, but, as is well known, the Loan Council emphatically turned down his proposal. Last financial year 462 workers' dwellings were erected. Hon. members will remember seeing a photograph of the rush of applicants for workers' dwellings when the receipt of applications was resumed. Many of these applicants are living in flats. I am of the opinion that unlimited flat life will be the ruination of Queensland, and I am totally opposed to this form of housing. In this State we have vast areas even in the metropolitan and city areas available for homes, and consequently I should like to see further moneys made available for the erection of workers' dwellings on these lands.

It is the intention of the Government to introduce an Electricity Bill, but I think some consideration should be given to the control of all public utilities by either the Government or local authorities. I refer particularly to the charges made by the Brisbane Gas Company. Although there is in existence an authority that controls the price that may be charged for gas, I believe that as it is a public utility it should be under the sole control of a local authority or a Government.

I congratulate the Premier on the good work done by him overseas in obtaining a renewal of the Sugar Agreement.

I am satisfied, and I am sure that the general public are satisfied, with what has been done by the Labour Party during the last five years. We have a policy, which has been put into effect, for the finding of work for the unemployed, and it has been endorsed by the people over a number of years. I have no hesitation in saying that it will be again endorsed when we face the electors of Queensland in the near future.

Mr. COLLINS (*Cook*) [3.31 p.m.]: I wish at the outset to compliment the hon. member for Maryborough upon the excellent speech he delivered in this House. His speech shows that he has a complete grip of the industrial problems of this State. It is a very fine tribute to a man who has spent a long life in the industrial movement that he should at the end of it be elevated to this House to assist in the passing of legislation beneficial not only to industrialists, but also to farmers in this State.

I congratulate the seconder of the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Warwick, upon his very able speech. I wish also to compliment the member for Warwick on the way he has travelled throughout the State in order to equip himself to better understand the industries of Queensland, because Queensland is a very large State, and it needs considerable study by any hon. member to make himself conversant with the whole of its industries. The hon. member has shown that he is very anxious to understand our industries, and I think his electorate should be congratulated upon having such an energetic and enterprising hon. member.

Queensland has been very fortunate in the renewal of the Sugar Agreement. The industry, the second largest in the State, has been very fortunate in having had such a representative as our Premier to go overseas with Mr. Casey and Mr. Townsend in its interests. The result of their work speaks for itself. Their efforts, to my mind, have been more successful than even the people engaged in the industry expected. It is certainly comforting to the sugar-growers of the State to know that the industry is safe for some time to come so far as a market for our surplus sugar is concerned. There still remains in Queensland a great deal of land that could be developed for the growing of sugar, and anything done to assist in the expansion of the industry will materially aid in the growth of rural Queensland.

To my mind greater attention could profitably be given to the production of power alcohol from sugar-cane. Power alcohol is as good a motor spirit as the imported spirit. It seems impossible that this State will be able to find crude mineral oil, the hydro-generation of coal seems to be expensive, and it is absolutely essential for the welfare of the Commonwealth that we have some adequate means of providing our own petrol, if for no other reason than that of defence. Any form of defence that leaves this nation dependent upon overseas supplies of petrol must naturally fail. To-day petrol is almost as essential for defence purposes as guns and ammunition. I claim that with the possibility it offers of the development of power alcohol the sugar industry will go a long way towards providing this essential to our defence. We have already a power-alcohol distillery established in North Queensland, and it is turning out a splendid material, but what is preventing the extension of the

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industry is the lack of Commonwealth legislation to compel all motor spirit to be broken down with a percentage of power alcohol. This idea is not new, as it has been carried out in most of the European countries that have not their own supplies of crude mineral oil. Germany and France are two notable examples. The power-alcohol industry should be developed side by side with the sugar industry, not only to enable the latter to employ more labour, but also to make it possible for more land to be brought under the cultivation of sugar-cane. Any policy of defence that neglects to secure its supplies of oil fuel fails in an essential respect.

I was rather surprised at the lamentably weak case submitted by the Leader of the Opposition to support his indictment against the Government. He went to considerable trouble to obtain figures that he claimed to be true, but they have been effectively answered by the Premier. I should not have referred to them at all if it had not been for the fact that when the Leader of the Opposition was in North Queensland he made many grossly misleading statements, and I now wish to take this opportunity to correct him. According to one of his statements, published in the Townsville "Bulletin" of 8th June last, the Leader of the Opposition said that the Government had transferred £500,000 from the Unemployment Relief Fund to consolidated revenue.

Mr. MAHER: You cannot deny it.

Mr. COLLINS: It was denied by the Premier in his reply to a question by the hon. gentleman yesterday.

Mr. MAHER: I say that it was transferred, despite the answer to my question.

Mr. COLLINS: There was the definite statement by the Premier that no money was transferred from the Unemployment Relief Fund to consolidated revenue. The statement by the Leader of the Opposition is in keeping with many other statements that he made in North Queensland.

Mr. MAHER: The Government took authority by Order in Council to do it, and they did it.

The PREMIER: You voted for it.

Mr. MAHER: I had nothing to do with the Order in Council.

The PREMIER: There was no Order in Council. The money was voted in the Estimates last year, and you voted for it.

Mr. COLLINS: According to the same report, the hon. gentleman also said—

"The capital city of Brisbane and Ipswich had twenty-two representatives in the State Parliament, nineteen of whom were in the Government and three in the United Australia Party. This meant the capital city had undue representation, and Brisbane had secured an undue share of loan moneys and received 35s. subsidy for every £1 loan, almost two to one. Rural towns suffered as the result, and the country elector was the victim. Not only in loan subsidies, but in loan fund expenditure."

The figures that I have obtained from the Premier show how far wrong the Leader of the Opposition was. This statement, prepared by the Treasury Department, shows

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the amount of loans and subsidies granted in the various divisions of the State between June, 1932, and June, 1936—

Division.	Loans.	Subsidy.	Total.
	£	£	£
Northern ..	2,288,891	1,577,853	3,866,744
Central ..	541,412	401,068	942,480
Southern ..	1,514,863	1,062,951	2,577,814
Metropolis ..	539,886	1,292,750	1,832,636

When making that statement the Leader of the Opposition paid no heed to the huge amount borrowed from private lenders by the Brisbane City Council, upon which subsidy had nevertheless been paid by the Government. He only told half the facts in order to show them in an incorrect light. A summary of the whole position is that the city of Brisbane received subsidy and loans amounting to £1,832,636 against subsidy and loans aggregating £7,387,000 by all bodies outside of Brisbane. How can the Leader of the Opposition, after seeing those figures, say that the country is being neglected? These figures show that only one-eighth of the loans made available by the Government was expended in the metropolis, and one-third of the subsidy fund. There is no question as to the accuracy of my figures. They show that instead of the Leader of the Opposition's moving a motion of want of confidence in the Government his own followers would be well advised to move a similar motion of want of confidence in him. His figures are absolutely incorrect. A man in the responsible position of Leader of the Opposition has a duty to the country, which is not to mislead it into the belief that its position is very bad, when in fact it is particularly good with respect to the allocation of loans and subsidies. I am sorry that the people should be misled by the statement of the Leader of the Opposition, and I regret that he has seen fit to make statements so far from the facts.

The unemployment relief tax and taxation generally are two matters on which the Opposition has challenged the Government. They claim that taxation is too high and that the Unemployment Relief Fund has been misused. I was very sorry to hear the hon. member for Keppel make disparaging remarks about that very unfortunate section of people who can be classed as unemployed. He referred to them as a body of loafers. It is bad enough to be unable to obtain regular work without being described as a loafer.

Mr. DANIEL: I did not say that.

Mr. COLLINS: His remarks are an unfortunate insult to a body of men who are just as good as hon. members in this House.

Mr. MAHER: Didn't he say that the conditions were creating loafers?

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Keppel referred to them as a body of loafers.

Mr. DANIEL: I said the system was creating a body of loafers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: The remarks of the hon. member are an insult to a body of people who are in a most unfortunate position.

Mr. DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I did not say that the unemployed relief workers were loafers.

What I said was that the present system of unemployment relief was creating loafers in this State.

Mr. COLLINS: If the hon. member for Keppel assures me he did not refer to the unemployed as a body of loafers, I accept his explanation, but my comments were based distinctly on what I heard him say about them.

I have listened with keen interest to the criticism of hon. members opposite on the question of taxation levied by this Government. I thought that from their criticism some constructive proposal would be forthcoming. If the Opposition say that taxation is too heavy it is only fair that they should say in which way it could be reduced without doing an injustice to the people of this State who are unemployed and to the services given to the people by means of that taxation. I listened in vain. Unfortunately, their condemnation seemed to be simply a demand that taxation should be reduced without any constructive proposal as to where the reduction could be applied. I realise that the unemployment relief tax is very heavy, particularly on the individual with a low income. The Government recognise that fact, and they have already done a great deal to ease that burden. Last session they reduced the tax to the extent of 1d. in the £1, and entirely relieved persons in receipt of an income of less than £84 per annum since the rise in the basic wage.

It must be remembered that a great deal of the reduction in unemployment is due to the wise spending of the Unemployment Relief Fund. It has been very largely applied to improving road conditions and public facilities both in the metropolis and country districts. The people in the country districts who have been asked to pay this tax have received definite benefits from it. The shire councils in the country districts that have taken advantage of the subsidy-loans have received cheaper money than ever before in the history of Queensland. Under this scheme they have been able to undertake works that will improve the roads and public facilities in a way that could not be even contemplated under any other scheme. According to the figures that I have quoted they have taken advantage of subsidy-loans in places outside the metropolis to the extent of over £7,000,000. There was no commission on local authorities to carry out this work. The money was made available to them should they require it, because they had the machinery ready at hand to give immediate effect to the spending of this money, and thus immediately affect the unemployment situation. The time has arrived when I believe many local authorities have completed most of the improvements they desired to carry out under this scheme.

I think it would be advisable if the Government, in their wisdom, devoted more of this money to improving the public estate, instead of largely improving the private estate, as was the case when the money was spent by the local authorities. The Secretary for Public Lands has taken a very keen interest in irrigation, and nobody was more pleased than I to learn he was causing a comprehensive investigation to be made of its possibilities in this State. That has been needed for a long time. The effects of drought are probably the biggest taxes we pay. If the money from this unemployment relief tax was used in inaugurating a big

irrigation scheme it would have a twofold effect.

Mr. MAHER: In five years you have not done it.

Mr. COLLINS: I am telling my story at the present time; the hon. gentleman has had an opportunity to tell his. I am suggesting that if this money was devoted to a big irrigation scheme it would do a great deal to combat the ravages of drought. It would relieve unemployment to a greater extent than any other class of work I am acquainted with. Irrigation works give the greatest amount of labour to the unskilled, who represent the biggest problem we have in this State. The skilled tradesman is reasonably well cared for, but it is the unskilled worker for whom it is difficult for the Government to find work. A scheme such as I suggest would provide continuous work for unskilled men for probably four or five years, and at the end of that time they would probably be able to find work on the irrigation settlement or possibly become farmers on it. It would also have the effect of lightening one of the principal burdens in any irrigation scheme, that is, the accumulated interest on capital cost. It has been the experience, not only in this country, but in other countries, that a considerable time must elapse between the completion of an irrigation scheme and the successful utilisation of it. That has been the case in New South Wales and in Victoria. During all this time the interest on the capital that has been put into the scheme is a burden that has in the past been written off by the constructing authority, which has been the Government. The unemployment relief money would not have to bear the burden of interest, and the whole of that money ultimately would probably be returned to the State directly in the shape of land betterment, and meanwhile would be a means of solving the greatest problem we have in the State—drought.

I had the privilege recently of inspecting some of the irrigation schemes in Victoria. It was interesting to learn what has been done there. Largely owing to irrigation that State has become a keen competitor with New Zealand in the export of frozen mutton and lamb. Only irrigation has made that possible and Victoria, with a sheep population of 16,000,000 is maintaining slaughtering of over 7,000,000 yearly and thus providing a great amount of work for employees in all classes of industry and traffic for the railways. It is also a means of combating the problem of drought which previously was almost as great in Victoria as in Queensland.

An additional feature of the scheme I propose would be that the advantages of the expenditure of this money by the Government would not end at that but would cause private enterprise to spend two or three times the amount of capital that the initial work taken in hand by the Government had made possible. A scheme of this nature is well worth the consideration of this Government. The majority of hon. members in this House have stressed the need for irrigation, but talking about it will not do much towards its accomplishment. Action is long overdue.

The Secretary for Public Lands is to be commended for his initiative in making a comprehensive survey of the whole of the State in order to ascertain the possibilities of irrigation and the form a drought relief scheme should take.

Mr. Collins.]

If the irrigation scheme I outlined could not be undertaken I have an alternative. Instead of making the money available to the local authorities, as has been done in the past—and the local authorities have done a great amount of good with it, but seem now to have had almost as much of that finance as they require—let it be used to give relief to the employers of labour, provided they increase employment. This would have the effect of putting the money into industry rather than placing men in dead-end jobs which when finished have no further effect on industry. I suggest that an employer who is prepared to employ more labour than he has been doing be given relief from the tax in proportion to the increased employment that he gives. For instance, if a man pays £50 in unemployment relief tax, relieve him of the £50, provided he gives additional employment to the extent of £100. To provide employment under this scheme would mean that the money would be expended in a more reproductive way than spending it through the local authorities. It would be quite possible to police the increase in the amount of labour employed. It is immaterial whether the employer is a factory owner, private individual, farmer, or engaged in any other class of industry—it would have the effect of stimulating private industry in a way that would permanently relieve the Government of having to levy the unemployment relief tax at all, and that is the desire of every right-thinking citizen and I am positive of every hon. member of this House.

Mr. MOORE: You say only 6 per cent. are unemployed.

Mr. COLLINS: I heard an hon. member on that side of the House say he did not believe any of the figures. I believe the figures I see published by the Government Statistician.

I claim that that is one way of tapering off the unemployment relief tax. It would have the effect of solving the very difficult problem of lightening taxation, and its gradualness would eliminate the drag that usually follows the sudden removal of a tax unless something takes its place.

At 4.1 p.m.,

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

Mr. COLLINS: A man would have to employ additional labour this financial year in order to earn relief from his tax during the next financial year, and in that way we should overcome the drag that makes it very difficult for any Government to give immediate effect to a reduction of taxation. The principle I have outlined is almost on all-fours with that of giving local authorities subsidy-loans, the difference being that it would relieve the Government of finding that proportion of loan money which it is necessary for the councils to take in order to get the subsidy. It would have the effect of tapering off the relief tax, and, finally, doing away with it in its entirety.

I was interested to hear the hon. member for Cooroora speak of the tobacco industry. He did not mention that owing to the tariff introduced by the Scullin Government the tobacco grown in Queensland—and sold—increased to the extent of 12,000,000 lb. of tobacco leaf.

Mr. WALKER: Due to the actions of the Moore Government.

[*Mr. Collins.*]

Mr. COLLINS: I think we have heard too much about that in the past. Let me tell the hon. member that as a result of the tariff imposed by the Lyons Administration tobacco production has fallen to below 3,000,000 lb. of leaf. That is proof of the interjection I made this morning to the effect that the Lyons Government had done more to cripple the tobacco industry in this State than all the pests and diseases we have associated with it. In other words, the Lyons Government is probably the worst pest the tobacco growers know of. They realise that, and they will give effect to their views at the forthcoming Federal elections. Until more sympathetic legislation is enacted in the Federal Parliament, in order to help the tobacco grower, the industry will not take the place to which it is entitled as an important rural industry in this country.

Mr. WALKER: We are consuming more tobacco now than ever before.

Mr. COLLINS: No, that is not so. The production of Australian tobacco leaf has fallen from 12,000,000 lb. to 3,000,000 lb. last year. The figures of the hon. member are wrong and as misleading as the figures quoted by his leader. The land that the hon. member for Cooroora referred to this morning as land settled by the Government of which he was a member in 1930—he referred to the initial settlement of Chewko—has been found to be unsuitable for the purpose. I am not going to accuse his Government of deliberately putting the settlers on unsuitable land, but the fact remains that the land did prove to be unsuitable. This Government have had to go to the relief of the tobacco grower by moving him—at considerable expense—from that unsuitable land to suitable land.

The present Government have also given considerable relief to tobacco growers through the unemployment relief scheme. It is generally argued by hon. members opposite that all of the advantages of the unemployment relief schemes are obtained by the workers in the cities, but that is far from being correct. All the tobacco growers who found themselves in difficult financial straits and appealed to the Government were given sustenance and other forms of relief, and in those cases where their crops failed and they were unable to repay the amount advanced to them, the Government wiped off the debt. The Government have gone even further, but I hope to see them go further still by making it possible for the tobacco growers to install irrigation plants. In the tobacco-growing areas in the Mareeba and Dimbulah districts irrigation plants are almost as necessary as the land itself, because the rainfall is so uncertain. The land is suitable for tobacco cultivation, and in some seasons the rainfall is adequate, but in much of the area it is very uncertain. The Secretary for Public Lands has taken steps to make it possible for the growers to install irrigation plants, and on two occasions at least has sent an expert from his department to make reports in this connection. On those reports I have submitted requests to the Minister on behalf of the various associations at Dimbulah with the object of having the recommendations carried into effect. When that is done, I feel sure, immense advantage will accrue to the growers.

The hon. member for Cooroora said that the growers had received 4s. a lb. for their

tobacco leaf, but that is a misleading statement, because, good as the quality is, the average price is less than 2s. 6d. a lb. Under present conditions Queensland is not being fairly treated in the sale of leaf. I am not blaming anybody in particular for that, but it is rather remarkable that in Victoria, where the yield per acre is heavier and the quality not nearly so good as in Queensland, the average price in some seasons is higher than that obtained in this State. I suggest that greater attention could be given to all phases of the tobacco industry with advantage to all concerned.

Mr. HILTON (*Carnarvon*) [4.9 p.m.]: I have listened with a great deal of attention to this debate, and I was pained and disappointed to hear hon. members opposite belittle this great State.

Mr. MAHER: Not the State, the Government.

Mr. HILTON: I say definitely, the State, Hon. members opposite set out deliberately to discount the good work done in Queensland, and as a responsible member of this democratic Parliament and as a representative of a primary-producing area where some thousands of primary producers earn their living, I deem it my duty to analyse closely the statements they made.

In moving his vote of no confidence in the Government the Leader of the Opposition took as one of his grounds the alleged decline in the value of primary production, but he did not advance any sound argument in support of it. He merely mentioned that in 1892 there were 20,000,000 odd sheep in Queensland and that at the present time there were only 18,000,000. The hon. member for Rockhampton very effectively answered him.

Mr. MAHER: Is any progress indicated in those figures?

Mr. HILTON: I shall give an indication of the progress in primary production in this State, and I am sure that I shall be able to dispel the false idea held by hon. members opposite concerning the alleged decline in the value of primary production.

Mr. MAHER: Does it not suggest stagnation?

Mr. HILTON: It does not; quite the opposite. If hon. members opposite had examined the position thoroughly they would have realised—as the hon. member for Rockhampton pointed out—that one of the chief factors in causing the numbers of our flocks to remain stationary was the unfavourable climatic conditions that have prevailed from time to time. A study of the statistics shows that the sheep population in 1902 was reduced to 17,000,000 by a very severe drought, but in 1933 it had risen to 23,000,000, and to-day the number is approximately 21,000,000. Another factor that has played a very important part in the decline of the sheep population from time to time is that from the latter part of the nineteenth century up to 1926 the terrible prickly-pear infestation took place. In 1924, we read, the number of acres of land infested with pear was 26,000,000. Most of that infestation was in some of our rich pastoral districts and extended from Roma to Dirranbandi, and as far westward as the Warrego. It is not an overstatement of fact to say that pear infestation caused a decline in the sheep population of 8,000,000. Pear infestation also

caused a decline in other forms of primary production.

Mr. MAHER: How do you account for the fact that New South Wales, having only half the area of Queensland, carries 50,000,000 sheep?

Mr. HILTON: As the hon. member for Warrego informed this House, such comparisons are absolutely useless unless the carrying capacity of the land is taken into consideration. I challenge the statement of the Leader of the Opposition that half of the lands of New South Wales are barren and unfruitful. That remark is an injustice to New South Wales. If he takes the trouble to look into the matter further, he will find that is not so. Comparatively, Queensland has a much greater area of less fertile land than New South Wales.

Mr. MAHER: That is not so at all. You are now depreciating your own State.

Mr. HILTON: I am not depreciating my own State; I am merely stating an actual fact. It is the hon. gentleman who made a statement that was not fact.

In considering this matter I referred to the report of the Land Administration Board for 1936, which contains valuable comments regarding its activities. I remember that several hon. members opposite last session paid a tribute to the work of that Board. At page 9 it says—

“Notwithstanding the difficulties through which we have passed, the period of five years that has just been closed, together with the period of five years lying immediately ahead of us, will in the future probably be regarded as a decade of extraordinary development of the pastoral lands of the State. Never before has so much new development work been undertaken or projected.”

Again on page 10—

“When the State recovers from the ravages of the recent drought and has the advantage of a few years' good seasons, it will be found that the numbers of sheep and cattle carried will be in excess of any numbers hitherto depastured in the history of the State.”

That is pleasant reading. It is very hard to understand how an hon. member claiming to represent a country constituency can argue in this Chamber that the Government have neglected one of our main primary industries. Had he and his followers read that report they would have discovered that the wool industry has not been standing still for the last forty or fifty years. It has made very substantial progress, and, as the report states, in a few years' time, given favourable seasons, our pastoral lands will carry a record number of sheep and cattle.

I have also gone into another aspect of this alleged decline in primary industry. I now refer to the financial stability of the primary producers. I am not going to argue that all is well with them. I realise that that is far from being the case. I support the suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Warwick, who ably seconded the Address in Reply, that a scheme should be devised to ensure to the small primary producer who is finding it so difficult to make ends meet, a certain minimum income each year. I realise that many difficulties are associated with such a scheme, but unless something of that kind is done we shall not

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make the progress that it is essential we should make in this State. Whilst I recognise that our primary producers have had many difficulties to contend with, I claim that they are considerably better off than those of other States. In support of that contention I shall quote figures I obtained from the various statistics available to me. I shall quote, for instance, figures showing the amount of money made available to the primary producers in the various States by the Commonwealth Government during the last six years. The following figures relate to farmers' relief and bounty to wheat-growers by the Commonwealth Government:—

	£
New South Wales	4,219,419
Victoria	3,185,590
Queensland	325,111
South Australia	3,509,689
Western Australia	3,053,493
Tasmania	106,605

The following figures disclose the amount paid out to fruitgrowers, mainly apple and pear growers, and certain citrus fruit-growers:—

	£
New South Wales	35,345
Victoria	71,340
Queensland	2,681
South Australia	27,417
Western Australia	39,794
Tasmania	173,531

The following amounts were paid out as subsidies on fertilizers:—

	£
New South Wales	97,840
Victoria	403,643
Queensland	95,112
South Australia	170,930
Western Australia	206,487
Tasmania	56,841

The grand totals for the different States are—

	£
New South Wales	4,352,604
Victoria	3,660,573
Queensland	422,904
South Australia	3,708,036
Western Australia	3,299,774
Tasmania	336,977

Despite the enormous sum of money that has been paid out by way of assistance to primary producers in the other States, we find they are in a much worse position than the primary producers in Queensland.

I have ascertained the number of farmers in each State who applied for assistance and the amounts granted under the rural rehabilitation scheme that has been in operation in Australia for the last two years. It is important, however, first to point out how many primary producers there are in each State. Approximately, the numbers are—

Queensland	50,000
New South Wales	75,800
Victoria	75,000
South Australia	24,000
Western Australia	23,000
Tasmania	11,300

It is astonishing to learn the small number of primary producers in Queensland who applied for assistance under the scheme. The latest comparative table I have been able

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to obtain discloses the figures up to the end of June last to be—

	No. of Applications.	Producers.
Queensland	683	Averaging 1 in 73
New South Wales	1,593	Averaging 1 in 47
Victoria	3,400	Averaging 1 in 22
South Australia	2,706	Averaging 1 in 9
Western Australia	2,813	Averaging 1 in 8
Tasmania	336	Averaging 1 in 34

These figures reliably indicate to us the position of the primary producers throughout this great Commonwealth of ours. Despite the drought, the hardships and the alleged bad government referred to by hon. members opposite, the primary producers in Queensland are in a better position and much more solvent than those in the less fortunate States of Australia.

Mr. EDWARDS: We only passed the legislation in Queensland last year.

Mr. HILTON: We have been receiving applications since the scheme was inaugurated two years ago.

Mr. EDWARDS: Very few got it.

Mr. HILTON: The hon. member can obtain full information later. I challenge him to debate the point in the House. He will find that the ratio I quoted still obtains and the comparison reveals that the primary producers of Queensland are better off than those in the other States.

Mr. MAHER: There are many in my electorate who would like to meet you on that basis.

Mr. HILTON: Those are the figures. I know they are reliable, as reliable as it is possible to get them, and commend them to the serious consideration of hon. members opposite when they strive to create an impression that we are in a condition of ruination in this State.

Mr. MAHER: I think the bulk of farmers in my electorate are worse off than some of the men on relief work.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Do not forget that they are getting help from the Government.

Mr. MAHER: No. Some of them are too proud. They would sooner starve than ask the Government for help.

Mr. HILTON: Would not the same argument apply so far as the other States are concerned?

In support of the remarks made by the hon. member for Cook on another branch of primary production, the tobacco industry, I wish to say a few words. Whilst every possible effort is being made by the State to further primary production in all its phases, tobacco growing is the one industry that can be fostered and developed to a greater extent provided the necessary assistance is given by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. WALKER: I am very pleased to hear you say that.

Mr. HILTON: I am very pleased to make the remark, but I was a little disappointed to hear the hon. member for Cooroora argue from the point of view he took. The hon.

member spoke of prices of 4s. a lb. and endeavoured to lead hon. members to believe that that could be accepted as the average price the tobacco growers were receiving for their commodity. That is entirely incorrect. I went to the trouble of making a comparison of the total production of tobacco in Australia during the past four years, the value and the average price a lb. These are the figures:—

Year.	Production.	Value.	Average Price per lb.
	Lb.	£	s. d.
1931-32	10,162,192	1,114,737	2 2
1932-33	9,723,056	960,565	2 0
1933-34	4,348,964	339,663	1 7
1934-35	3,113,315	256,655	1 7
			approx.

In view of the fact that in 1931-32 there was a wonderfully good production and the average price was 2s. 2d. a lb., it is a crying shame that that could not have continued. There has been long arguments concerning tariff and excise, but apart from those considerations I say that it was nothing short of criminal that an industry such as this, which relatively gives more direct and indirect employment than any other of our primary industries, should have been allowed to receive such a severe setback.

At 4.30 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. HILTON: I look forward to the day when the necessary attention will be again paid to this very important industry. The Government have been exceedingly willing to give the greatest possible assistance to growers in my electorate. It contains a rather remarkable co-operative tobacco settlement. The Glenarhon tobacco growers on the Dumaresq River have fought against great odds. Four or five years ago they were left stranded, but the Government came to their rescue. I pay a tribute to these men, their wives and families, for the manful way they have carried on the industry, and at the same time reduced their liabilities; and at the same time I thank the Secretary for Labour and Industry and the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock for the kind consideration extended to them. It was refreshing indeed to watch these settlers co-operating to the fullest extent and to learn at the end of the last tobacco sales that they were practically out of the wood. But for the timely and generous assistance given them by the Government, however, I venture to state that those forty or fifty people would have had to drift away to other centres, and perhaps be employed on this much-discussed relief work. I quote that area as an instance to show that this Government are very ready at all times to do the fair thing by people who are prepared to help themselves.

Mr. MAHER: Your predecessor, Mr. Costello, did a lot of hard work for those growers.

Mr. HILTON: He did interest himself in them in the first year of their existence when they found themselves stranded. He made representations on their behalf, and the Government came to their assistance. It is a great pleasure for me to be able to follow in his footsteps and co-operate with them to the fullest extent. I hope that some

day the history of this little settlement will be written—if I get the time I may make an effort in that direction myself—for its history will reveal that the Government assistance has been to a great extent responsible for its success, but only because the people themselves were prepared to do the right thing. I hope at a later stage to give this House some further information on the subject.

I was surprised to hear the arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Wide Bay, and the hon. member for Keppel, that there should be a reduction in wages and a lengthening of hours of factory employees in order to enable Queensland manufactures to compete with the alleged prosperity Southern factories are enjoying.

Mr. CLAYTON: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member said the hon. member for Wide Bay advocated a reduction in wages. I did not say anything of the sort, and I ask for an immediate withdrawal of my name.

Mr. HILTON: If I remember rightly, the hon. member for Wide Bay, in this Chamber yesterday, implied that it would be better for the people to work for lower wages and so obtain employment than to allow this alleged decline in factory production in Queensland to continue.

Mr. CLAYTON: That is incorrect, and untrue.

Mr. HILTON: If the hon. member says that it is untrue, I accept his denial. I think the Leader of the Opposition, however, implied that it would be better to work for lower wages and have employment than allow the Southern States to have all the factory output of the Commonwealth.

Mr. MAHER: I said, to work a few hours longer and have a job, than shorter hours and no job. I stand on that.

Mr. HILTON: The inference is that the hon. gentleman would advocate a policy of reducing factory wages and increasing factory hours, so that we could stand up to the sweating competition that prevails in the Southern States.

Mr. MAHER: I made no reference to wages.

Mr. HILTON: I am surprised to find this argument about factory employment being continued in this House along the lines advanced by hon. members opposite. In the "Telegraph" recently I read an article written by Dr. T. L. Wood. I commend this very excellent summary to those hon. members who have not read it. Dr. Wood was dealing with Mr. Lyons's alleged economic survey of the manufacturing industries in Australia. In one part of his article he says—

"As a direct result of the natural advantages enjoyed by those States, the percentage of the population employed in factories is 7.27 in New South Wales and 9.95 in Victoria, compared with 4.64 in Queensland, 6.56 in South Australia, 4.69 in Western Australia, and 5.03 in Tasmania.

"It is a curious fact that in 1907 New South Wales and Victoria possessed 8,962 factories out of 12,555 registered in Australia. That is about 71 per cent. In 1935-36 those States had 17,646 out of 24,894 factories. That was still about 71 per cent. The horse-power employed in

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factories in those two States was 65 per cent. of the Australian total in 1907. It was nearly 70 per cent. in 1935-36. Again, the number employed in factories in the two States was 68 per cent. of the Australian total in 1907; in 1935-36 it was nearly 76.5 per cent.

"In 1907 the value of capital and plant of secondary industry in New South Wales and Victoria was 67 per cent. of the Australian total; to-day it is 70 per cent.

"These figures show strikingly the degree of concentration in secondary industry that has developed in Australia."

The article goes on to say—

"We have not yet realised that a country which sets out to encourage secondary industries under a tariff not merely eliminates the competition of manufacturers outside Australia, but the very policy which rules out the foreign competition intensifies internal competition. That competition intensifies the search for the most favourable sites for factories.

"Unless, therefore, the Federal Government is prepared to subsidise industries in States with inferior industrial resources, or to set up a second form of protection by assisting industries in the States with inferior resources against those of the States with superior resources, it is difficult to imagine what is implied by 'manageable steps.'"

Mr. NIMMO: What does a university professor know about it?

Mr. HILTON: For the information of the hon. member, Dr. G. L. Wood is Associate Professor of Commerce at the Melbourne University, and one would naturally expect him to be au fait with the trend of commerce throughout Australia, especially as he would have all the available data at his disposal. Since he is a professor of commerce, we must attach some weight to his statements. Furthermore, he was not endeavouring to make a case for Queensland; he was merely analysing the statement made by the Prime Minister and critically reviewing the alleged economic survey that had been carried out. He clearly indicates from the outset that as far back as 1907 Victoria and New South Wales had a big advantage over this State from the point of view of production. That is to be expected, because, as the hon. member for East Toowoomba pointed out, those States were thoroughly established years before this State, and they had a population of about 400,000 when Queensland was declared a separate State with a population of about 50,000, if my memory serves me right. Those States have continued to hold that advantage, and even if we did introduce a longer working week and a smaller weekly wage I doubt very much whether we could make up even 1 per cent. of the leeway that exists between this and the other States. Although the population in this State has increased immensely since the days of Separation, the other States, with their bigger populations and greater turnover, still have the field to themselves to a very large extent.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: Queensland has the shortest working week and the smallest percentage of unemployed in the Commonwealth.

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Mr. HILTON: That is so.

Mr. MAHER: Then why the unemployment relief tax?

Mr. HILTON: I have given some thought to the subject of taxation. Comparisons can be absurd unless we take all factors of the case into consideration, and I shall welcome a reduction at the earliest possible moment. But in order to ascertain the true effect of taxation it is essential that we first get down to fundamentals. We must ascertain what is the real wealth production of this State and, if we are going to argue on the per capita basis, find out what the wealth production per head is in the other States. It is only natural that the per capita taxation is large because our population is small. Queensland not only leads the Commonwealth in social services to the community, but also the world. That is a big statement to make, but nevertheless a true one, and if any hon. member cares to study the social and industrial conditions of any country and ascertain the expenditure on such services he will be forced to admit we lead the way. That being so, it is only natural that our taxation per head should be greater than the taxation per head in the more densely populated States.

Apart from that point, I submit that we are in a position to pay that rate of taxation per head of population. I have gone to the trouble of collating figures on this subject from Government statistics to prove my contention. The principal wealth produced in the State is the net value received for primary products and manufactures. The latest comparative statistics available in this respect are those of 1934-35. They are—

	Total Value of Production.	Value per Head.
	£	£
Queensland ...	45,646,000	47
New South Wales ...	118,922,000	45
Victoria ...	83,017,000	45
South Australia ...	23,209,000	40
West Australia ...	22,633,000	50
Tasmania ...	8,258,000	36

The wealth production of Western Australia is largely due to the amount of gold won. These figures clearly reveal that the wealth in this State per head of population is greater than that in any other States. That being the case, it is only logical to assume that our income is greater per head and we are in a position to meet this taxation. We have also the very consoling reflection that we have endeavoured, and very successfully, too, to give great social services to the more unfortunate members of the community, and develop this great State of the Commonwealth along very sound progressive lines.

Before I conclude my speech I should like to give hon. members opposite yet another angle from which to examine this subject of alleged bad government in Queensland. It is very refreshing at times to see ourselves as others see us. My attention was very forcibly arrested in April last to a news item in the "Courier-Mail." I read it with great interest, because it was under the caption—

"TRANSFER TO QUEENSLAND.

"NEW SOUTH WALES PROPOSAL."

This makes very interesting reading, indeed, because if conditions in Queensland were as hon. members opposite argue, it would be

very strange that a large part of New South Wales should seek to be transferred to this State in order to overcome difficulties under which it is labouring. The article reads—

“TRANSFER TO QUEENSLAND.

“NORTHERN N.S.W. PROPOSAL.

“Lismore, Sunday.

“Declaring that the people of the North Coast of New South Wales realised their inability to get things done by the Government, the president of the North Coast and Tablelands Federated Chambers of Commerce (Mr. P. E. Tighe) successfully moved at a meeting of the federation in Lismore yesterday, that a district-wide popular convention be arranged.

“The principal objects of the convention will be to bring about an alteration in the machinery of Government to enable the district more effectively to control its own affairs.

“The convention, which it is proposed should include the Municipalities and Shires' Association, Northern N.S.W. District Chambers of Commerce, Primary Producers' Union, Country Party, Labour Party, Richmond Harbour Development League, and any other organisation interested, will be asked to consider as alternative proposals—

(1) The revival of the new States movement.

(2) The establishment of provincial councils, with powers as recommended by the royal commission.

(3) The transfer of this district to the State of Queensland.

“Mr. Tighe, in moving his motion, declared it was obvious the people of the north would have to do something. No one felt the district was getting fair treatment.

“Mr. W. E. Bagot, who supported the motion, contended that the North Coast was being ignored by the Government. Once Dr. Page had considered new States would be beneficial, but now he appeared to think Australia possessed too many States. There were many questions affecting the North Coast which people living in it could better handle themselves.”

I submit that the only interpretation we can place on that article is that those people, representing all shades of political opinion, openly published the fact that they were prepared to inaugurate a movement to have their territory incorporated in Queensland in order to escape the difficulties under which they labour under a Tory Government.

Mr. MAHER: Does the hon. member know that Mr. Tighe is a very old and prominent Labour man in that district?

Mr. HILTON: He was not alone in the movement.

Mr. MAHER: It is his proposal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HILTON: He was supported by the Chambers of Commerce, so that not all at that meeting were sympathetic to Labour. It is really absurd to argue that they were.

Mr. MAHER: Does the hon. member seriously believe that the people of the

North Coast of New South Wales would desire to come under Queensland jurisdiction?

Mr. HILTON: I very definitely do. I have not read of any objection by anybody in that district to this scheme. No move was made to counteract the proposal, because the people are wholeheartedly in favour of it. That effectively disposes of the despairing cry of ruination in this State that we have been hearing from hon. members opposite.

I commend those few thoughts for the earnest consideration of the Leader of the Opposition and I trust that when next they feel disposed to decry this State they will bear them in mind. I feel confident that the people of this State do not wish to see any change of Government. Much has been accomplished in the last five years, yet there is still an enormous amount to be done. I am sure the electors wish the Government to remain in office in order that they may carry out the important proposals that are occupying their thoughts. The construction of that important highway that the hon. member for Warwick referred to is one of them. I assure the people in that district that I am wholeheartedly with the hon. member for Warwick in his endeavours to have the Cunningham Highway constructed, thus affording better access to some of the more remote parts of the State. I feel sure, I repeat, that no change in Government is desired, because the people realise the value of all the Government have done during the last few years and look to them to do even more in the years to come.

Mr. WALSH (*Mirani*) [4.52 p.m.]: In common with other hon. members who have spoken, I desire to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. The election of the hon. member for Maryborough is a fitting reward to a man who has given a lifetime to the Labour movement. It indicates that the people of Maryborough appreciate the service he has rendered.

I was particularly impressed by the speech of the hon. member for Warwick. It indicated that even if the younger hon. members on this side of the House have not been on the land they have at least paid much attention to the problems of the farmers in their electorates. The hon. member dealt with matters relating to his electorate in a very broadminded way. His remarks indicated that he has made a close study of the problems associated with his electorate, particularly those of the wheatgrowers and dairymen.

Listening to hon. members opposite, one is forced to sympathise with them in the difficult task they have before them of endeavouring to convince the producers that the Government are not sympathetic with the man on the land. All the evidence that is available over many years goes to show that the man on the land has received more from Labour Governments in Queensland than any other primary producers have received from any other Government in Australia. Moreover, despite all that the Leader and hon. members of the Opposition may say, the fact remains that the Leader of the Country Party in Australia definitely stated that the farmers in Queensland were better off than those in any other State of Australia.

The hon. member for Coorooora asserted that hon. members on this side failed to take part in the recent referendum campaign.

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Metropolitan members were very active in meetings in their electorates. Neither the hon. member nor the Leader of the Opposition was fair to them or to other members because considerable time was spent by Northern members in assisting organisers throughout their electorates, even though they may have been opposed to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MAHER: I know nothing of the kind. I know the contrary is true.

Mr. WALSH: The Standing Orders do not allow me to employ the language I might like to use in describing the hon. member. There are not many electorates than will show better results than those of Mackay and Mirani in favour of both questions. In Mirani the voting was in favour of both proposals by a majority of two to one and to Mackay the same remark applies. The electors in both these constituencies took some notice of the hon. members representing them.

Mr. MAHER: Tell us about Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. gentleman has his allotted time to make his speech and I am now making a few remarks to show that we made some effort to get the proposals carried. Moreover, a perusal of the primary producers' publications in this State shows that the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock put forward the best case on behalf of the farmers of Australia of all the representatives in the Commonwealth and State Parliaments. He put forward a stronger case than that prepared by those associated with the Federal Government.

It is all very well for hon. members opposite to shed crocodile tears on behalf of the man on the land. Twenty per cent. of the sugar-growers of Queensland are in the electorate of Mirani, represented in this House by myself, and I know only too well that the things done by the Moore Government during their period of office are having their effect to-day, that they are bringing about disunity amongst the sugar-growers throughout the State. Legislation passed by that Government is crippling the smaller farmer in various parts of the State.

Mr. WALKER: It was unanimously recommended by two sugar-growers' associations.

Mr. WALSH: I can claim to know as much about that matter as the hon. member and I defy anyone to show me that the peaks and other proposals were ever unanimously agreed to by the sugar-growers. As I previously pointed out in this House, there is a vast difference between sugar interests and sugar-growers. I defy anyone to show me that the sugar-growers unanimously agreed to the allocations that were eventually agreed to by the Moore Government.

Mr. WALKER: Their representatives did, anyhow.

Mr. WALSH: I intend to deal with that aspect of the subject later. At the moment it is a very important question.

I now draw attention to some of the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition when touring the North. In his endeavour to infuse more or less enthusiasm into the Country Party in these northern electorates he went out of his way to criticise the result of the Premier's visit overseas. The hon. gentleman should have done the decent

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thing; he should have emulated the leader of the Australian delegation overseas, Mr. Casey, and given credit where credit is due.

Mr. MAHER: I did.

Mr. WALSH: I do not agree with the hon. gentleman. The chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers' Council made the remark that he was afraid the hon. member was more or less damning the Premier with faint praise and that whilst endeavouring to emphasise that such and such a thing had been done was all the time really pointing out that something else had not been done. Queensland did obtain an extra quota of 400,000 tons that the industry did not expect, but the hon. gentleman was endeavouring to insinuate by various means that in the long run the growers would not obtain the benefit of this quota.

Mr. MAHER: I showed how.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member did not show it very convincingly. The statement made by the Leader of the Opposition in the northern part of Queensland will convince the people in the North that they have nothing to hope for from a return of hon. members opposite to power in this State.

As a matter of fact, going over the various Acts passed in connection with the sugar industry we find that the first industrial award affecting the sugar industry was made under a Federal Labour Government. We remember the time when the Denham Government imported hundreds of "scabs" from the other States into Queensland to break down a strike when the men here were fighting for decent living conditions. It was only a Labour Government, associated with the old Australian Workers' Association (subsequently the Australian Workers' Union) that broke down the existing conditions, and gave to the workers decent industrial conditions. We know, too, that the Industrial Peace Act, which passed this House in 1912, excluded sugar workers from its operations. As time went on, and with the return of a Labour Government, the sugar workers, like all other workers throughout the State, were brought under the operations of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, and enabled to get decent conditions. It was a Labour Government also that gave the growers their first increase in the price of cane by passing legislation to give them a decent return for the commodity they were growing. And so on, throughout the years, the records show that everything that has been done by Labour in this House has been in the interests of the workers and the producers in the industry.

Mr. MAHER: Not so much the producers.

Mr. WALSH: The fact that almost every sugar-growing electorate is represented by a Labour member in this House is proof that it is Labour that has conferred benefits on the industry. If the hon. gentleman wants more definite proof than that, he is hard to satisfy.

The highest price received by mills for sugar prior to 1915 was £15 a ton. An increase in price of £3 a ton was given as a result of a return of a State Labour Government, which co-operated with a Federal Labour Government.

Mr. BRAND interjected.

Mr. WALSH: We shall come to that later, and I hope I shall be able to give

the hon. member for Isis something to think about. We know—as I was explaining before the hon. member for Isis came into the Chamber—that the legislation the Moore Government passed created the disunity that exists in the industry to-day. In the allocation of peaks they did not allow for districts developed along the lines desired under the terms of the embargo and the original agreement. They definitely penalised some districts, and gave large allocations to other districts, where there has been no substantial increase in settlement.

Mr. BRAND: You are not going to blame the Moore Government for that?

Mr. WALSH: I am blaming the Moore Government. If this Government agreed to a scheme and did not give a fair and equitable allocation to those districts that have settled a number of people on the land, I should be prepared to blame this Government for their action. I have explained before in the Mackay district that the embargo and agreement were granted for at least three very definite reasons—firstly, for the purpose of peopling the northern parts of Australia for the purposes of defence, and encouraging development and settlement within those areas by giving decent living and working conditions to the workers engaged in the industry. The very allocations approved of by the Moore Government were rejected by the present Premier when he was Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, on the ground that the various factors involved had not been sufficiently investigated. That was the proper policy for any Government to adopt before agreeing to such allocations. To-day, in the Mackay district, we have perhaps 20 per cent. of the growers in Queensland producing over one-fourth of the total production last year, and getting approximately £14 a ton on the average for their sugar, as against the average No. 1 Pool price of £17 a ton. There is the position of a district that has increased its settlement by approximately 24 per cent. since 1928 being asked to bear the whole burden of increased development and settlement in that district. The same position obtains in the Bundaberg area, but in the northern areas where large allocations were granted to various mills the increase in settlement since 1928 has been less than 1 per cent. When the agreement and the embargo were approved by the various Governments it was not contemplated that such a state of affairs would be allowed to develop. To-day we have the spectacle of districts being penalised because they have been considerably developed, while on the other hand growers within the same area with really only a fence between the two classes of properties are receiving up to 8s. and 10s. a ton less for their cane. Although they are in receipt of a lower price for their product on account of these allocations they are expected to conform to the industrial conditions laid down for the whole State. That is a phase of the matter that cannot be overlooked.

The fair thing has not been done in my electorate in these allocations. The Act providing for the survey of the lands has had the effect of restricting the small suppliers to such an extent that they are unable to carry on profitably. Hon. members opposite would be better employed considering these phases of the subject than trying to convince the people in a loose sort

of way that the Government have not given adequate attention to the requirements of the man on the land. In my area—I believe the same applies in the Proserpine area, and the hon. member for Bowen has referred to it in his own area, too—we have this effect: a man may own 200 acres of land, but he is compelled as the result of the certification of his area to cultivate the fifteen acres or the area that may be determined on a specified portion of his property, but that does not enable him to produce a crop that will permit him to earn a decent living. Hon. members opposite have endeavoured to pass the blame to the industry instead of accepting it themselves. The hon. member for Isis knows that the allocation of the various peaks, was subject to Government approval, and in his own electorate, where they have made some comment concerning the statement of the Premier at Mackay, they appear to overlook the fact that the sugar-growers in my electorate are not in the Premier's electorate.

I have noticed that the Premier has always dealt with the subject in a broad way, as it affects the industry generally, and although he may be affected to a certain extent in his electorate because the surrounding district comprises sugar areas, he has never attempted to exploit the position. In all of his remarks he has made it plain that it is a matter to be considered by the industry as a whole, so that reasonably decent conditions may be enjoyed by all districts.

As a result of these allocations we know that the suppliers in the district of the hon. member for Isis were paid for 50 per cent. of their production on the Australian consumption basis, whereas in the Mackay district between 68 and 70 per cent. of the production last year had to be sold at export price. When we realise that over the whole of the district their average excess is something like 35 per cent. above the peaks allotted, and that 46 per cent. of their share within the No. 1 pool was also sold at export price, we must concede at once that they have been labouring under very great difficulties.

Mr. MAHER: Do you blame the Opposition for all this?

Mr. WALSH: I blame the Moore Government for those two factors that are causing so much unrest in the industry at the present time. I am getting letters every day in regard to certified areas, because the effect is to restrict the small growers to a very limited area.

Mr. MAHER: You recognise that you have the power in your hands to alter that?

The PREMIER: The Moore Government introduced the legislation.

Mr. WALSH: I have already pointed that out. I am hopeful that in the course of time the present Government will see the wisdom of knocking out this legislation just as they repealed much other legislation passed by the Moore Government.

Mr. BRAND: Notwithstanding the fact that you advised the Government of the day to do it!

Mr. WALSH: The Government have always listened to any representations made by the industry as to control. It does not necessarily follow that if the request from the industry conflicts with public interests that the Government will accede to it. Does

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the hon. member suggest that the Government should accede to every request made by the industry? The hon. member knows that at times the industry has asked for a reduction of wages, but it has to make out a case for it. The same principle applies in this House. If a request is made to the Government, and the Government find on inquiry that public interests are prejudicially affected, they take up the attitude that they have no right to accede to the request.

It was never intended by any Government that there should be a differentiation in sugar prices as between cane districts. It was taken for granted that growers throughout the State would get the same price for their product, no matter in what part of the State it was grown. There has to some extent been a desire to keep down production to an economic level. We have had districts producing excess cane, not as a result of increased production by old-established growers, but chiefly by bringing in new settlement, and being penalised every year for doing so. We now have the spectacle of representations being made that these districts should abandon 30 to 40 per cent. of their production in favour of other districts in order that they may benefit by the result of the visit overseas by the Australian delegation, it being hoped that eventually a higher price will be obtained for sugar. It is unfair that these districts should be called on to grow sugar, establish a price, keep men in employment, and then hand over part of their production to districts that do not show a 1 per cent. increase in settlement since 1928. I know the disability so far as the southern districts is concerned, and I am not suggesting that anything should be done to make their position any worse than what it is, but they must remember that we must look at the industry as a whole. We cannot afford to consider it by districts or in part.

I do not wish my remarks to be construed as applying solely to the sugar-growing districts represented by me, which for the purposes of these remarks I regard merely as one of many sugar-growing areas in Queensland. Naturally, the future of the industry is causing a good deal of concern to the representatives of the organisations. Those areas that adhered to the principles of the embargo and agreement, and carried out the wishes of the Government in regard to development and settlement, should receive some consideration in order to relieve them from the handicaps of the position that has arisen during the last five or six years. I will give a very striking example of how development and settlement have affected the Mackay mills. Take a mill I have in mind, which prior to 1932 never produced more than 70,000 tons of cane from a tramline area, and which was served by this tramline up to 1920. The results of the completion of the North Coast railway—a policy that has been actively prosecuted by this Government so as to provide for the settlement and development of the areas between Bowen and Reckhampton—are now evident. Whereas in 1920 this mill had 35 suppliers of cane in this tram area, and only 6,000 tons of cane were railed at the various railway sidings, an examination of the suppliers down the years to 1933 shows a progressive increase till in that year this mill had 210 railway suppliers supplying 98,000 tons of cane. In that period, however, the supply on the tramway area did not increase by more

than 3,500 tons. We, like the Bundaberg, Tully, and other areas, are asked to keep on developing these northern areas at the expense of the respective sugar districts, and not at the expense of the industry as a whole.

Mr. BRAND: The responsibility is a national one.

Mr. WALSH: I agree with the hon. member that it is a national one, but it has not been treated as such. An examination of the position shows that in the Mackay district since 1928, including the Proserpine area, about 460 farmers have been settled. From time to time we hear members on both sides of the House and members in the Commonwealth Parliament advocating that men should go on the land. I also advocate that policy. I do not think any life is more suitable for many of our young people than a life on the land. At least some of the districts have taken heed of that advice, but we find as a result that we are being penalised very heavily for it.

It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that the Moore Government had no responsibility. The Premier could just as well have approved of that scheme at the time it was submitted to him, and he could have argued now in the same way as the hon. member; but he very firmly turned down the proposals that were submitted to him until the position was investigated to show the likely effects on those phases of the industry in the various districts that I have mentioned.

At the moment we have a conference dealing with this matter, and I hope some attention will be given to the factors I have raised this afternoon. After all, it is not entirely a matter of transferring money out of the sugar pool to allow them to get so much a ton of cane. In many districts there are farmers who think they are the only people to be considered under the operations of the Sugar Agreement. That is a mistaken idea. Many thousands of workers are dependent on the industry—as consumers they give it the necessary protection and pay the price it needs—so that not only the producers should get a reasonable living, but the workers also. Any attempt to restrict the price level to a degree that would reduce employment to any great extent could not very well be favoured by this Government or the Commonwealth Government. Naturally, there is some responsibility on the districts to give something in return for that protection that is afforded to them. The growers are expected to give the workers a reasonable wage, and to develop their properties and increase production so long as they do not reach a level where it does not become uneconomic for them.

It has been suggested that we should part with some of our excess production over the last five or six years. That is a matter that needs to be very carefully considered by the Government if it is contained in the proposals submitted to them. I feel that the district that I represent in this House, which—as I pointed out before—contains over 20 per cent. of the growers in Queensland, and produced over one-fourth of the sugar production in Queensland last year, of which about 70 per cent. was exported, is entitled to some consideration in the review of the position. I know the attempt that has been made would more or less make our position worse

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rather than improve it. One would imagine after the agitation that has been going on for the last seven years that at least the men occupying the higher positions in the industry would see that something was done to ease the position rather than aggravate it.

I wish to make one or two observations in reply to statements by hon. members opposite regarding Government policy and unemployment. Various speakers from the Opposition benches have referred to the alleged excessive taxation in this State. Various statistical returns have been quoted to show that Queensland has the highest taxation of any State in Australia. Side by side with that we have figures that disclose that we have the lowest percentage of unemployment of any State.

The PREMIER: And the lowest cost of living.

Mr. WALSH: And the lowest cost of living. So it is very difficult for hon. members to make a case that this alleged excessive taxation is having a detrimental effect upon employment in this State. It has never been denied by hon. members on this side of the House that the revenue from the unemployment relief tax has assisted very largely in keeping men employed. The argument put forward by hon. members opposite for the abolition or reduction of this tax would cause the State to revert to the position in which their party left it in 1932.

The PREMIER: That is what they want.

Mr. WALSH: Hon. members opposite put forward the contention that it is only the expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Fund that is keeping the employment figure down to what it is to-day, and that if relief from this taxation was given there would be greater employment. That merely shows that private enterprise is not playing its part in employment.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Why not?

Mr. WALSH: That is a question the hon. member may answer. He may know something about that.

The PREMIER: After it came about they would discharge them again.

Mr. WALSH: That is true. They would be discharged again. According to the prosperity index considerable profits are being made in some directions, despite the increase in the basic wage and concessions in industrial conditions. Large profits are being made in many concerns, but there is no evidence to show that private industry has played the part expected of it—at least in assisting to relieve unemployment.

Mr. BRAND: There must be a reason.

Mr. WALSH: Obviously there must be a reason. It must be hanging on to the profits and leaving the Government to do the relieving. If in the other States taxation is much lower than here, as hon. members opposite claim, how is it the unemployment figures for those States are much higher? If this Government reduced taxation to any great extent the State would get into the same pickle as those that are to-day controlled by Governments of the political colour of hon. members opposite.

Mr. BRAND: Did you not say a moment ago that in Mackay they were increasing employment?

Mr. WALSH: I agree as to the sugar industry, but the point of view of hon. members opposite is that if secondary industries were encouraged a little more, there would be increased employment. The Government have given every consideration and every encouragement to secondary industries and comparison with other States is very favourable to Queensland. Hon. members opposite have not devoted enough research to the position to enable them to make a fair analysis.

Mr. MAHER: You taxed them out.

Mr. WALSH: No. In the past the policy of the Government has been such and for the future their programme is such that there is not the slightest doubt that they will be returned to power with a very handsome majority at the next elections.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.
