

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER 1940

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. E. J. Hanson, Buranda) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.**RAILWAY LOOP LINE, CUNDARA.**

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Was there a loop line, also night officer's house, kitchen, &c., constructed at Cundara, near Bindango, Western line, near 332-miles peg, during the last few years? If so—(a) What was the cost of the whole of the improvements? (b) Are such improvements being used, or were they removed? (c) If the buildings and loop line were removed, what is the reason for such removal?”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Larcombe, Rockhampton) replied—

“No loop line has been constructed or night officer's house built at Cundara during recent years. These facilities were provided in 1926, and removed some years ago. General information on the subject can be obtained at the Commissioner's Office.”

RAILWAY FREIGHT CONCESSIONS, DROUGHT TRAFFIC.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba), for Mr. BRAND (Isis), asked the Minister for Transport—

“In view of the severe drought conditions prevailing in many parts of the State, will he make provision for concession freight rates on stock travelling to agistment country and on fodder purchased for starving stock?”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Larcombe, Rockhampton) replied—

“Freight concessions are already in operation on fodder railed to drought areas for the feeding of starving stock, and also on starving stock railed from drought areas.”

EXPENDITURE ON REFORESTATION, 1939-40.

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“What was the expenditure on reforestation in 1939-40 under the following headings:—(a) from consolidated revenue, (b) from the Loan Fund, (c) from other sources?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) replied—

“The information is being obtained.”

AGRICULTURAL FARM TENURES.

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. How many leases of agricultural farms expired in 1939?”

“2. Of that number, how many (a) applied for a freehold title; (b) applied for an extension of lease, thereby retaining a right to a freehold title; and (c) converted to perpetual lease?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) replied—

“1. Eighty-one.

“2. (a) 10; (b) 71; (c) none.”

FODDER RELIEF SCHEME.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“In view of the severe drought conditions in many dairying districts, will he provide a fodder relief scheme operated through the co-operative dairy companies as in 1936, including freedom from interest for a period of not less than 12 months?”

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

“In view of the financial arrangements existing between the Commonwealth and the States, expenditure for the purpose indicated by the hon. member's question requires the joint action of the States and the Commonwealth. Negotiations along these lines are proceeding, and were the subject-matter of a conference which I attended in Melbourne last Friday.”

PAINTING AND FENCING, HODGSON SCHOOL.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“What was the total cost of painting the interior of Hodgson school residence, and erecting 40 chains fencing around such school in or about 1938?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, The Tableland) replied—

“£208 0s. 11d.”

RAILWAY BUILDINGS, MUCKADILLA.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba): I desire to ask the Minister for Transport whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on 26 September—

“With regard to the station buildings (including fettlers' cottages) at Muckadilla—(a) How many buildings were painted recently? (b) What is the average size of lengthmen's cottages? (c) What is the size of the goods-shed and station? (d) How many men were employed to do the painting? (e) What was the length of time taken to do the work? (f) What was the total cost of same?”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Larcombe, Rockhampton) replied—

“(a) Thirteen buildings. In addition, signals, gates, ball levers, notice boards, signs, and windmill were painted. (b) Average size of fettlers' cottages is three

to four rooms and kitchen. (c) Goods-shed is 22 feet by 15 feet, and station buildings 35 feet by 10 feet. (b) Two. (e) Approximately 38 weeks. (f) £600, which includes wages and material. A considerable amount of burning-off and scraping of old paint had to be performed, and the yardage painted per man-hour was satisfactory."

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Queensland Meat Industry Board for the year 1939-40.

Report of the Manager, State Advances Corporation (Workers' Dwellings, Workers' Homes, &c.), for the year 1939-40.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation, dated 26 September, 1940, under the Farmers' Assistance (Debts Adjustment) Acts, 1935 to 1938.

Regulations, dated 26 September, 1940, under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1939.

BURDEKIN RIVER TRUST BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Smith, read a third time.

PAYMENTS TO JUDGES.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) (10.34 a.m.): I move—

"That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing all amounts paid during the past five financial years to judges of the Supreme Court, exclusive of salaries payable to them under the Supreme Court Acts and travelling expenses, such return to include names and amounts, respectively, and the reason for payment in each case."

When the hon. member for Cooroora moved the motion standing in his name there was considerable surprise that the Premier should express a desire to debate it, but the surprise on the part of the hon. member for Cooroora was not comparable with my surprise when the Premier called "Not formal" to the motion that I have just moved. There came to my memory the speech the Premier made when congratulating the late Mr. George Pollock upon his elevation to the high office of Speaker of this Assembly. You may recollect, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier said that to the uninitiated many of the customs of this House would cause some surprise and appear very unusual. This is certainly one of those strange occasions. For the life of me I cannot see why this motion should be debated. To me it seems a matter that will cost little expense to the public, and it is a matter on which Parliament should be informed. Why should there be any secrecy

upon it? The attitude of the Government and their apparent reluctance to give this information would build up in the minds of many people that there is something sinister in the mind of the Government.

The Premier: Your attitude is a sinister one.

Mr. MACDONALD: Let me continue from where I was rudely interrupted just now. (Laughter.) Of all civil positions, I contend the judiciary holds pride of place in the British Empire. Therefore, anything that is done to lessen the individual's respect for the bench, as the Premier well knows, is bad for the State, bad for the bench, and bad for the individual. Since the passing of the Judges' Retirement Act of 1921, the position of the judiciary has been far from a happy one. I think that the abolition of judges' pensions was a serious mistake. Even to-day it is whispered on all sides that Sir James Blair, the late Chief Justice, and now Lieutenant-Governor, has been paid the princely sum of between £3,000 and £4,000 in lieu of long leave, or for some other reason. I know what a despicable creature the whisperer is. He is always abroad in a community. If this rumour is correct, however, a plain statement on this situation should be made by the Government. Such a statement would be welcomed by anyone worthy of holding the high office Sir James Blair occupied. In this connection, and for the same reasons, do the Industrial Court judges receive any remuneration beyond their fixed salaries for work that they may have done and is not known to the general public? I assume that this motion will not be opposed. Yesterday the Premier asked that I "make my argument snappy."

The Premier: No, you can go as long as you like.

Mr. MACDONALD: In compliance with that request I formally and without more ado move the motion.

Mr. BRAND (Isis): I second the motion.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (10.44 a.m.): The hon. member for Stanley is actuated by the best of motives in his endeavour to obtain information by moving this motion. I am very glad that the Government have decided to make Sir James Blair an allowance. I believe in the principle that every judge should receive a pension.

I am sorry the Labour Party cancelled that time-honoured condition attached to the appointment of a judge. I speak for myself entirely—I am not committing my party on this matter because we have not discussed it—but I do feel it is not a good thing to have judges sitting on the bench to a very ripe old age—although some may be quite competent at that old age, others may not—and that it is a good thing to have a fixed retiring age for them, and that when a judge reaches that age, in recognition of his valuable service to his country as a member of the judiciary, he should be paid a pension that would leave him without any fears as to his future.

One of the things that we pride ourselves on in British communities is the integrity and the high standard set by members of our judiciary. There are some countries in the world that cannot measure up to our standards in that respect, and we should jealously guard the honour of the judiciary in every way. I do not think a judge should ever be placed in a position in which he would have cause to fear his financial future. The Government have made a sum available to Sir James Blair, and although it is stated to be payment for acting in the capacity of Lieutenant-Governor, actually I should say it is more in the nature of a pension to compensate him for the service he has rendered to Queensland in the past.

What applies to Sir James Blair applies with equal force to every judge who serves this country on the judiciary. I should like the Government to give serious consideration to the reinstatement of the principle that the judiciary shall be entitled to a pension.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (10.47 a.m.): The hon. member who moved this motion expressed surprise and indignation that I dared to call "Not formal" to a motion moved by him. If he made himself conversant with the Standing Orders he would know that the calling of "Not formal" to any motion by any member is merely an indication that he who calls "Not formal" desires that the matter be the subject of debate. No-one has any peremptory right to move motions without debate, and hon. members have the right to ask for reasons why they should be called upon to vote for certain motions. So that neither the hon. member for Stanley nor the hon. member for Cooroola has any right to complain of my calling "Not formal" to his motion. I merely wanted the subject to be aired, to be debated; because I know that in many cases statements are made throughout the country that are entirely erroneous, and the best way of dealing with those statements is to have the facts placed before the House. I did that in the case of the hon. member for Cooroola and I am doing that in this case.

The only payments made to judges are as follows:—

- (1) Salaries and ordinary travelling expenses.
- (2) Payments made by the Commonwealth for bankruptcy services. Each judge receives this payment.

All proceedings in bankruptcy are now under Commonwealth law and arrangements have been made with the Commonwealth that State Supreme Court judges, when called upon, shall exercise Commonwealth jurisdiction. That is the practice, and judges receive an allowance from the Commonwealth under the Commonwealth law for this purpose.

There is also under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act passed by this Parliament a provision whereby the chairman of

the Central Board may be paid an allowance for exercising that jurisdiction and an allowance is paid from the cane-prices fund to the judge who presides of one-half that which is paid to other members. That is authorised by Parliament and he is entitled to receive it. I might say that the personal desire of the present Chief Justice when appointed to that office was to resign from the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, but owing to the legislation that had been passed and the many intricacies that had to be decided in relation to sugar problems, the Government asked him to continue in that office. He agreed to do so.

Mr. Maher: You are a bit slow in taking that job. You are a bit slow in falling into that job—the vacant position.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I do not understand.

Mr. Maher: You "no savvy"?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I do not understand what hon. members have in mind, Mr. Speaker, I am trying in a plain and definite way to give the House information.

Mr. Brand: It is a good thing to keep the Chief Justice there at the present time, is it not?

The PREMIER: Of course it was, and that is why we asked him to continue in that jurisdiction. The Chief Justice works very hard, not only in the Supreme Court, but also in the Industrial Court, of which he is president, and as chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. In view of the special circumstances we asked him to continue as chairman of that board. He accepted reappointment for a period of three years at the request of the Government, and I believe the industry appreciates that fact. He receives no salary whatever for work in the Industrial Court jurisdiction.

In other words, the salary of Chief Justice covers his work in the Supreme and the Industrial Courts. For his work on the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board he receives an allowance equal to one-half of what is paid to the other part-time members.

Gratuities in lieu of long-service leave are paid to judges and have been paid by the present Government. There is nothing wrong in that principle. It is carried out in other departments of the service, if for some reason men do not take advantage of their long-service leave and continue to do their work and thus save the appointment of other officers to carry out their duties. Minutes go through the Executive Council every week granting gratuities to public servants. The same principle has applied in the case of judges. Judges are entitled to certain leave of absence. If that leave of absence is not taken, then the Government lay down the principle that they are entitled to the cash equivalent as if they had taken the leave. They would have been paid during that leave

if they had taken it during the service, and they merely receive the equivalent at the end of their service instead of during their service.

As a matter of fact, the Crown saves to some extent by the arrangement because if a judge goes on leave it is frequently necessary to appoint an acting judge and he has to be paid for the six months, or whatever period it may be, the equivalent of the other judge's salary for that period. There is no new principle in that. I pointed out that no payment is made to the president of the Industrial Court. The chairman of the Medical Assessment Tribunal, who is another judge, receives no special payment for that work, nor does the chairman of the Land Appeal Court, who is a Supreme Court judge, receive any extra payment for his work on that tribunal.

No payment is made to judges for their services when acting on a royal commission, although it has been whispered sedulously among members of Parliament that it is the practice to make special payments. A case arose recently in which the president of the Land Court made an investigation into the wool industry. He was paid his salary; he was paid 30s. a day plus motor-car hire and other expenses whilst making that investigation, and he made a claim for £3 3s. a day in addition. That claim was rejected by the Government on the ground that the Land Act provides that the chairman shall act in these investigations, and a year or two ago the Minister justified an increase to this officer's salary on the ground that it would save the necessity of making special allowances or paying special fees for investigations made under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act. At that time it was stated to me that Mr. Justice Webb had been paid £3 3s. a day for acting as a royal commissioner. That is not so. Mr. Justice Webb has never been paid anything for acting as a royal commissioner, nor has any other judge. What is paid to judges acting in that capacity is a travelling allowance of £3 3s. a day, which is the travelling allowance that is paid to judges ordinarily. Mr. Justice Webb drew that allowance only while he was absent from Brisbane, and most of his work was done in Brisbane. That applies to the Royal Commission on Sugar Peaks and the Royal Commission on Transport.

Probably one of the reasons why this motion is being debated to-day is, I assume, that a case was put forward for payment to be made to Mr. Payne in the same way as it was made to Mr. Justice Webb. The reply is that no payment was made to Mr. Justice Webb or any other judge for acting as a royal commissioner. They are merely paid their travelling allowances.

There have been cases in which judges have acted for the Commonwealth as well as for the State, and in which those judges have refused fees for that work. That completely disposes of any claim of that nature. Judges receive only those allowances and expenses to which they are entitled under the law.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) (11 a.m.), in reply: I want to contradict an impression that might arise in this Chamber from the utterances of the Premier.

The Premier has definitely stated that this motion was brought forward perhaps owing to influence. That is utterly false. An accusation of that nature is not worthy of the Premier.

The PREMIER: I did not say that. I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Stanley has made very offensive references to me. He said that I made a statement not worthy of a Premier. He further said that I said this motion had been put forward because of certain things. I never said anything of the kind. I said it was one of the reasons why it was being debated—an entirely different thing.

Mr. Macdonald: I am glad to hear that.

The PREMIER: I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to call upon the hon. member for Stanley to withdraw the offensive references he made to me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member for Stanley withdraw his remarks?

Mr. MACDONALD: I regret very much that I misunderstood the Premier's remarks. That was the impression I gathered. If my words were offensive to him I withdraw them in deference to him.

Motion (Mr. Macdonald) agreed to.

OPERATIONS UNDER FARMERS' ASSISTANCE (DEBTS ADJUSTMENT) ACTS.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 26 September (see p. 402) on Mr. Walker's motion—

“That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—(1) for each year since inception (a) the total amount of approvals under the Farmers' Assistance (Debts Adjustment) Acts, 1935 to 1938, (b) the total amount of reduction in debts under approved compositions or schemes of arrangement, and (c) the total amount of advances; (2) the total amount of approvals since inception in respect of (a) sheep, (b) cattle, (c) wheat, (d) cotton, and (e) other properties.”

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) (11.2 a.m.): The reason why the hon. member for Stanley and I were surprised that “Not formal” was called to our respective motions was not that we had no knowledge of the Standing Orders. It was the simplicity of the matters involved, the earnestness with which they were asked, and the fact that the information sought was required in the country that caused our astonishment when the words “Not formal” were called. For the life of me I cannot understand why the Premier wanted to debate this question. Had the information been given in the form in which I asked for it—it was not required for political purposes—we

should have been able to pass it on to the people of the country. We should have been able to inform them as to the progress made after five years' working of the Act.

When speaking to this motion the other day, I made reference to delay in the passage of this Act; I also spoke of the enormous amount of good the Act had done up to the present, after being in operation in some States for approximately five years. That period enables a fair trial to be made. I really wanted to find out how the Act was working in practice, and I wanted to know the amount of money allocated to Queensland in order to see if the amount being spent was confined to the wool industry or being shared by other industries. For that reason, I included in my motion other products besides wool.

There was no occasion to conceal the information I sought. If we cannot get it in the form asked for, we cannot get it as a result of a debate to-day, particularly if the same happens to this motion as happened to the hon. member for Stanley's motion. We are getting nowhere. The question was asked in simple form and it would have saved debate and time to have replied to it—time that is at the present moment valuable to the State. With the time saved we could have done something better.

During the short time at my disposal last Thursday I gave a few particulars as to why this information is being sought. I shall give further reasons why the information should have been given to me. Even on the information that I have already given, apart from the information I propose to give, the Premier made a mistake in calling "Not formal" to my motion.

The Premier: You have no right to object to another hon. member calling "Not formal" to a motion.

Mr. WALKER: I do not mind what the Premier does; that is entirely a matter for him. The motion contained nothing objectionable. Indeed, it was asked in the interests of the public, particularly the people in the country, so that they might have a clear idea of how the Act was being administered. We already know from the report of the Wool Advisory Commission that the indebtedness of some primary producers has been written down by more than 60 per cent., and so can well understand how the Act could have been administered for the benefit of the clients of the Bureau of Rural Development. If a similar benefit had been extended to them, many of them would have been helped considerably. Quite a number are still struggling along, manfully trying to meet their financial obligations, but I am safe in saying that if they had been relieved of only 25 per cent. of them it would have made all the difference between failure and success. There is no doubt that the people on the land are going to have hard times in the future.

Why the Premier refused to give this information is known only to himself. I had no

desire to hurt his feelings when I said the other day that the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock would be more conversant with the administration of the Act than he. I simply intended to say that as the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock had charge of its administration he naturally would have a better idea of how it was working out than anybody else. I certainly did say that the Queensland Government had wilfully delayed their acceptance of the measure for 12 months, and I am still of that opinion. I am also of the opinion that they refused to acknowledge the spirit of the Act by providing in the Bill passed by this Parliament for the compounding of Crown debts as was done by the Commonwealth itself and all the other States. In refusing to provide for the compounding of Crown debts, the Queensland Government jeopardised the success of the measure in this State. That is why I want the information that I seek. I want to know, for instance, if the Crown have funded these Crown debts, and in what direction and to what extent.

My motion is fair in every respect, and the Government should have had nothing to hide. I can thoroughly understand the need to keep defence information away from the public lest it should fall into enemy hands, and I can appreciate the desire to keep Cabinet proceedings secret, and generally not to disclose matters of importance to business, but the information I want is required in the interests of the country. The people in rural areas are anxious to know if their liabilities can be adjusted under the measure, and how it may be done. The Act was initiated by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of helping primary producers, and it was eagerly availed of by all the other States. It has been asked in Queensland whether the farmers are getting the full benefits that were sought to be conferred on them by this measure. Hon. members on this side of the House have directed questions to the Government with the object of eliciting that information, but it has been extremely difficult to get satisfactory replies from them. One Minister may make an admission on one occasion, and another may accidentally supply some information on another, and between the lot of them we are perhaps able to glean some idea of how the Act is working in this State.

I appeal to hon. members opposite to read my motion carefully. It is not loaded in any way; it is an honest request for information that is required by the people on the land. It bears no evidence of any attempt at smart practice on my part. I do not indulge in smart practice; I think every hon. member in the Chamber will concede me that.

While it may be wise to follow the lines Queensland has followed during the last three or four years, I would point out that this policy is wrong in principle and contrary to the spirit of the scheme and the intentions of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth gave each State a basis on which to legislate for the adjustment of farmers' debts, thus readily recognising the effect of the depression

on the producers. It recognised that the value of primary products had depreciated a great deal and that the value of some was virtually nil. Many primary producers could not pay their interest bills because they were earning such small incomes. It was because of these facts that the Commonwealth Government recognised that they had some responsibility. They gave to the States a scheme. Unfortunately, that scheme is only meeting the needs of a small number of people in this State.

It is all very fine for some people who have never been involved, or who have never lent money, to say, "Let the private money-lender make his own adjustments." The person affected might be a member of this House. In fact, I know a member of this House who, in order to enable a borrower to meet his liabilities, agreed to compound the small loan he had advanced. That was done after the farmer had placed all the information before the committee, who knew quite well that he could not meet his liabilities. It is all very well for the butcher, baker, and grocer to come forward and say, "I will take 25 per cent. off the account to save Mr. Farmer from sinking"—that is the spirit of the scheme—but the whole intent and purposes of the scheme is frustrated because the Bureau of Rural Development, the Public Curator, or some other governmental lending authority declares, "We will not fund the amounts due to us. Let the other fellow do it, or let the farmer sink."

My first two points are that the Government delayed putting the scheme into operation, and, secondly, that they will not fund the producers' indebtedness to them. If the Government had funded such indebtedness then the Minister has failed to give the information to this House. I know that no Crown debts were funded till 1937. Information I have will show conclusively it was not done. It is right that the producer-debtor, whether he has borrowed from the Crown or a private institution or individual, should have an opportunity of funding his debts to enable him to carry on. As the Minister knows very well, the Bureau of Rural Development has dozens of accounts that will never be met. The position is hopeless. In time the Minister will be compelled, as he is guided by the law, to repossess and sell some of those properties, but if that indebtedness was funded, as the butcher, the baker, and the private money-lender have funded their debts, some of these debtors would be saved and they would be enabled to produce again. It is not only a question of saving the man, but also of enabling him to become a producer again, particularly as the Imperial Government are crying out for more primary products, and are willing to take all that we can produce.

Even at this eleventh hour the Minister, in all fairness, might meet the Commonwealth in the spirit of the law. There must have been some provision dealing with Crown liabilities in the draft legislation submitted by the Commonwealth. All the other States but Queensland readily adopted it and put it

into operation 16 months before we lent any money. When this State was compelled to pass the legislation or forgo its share of the allocation, what did it do? It said, "Yes, we will put your wishes in the Bill," but the Government in administering the Act never fulfilled the spirit of the scheme. The public have a right to know, and we also have a right, whether the State has fallen into line with other States, and whether Crown debts have been pooled or funded. Moreover, all other States embarked on this scheme over 16 months before we did, as I shall give figures to prove directly.

The Premier said the other day that if there was any allotted money left from the Commonwealth grant it would be spent later on. That is not the point. If you are going to rescue a man from drowning you do not wait till he is under the water two or three days; you get to work immediately. That is the reason why the Commonwealth Government, realising the situation of the man on the land, are going to rescue him immediately. If the allotted money is not spent at the present time it will be too late to rescue him. The man who has been struggling for five years and who has now only his nose above water needs help now or he will soon sink altogether. What is the good of talking about the money's being in the exchequer if it is not being spent? The money should be spent quickly. The spending of this money should have kept pace with the record this Government have created since they have been in power for spending money. If that had happened we should have saved a good few farmers.

I should like to give the Committee the authentic figures regarding the rural rehabilitation scheme as it has been applied to other States and Queensland. In 1937 the aggregate demands for rehabilitation were in excess of the grant. New South Wales asked for £1,500,000, and Victoria asked for £1,250,000 from the Commonwealth grant.

The latest available figures of expenditure up to 1937 are as follows:—

	£
New South Wales	545,000
Victoria	876,000
South Australia	242,000
Western Australia	511,000
Queensland	67,000

The following are the figures for reductions in the Crown debts conceded by State Governments:—

	£
New South Wales	6,648
Victoria	47,000
South Australia	262,000
Western Australia	2,080,000
Queensland	nil

Does not that prove conclusively that the spirit of the law as laid down by the Commonwealth has been broken? Does it not also prove that those farmers who are indebted to the Bureau of Rural Development or the Public Curator are suffering to-day by being debarred from participating in the

benefits of legislation passed by the Commonwealth? Unfortunately, the Commonwealth trusted the Government and that trust has been broken and many people are suffering in consequence, whereas if the intention of the Commonwealth had been carried out they would now be successful producers.

When compared with the other States, Queensland is in a ridiculous position. First of all, the other States have granted reductions in Crown debts amounting to £2,397,000, whereas the Queensland Government have not conceded any. In the second place, Queensland shows up in a poor light compared with the total disbursements of the five States, which amount to £2,242,000 in round figures. All those who are conversant with the conditions know that this is cheap money, and we find that Queensland has spent only £67,000. That is unfair, and I think it ought to be exposed. I do not like exposing these things because I realise that all Governments make mistakes; but when one cannot get information that one has the right to get in order to be in a position to debate such matters as the Financial Statement, one must endeavour to get it. If the exact figures are not supplied by the Government hon. members cannot be blamed for making mistakes. Members have a right to know exactly what has happened just as a shareholder in a company has a right to know the transactions of the company.

In 1935 the State Government were excluding debts due to the State from any scheme of reduction. This defect was not removed until nearly the end of the 1936 session: in other words, 12 months after the original Act was passed.

On Tuesday last the Premier made a statement in which he endeavoured to show that the operation of the Commonwealth rural rehabilitation scheme in this State was not delayed by the State Government. The Commonwealth Act, the Loan (Farmers' Debt Adjustment) Act, was passed early in 1935, and received the Royal Assent on 13 April, 1935. It provided for the allocation to the various States of £10,000,000, and that is virtually the sum they have got up to the present time or the greater portion of it.

Section 6 (6) stated—

“The moneys payable to any State in pursuance of this Act shall be payable in such instalments and at such times as the Minister thinks fit.”

Therefore, the Minister can give the States part of their allocation from time to time, and, I take it, the unused part will be held by the Commonwealth and used later. That is quite a sound business procedure, and one with which, I am sure, every State will agree. Obviously, when the Queensland Act was not acceptable to the Commonwealth Government, which the Premier has admitted, Queensland did not get its share of money, but the Premier immediately falls back on the statement that the allocated money can be used later on. What is the good of using it later on? This was to be a speedy remedy or

speedy relief. People should have been able to get that relief quickly instead of being dragged over three or four useless years. When administration goes on in that way it calls for inquiry.

The first Queensland Act was passed in 1935, and received the Royal Assent on 5 December, 1935. This Act was in dispute, and at a conference of the Queensland Country Party in August, 1936, 16 months after the Commonwealth Act was passed, Mr. Thorby, Assistant Minister for Commerce in the Commonwealth Government, explained the delay as follows:—

“The Queensland Government persists in retaining a clause in its Act which says that ‘It shall not bind the Crown.’”

Why did the Government dictate to the Commonwealth on a matter of that kind, when all the other States had previously fallen into line? It was in the draft Commonwealth Bill, and they must have seen it. Why the omission? A rectification took place here the following year, because they had to submit. To my mind, it was only smart practice, although I do not like to make use of the term. To have a section in a Commonwealth Act, which the Commonwealth Government include in their legislation, and then not to use it, and thus debar all these people from becoming participants under the Act, is not giving a fair deal to these people.

“The Commonwealth Government is not prepared to make money available to Queensland until that Government is prepared to allow debts to the Crown to be suspended or treated in the same way as other creditors in any composition that may be arranged.”

That conclusively proves that the Commonwealth Government wanted uniformity. They did not want the State or any person to lend a farmer £100 and not be under some obligation to that man—i.e., to fund the amount when they funded theirs. This would have given equality and given the financing public, including the Government, a “fair go” under fair conditions. I cannot understand how any Government with any conscience could allow this to be done, especially when men are in a hopeless financial position. Although the burden of debt is too great, they are not prepared to reduce it by a small amount, and thus give the farmer an opportunity to become a successful producer. It would be only a question of time before he would become that, yet they prefer that he should remain a miserable man and a small producer instead of becoming probably a successful one.

Even in December, 1936, the Queensland Government were still refusing to agree to any composition of debts or scheme of arrangement that included debts due to the State. The following letter proves this—I will not disclose the applicant's name, but it was written by the manager of the board:—

“With further reference to your desire to be assisted under the Farmers' Rehabilitation Scheme, I have now to advise that

the Land Administration Board has referred here your letter of the 23rd of last month, from which it would appear your liabilities are solely to Government departments. In view of this, it is pointed out that although Crown debts may be compounded where deemed necessary, no advance in respect of such debts can be made under the scheme, and applications relating solely to Crown debts cannot be accepted for consideration."

The Queensland Government finally amended their Act to meet the wishes of the Commonwealth Government. They did this during the 1936 session, and the amending Act received the Royal Assent in November, 1936. That Act contained the following new section:—

"(13A) Where the Board is of opinion that it is necessary that the assistance which may be given under this Act to an applicant farmer who is indebted to the Crown (being the State of Queensland or any State Governmental authority) shall, to enable the farmer concerned to continue to carry on farming operations and to give him a reasonable prospect of carrying on those operations successfully, include a composition or scheme of arrangement of any such Crown debts, or specified Crown debts, or portion of any specified Crown debts, the Board may recommend accordingly."

New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia had all conformed to the desires of the Commonwealth Government. The other States were far ahead of us.

As I have only a few minutes to speak, I must skip many things, but as ample proof of my argument I quote from the little red book with which hon. members opposite are so conversant. I refer to Information Bulletin No. 11, at page 3, on which appears the following table:—

FARMERS' REHABILITATION SCHEME.

—	No.	Amount of Debt.
Applications received	27	£ 84,713
Applications approved	19	28,318
Applications rejected	19	27,332
Applications withdrawn	2	5,279
Applications in abeyance	110	521,996

I find that when the board took over at the beginning of that quarter, that is, on 1 July, 1939, there were no fewer than 123 applicants awaiting consideration. Such a delay is serious. Why, it demands an inquiry. What is the use of giving a man consideration when, according to this table, it would be 12 months before anything would be done? If it can deal with only 19 cases in a quarter, and it has 110 in abeyance, it would be 12 months before some applications were considered. Why, money borrowing is done after mature thought of a day or two on the part of the farmer. A man makes application because he has liabilities to meet, and he desires to reduce or liquidate his debts. It is an Australian trait to want to do these things speedily. I

know that complaints have been made because applications for advances from the board have not been finalised for a month or six weeks. If a delay of only one month or six weeks causes the prospective borrower some concern, what must a delay of 12 months do? We cannot hope to get anywhere if we carry on business in that way.

I say advisedly to the Government, "Give those producers who are Crown debtors the opportunity of funding their debts. Deal speedily with the whole question and deal fairly with both private lenders and the Government." Let us put them all on the one footing. It is no use running down the Commonwealth Bank during a time of crisis. We want to get somewhere.

I repeat that the Government have negligently carried out the administration of this Act, first in regard to the number of applications that have not been considered, and secondly by not funding Crown debts, as they ought to fund them. I ask the Government to treat the Commonwealth Government fairly, not only by observing the law as amended by the Queensland Government but also in the spirit of fair play. To break the spirit of a law is as bad as breaking its letter.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.31 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the hon. member for Cooroora. I cannot understand the need for discussion of a motion such as this, especially when it is known that no great cost would be involved in supplying the information. According to our parliamentary practice, if a return is going to cost a large sum of money the Government have the right to question the wisdom of supplying it, but it would take only a few minutes of the time of an officer in charge of this department to supply the information asked for in the motion of the hon. member for Cooroora.

Had the answer been given to his original question it would have provided very useful information for discussion in relation to the welfare of Queensland. We are all aware that in the depression Australia passed through some years ago the primary producers had a very bad time. In all industries prices for commodities fell, and as a result there was a large amount of distress. The position was so acute that the Commonwealth Government in their wisdom decided that it was necessary to give them aid. They decided that a sum of at least £10,000,000 was necessary to rehabilitate our primary producers—

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: They promised £20,000,000.

Mr. BRAND: To be correct, they promised £21,000,000. The money was to be distributed through the instrumentality of the various State Governments. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this was very important legislation, for we know that its passage has been the means of re-establishing in industry many of the people who took advantage of it. The people in the country should have full knowledge of what help has been

given, not only by the Commonwealth Government in making this money available, but through the State Governments in carrying the scheme into effect. We should also know the contribution made by private financial institutions and business people towards bringing about the rehabilitation of the primary producers in this country.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry:

We also know something about the moneys the Commonwealth Government will not supply.

Mr. BRAND: If the hon. gentleman will read the motion he will see that it does not seek information in respect of things that the Commonwealth Government have failed to do. We can only surmise that if the Commonwealth Government have failed to give the help that should be given, it is because the State Government have not made a request for it. The State Act empowers the State Government to submit requisitions to the Commonwealth Government for the money that is required from year to year to carry out the provisions of the Act. It seems very peculiar that there is a variation in the amounts required by the different States from time to time, and I can only conclude that if there is any difficulty in this respect it is because the States concerned have not applied to the Commonwealth Government for all the money that is needed to give the financial help sought to be given by the scheme. At the present time the primary industries in Queensland are more prosperous than they were during the depression years, because of the prevailing improved prices for primary products, and so there is not the same call upon this fund as there was in 1934 and 1935, and we may not be able to avail ourselves of the money to be provided by the Commonwealth Government under this Act for the relief of distress in this State. However, I know that there are still some primary producers in Queensland who have not recovered from the devastating effect of the fall in the price of primary products in the depression years. They have been hard up against it since the depression, and I have no doubt that they will be making requests for financial help in accordance with the Act. Still, there is not the same need for this help to-day as there was in earlier years, but we should know just what is being done.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry:

You are simply trying to justify the action of your party in the Federal House.

Mr. BRAND: I am trying to justify the motion by giving reasons why this information should be supplied. Why should it be necessary to debate a motion that seeks to obtain information of vital importance to the people in the country? We should know what industries require the most assistance and what industries have benefited in accordance with liberal legislation initiated by the Commonwealth Government in their interests. For instance, we want to know the total amount of help that has been approved since the inception of the Act in respect of sheep, cattle, wheat, cotton, and other products. That information should be available to hon. mem-

bers, and there should be no objection on the part of the Government to letting the whole country know what financial aid has been given to various industries. It may enable us the better to decide what primary industries are justified in asking the Government for further aid. There is no reason why all this information should not be readily forthcoming from the Government. I do hope that our administration of this Act will, in the coming year, continue to show greater sympathy to people in distress and urgently in need of assistance. I hope, too, that we shall be able to submit to the Commonwealth Government a request for a greater allocation from the fund.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:

Do you think that has not been done?

Mr. BRAND: We are not getting as far as other States under this scheme. I am quite satisfied that no differentiation is being shown by the Commonwealth Government against Queensland. There must be some other reason.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry:

Your party has dropped the farmers.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that if one authority in Australia has stood by the primary producers in the past years more than another it has been the Commonwealth Government. They have given every consideration to all the primary industries in this State. No State in the Commonwealth should have higher praise for the actions of the Commonwealth Government than Queensland. I could enumerate industries they have assisted, but I do not intend to go into that phase of the question. I say that sympathetic consideration has been given to every industry in this State on whose behalf an appeal has been made to the Commonwealth Government by the State Government.

When I was diverted from the trend of my thoughts by the Secretary for Labour and Industry, I said I was afraid the necessary approach had not been made to the Commonwealth Government with a view to getting a greater allocation from the fund to meet the whole of the needs of the distressed farmers in Queensland under the Farmers' Assistance (Debts Adjustment) Acts.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry:

That has definitely been made.

Mr. BRAND: I repeat that I cannot understand why we have not received that additional assistance, because in all other approaches to the Commonwealth Government, whether for the sugar industry, the cattle industry, the wool industry, or the cotton industry, we have been met sympathetically and received all the consideration from that Government that we desired or should get. As a matter of fact, it is due to the help that has been given by the Government that our industries are so prosperous to-day. The Secretary for Labour and Industry should be aware that all industries are operating to-day under agreements concluded between the Commonwealth and Imperial Governments

assuring a price for the whole of our primary products. Consequently, the hon. gentleman should be the last man to suggest that we are not being met with sympathy by the Commonwealth Government.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: Why did they not supply the £20,000,000 that was first suggested instead of cutting it down to £6,000,000?

Mr. BRAND: I had in mind a sum of over £2,000,000 raised for developmental purposes in this State, and the fact that nothing is being done with that fund in relation to many of our primary industries. The hon. gentleman is asking the Commonwealth Government to do all while his Government have that great amount of money at their disposal for the development of industry generally and are not making the same contribution as they are.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: Yes, we are.

Mr. BRAND: At all events, our primary industries have received adequate assistance in past years from the Commonwealth Government.

I hope we shall not have a division on party lines on this motion, and that Parliament and the people will be able to get the information desired by the hon. member for Cooroora. Be it said to his credit that he has asked for the information to be given. I am surprised, in the light of my parliamentary experience, that there should be cause to discuss a motion of this character. It is obvious that the information should be given to Parliament. We have a right to have it.

Mr. McLEAN (Bundaberg) (11.46 a.m.): The mover of the motion will be adequately answered by the Minister. If hon. members opposite had concentrated their efforts on inducing the Federal Government to give the necessary money to Queensland they would have been better advised than in tabling this motion.

The hon. member for Isis said that he could not understand the differences in the requirements of the various States. He also said that he could not see why there was an argument. I do not see that there is any cause for argument either, because he has answered his own question. He said that the amount that was allotted by the Commonwealth would not be required by Queensland. The more prosperous conditions of the farmers in this State of which he spoke are due to the rural policy pursued by the Labour Government.

The hon. member also said that the Commonwealth Government had given full assistance to all industries in the various States. That is not so. The Commonwealth Government have extracted £12,500,000 in taxation from this State and have given back only £7,500,000.

Mr. Moore: That is not true.

Mr. McLEAN: It is true. I am quoting from the Treasurer's Statement. Those figures indicate that the Commonwealth is reducing the capacity of this State to aid the farmers.

Mr. Nimmo: What do we get back for sugar?

Mr. McLEAN: I will deal with that. There has been much vacillation on the part of the Federal Government about the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Scheme since it was initiated in the Commonwealth Parliament. In 1939 many questions were asked on the matter in the Federal House. In "Hansard" No. 12 for 1939 Senator Cooper is reported as asking the following questions:—

"1. What amount was originally voted for relief of distressed farmers under the Loan (Farmers' Debt Adjustment) Act?

"2. What amount has been advanced to each State for this purpose to date?

"3. What amount has been actually paid out by each State to date?

"4. What is the capital value of the debts taken over by each State to date?

"5. Is provision being made for further amounts to be made available to the States for the purpose mentioned at an early date?

"6. What amount is still available of the original amount allocated for this purpose?"

Senator McBride, in answering the questions some time later, stated in reply to No. 1 that an amount of £12,000,000 was appropriated under the Loan (Farmers' Debt Adjustment) Act 1935-1936. It will be noted that three years after the passing of the Act Senator Cooper had to ask these questions. It will also be noted that the amount given to the farmers throughout the whole of the States approximated only half the amount allotted in a period of three years. The result has been disclosed by the recent Federal election, especially in Wimmera and similar electorates, in which the representatives of the Country Party have been brushed aside. This has been the result of the Commonwealth Government's vacillation in giving aid to the farmers. South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Western Australia made very definite requests to the Commonwealth Government, and it is because of the paucity of assistance that representatives of the Country Party were so badly beaten in the elections.

The answer to the second question was—

"The total amounts advanced to the States under this Act to date are—

State	Amount, £
New South Wales ..	1,733,000
Victoria	1,972,000
Queensland	545,000
South Australia ..	790,000
Western Australia ..	1,064,000
Tasmania	213,000'

That is a total of £6,317,000 out of an appropriation of £12,000,000.

“3. Amounts paid out by each State to 31 May, 1939, are—

	£
New South Wales	1,359,000
Victoria	1,968,672
Queensland	492,777
South Australia	690,000
Western Australia	1,031,743
Tasmania	203,073
	£5,745,265”

It will thus be seen that New South Wales and Victoria received a large allocation from the Commonwealth grant. No person could have expressed greater admiration of the primary producers of the State than the hon. member for Isis when he said that there would not be the same necessity for it as in the years of the depression. In that connection the hon. member means that there had been very marked progress in Queensland by the primary producers, and it would not be necessary for them to draw the amount allocated.

To question No. 4 the reply was—

“The value of debts as at 31 March, 1939, on approved claims prior to and after adjustment is as follows:—

State.	Value of Debts on Approved Claims.	
	Prior to Adjustment. (a)	After Adjustment. (a)
	£	£
New South Wales	3,537,645	1,436,459
Victoria	7,033,076	2,913,723
Queensland	1,158,225	699,512
South Australia	(b) 4,948,438	(b) 2,611,321
Western Australia	13,113,096	9,371,225
Tasmania	(b) 790,838	(b) 454,340
Total	30,581,328	17,487,580

(a) Including amounts written off by creditors.

(b) As at 31 December, 1938.”

The answer to question No. 5 was—

“At its forthcoming meeting, the Loan Council will consider the total amount to be borrowed for the financial year 1939-40 for all governmental purposes, and what proportion of that amount can be made available to the Commonwealth for its loan requirements, including the amount required for further payments to the States on account of the appropriation of £12,000,000 for farmers' debt adjustment purposes.

“The proportion of the appropriation of £12,000,000 which has not yet been paid to the States is £5,683,000.”

That is the crux of the situation. If the motion were directed to moving the Commonwealth Government to make available this balance of £5,000,000 for allocation to the various States, it would be serving some useful purpose, but, in my opinion, all the

arguments of hon. members opposite have been used merely for the purpose of political propaganda, to show that the Commonwealth Government have done wonderful things for the primary producers. I say that they have not, and that is borne out by the fact that the representatives of the primary producers in the various States were defeated so heavily in the recent Federal elections. Their vacillation has been the cause of their defeat.

If this money was made available, and action was taken in accordance with the motion passed by this Assembly last Thursday for the remission of the interest burden by commercial and financial institutions, many of the primary producers' difficulties would be overcome. The money could be made available to the various States and disbursed through the Bureau of Rural Development or by other methods of rural rehabilitation. If this was done there would be no need for hon. members opposite to be continually harping about what this Government have or have not done.

In his endeavour to bolster up a case for the Commonwealth Government, the hon. member for Isis really put forward an argument in favour of this State Government, for his very statement that the number of farmers needing help is not now nearly so great as it was during the depression years is direct proof that the State Government are doing a great deal in the interests of the primary producers. It is an admission that, but for the Labour Government, the primary producers of Queensland would not have prospered as they have.

In conclusion, I suggest that the motion be altered to one of censure of the vacillation of the Commonwealth Government and their delay in making available to the primary producers of the various States that balance of £5,000,000.

Mr. DEACON (Cunningham) (12 noon): I cannot understand why the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock refused to put on the table of the House the information asked for by the hon. member for Cooroora.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Has any refusal been made? Have I refused?

Mr. DEACON: A question was asked in the House. Later a motion was moved that a return be furnished giving certain information. Why should the Minister or the Government refuse to lay it on the table of the House? It is information we should have. Hon. members opposite have not only refused to comply with the request but took it upon themselves to blame the Commonwealth Government. Why did not the Minister immediately agree to place the information on the table? There is no reason why it should have been refused. It does not matter what Government are in power, all that was asked for was particulars of the operations under a certain Act. Why should there be difficulty in getting that information when we know that money was made available by the Commonwealth Government? No wonder the farmers blame the State Government.

Hon. members opposite have given reasons why the information should be refused, but it is information the whole State is entitled to have.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Answer my question. Who refused the information?

Mr. DEACON: Immediately the hon. member for Cooroora asked the question the Minister should have furnished the information. There was no need for a motion. When notice of the question was given the Minister should have said he was willing to give the information. How can the Government blame hon. members on this side of the House and the farmers outside for thinking that the Government are not trying to give the relief for which the Commonwealth Government have found the money? They can only think that the State Government are refusing to help. Many of our farmers and graziers—as well as other people on the land—cannot get the money they require and are in difficulties. They should receive the help they are entitled to from the funds provided by the Commonwealth. If the Government are blamed for the delay and the smallness of the amount given, nobody can wonder at it. Why should people outside not blame them when they will not give such simple information? A motion has had to be debated in this House asking that the information be laid on the table. Had the Minister stood up at once and said that he would give the information there would have been no need for the motion. Why should he refuse it?

Mr. Dart: What have they to hide?

Mr. DEACON: What have they to hide, as the hon. member for Wynnum remarks? I cannot understand the attitude of the Minister and hon. members opposite in withholding the information. If the money offered by the Commonwealth was not enough they could say so, and if they did not have enough applications to absorb all the money they had they could say that, too. There is no reason why they should delay in giving the information, and, indeed, there should have been no need to move this motion in an endeavour to get it. We all know that there are settlers that the ordinary banking institutions cannot help because the margin of security is not good enough, but here the Commonwealth Bank has offered the money to help those who are worthy of help and the State Government are not taking full advantage of the offer.

Why will they not give us the information? Why do they refuse us the information, and why do they debate a motion that simply asks for the information? I cannot understand why any hon. member opposite should argue about it or give any reason why the information should not be given.

The Secretary for Public Lands: The Minister has not refused to give it.

Mr. DEACON: Then why does he not give it at once?

Mr. Walker: The Minister has refused to give it. He refused to give it in answer to a question that I asked him on a previous occasion.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I have not refused to give it.

Mr. Walker: I asked the hon. gentleman a question concerning the matter.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member for Cooroora says that he asked a question about it and then the information was not given. When the motion was first given notice of the Minister could have intimated at once that he was willing to give the information.

Mr. Collins: Is that not a far better way? You do not want it debated?

Mr. DEACON: Of course he does not want to give the information.

Mr. Collins: That is not a reply to my question.

Mr. DEACON: There must be some reason why he does not want to give the information. If the Government had done their duty, if they had availed themselves of the money provided by the Commonwealth Government, if they had done their utmost to help farmers in distress they could easily have given us all the information and thus avoided any suspicion that the Act was not being fully administered. The very fact that they have allowed this debate to take place is a disgrace to them. They will not give the information.

We all know that farmers in distress have applied for help and have not been able to enjoy the advantages of the Act. Every hon. member representing a country district knows that applications for relief have been refused although the money was forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government. Still the Minister has not given us the information when he should have given it the instant the motion was tabled. There should not be any delay about the matter, and it should not be necessary to have this debate. If the Government have anything to hide, or even if they have nothing to hide they can give their reasons for not making the advances, for not getting the money from the Commonwealth, and for not helping the farmers.

Mr. Collins: Who refused to give the information?

Mr. DEACON: If the Government have nothing to hide why not answer the question at once?

Mr. Collins: There is no refusal.

Mr. DEACON: A debate is necessary to get the information.

Mr. Collins: You are ashamed of it.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister should have said at once without any delay that he would give details of the amounts advanced and all particulars. He could have given that information at once. One hon. member, in speaking as to why the information has

been refused, tried to blame the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Jesson: Of course they are to blame.

Mr. DEACON: The Commonwealth Government are not to blame; it is the State Government who are to blame.

Mr. Collins: There is no defence. You cannot defend the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. DEACON: There is no reason whatsoever why the State Government should not have taken advantage of the allocation made by the Commonwealth Government to help those settlers in this State who are badly in need of help. We know they have not done so, and now they have refused to give the information.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (12.12 p.m.): For a quaint mixture of specious propaganda and a want of knowledge of the question before the House I commend the speech of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat as a classic in debates in this Chamber. It has been customary for a number of years for hon. members at least to possess acquaintance with facts before they proceed to debate a question, but the hon. member delivered a speech disclosing a want of knowledge and made insinuations not justified by any fact. He said: "What have the Government to hide?" That is a cowardly, mean insinuation.

Now, what are the facts of the case? The hon. member for Cooroora placed the motion we are debating on the business-sheet. He had a perfect right to do so. He was accorded the usual courtesies of this House in being given an unrestricted right to debate the question. He was supported by the hon. member for Isis. Then the hon. member for Bundaberg made a short speech and was followed by the hon. member for Cunningham. In other words, three Opposition speakers have contributed to this debate, and one Government speaker, yet the hon. member for Cunningham has the audacity to say we are withholding information when his own party is preventing that information from being made available.

Let me say at the outset I have nothing to hide, nor have the Government, and I am willing to agree to the motion.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Let me say further that I am not going to agree to it and let the constituencies of Queensland be wrongly informed by hon. members opposite who, for political purposes, endeavoured to pervert a question and make capital out of the sufferings and hardships of certain sections of our community, without replying to their statements. That is a shameful practice. Let us look at the cold facts without political distortion and without political propaganda. The

cold facts are these: some years ago I was summoned to a conference in Canberra to discuss this question of rural rehabilitation. The Commonwealth Government then announced that £20,000,000 was to be made available for rural rehabilitation. No person familiar with the affairs of agriculture generally in Australia at that time would say that the sum of £20,000,000 was generous. As a matter of fact, the sum was inadequate. But what happened, Mr. Speaker? The very party that hon. members opposite seek to defend allowed that sum of £20,000,000 to be whittled down to £10,000,000, although it was subsequently increased to £12,000,000. They were very favourable custodians of the rights and privileges of the farmers. This Country Party, which was then associated with the Commonwealth Government, and was led by Dr. Earle Page, who originally told us in conference that £20,000,000 was to be made available, ultimately accepted a reduction of £8,000,000. Hon. members opposite do not refer to that fact.

Mr. Deacon: You did not take your share.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I will come to that. I am not going to allow the hon. member to get away with any perverted statements he has made in this House.

Obviously, it is a popular thing to get money for nothing; it always is and always will be. When it came to the allocation of the £10,000,000 that was to be made available—£2,000,000 was to be held in trust against eventualities, but just what those eventualities were I did not know; it was a means, anyhow, of reducing the £12,000,000 to £10,000,000—every State wanted the maximum amount it could get from the Commonwealth Treasury. I am willing to plead guilty to that desire myself. Because we could not agree on the allocation, it was eventually arranged that the Commonwealth Statistician should assess the agricultural debt of each of the States and make recommendations accordingly. So the issue was removed from a parliamentary atmosphere to an economic atmosphere. The Commonwealth Statistician made the necessary survey, and recommended that certain amounts be made available to each of the States. A very significant thing emerges here: Queensland, on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Statistician, was allotted a smaller proportional share than any other State in the Commonwealth. What was the reason? It is not far to seek. The primary-producers' debt structure in Queensland was less formidable than that in any other State in the Commonwealth.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That was conclusive proof that the beneficent legislation of the Labour Party had materially enhanced the conditions of primary production in Queensland, and it had materially protected the producers in

Queensland, and their debt was less than that of any other State in the Commonwealth.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The hon. member for Cunningham affects to laugh at that. I will pin him down to all these things and give instances. Is it not true that the Queensland wheatgrower—until the Commonwealth Government insisted that the wheat of Queensland should be taken over and marketed by the Commonwealth authority—as a result of the legislation enunciated by the Queensland Government received a higher price for his wheat than any other grower in Australia? Is it not true also that before dairy stabilisation—and this State led the campaign for dairy stabilisation and initiated dairy stabilisation—the dairy farmers of this State got a better price for their butter than those in any other State of the Commonwealth? So one could multiply example after example to demonstrate that the Queensland Labour Government's enactments are responsible to a very large degree for the greater prosperity of Queensland in comparison with other States of the Commonwealth.

These facts are borne out by the determination of the Commonwealth Statistician, who allotted Queensland, on the ascertained debt structure, a lesser amount than was allotted to any other State in the Commonwealth. I accept that finding, but I have two points on which I offer very grave criticism of Commonwealth administration of this Act. Some attempt has been made to gain some political kudos, again, I repeat, out of the sufferings of certain people, by suggesting that the Queensland Government were responsible for delay. I handled this thing from its inception, including the preliminary negotiations, and I know the whole story, perhaps better than any other man in this House, and I am going to tell the whole story, so that the people can judge whether Queensland did the right thing or whether the Commonwealth Government, made up of the United Australia and Country Parties, were derelict in their responsibilities.

Mr. Nimmo: Tell us about the Agricultural Bank.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I will tell the hon. member everything, and they will be sorry they raised this question.

The Queensland Government, in common with every other Government in the Commonwealth, had submitted to them certain draft proposals. These were being consolidated in the form of legislation, and submitted to the Commonwealth authorities for their concurrence and approval. Queensland has a very good habit of getting on with the job, and Queensland got on with this job. After many consultations between myself, my officers, and financial institutions—I think hon. members will admit that a Bill such as that Bill, opening up new ground, is not an easy Bill to frame, but requires much consideration of possible eventualities and contin-

gencies—we finally framed the Bill. It was approved by Cabinet, and I was instructed to forward it to the Commonwealth authorities for their approval. In reply the Commonwealth Government informed us that the Bill met with their approval. Armed by that decision, and believing that the Commonwealth Government would act in good faith, believing that the word of a Government was sacrosanct and binding, I then introduced that measure in this House. Can any person say that I did not submit that Bill in good faith? That I acted in bad faith is not an accusation that can be made against me. This House accepted the Bill. At this juncture I want to say that I believe, as a result of having the responsibility of the administration of rural rehabilitation, that a better scheme could be evolved. I can see that the vicious circle that this system seeks to break is, to a degree, again manifesting itself and being perpetuated. But that is my own personal opinion.

That was the opinion I originally held, and two years later it was the opinion held by half the States represented at the conference. The Bill was passed by this House, and we then made application to the Commonwealth Government for our allocation of the finances under the Act. We had the most extraordinary difficulty in getting replies from the Commonwealth authorities. I tried myself to get replies. Ultimately, in desperation, I asked the Premier to endeavour to get replies. When the House rose, we had no money, we had the Act on the statute-book, and we had set up the organisation required by the Commonwealth, only to find that no funds were available.

Mr. Dunstan: You had no money?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: We had no money. This money is entirely at the disposal of the Commonwealth Treasurer for distribution amongst the States. The Commonwealth Treasurer—if I remember rightly, he was a Country Party member—refused, in spite of the fact that we had passed the legislation, and in spite of the fact that the Commonwealth Government had concurred in that legislation, to make the money available. Every endeavour was made, from the time that Bill was passed until this House rose, to get some satisfaction from the Commonwealth Government, but it was not until this House had gone into recess that the Commonwealth Government calmly announced that their word did not mean anything, that they were not bound by their word, that the sanction they had given us to go ahead was withdrawn. In other words, they repudiated their concurrence and suggested that material alterations were necessary in the Bill before it could meet with their approval.

Mr. Russell: You had to back down, of course.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Is there any suggestion of backing down when one drafts a Bill, submits it to the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Government says, "That Bill

is in order; go ahead with it"? There is no backing down under those circumstances.

Mr. Russell: Why did you back down?

Mr. Dunstan: That only shows how they twist.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: When this House had gone into recess the Commonwealth Government intimated, after a great deal of pressure, that their consent was withdrawn and the Bill would have to be altered. We altered the Bill within a few days after receiving that communication. During that recess a Bill embodying the Commonwealth Government's requirements was drafted, and forwarded to the Commonwealth Government, but a period of many weeks elapsed before the Commonwealth Government informed us whether that Bill was acceptable to them. I can assure this House that so soon as we got the information from the Commonwealth Government that our second Bill was acceptable to them the necessary amendments were initiated in this House.

Those are the plain, hard, cold facts. They entirely disprove any suggestion by the hon. member for Cunningham or the hon. member for Cooroora that any delay that occurred was occasioned by the State Government. I reiterate that any delay that occurred was occasioned by the Commonwealth Government, and occasioned by them in a most exasperating and unsatisfactory manner.

Mr. McLean: No wonder they struck all the Country Party out at the recent elections.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: When they do that sort of thing one can understand it.

Mr. Edwards: You are only indulging in political propaganda now.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Does the hon. member suggest, after three speakers have been traducing this Government on a case that does not bear analysis, that because I reply and give the facts I am indulging in political propaganda?

Mr. Edwards: Under these circumstances can we not be Australians and drop this business?

Mr. Collins: Take your whipping. You cannot take your medicine.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: This is most intriguing, indeed. Do hon. members opposite expect that they are going to get up in this Chamber and make all sorts of wild, unconfirmed, and uncorroborated statements that are not based on facts, and that those statements are going to be allowed to go out to the country uncontradicted? Surely they do not suggest that I am not going to lay the facts before the constituencies in Queensland? In laying the facts before the constituencies of Queensland I am doing what hon. members opposite suggest should be done with relation to the tabling of this return. I am merely providing

information to which I think the people of Queensland are entitled.

Let us get down to the financial basis of this thing. When it came to a question of the allocation of funds—and this basis was determined by the Commonwealth Statistician—it was determined that the total appropriation of £10,000,000—not £12,000,000, you will observe—was to be allocated as follows—

The States were to receive—

	£
New South Wales ..	3,450,000
Victoria	2,500,000
Queensland	1,150,000
South Australia ..	1,300,000
Western Australia ..	1,300,000
Tasmania	300,000

The actual percentage in respect to the total amount of £10,000,000 to be made available was—

	Per cent.
New South Wales ..	34.5
Victoria	25
Queensland	11.5
South Australia ..	13
Western Australia ..	13
Tasmania	3

Now, the total amounts allotted up to the present—and I reiterate that the Commonwealth Treasurer has full control of the distribution of these funds—are—

	Per cent.
New South Wales ..	28.20
Victoria	30.17
Queensland	9.13

Yet people have the audacity to say that there is a Country Party to look after the interests of Queensland!—

	Per cent.
South Australia ..	12.17
Western Australia ..	16.89
Tasmania	3.44

Let us examine the matter from another aspect. The total percentage amounts made available to the various States since this Act has been in operation have been—

	Per cent.
New South Wales ..	57.77
Victoria	85.28
Queensland	56.09
South Australia ..	66.15
Western Australia ..	91.84
Tasmania	81

The amount distributed was 70 per cent. of £10,000,000 in the manner I have indicated. Queensland got 56.09 per cent. of her share.

During the present year the Commonwealth Government decided not to make available the sum proposed under the formula, but £500,000. Queensland, under the original basis, was to have got £57,500. The Commonwealth, with Messrs. Cameron and McEwan and Dr. Earle Page, made £500,000 available for farmers' relief during this present financial year.

Mr. Walker: You know the reason.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The hon. member says that I know the reason for that. The reason is—and it is not very hard to see—that with the prices being obtained and the markets that prevail at the present time, for certain commodities only, however, the Commonwealth Government are of the opinion that they can sidetrack rural rehabilitation and make the minimum amount available.

I direct this question to you, Mr. Speaker: Are the Commonwealth Government entitled to break their own law? I think the answer is "No." If the Commonwealth Government or any Government are going to infringe their own statutes we must arrive at a state of chaos. The Commonwealth statute required that Queensland was to get 11.5 per cent. of the total amount made available. But Queensland is not getting 11.5 per cent. Queensland is getting only 9.13 per cent., and apparently the Commonwealth Government have no hesitation in breaking their own statute.

The Premier: The Commonwealth Government do not deny their ultimate liability.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That is true. Of course, the Commonwealth Government are obligated under their Act to make this amount available. The first delay was brought about entirely by the vacillation and indecision of the Commonwealth Government, because, apparently, at some stage or other, they changed their mind concerning certain bases of rural rehabilitation.

The second fact that emerges very clearly, and is confirmed by the figures I have quoted, is that the Commonwealth Government have not been generous to Queensland in the amount of money that they have made available. Every other State has been treated more generously than Queensland. Hon. members may ask why Queensland has endured this, and, in reply, I should like to tell them that the State Government have made incessant representations to the Commonwealth authorities asking that at least we should get the amount of money that should be provided for the State under the approved formula. We have not been able to get the money that should be made available to this State under that formula, and, to the degree that we have not received that amount, we have been gravely handicapped in helping our own settlers. If we desire to select a person who is responsible for this, then it is the Federal Treasurer, and, if we take a Government, then the only Government responsible are the Commonwealth Government. These are facts that cannot be controverted.

The hon. member for Cooroora has asked for certain information, and I want to reiterate that we have no objection whatever to making the information available to this Chamber. The Commonwealth Government require the certificate of the Auditor-General in Queensland to indicate that the fund has been administered in terms of the Commonwealth legislation and the complementary State legislation. Every six months that

certificate is issued by the State Auditor-General and forwarded to the Commonwealth Auditor-General. If there were any departures from the requirements of the Acts by either the State or the Federal Governments, it would not be competent for the Auditor-General for Queensland, Mr. Ross, to give that certificate, and if there was any suspicion that the Act was not being meticulously carried out, Mr. Ross would not give that certificate. Even if he gave it, it is quite obvious that the Commonwealth Auditor-General would not accept it.

The board that controls rural rehabilitation is primarily constituted under the Commonwealth Act, and our Act confirms that constitution. So that the board acts independently in its administration, and it meticulously examines all phases of rural rehabilitation before coming to a decision on claims. The entire suitable public service of Queensland is used in this direction. I do not know whether hon. members are aware or not that the State bears the full cost of administering the scheme in Queensland.

Another point that I should like to make—and a point of some moment—concerns the suggestion made by certain hon. members opposite that the Crown should be disadvantaged in comparison with private persons. Does that argument stand analysis? Can it be justified in the light of pure reason? Hon. members opposite have suggested that while outside creditors should compound voluntarily the Crown should compulsorily compound. If that is so, would not the State be materially disadvantaged in comparison with outside people? Our Bill places the Crown precisely in the same position as outside creditors. Our legislation has proved the most effective of its kind in the Commonwealth. I have had the opportunity of checking up the action and interaction of the legislation passed in respect of this matter in other States, and I am perfectly satisfied that our own Act is meeting the requirements of our producers more adequately than the Acts in operation in other States of the Commonwealth. I say quite seriously, after having administered this Act for quite a considerable period, that the basis of voluntary contribution of compounding has proved to be absolutely sound, and the Crown cannot be disadvantaged to a greater degree than private individuals. I know there is a tendency among hon. members opposite to endeavour always to disadvantage the Crown. I know, too, that there is always a tendency among some persons both within and outside this House to expect the Crown to make contributions that private individuals will not make. I sometimes fear that there is a paternalism abroad that will have very serious repercussions on our economic structure in the years to come, unless some of those tendencies are very materially curtailed.

The arguments hon. members opposite have advanced entirely disappear when subjected to the analysis of clear reasoning. They must remember that, first, the Commonwealth Government were responsible for the delays and not the State Government; secondly, the

Crown should not be disadvantaged beyond private enterprise—both Crown and private enterprise shall be placed on the same basis—and, thirdly, very material aid has been given to the primary producer under this Act.

The limitation of assistance is essential and has been imposed by the Commonwealth Government—absolutely and in every material sense. The Commonwealth Government undertook to find a certain sum of money, and to the degree that they failed to honour the formula, to that degree money has been withheld from Queensland. Rural rehabilitation is a child of the Commonwealth Government, not a child of the Queensland Government, and is dependent on the volume of money that is made available by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Edwards: Would not the percentages be the same in Queensland as in other States?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I have given the House all the percentages and totals. I repeat for the information of the hon. member that while the average advances in other States have been 70.67 per cent., the advances in Queensland have been 56.09 per cent. I reiterate that we have made incessant representation to the Commonwealth Government to increase the amount that should be made available to Queensland. Let us take the current year. The sum of £500,000 was made available by the Commonwealth. If the formula had been adhered to Queensland would have got £57,500. We have applications at the present time representing three or four times that amount. I think I gave an hon. member in this House that information by way of answer to a question quite recently. I think I should say in passing that I have never refrained from answering any question in this House bearing on rural rehabilitation, so far as I can recollect.

I will admit—and it is an admission that does not mean very much—that the Commonwealth Government did see the error of their ways and did appreciate the fact that £57,000 was like a sip of water to a thirsty man, and they increased that amount to £65,000, plus a carry-over of approximately £10,000, which gives us approximately £75,000 for rural rehabilitation in this State this year.

Hon. members opposite, including the hon. member for Cooroora, told a doleful story about the need for giving immediate, adequate, and extensive relief. I submit to those hon. members that their submissions should be made to their friends in the Commonwealth arena who have control of rural rehabilitation, and who have these amounts of money. After all, we can only spend what we get, and if the Commonwealth Government restrict our income, then quite obviously our power of disbursement is restricted accordingly.

There is just one other point I desire to make before I sit down. The hon. member

for Cooroora framed his question in a certain way. As I said before, I have no objection to making this information public, but I doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, if the tremendous amount of work that will be involved can be carried out without involving overtime work. The organisation is understaffed at the present time, because some of the juniors are in the compulsory military camps and others have enlisted. I know that the getting of the information is going to involve overtime, because the work will be extensive; it will mean a dissection of every individual account if it is to be given in the form the hon. member has asked for. In view of the short staff of the Rural Development Bureau, and the fact that they are being worked to capacity at the present time, I do not know whether such an expenditure is justified.

How are you going to overcome this difficulty, for instance? A man may be a cotton-grower and a dairy farmer also. There are many applicants of that description, and the hon. gentleman has asked for the volume of assistance given to cotton-growers, and also the volume of assistance given to dairy farmers. Many a dairy farmer is a cotton-farmer, too, and vice versa; so quite obviously it would be impracticable to get it out in the form the hon. member has suggested.

The secretary of the Rural Development Board, Mr. Palmer, in commenting on this motion, said—

“It will be necessary to dissect the whole of the approved applications before the desired information can be furnished. It is considered the expense involved therein would not be warranted.”

After all, we have to pay some attention to Mr. Palmer's finding; therefore, I suggest that the simplest form that could be adopted would be to return the individual as being engaged in general agriculture. That would give the hon. member the information he requires, and it would save officers of the Bureau of Rural Development many weeks of work. Quite frankly, I cannot afford at the present juncture to detail officers to this work when there is more important work to be done.

I wish to say this in conclusion: hon. members opposite have drawn many red herrings across the trail in this debate, and it is quite obviously the desire of the Opposition to debate this question because, had the hon. member who moved the motion not desired to debate this question, all this information could have been obtained by way of question.

Mr. Maher: Why not give it now without all this fuss?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Give it to you without all this fuss when hon. members opposite have been addressing themselves to this question Thursday last and all this morning! Do they begrudge me the right of reply in order that

I might contradict many of the fallacious and inaccurate statements they have made?

Mr. Maher: You need not have called "Not formal," you could have furnished the return.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I have no objection to furnishing the return, but if it involves the amount of work I think it will to furnish it in the detailed manner that has been asked for, I think this House might reasonably content itself with the furnishing of the return in the way I have suggested: that people engaged in two or more agricultural industries be returned as general producers.

Mr. COLLINS (Cook) (12.51 p.m.): It was rather amusing to hear hon. members opposite objecting to the discussion of this question in this Assembly. It is so obviously apparent that they desired merely to make some political capital out of a brief reply in order to circulate it in some of the farming constituencies that they misrepresent and point out, "This is what the Queensland Government are doing for you." They have the right to debate all motions that we bring forward, and we, in turn, have an equal right to debate their motions, but when we do so they complain very bitterly that we are talking unnecessarily. The object of debate is to give all and not merely part of the information. There is a great deal of information regarding this matter that the general public, and particularly the farming community, desire and have a right to know.

I was astonished that the hon. member for Cooroora objected to a revolving fund as undesirable. I think that provision was included in the Act at the request of the Minister who has just resumed his seat and is one of its best features. The money is not lost sight of after one transaction. It is continually revolving or circulating and thus helping not a small number of farmers, but as many as possible, before finally being lost sight of owing to the failure of the recipients to repay the whole of the amounts advanced. In other words, a sum of £1,000,000 allocated to Queensland may give assistance eventually to the worth of £10,000,000.

We know how the scheme is devised and we also know that treatment must be sympathetic. Those in financial difficulties, irrespective of their walk of life, are deserving of all the sympathy and help that any Government or public body can give them. It is also known that from the business viewpoint it is useless helping a person who is hopelessly bankrupt. Money given to such a person is irrecoverable, it is lost entirely and cannot save the borrower from bankruptcy.

On the other hand, we know that seasonal conditions might place a man in a temporarily embarrassed position, but with one or two good seasons, he will recover. Just as it is no use helping the man who is hopelessly bankrupt, so there is no need to help the man

who, with one or two good seasons, will recover his prosperous position.

Then we come to the third class, those to whom we do give aid. Where a man's position is reasonably sound and a little composition will help him to regain solvency, so that he will soon be on the high road to prosperity we give aid. It is greatly to the credit of the Minister that he has done what he has. This revolving fund is of benefit to a great number more than was originally intended. I think that the way in which the Act has been administered reflects undoubted credit upon the Government, the Minister who has been administering it in particular.

Motion (Mr. Walker) agreed to.

At 2.15 p.m.,

In accordance with Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.

BUFFALO FLY CONTROL BILL.

ORDER FOR THIRD READING DISCHARGED.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (2.15 p.m.): I move—

"That Order of the Day No. 7 (Buffalo Fly Control Bill, Third Reading) be discharged from the Paper."

I move this motion owing to the extensive drought that is prevailing, affecting particularly the dairying industry. It is not proposed to go on with the Bill. The work contemplated under the Bill will be made a charge against the revenues of the Crown.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—
RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(Mr. King, Maree, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 2 October (see p. 486) on Mr. Cooper's motion—

"That there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1940-1941, a sum not exceeding £300 to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor."

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (2.17 p.m.): I listened with a great deal of interest to the Treasurer when he delivered his Financial Statement. I must say that in many ways I was disappointed. Of course, it will be said by hon. members opposite that that is only natural in party politics, but I do not put it that way. I am setting out to criticise where necessary and give credit where it is due. I have told you before, Mr. King, that I came into this Assembly in 1938 with a view to helping the people of Queensland and offering constructive suggestions, not carping criticism.

The Budget disappoints me because in the first place there is to be no abatement of taxation. The usual spending goes on. In

fact, it is to be increased, and almost every item in the Estimates is greater than last year. I remember that the Government appointed a Taxation Inquiry Commission. I should like to know what has been the outcome of that inquiry, particularly in regard to company taxation. I expected that report to be tabled in this Chamber before now, and I am wondering why it has not appeared. Perhaps, in common with many other reports, no notice will be taken of it, but if we are to have inquiries made, reports submitted, and no action taken, we should decide at once that no further inquiries shall be made. Later on, perhaps, I shall refer to another report that no doubt is stowed away upon some dusty shelf, and upon which no action has been taken.

This is the time for the State to help the Commonwealth by reducing taxation, but for goodness sake, do not let us mix these things with party politics. Let us help the Commonwealth, whether it is led by John Curtin or anyone else. Let us push on with the war effort by reducing taxation and effecting reasonable economies. There is no doubt that the Federal Government will need all the money they can get to carry on the war. We have been told that a sum of £180,000,000 per annum will be required for this purpose, whereas only a one-eighth part of it would be enough to carry out an extensive policy of water conservation and development in peace times. However, I do not want to fill the pages of "Hansard" with all the things that might have been. The British nation is up against it. There are not one but two dictators in the world, not just knocking meekly at the door inquiring, "Can we come in?" but like two burglars hammering away so that the very doors are creaking. That means that the boundaries of Australia have been extended to the English Channel, to the defence lines of London, and it behoves this country to stand valiantly by the British Empire in her time of crisis.

So I say that this is the time to make available all the available man-power and money for the protection of our country. This is an opportunity for the States to co-operate with the Commonwealth, but I am afraid that there has not been enough co-operation on the part of Queensland. This State has done much good war work, but, in my opinion, not enough. It should set out to economise and to reduce taxation so that the Federal Government will be able to make a greater war effort. Party politics is a curse in this country. However, I hope that shortly we shall have a national all-in Government led by the ablest man in the Commonwealth Parliament. I care not who the leader of the Federal Government is so long as he is the ablest man in the Federal Parliament. His selection must be left to that Parliament.

While on the question of taxation, I think I should mention the case of a soldier, QX5759, A. N. Lobban, 7th Field Engineers, Redbank. In peace time this man lives at No. 626, Ruthven street, Toowoomba. For

10 or 11 months of the past financial year he earned £221 in his civil employment. He was credited with having earned £15 in the period of the financial year in which he had joined the ranks. That sum happened to bring his income for the year to £236. He has a wife and two children. The State Government then included his wife's allowance for the purpose of assessing the State development tax, and charged him at the rate of 6d. in the £1 on £236. I am satisfied that there are many more similar, or almost similar, cases. Lobban's case is not made to order. If necessary, the Minister should amend the Act to overcome this injustice. I know that he cannot do it by regulation. It is a pity so much can be done by regulation and I do not advocate that it be corrected by that means. I ask the Government to consider the advisability of amending the Income (State Development) Tax Act so that persons enlisting will not have their military pay taken into account in such a manner as was done in Lobban's case.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: The Commonwealth and all the States are agreed on that formula. That would be class-distinction.

Mr. YEATES: It is not right, even if the Commonwealth and all the States agree. No State development tax is levied on incomes not exceeding £211 per annum; 3d. in the £1 is assessed on incomes exceeding £211 but not exceeding £227, and 6d. on incomes exceeding £227 but not exceeding £499. When the Premier attends the next conference of Premiers I suggest that he use his influence to have this anomaly rectified.

It seems to me that the works programme as outlined on page 14 of the Financial Statement is not altogether necessary, and that a certain amount of it is merely window-dressing for the next election. This is the outcome of the party system of government. Unfortunately, we have no substitute; therefore, we shall have to put up with it. The party system has put the brake on progress and has retarded the State's progress for 25 years.

The motto of this Government seems to be "Borrow, borrow, borrow." Years ago the original Labour Party, fathered by Thomas Glassey and supported by David Bowman and William Henry Browne—the party was necessary at that time, too—had a non-borrowing plank on the top of its programme. Later on, the Labour Party gradually drifted into the position of "Labour members first, and rank and file people afterwards." For 27 to 30 years it borrowed as much as it could, while its members took all they could get personally, not illegally, but otherwise.

Mr. Collins: What do you mean by otherwise?

Now, there is no thought of the future generation. In my opinion, no man should be a member of this Assembly who cannot think at least 25 to 50 years ahead, when dealing with matters such as transport,

for instance, before spending millions of money.

Mr. Jones: Did you ever read teacups?

Mr. YEATES: I invite interjectors to look up Matthew 6, verse 34, which contains the words—"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The philosophy of hon. members opposite is not to think for to-morrow and not to mind about posterity. In the interests of Australia's war effort there is a moral obligation on the States to overhaul their taxation and the borrowing requirements should be reduced if it is possible.

I wish to quote from the "Taxpayers' Review." I hope hon. members opposite have read this; anyhow, I will read it again.

The Treasurer: I read it in extenso and also in the train. (Laughter.)

Mr. YEATES: Some of the hon. gentleman's supporters may have studied it but I do not know whether they would understand it. I do not think there is one business man in the Cabinet or among the rank and file on the Government side—and I do not say this disrespectfully—who has the capacity to see into the future and to understand the intricacies of finance. The "Taxpayers' Review" contains the following:—

"Queensland has experienced two prosperous years with its primary industries bringing in record wealth and with unemployment reduced to the minimum. After a decade of deficits the State accounts have shown a surplus for two years in succession. Queensland has managed its finances better than any other State in the last two years."

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. YEATES:

"But the taxpayers have paid for it. Queensland is the highest taxed State in the Commonwealth. In 1938-39 taxation per head in Queensland was £8 11s. 9d., exceeding the next highest (Western Australia) by 15s. 4d. a head, and the lowest (Victoria) by £2 3s. 6d. per head. It should be possible to maintain a balanced Budget with lower expenditure, consequently allowing for a reduction in taxes. To this end expenses and employment in all Government departments should be thoroughly checked, making all economies possible.

"By bringing the basis of Queensland taxation more into line with other States the Federal Government's tax problems would be simplified. Federal taxes cannot distinguish between States. Revenue in lower-taxed States may be lost because Federal taxes must have some relation to the highest-taxed State. For instance, the system of company taxation in Queensland is different from that of other States. Queensland companies pay in accordance with the rate of profit made on capital, and the tax ranges from 2s. 1d. to 6s. 3d. in the £1. Companies in other States pay a flat rate on profits, varying from 1s. 5d.

in the £1 in Western Australia to 2s. 6d. in the £1 in New South Wales. In individual taxation Queensland is lighter than some other States on small incomes, but it is heavier than all States on net incomes over £600, and it is very heavy on the high incomes. For instance, a net income of £1,250 pays £154 in Queensland, but only £82 in Victoria. It is evident that Queensland will not share to the same extent as other States in Federal Government contracts and defence works. This is because the State is not industrially as well developed as in the South. The Queensland system of company taxation accounts partly for this. To make up any shortage in defence works in maintaining employment the State may require a larger loan allocation than otherwise, but the works should be directed to assisting the war effort, such as by promoting increased production of essential goods. Non-productive works should be deferred until after the war."

Since Labour took control of the government of this State in 1915—a most unfortunate incident—the public debt has jumped from approximately £57,000,000 to £129,000,000, an increase of £72,000,000. The only appreciable decrease took place between 1929-32. It began in 1930, when there was a small reduction. I have no particular interest in what Government may be in power so long as they manage the affairs of State properly, but, on looking up the records, I find that at that time Labour was not in office. The operation of a sinking fund gradually reduced the amount of the debt. I also find that there was not so much borrowing. In that period, therefore, the public debt was reduced by approximately £950,000.

The population of Queensland in 1860 was 28,000. During the next 60 years population increased enormously—and it was a natural increase, the proper kind of increase—but in the succeeding 20 years the population increased from 750,000 to only 1,013,000, whereas the public debt increased out of all proportion to the increase in population. The point I wish to make is that, with an almost stationary population—at least there is a very slow increase, indeed—the public debt of this country is continually increasing. Every Treasurer in the Commonwealth, the Prime Minister and every State Premier, should give serious thought to that matter.

In 1939, after war was declared, I was speaking in this Chamber and advocated a "Business as usual" policy. I urged that no-one should be chicken-hearted or become panicky and indiscriminately dismiss employees or take other steps to reduce expense. To-day I advocate that policy, with a modification. Our policy now should be "Business as near usual as possible." As the war progresses there should be complete co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States to keep every man in his proper place. There is no need to start to shut up industries because of the war. Although the British nation has a big barrow-load ahead of it, it will without doubt win this war.

Industries should be kept running as near to usual as possible, but the States must economise and reduce taxation in order to make room for the central Government. I say this despite the theories of our economists. Theory without at least 33½ per cent. of practical experience mixed with it is of no use. It is the duty of the man on the land to keep primary production going, to repair his machinery or buy new machines when they are absolutely necessary. It is the duty of the Government to give whatever aid is possible to keep the wheels of industry turning without additional expense. I say to the Government and the people that a sound policy is to spend wisely.

In this State something like £63,000,000 has been spent upon our railways. I do not take any notice of the writing-off of roughly £30,000,000 because I am still paying off some debts incurred because of the depression and no-one has offered to write off any of them for me. I cannot see how writing off that £30,000,000 can be called finance at all, because the State is still responsible for the money.

A huge charge is placed on the public of Queensland in paying the interest on the State's public debt of roughly £129,000,000. Before you can send a man out to dig a post-hole and pay him the 10s. or whatever amount is required, you have to pay something on account of this huge sum being sent overseas for interest—some to America, worse luck. I can tell hon. members just who brought that about, too, if necessary. Some of the interest is being paid in Australia, but a tremendous amount of it is going overseas. The Treasurer has to pay that interest before he can tackle anything else. I sympathise with him. I realise that it is easier to be in Opposition than in the Government. I did not come to this Assembly believing that the work was all beer and skittles—even the running of a Government. When we cross to the other side—and I do not think the time is far off—we shall have a heavy task upon us.

As I have said, £63,000,000 is invested in the railways. I want to see reforms made in the department, so as to bring in more money and make the railways pay. The Government speak of a little surplus, working, of course, on the amount of money written off the debt. That, from an accountancy point of view, is not the correct method of arriving at the position. We are slipping badly. When on the Estimates of the department I shall talk of the need for faster trains. Only in passing do I say that we must have a faster train service for both passengers and livestock. Our fully-loaded livestock trains are too slow and the passenger traffic is being diverted from the railways day by day because passenger trains are too slow. Our locomotives can do 50 miles an hour on the straights. We may require a little strengthening of the main lines, and it is in that connection that I have been asking questions about heavy rails on the Western Line. I want to see the day when heavy C19 and B18½ engines are running to

Charleville, making the journey hours quicker than at present. After a lot of agitation, the journey was reduced by 1 hour 12 minutes for one express and something less than that for another. I am pleased that the Commissioner did that; I know he did the best he could. I know that the department is doing its best but I am not always satisfied with a man's best—we have to get the very best.

The train from Wallangarra to Toowoomba—37 down—is far too slow; the one they call "first 37" which runs on special occasions from Wallangarra to Brisbane is not so bad. Recently, the Commissioner for New South Wales, with the assistance and guidance of the Minister for Transport, Mr. Bruxner—a man who takes a great interest in railway work—was able to reduce the time taken by the Wallangarra to Sydney train by more than one hour. Likewise they speeded up the train from Sydney to Wallangarra by 20 minutes. I want to know why it is necessary that the State Government should say that 50 minutes are required to transfer all passengers at Wallangarra when 30 minutes was time enough in years gone by. It is a poor reply to say that the trouble arises from the necessity of passing the up and down mail trains at Greenmount or Cambooya. It is very unconvincing for the department to say that such and such a proposal is impracticable. I am not at all satisfied with such replies, and I should like the Minister to look into this matter again. It may appear a small one, but we cannot allow red tape to strangle an important department, such as the Railway Department, which is administered by some very highly qualified officers, particularly the secretary to the Commissioner. There is just something about the department that needs looking into. Let us get away from these stereotyped replies to requests—replies such as "It is hardly feasible," or "The business does not warrant it." For instance, I am told that the business between Brisbane and Toowoomba does not warrant the running of 26A—that is, the rail motor, from Brisbane to Toowoomba—at 7 a.m. so that the other trains may be accelerated. These things can be done, and the Wallangarra mail should be able to arrive at its destination at Brisbane at 6 p.m. instead of 6.44 p.m.

Recently I was out in the West, let us say on a health trip, as far as Blackall and the surrounding districts. I thoroughly enjoyed my tour of the district, and it was wonderful to breathe the clean, fresh, exhilarating air of the country. As I do not play cards—I have no objection to the playing of cards—I devoted my time to talks with the local people, and I sought their views about the extension of the railway line from Blackall to connect with the southern system. I wanted to know whether they would approve of a betterment tax to pay part of the interest on the cost of constructing the line. Of course, I impressed upon them that in ordinary circumstances the traffic that would be attracted to the line would not be enough to make it pay, but on the other hand I reminded them that it might be the means of attracting young-cattle traffic from the far

North—even from the Gulf country, via Winton, Longreach, Jericho, and Blackall. Many people thought that there would be nothing wrong with the idea, and that indeed it was well worthy of consideration.

Mr. Clayton: I do not agree.

Mr. YEATES: I do not hold the view that we should say that this or that railway is a national project, and that we should rush into it whether it is right or wrong. I am not willing to go that far. We must look into the future and try to visualise what may be the means of transport in the years to come. For instance, to-day stock are being carried singly by aeroplane. There is no telling what form of transport will be the vogue when the war ends. We must go carefully into matters like that. It may be possible to transport 10 to 18 cattle by air when running costs are lower during the next decade or two.

Another thing to be considered when inquiring into the linking by railway of Blackall and Charleville is the provision of mere water on the stock route. I admit that the stock route is fairly well watered now, but if water was provided at distances not more than 10 miles apart there would not be much difficulty in travelling stock on the hoof between those two towns, even in dry periods. Experienced people will to a certain extent support that suggestion. If a railway is to be built I favour its construction in a direct line from Charleville to Blackall, omitting Tambo altogether, but connecting Tambo with the railway by a good road. We must not rush into such works costing millions of money without proper investigation and consideration of the future. Personally, I would not build a mile of railway at present, with the exception of such links as Cooyar to Tarong and Nanango to Yarraman. A statesmanlike policy would not build long lines of railway while air travel was progressing so fast.

Speaking of railways and roads brings me to the vexed questions of port rates. We have in existence a scale of port rates. We also hear of special rates favouring such places as Cunnamulla. The other day I was at Adavale with a party. I was just having a look round to see how the country looked. Someone bought a bottle of beer—(laughter)—it was bought within the proper trading hours, which seem to be from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., but I shall have more to say on trading hours on another Vote—and was charged 4s. for it. I asked the landlady to tell me how much she charged for lunch. She said 2s. I said, "How much do you charge for a bottle of beer?" and she said 4s. I could not understand it. I made inquiries when I returned to Brisbane. I rang up the general traffic manager's office and a smart and genial clerk promptly gave me the information I desired. He informed me that the freight rates from Brisbane to Quilpie, a distance of 621 miles, was £14 5s. a ton. Beer was included in that rate. The freight rate from Brisbane to Goondiwindi, 284 miles, is £9 13s. 6d. a ton. That is a

special rate. The freight rate for the same distance on the Quilpie line is £12 10s. a ton. Cunnamulla, which is 604 miles from Brisbane, has a special freight rate of £7 8s. a ton. That is little more than half the freight rate from Brisbane to Quilpie, 621 miles. I understand that the freight rate to Cunnamulla is a special quotation because the New South Wales railway, which is 160 miles from Cunnamulla, quotes special rates to get the trade of that district. Because of these competitive freight rates a parcel can be forwarded from Brisbane to Cunnamulla and brought back to Morven at a lower rate than if consigned direct from Brisbane to Morven. These things must be altered. The settlers who are living away out beyond Cheepie and Adavale, down on the Bulloo, and out on Kyabra Creek, and in that area extending to the border are struggling in a wilderness, yet they have to pay these excessive rates, while someone at Goondiwindi and other places can get the special rates I have mentioned. (Government interjections.)

Some of the interjectors have hardly been outside the suburbs of this city.

I shall investigate this matter further. I know perfectly well that this has been talked about for a long time—so were the port rates; they were talked about in Kidston's time—but because matters have been talked about for a long time is no reason why reforms should not be brought about. If this Government do not bring about some reform in this matter some other Government must do so.

A special investigation should be made throughout the public service to see if everybody is doing a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. I make no reflection on the public service. I think it compares favourably with any other public service in Australia, but my suggestion is a definite business line of action.

Mr. Nimmo interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Oxley is not entitled to throw questions across the Chamber in that way.

Mr. YEATES: I should like the Main Road Commission, which has done good work, to supersede the shire councils and do all road work, with the assistance of the clerical staff employed by the shire councils. Many of the shire councils are doing the best they can, but, as I said a while ago, I am not satisfied with a man's best. If a man is not able to do his job somebody else has to do it. I firmly believe that under the supervision of the Main Roads Commission all feeder roads could be constructed of such a class that they would be almost permanent. The shire councils often build inferior roads and have to seek another loan in 15 or 20 years to repair them; a good road should be built in the first place.

As I drove along the central highway to Blackall at about 60 or 70 miles an hour I was very pleased to note the progress that has been made on that defence road. Quite a fair amount of milage has been constructed. I wish to see it pushed right out,

and I shall give every encouragement to any Government who will do it.

Much has been said about the Co-ordinator-General in this House. He is the right man in the right place. If the same remarks were made about someone between 17 and 23 years of age he would get a swelled head, but the Co-ordinator-General is a man with experience and ability.

We must give him credit for what he has done. The construction of the Condamine highway is another step in the right direction, but some of the settlers in the district are apprehensive because of rumours that after meeting the Roma-Surat road this road will go to Roma and follow the railway line to Charleville. I informed them that I was not apprehensive and did not believe any such rumour, and that the road would follow the surveyed route through Boatman Station to Charleville and would be completed within 15 months. I made inquiries at the office of the Main Roads Commission and found that up to the present no order has been issued for any deviation from the surveyed road, and, until some order comes from the Secretary for Public Works, of course, there will be no deviation. I do not expect that such an order will ever be issued. In 15 months or so, with the use of graders in the mulga country, the road will be constructed to Charleville and one will be able to travel along the great Condamine highway. No doubt, that will be called the Great Western highway. I expect the young men of the back country—I know many have enlisted, but we will speak of the future—to club together and use motor cars to travel along this road from Charleville to Brisbane, making a speedy trip. Of course, I am hoping that there will be no need for petrol restrictions in one or two or at the most three years. This is the reason why I advocate the use of faster trains between these points, in order that the department will hold the business. If the present Government will not do it, then another Government will do so and I shall be in that Government and sign the Executive minutes giving orders regarding reforms. (Laughter.) It is all very well for hon. members opposite to laugh and say that I am talking balderdash. It is nothing. I have confidence enough to see that this has to come.

I travelled on the Cairns to Mossman road but it was not quite finished. It was even then a very fine piece of work and the officers responsible are to be complimented. I am not certain of its cost, and in any case I cannot go into those details now.

Now, let me come to the Darling Downs and the Heifer Creek road. Hon. members know that locality. I am wondering why, notwithstanding his wonderful work, the Co-ordinator-General for Public Works and the Commissioner of Main Roads built the road from Fordsdale to West Haldon, 8½ miles. This work has been going on for approximately 15 years. Originally there was to be a tunnel, but eventually the work has been done by making one of the largest

cuttings to be found in Australia and erecting numerous bridges. I wonder why. I intend to ask for the cost of those 8½ miles. Why was the road not constructed from Greenmount to the West Haldon school and Grantham to Fordsdale, farming districts, leaving the other 8 miles with next to no settlement to be constructed in the next 20 years?

The Story Bridge is a magnificent structure. There is nothing wrong with it from the structural point of view, but 20 years hence would have been time enough to think about erecting it. I do not say this for the first time to-day. I said it in 1938. The money used in its erection should have been spent in the conservation of water in the Condamine and other small creeks.

I regret that the Government have seen fit to take £250,000 a year from the Main Roads Fund, despite the fact that it is replaced by loan money. I do not like that policy. However, so long as Labour is in the majority and adopts the policy that might be right, I shall pass over that subject and wait until we can effect a suitable remedy in a proper constitutional manner.

I was absolutely surprised at the speech delivered by the hon. member for Cook yesterday. I did not think that he was such a firebrand. He rose and just talked about the wage-slashers of 1929. He introduced all the partyisms that he could think of to boost up this so-called wonderful Financial Statement. It was scandalous to hear the way in which he was running down the Moore Government all the time. I had no intention of referring to these matters, but the hon. member for Cook's speech forces me to remind him of the things with which his party was mixed up in the past. I remind him of the millions of pounds that had to be written off the State stations. Belonging to the Labour Party, he must be associated with all that. I remind him of the fish shops that were smellful financially and sometimes otherwise. I can go so far back as the Mooraberrie cattle case, in which the Government sent police out to take cattle away from Mrs. Duncan. They even broke into the store, took rations, camped there, and mustered the cattle. I did not want to rake up all these filthy things that the Labour Party did years ago until the hon. member for Cook set that shocking example.

I should like the Government, the Treasurer in particular, to consider having the artesian bore at Muckadilla investigated and cleaned out or having another bore put down.

The Treasurer: Why go that far for a bore? (Laughter.)

Mr. YEATES: Someone is supposed to have looked into the matter out there, but the reports that I have show that very little was done. There ought to be an investigation into the condition of that bore. It is the source of water supply for the stock route from Roma to Mungallala, Charleville, and the surrounding areas. The Railway Department advertises the bathing facilities there,

but in actual fact there is so little water in the bore now that only one person can bathe at a time, even though there are four baths there. The most important consideration, however, is water facilities for travelling stock and residents of the district. I urge the Treasurer to have the matter investigated to find out what was done for the expenditure of that couple of hundred pounds the last time.

I should like the Premier to tour the State more, not just go to Mackay and sometimes to Cairns. I should like to see him go to Cunnamulla, in fact all over the State.

I also want a Commissioner in the Railway Department who will go out at least once in every 18 months in second-class and KB wagons attached to stock trains and mix quietly with the drovers and guards to see what actually goes on. I want to hear of the general manager going out at least once a year over the railways of this State. Yes, let him do the journey in mufti, with no flourish of trumpets; let him travel in the second-class carriages and the cattle trains, joining them anywhere en route at intervals, and see exactly what is being done. I shall not be satisfied until he does that.

The report of the Wool Advisory Commission seems to have been put away on some dusty shelf, except the copy I have, which is clean and bright and looks well. Why has the value of this report not been recognised and some notice taken of it? I should like to have an answer from the Government. They seem ashamed to say anything about it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. McLEAN (Bundaberg) (3.16 p.m.): The Treasurer is to be congratulated on his Financial Statement. It is a Budget that describes not only the political activities of the parliamentary Labour Party, but the welfare of the people of this State. The various matters contained in it are of interest to our people, as it shows to them how their money was expended, and the progress made by the State.

The surplus of £15,755 shown this year depicts a very vivid transformation from the £2,075,000 deficit left by the regime that held office in the three years up to 1932. That deficit has been wiped out only by progressive work on the part of the Government, and the surplus of £15,755 will be encouraging to the people. It is proof of a very creditable performance by the Government and a creditable job done by the Treasurer in handling the finances of the State.

The Leader of the Opposition wanted to know, with a thud and a thump on his desk, resembling a motor car travelling over railway sleepers, how the Government were going to meet the requirements of the future. Answering his inquiry, I remind him of the Bill recently introduced in this Chamber, a comprehensive digest of which was given by the Premier. The details announced by that hon. gentleman give to the people some idea of how the Government are meeting the

requirements of the future. The Bill shows what the Government propose doing for the repatriation of those men who are serving their country overseas. Provision will be made for them to be taken back into industry.

A further answer has been supplied to the Leader of the Opposition—and this is a hurdle he cannot jump—by a leading article of the "Telegraph" in that paper's analysis of the Budget delivered by the Treasurer, and the alleged criticism levelled against it by the Leader of the Opposition. That article states—

"The debate on the Budget in the Queensland Parliament yesterday brought from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Maher, trenchant criticism of the Government's financial policy and administration. Unfortunately for him and for the cause which he would serve, that criticism was as wildly extravagant as Mr. Maher would have us believe is the spending of the Government. It is, of course, easy and pleasant to the ears of an Opposition to hear a Government accused of reckless irresponsibility, but it is well to have a strong case before hurling such charges, and we do not think an examination of the position warrants Mr. Maher's attitude."

It goes on to say—

"There is nowhere in the provisions of the Budget evidence of recklessness. The Treasurer was able to come before the country for the second time with not only a balanced statement but with an actual surplus to be applied to the reduction of the deficit accumulated mainly in the years of depression. That is a performance which has no taint of recklessness, and as Mr. Cooper again is estimating a surplus for the ensuing 12 months, it is difficult to see where Mr. Maher finds his basis for the condemnation of this Budget. Seeing that a full quarter of the Government's spending goes in payment of interest on debt and redemption of loans, there is not much margin for anything approaching extravagance after meeting the routine charges of departmental costs for the running of the country. What is left is being very wisely expended on public works which, beside maintaining the standard of efficiency of the State, provide much needed work for wage-earners, instead of throwing them on the dole.

"Naturally, Mr. Maher would like to see taxation reduced. So would every taxpayer, but it is necessary and right to take into consideration the special circumstances of the times, which might well be made still more difficult if there was anything in the way of a depression created by false economy. What Mr. Maher too little regarded were the facts that it is important to keep the wheels moving at a good round pace, and that the serving of this end must be accomplished this year in the face of seriously diminished revenue in respect of Federal road grant and State motor registration fees owing to the petrol rationing. This represents a considerable item.

Another point which he also overlooked was that, while Queensland will continue to suffer the handicap experienced for years past of an inadequate return from the Commonwealth for the large sums taken out of the State by way of Federal taxation, direct and indirect, the ensuing year will see an accentuation of that disadvantage by reason of the Commonwealth Government's need to make higher demands upon the citizens to cover the heavy costs of war."

It concludes by saying—

"Mr. Maher would have been more practical if he had given the Opposition's whole-hearted backing to an endeavour to remedy this anomaly of the ill-distribution among the States of Federal expenditure which has given New South Wales and Victoria such a preponderant gain out of federation at the expense of the other States."

That is a fair summary of the position in Queensland to-day. During the debate on the motion by the hon. member for Warrego relating to the functions of the Commonwealth Bank, the disabilities and disadvantages suffered by this State in comparison with the rest of Australia were stressed by hon. members, and they are supported by the leading article in a paper that is not always in accord with the principles or policy of Labour. However, it is a fair analysis of the financial position of this State, and it is an effective reply to the so-called criticism of the Budget by the Leader of the Opposition. If the Budget does call for our defence, then all we need do is to quote the leading article in the "Telegraph."

Every fair-minded person will agree that the practical achievements of the Government in providing welcome incomes for the majority of the people are something of which we can be justly proud, and so we congratulate the Treasurer upon his inspiring Budget. The man on the land has been helped considerably by reductions and rebates in freights on wool, starving stock, fodder for starving stock, store stock, lead ore, flour, bran, and pollard. All these concessions tend to help the primary producer and to develop the State. Let me give some figures to show that the Government have always shown a deep consideration for the man on the land who is called upon, at times, to contend with disabilities caused by unfavourable climatic conditions. These figures show the rebates on starving stock and fodder for starving stock granted by the present Government—

	£
1932-33	78,278
1933-34	165,042
1934-35	287,248
1935-36	285,289
1936-37	195,825
1937-38	278,598
1938-39	312,030
1939-40	24,672
	<hr/>
	£1,626,982

The money that has been gathered in by the State Treasurer and disbursed in this way

has also been disbursed in other directions, such as the building programme. In that connection it is appropriate that I should quote the Financial Statement—

"The building industry, however, was not so active as in 1938-39. The total value of building operations in the 12 cities and towns for which figures are compiled was £3,424,000—a decline of approximately £400,000 with the previous year."

The decline in the building industry may have been evident in some cities and towns, but it was not so in the city I represent. I am now going to quote the building figures of that city, which for the period under review were a record. The mayor of Bundaberg, Mr. F. H. Buss, on 27 May, 1940 said—

"The value of buildings erected in Bundaberg since 1 July, 1939, is £91,636, which is an all-time record.

"I have every reason to believe that by the end of the financial year the value of the buildings passed by the council will exceed £100,000.

The building programme is an index to prosperity.

As I said on the Address in Reply, the barometer of our successful administration and progress is the productivity of the people and the increase in the State's population. If work at good wages and conditions is offering it naturally follows that there will be an influx of people from the adjoining States. The conditions prevailing in this State for the last few years have encouraged people to migrate here. They have made their homes here because they have been encouraged to do so by Government policy. It is necessary for us as big Queenslanders to realise that we owe a duty to the State and that loyalty and patriotism are demanded from us by the State just as much as by the British Empire. In order to build up adequate defence for our northern coastline our works programme should be framed in such a way that it will encourage people to come to this State and settle in that area.

Statements made by our opponents to decry the State only impede its progress. It is unnecessary for me to repeat facts and figures showing the State's progress that have already been given. It is enough to direct hon. members to the various agricultural shows. There the attendances, the increased gate receipts, and the increased entries in the various sections are all indicative of the progress of the State.

I have heard much talk and criticism, mainly by hon. members opposite, of the heavy rate of taxation in Queensland. I would point out that Queensland is not the heaviest-taxed State, particularly with respect to incomes of £1,000 and over. Proof has been given in support of that statement already, but I intend to give additional proof. Let us take a taxpayer whose income is £10,000. If he lives in Queensland—the allegedly highest-taxed State—he pays £1,857

in Federal income tax, whereas if he lives in what is termed the lowest-taxed State, Victoria, his assessment is £2,636.

The reason for the differentiation is that the amount paid in State taxation is deducted, the amount returned to the Federal authorities is lower by that amount, and consequently, the higher State taxation in Queensland has the effect of making the taxable income for Federal purposes lower than in Victoria. That system is democratic inasmuch as it relieves the man who pays big State taxation, and he is better off than those who live in the so called lowest-taxed States.

We have heard a great deal about taxation, and I intend to quote various authorities, some of whom I am sure the Opposition will be surprised to hear. The following is an extract from Federal "Hansard":—

"Mr. Mahoney: Does not the hon. member think that those who have higher incomes should have to pay? The soldiers will be fighting with their lives.

"Mr. Jolly: We all subscribe to the view that those who have the money should be taxed more heavily than those whose incomes are small."

As to the uniformity of taxation the rate of increased tax by the Commonwealth Government would vary as follows:—

Income. £	Increase. Per cent.
350	50
400	66
500	25
4,000	2.7
5,000	1.7
10,000	3.7
40,000	3

Can hon. members reasonably claim that there is any equality between a 3 per cent. increase on an income of £40,000 a year and a 66 per cent. increase on an income of £400 a year? When speaking on Commonwealth taxation proposals, Mr. Fadden had this to say—

"I take great pleasure in supporting the Treasurer in the tax proposals he has brought before this honourable House. No member of any Parliament derives pleasure from having to increase taxation, especially in the circumstances which the Government is faced with and the amount that it has to pay."

We also find that the man on the statutory exemption of £250 pays a great deal by indirect taxation. In this connection I also wish to quote what was said by Mr. Fadden. I think it was unfair of him to make this statement about the working class—

"They were not called upon to contribute so much by way of indirect taxation.

"Mr. Thompson: Taxpayers generally do not worry about indirect taxation.

"Mr. Fadden: Then we must worry for them."

And they have been worrying for them.

In this connection Professor Portus recently remarked—

"Indirect taxation might and often did fall more heavily on the poor than the rich."

A leading article in the Melbourne "Herald" of 22 September, 1938, contained the following:—

"Insidious indirect taxation makes life harder for families with small or moderate incomes. It is responsible for putting more on to prices at different stages of production than accrues to the tax-collector."

After the consideration we give to the poorer sections of the community and in spite of our income-tax exemptions, the Commonwealth Government deal us a very harsh blow. Of the £12,500,000 they extract from the poorer sections of the community by indirect taxation they remit to the State £7,000,000, a difference of £5,500,000. This does not allow the Government to do everything possible for the relief of unemployment in Queensland.

Labour has a policy of indirect taxation, but it has always been misconstrued by those who do not understand it. Labour is not in favour of revenue tariffs, but is in favour of a tariff to protect Australian industry. Imports should not be encouraged to compete with goods of Australian manufacture to their detriment. It may be asked why Labour does not put into effect its policy of indirect taxation. I have given the interpretation of our policy as I have always understood it, but the niggardly manner in which the Commonwealth Government have dealt with this State has let us down, and hampered the further development of the State.

Reference has been made to planning for the future. The Treasurer, in his Budget, has forecast proposals to be made, and that statement has already been supplemented by the Premier who has introduced legislation for that purpose.

Speaking on the Commonwealth Government's Financial Statement, Mr. Spender said—

"We must for practical purposes make a definite plan based on the best judgment we can make of the probabilities. At the same time, the plan must have some elasticity so that it may be adjusted to changing circumstances. We live in a rapidly-changing world, and we must, therefore, be prepared in our minds to face the probability of drastic changes in outlook which might force a wholesale group consideration of the financial and economic policy."

That is precisely an expression of the same views as those held by the Premier when introducing the Bill, and the Treasurer in his Budget. The Government are planning for the future. We visualise the problems that have to be faced in the interests of the welfare of the people of Queensland.

Much has been said in this Chamber on company taxation in Queensland. The hon.

member who just resumed his seat repeated parrot-fashion the remarks of other hon. members opposite. He said that no-one could do anything in Queensland, because of the company taxation. I remind him that it is not the taxation, but the Commonwealth Government who are at fault, and in support of my argument I quote the following allocations of orders to various woollen mills throughout the Commonwealth, as shown on page 566 of Federal "Hansard" of 11 May:—

	£	s.	d.
New South Wales ..	261,939	16	10
Victoria ..	753,526	3	9
Queensland ..	34,986	5	0
South Australia ..	36,087	3	9
Western Australia ..	8,332	3	9
Tasmania ..	30,732	16	3
	<hr/>		
	£1,125,644	9	4

The point I want to make is that the Commonwealth Government allocated an extremely small sum to Queensland. If our mills are efficient why were not larger orders given to this State? They say that the placing of these orders in the several States was related to the volume and delivering capacity of the mills. The trouble is not to be found in the taxation imposed by this Government. Investors are discouraged when they find that the Commonwealth Government give such a small amount of work to Queensland. It is illogical for the Opposition to say that we cannot get work in Queensland because of the heavy taxation. The Commonwealth Government had a golden opportunity to give us work, but did not avail themselves of it.

At 3.44 p.m.,

Mr. BRASSINGTON (Fortitude Valley), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. McLEAN: Perhaps it is not generally known that the Federal Treasurer, in order to counteract any suggestion that the Commonwealth Government could help the various States by the issue of national credit, distributed 17,000 pamphlets throughout Australia using the private banks of the Commonwealth for that purpose. That, of itself, shows that there is no desire on the part of the Commonwealth Government to extend its national credit for the development of the States.

I was, indeed, pleased to read of the marked progress that has been made by the Queensland railways. I find that the collections for last year amounted to £7,918,487, or £279,962 more than the previous year. That is another point emphasising the increase in productivity of this State. All these things go to show that Queensland has made marked progress over the last few years, and I hope that with the termination of this war in our favour and to the advantage of the British race we shall be able to achieve equilibrium of trade and build up prosperity for the benefit of the people of the State.

We also find that last year constituted a record in overseas exports, an increase of 1940—s

12½ per cent. being shown. The value of our exports last year was £31,614,000 as compared with £28,651,000 for the previous year, a further indication of the improved productivity of Queensland. Exports overseas are a sure guide to a country's production. Our exports have more than doubled in the last eight years. Our overseas exports of sugar were valued at £2,000,000 more last year than for 1938-39. I take this opportunity on behalf of the canegrowers in my area of saying how pleased they are that the State Government have acquired all sugar produced this year. Their minds have been relieved considerably, but, unfortunately, we are somewhat handicapped by the lack of storage space in our mills. If we only had our Commonwealth line of steamers—and I have no wish to stress unduly the blunders made by the Commonwealth Government—we should have the facilities at hand to take our foodstuffs abroad. If shipping space is not made available shortly the mills in the Bundaberg district will find their storage capacity overtaxed and will have to close down. Hundreds of men will be thrown out of work and thousands of tons of cane will remain in the field. That is a serious position, and I trust that there is some way of meeting it. The State Government are not to blame for the want of shipping space. A crisis will be reached in the sugar industry as no more cane will be manufactured into sugar owing to the lack of space to store it. The mills will probably close down in the next three or four weeks instead of running for another 10 weeks or so. Farmers' crops will have to remain unharvested, and hundreds of men now employed in the mills and fields will be dismissed. I can assure hon. members that if anything can be done in the direction indicated it will certainly be an acceptable gift to the farmers.

Last year's Queensland wool production amounted to 650,000 bales, a record production, valued at approximately £11,500,000. It has been said that the people engaged in the production of wool have not had a fair deal from the Government, but a complete answer to that charge is that the number of sheep and the volume of wool produced in this State have considerably increased.

The volume of bank clearances is recognised as a good barometer of business activity, and it is pleasing to note that last year they reached a new record, being a rise of 10 per cent. over those of the previous year. Does not that indicate that the policy of the Government has been favourably received by the people and that their incomes have not only remained steady but have actually risen and thus increased bank deposits, especially in commercial circles, which in turn have given such an impetus to bank clearances that last year they reached a new high record? Is that not something of which this Government may be justly proud?

The Government have gone from strength to strength over the past few years. They have alleviated the sufferings of the producers in a generous and sympathetic way.

Primary production has gone ahead. The legislation of the Government and the results of their sympathetic administration are reflected in the sound Budget brought down by the Treasurer. It has always been the aim of Labour to do its utmost for the benefit of the people. Our policy has led to an improvement in their social conditions. They are better fed, better clothed, and better housed than in the years gone by. In all ways a marked improvement in their conditions has followed the adoption of Labour's policy of happiness and contentment for the people. All these factors are reflected in increased production and a buoyant revenue, which are crystallised in the very fine Budget the Treasurer has laid before us. Given good seasons during the coming year, it can be confidently expected that the progress in this State will be more marked than ever before.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) (3.55 p.m.): In the first place I wish to compliment the Treasurer on bringing forward such an excellent Budget, and at the same time being in that happy position for the second year in succession of having shown a surplus. While some may argue that surpluses mean that somebody or someone has suffered, to me they indicate careful husbanding of the State's financial resources. Although we have heard within the past few days during this discussion many complaints that notwithstanding the buoyancy of the State's finances and the large amount of money received by the Government from various sources, no reduction has taken place in taxation, I still hope that something will happen in this direction before long. One must not overlook the fact, too, that although there has not been any decrease in taxation there has been no increase in taxation with its consequent burdens.

Year after year it is always interesting to study the reaction on both by the individual and by the Press to the presentation of the statement concerning the budgetary position of the State. This year has been no exception to the rule. Opposition members might give credit where credit is due, and in one or two instances give a meed of praise to the Treasurer and Government for the condition of the ship of State. They have not been willing to do so. They spoil the whole effect of their utterances by making all the excuses possible for those States that have not been able to present such a healthy Budget as Queensland.

It was interesting to read the day following the presentation of the Budget, the very fine leading article in the "Telegraph." It was very outspoken.

Mr. Maher: The "Telegraph" has gone red.

The Treasurer: You cannot laugh it off.

Mr. Russell: Why don't you read what the "Courier-Mail" said?

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: Strange to say, the "Courier-Mail" is my paper, not the "Telegraph." Both sides of the Committee

must agree that the "Telegraph" was very fair in its references to the budgetary position. So much so that it headed its leading article—

"Healthy finance"

and proceeded to comment in this way—

"It is an admirable achievement for the Queensland Government to have followed the depression years' heavy deficits with a second surplus in succession. It is the more praiseworthy in view of the change over from peace to wartime conditions which, though primarily a Commonwealth matter, still very directly affects the States. In the circumstances the Government is entitled to thanks for its performance under the difficulties which had to be faced, and that tribute must be extended in special measure to the Treasurer, Mr. Cooper, who again has presented the State's balance-sheet and Budget for the ensuing 12 months with clarity and with a measure of commentary which is informative as well as provocative."

Further on, in a smaller paragraph, the leading article stated—

"Altogether it may be said that the Government has handled the finances with due care, and the position is really more creditable than appears on the surface seeing that so large a proportion of the expenditure was monopolised by interest charges on the loan indebtedness of the State, more than a quarter of the revenue being swallowed up in this rapacious maw. It is a serious burden upon the community, but it is being slowly lightened by redemption and by the modesty of our current borrowings."

In two somewhat lengthy paragraphs there is favourable comment on what people generally—decent people generally—regard as being an excellent Budget.

There have been many charges of extravagance levelled against the Government, whereas, in the main, the opposite has been the case.

I maintain, as I said before, there has been careful husbanding of the State's finances in that respect, and instead of charges of extravagance being levelled at the Government by members of the Opposition they should offer some measure of praise to the Government in that connection.

The Leader of the Opposition was the chief transgressor in complaints of this nature. It is his job to criticise as it is my job to do the right thing and be fair and indicate to the House and the readers—few though they may be—of any speeches that I make, the nature of the position as I view it.

The Brisbane Press does not always hold with what the Leader of the Opposition says, and I know it does not always hold with what I have to say on similar matters.

Returning to the Financial Statement, there are a few interesting statements of the functions of the Government for the benefit of

the State contained in it. On page 13 the following interesting paragraph appears—

“In accordance with the provisions of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act of 1938 a co-ordinated plan of public works and State development has been drawn up by the Co-ordinator-General at the direction of the Government after consultation with departmental executives.

“The plan provides for the allocation of available funds to provide a maximum for employment, whilst at the same time it envisages expenditure on works and other projects in the most economical and productive directions.

“All projects included in the State’s programme, as well as in the local body and semi-governmental debenture programmes, have been discussed with the Loan Council Co-ordinator of Works, with the result that there will be as complete as possible an integration of governmental, semi-governmental, and defence works throughout the State during the year.”

This being so, one is tempted to ask, “Why the statement that we are extravagant?” All the projects on which money is being spent have first of all been submitted to the Loan Council’s Co-ordinator of Works.

The statement in the Budget continues—

“The plan provides for the distribution and timing of works in such a way as to minimise the effects of seasonal unemployment in industry.”

That is a very wise procedure with which you, Mr. Chairman, and other hon. members will agree—to plan ahead for the distribution and timing of works in such a way as to minimise the effects of seasonal unemployment in this State.

Again, on page 19 this interesting paragraph appears—

“The Commonwealth’s financial provisions, on the other hand, have always on balance acted as a factor reducing rather than creating employment in Queensland. Even after crediting the Commonwealth with their grants to the State and Main Roads budgets, they are seen to have continuously drawn out of Queensland far more money than they have spent in Queensland. This rose to a climax in 1939-40, when they collected £12.5 millions in Queensland and only spent £7 millions (£5 millions direct and £2 millions as grants to the State and Main Roads Fund). Even for the coming year, the best estimates of Commonwealth expenditure indicate that they will still spend in Queensland less than their taxation collections in the State, while the industry and income in the rest of Australia will be irrigated by a copious flow of Commonwealth expenditure greatly in excess of the taxes collected in those States.

“This factor emphasises the need, therefore, for the State’s development and

employment activities to be maintained in the maximum possible directions.”

In that respect I refer once again to the leading article from which I quoted a few moments ago, on the matter of the niggardly financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government.

In reference to that paragraph the “Telegraph” writes—

“This is a question of common justice which the Queensland Treasurer very rightly emphasised, and we hope that the matter will not be allowed to drop with a mere expression of indignation. It is not in the best spirit of federation that the resultant advantages of the throwing in of the fortunes of the States in a common lot should be so unfairly distributed as has been the case now for many years. It is no exaggeration when Mr. Cooper states that the consequences have been to reduce employment here instead of developing it, and he has done a good service in stressing the fact that ‘even for the coming year, the best estimates of Commonwealth expenditure indicate that they will still spend in Queensland less than their taxation collections in the State, while industry and income in the rest of Australia will be irrigated by a copious flow of Commonwealth expenditure greatly in excess of the taxes collected in those States.’ That is putting the case very neatly in a nutshell. Mr. Forgan Smith should not allow Mr. Menzies to overlook so pithy an argument.”

We hope that we have raised our voices in protest effectively, and that something will be done.

Before discussing matters that will affect the State as a result of the war, I wish to refer to some remarks of the Treasurer in his Budget speech. He states—

“The requirements of cotton, furthermore, are expanding because of the additional needs of wartime. Greatly increased expenditure is required to implement the Government’s programme for the development of this industry, following on the grant by the Commonwealth Government of a bounty for raw cotton for a period of five years.”

I pause there to say, as one of the few members representing cotton-growing districts in this State, that the action of the Commonwealth Government is appreciated.

“This programme aims at establishing the cotton-growing industry on a sound basis, which will include the promotion of irrigation facilities and plants for the increase of the yield per acre in non-irrigated areas. The proposed expenditure includes crop lien loans, aggregating £60,000, by the Department of Labour and Industry to farmers for the purpose of growing cotton, including a special loan of £2,100 for a demonstration cotton irrigation area of 500 acres at Theodore, and interest-free loans totalling £15,000 by the Bureau of

Rural Development to provide irrigation facilities. In addition, provision is made for an expenditure of £4,000 for the installation of bores and silos in the Callide Valley to explore the possibilities of developing irrigation facilities. Further cotton irrigation experimental programmes will involve an estimated expenditure of £5,375."

Any assistance to the primary producers should be, and is, welcome, not only by hon. members in this Chamber, but by all persons interested in the welfare, progress, and development of this State.

We shall be faced with many post-war problems, but just as the Mother Country is preparing to meet her problems, and will solve them, so shall we in Queensland and Australia meet our difficulties and overcome them one by one. Among the many post-war problems that attract my attention is one that we must face, and the sooner we do so the better will be the position of the primary producers. There have been many discussions as to whether production should be increased or by degrees restricted. We must be very careful to guard against any fall in prices, and it is interesting to read in the annual report of the Agent-General for Queensland a paragraph that strikes a timely note of warning.

Mr. Pike had this to say—

"The war and its aftermath must have a profound effect upon the economic faith and constitution of the United Kingdom. There may be, in fact, a complete reorientation of present trading relations as between the United Kingdom and the outside world and as affecting the agricultural industry. This change might have vital repercussions on Queensland exports of butter, sugar, meat, and other products. The dangers of creating artificial conditions in the wool market were, in any event, likely to react to our serious disadvantage when international conditions resumed a normal state, particularly in view of the increased competition likely to be met from rayon and staple fibres."

I hazard a prophecy, too, that a present-day as well as a post-war problem for us to overcome is that of replacing the labour that has enlisted from our primary-producing industries. It may prove difficult to fill the places of those unfortunate men who lose their lives or return either unfit or unwilling to take their places again in primary production. I suggest to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock that it might be well to look into the matter with a view to formulating some scheme, if that is possible, to meet this depletion in the ranks of farm labour. I desire to point out to the Minister that the allotting of selected unemployed youths from city or town areas would certainly help to overcome the difficulty to a large extent, but only if such youths are given some form of training for periods of either three or six months before being sent out to do farm work,

whether to a wheatgrower, dairyman, cane-grower, or fruitgrower. Such training, at one or more of our agricultural colleges, whether for one, three, or six months, or with recognised up-to-date prominent farmers throughout the State, would give the youths some idea of the industry to which they might be sent as off-siders or assistants.

Some time ago, the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, in his presidential address at the annual conference of the Council of Agriculture, had something to say in this respect, and I desire to voice my full agreement with his remarks. The Press report reads—

"In his presidential address to the annual conference of the Council of Agriculture to-day, Mr. F. W. Bulcock issued a frank warning that primary producers must prepare for a fall in agricultural values after the war, because of the inevitably diminished purchasing capacity of the people.

"He said that there was room for material expansion of the cotton and tobacco industries in Queensland, but flax-growing would not be an economical proposition."

That, of course, is a matter of opinion. Some prominent landowners and agriculturists in the State believe that flax production could be made economic. The Minister, with all the information that is available to him, thinks that it would not prove to be economic, and so flax-growing has not been seriously considered.

The report goes on—

"After describing as fantastic any arguments that production should be increased without any certainty of a market and in the absence of any lead from Britain, Mr. Bulcock suggested that the best contribution that the council could make in the war period was to grapple with the problem of preventing economic loss in Queensland, which, he estimated, would amount to not less than £10,000,000 in primary industries alone."

Hon. members opposite who know anything of farming, or who represent farming areas and who come in contact with primary producers, would, I think, agree with the Minister.

After the presidential address delivered by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, His Excellency the Governor gave the delegates some useful and, as usual, some rather fatherly advice. He said—

"The members assembled at the conference represented industries whose products were valued at more than £25,000,000 in the last financial year. The council was planning to protect farming industries from the effects of the present war. He suggested that experimental farms for cotton and tobacco should be established in parts of the State where these commodities could be grown so that producers could be instructed on the right lines."

Later on, in referring to the suggestions of His Excellency, the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, Mr. Bulcock, said—

“In Queensland there was room for material expansion in the cotton industry. Economic circumstances were satisfactory, and Australia needed cotton as a contribution to the war effort. Anyone growing cotton to-day was discharging an essential national service. Tobacco was more or less a luxury crop, but there was considerable room for expansion, and the economic justification was that they would conserve dollar exchange. The amount of money so conserved could be utilised in their own land and labour and so have special application to the war effort.”

It is pleasing to know that so much is going to be made available to the cotton-growers and I hope, too, to the tobacco-growers to encourage greater production. I am pleased, Mr. Brassington, that in his utterances at that conference the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock did not advocate restriction of output. To use his own words, he said—

“We should maintain our ordinary expansion of agriculture.”

Concerning the probable decline in value of our primary products after the war, the hon. gentleman had this to say—

“Primary producers should investigate reducing overhead costs and securing greater efficiency in production.”

He will probably be told to mind his own business and not interfere with the ordinary vocation of the farmer. However, he went on—

“They should seek to avoid preventable economic loss. Factors in this were the cost of the blowfly to the wool industry and tuberculosis and contagious abortion in the dairying industry. The council should concentrate to an increasing extent on this aspect. If they prevented some of the loss, they would lessen the gap between the present earning capacity of the primary industries and the prices which, he felt, would obtain after the war. If they did that, the problems of the post-war reconstruction period could not hit so hard.”

That brings me back to what I said before—namely, that we shall have many post-war problems to contend with. In fact, they are beginning to show themselves now. Some will have to be sidetracked, as it were; others will have to be faced, and, as the Minister pointed out, much can be done by getting greater efficiency in production and lessening costs.

I desire to support the remarks of other hon. members in this Chamber during this debate and the debate on the Address in Reply to the effect that Queensland and its people are seized of the seriousness of the present World War. Our recognition of the position is demonstrated by our response in manpower and our contributions to the various patriotic funds. In many ways we are proving that we are intensely loyal and

willing to give the fullest service that our Empire expects of us.

At 4.20 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. T. L. WILLIAMS: I desire to compliment the Government on the considerable help that they intend to give to people who are willing to go in for greater production of cotton, and I am particularly pleased that so much encouragement has been given by the Government to settlers, not only in the Upper and Central Burnett areas, but also in the Callide and Theodore areas, which are the main cotton-growing districts of the State. A little while ago, the Premier said that it was necessary to produce more cotton for civil and defence purposes, and it is heartening to know that in response to the Government's encouragement many applications—in fact, too many for the department to handle at the moment—were received.

During this session I asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry certain questions concerning cotton production, and this is a report of his reply—

“Record Cotton Crop Expected.

“There was ample evidence of increased production of cotton in the 1940-41 season, stated the Minister for Labour and Industry (Mr. T. A. Foley) in Parliament to-day. He added that there was every prospect of a record crop.

“The Government had undertaken a campaign to increase acreage under crop and was concentrating on instructing growers in improved cultural methods and pest control, the Minister told Mr. T. L. Williams (Government).

“The Minister said that 80,000 acres would be planted as compared with 40,000 in previous seasons. Last season, advances from the cotton production relief fund were made to 725 growers and, so far this season, advances had been approved for 1,020 applicants.

“The amount advanced last season to cotton farmers was £7,020 and to cotton share farmers £29,330, while it was estimated that the amount required for this season would be £60,000. Since the inception of the scheme in 1932-33 to 30 June last £172,166 had been advanced.

“It was estimated that employment was given each season in the cultivation and picking of the crop to 1,200 persons as a result of the advances, the wages payment being £40,000. Should seasonal conditions be favourable it was estimated that at least 2,000 workers would be employed by borrowers and that £67,000 would be paid in wages.

“In the last seven seasons it was estimated that 86,000 acres of scrub land and 64,000 acres of forest land had been cleared and converted into dairying and farming land. The potential value to the State was approximately £300,000.”

It is pleasing indeed to get good news such as that and to know that the Government are encouraging the development of cotton to the utmost extent. We now only require favourable climatic conditions during the next few months for the expectation of an increased crop to be realised. The production will be considerably increased by the extension of irrigation.

Mr. Young, the chairman of the Queensland Cotton Board, is also very pleased at the prospects of increased production, and he appreciates the help that has been given by the Government in the past and looks forward to the splendid results that will follow the additional help that the Government propose to give. This is a report of his views on the coming cotton production—

“1,000 More Farmers to Grow Cotton This Season.

“In the coming season 1,000 more farmers will plant cotton in Queensland than last season. The area placed under cultivation will be 80,000 acres—double that of last year—and a crop of between 20,000 and 25,000 bales is expected, compared with 12,000 bales last season.

“The chairman of the Queensland Cotton Board (Mr. J. D. Young) said to-day that good rain was urgently needed to ensure satisfactory conditions for planting. Cotton had to be planted by the end of October for the best results.

“If favourable conditions were experienced the cotton crop this season would be roughly about a quarter of Australia's total requirements for 1941. This showed the big possibilities for expansion in the industry. The number of growers this season would be 3,500 compared with 2,500 last year.

“Increased acreage was being placed under cotton this season in the Callide Valley, Burnett district, and in the Maranoa and northern Darling Downs areas. A crop of commercial significance also would be grown in the Burdekin Valley for the first time. Doubling of the cotton crop this season also would mean a similar increase in employment in the industry. Between 2,000 and 3,000 persons were employed for five months in the harvesting of cotton in past years.

“Irrigation developments were proceeding rapidly, Mr. Young said, and next year more extensive irrigation would be undertaken.”

We, as well as others interested in the cotton industry, all hope for the success of the irrigation that is being undertaken by individual farmers, either from their own financial resources, or as a result of Government assistance.

There is not much more I want to say at the present moment, except to refer to the

concluding paragraph in the Financial Statement—

“Our earnest hope, I am sure, is that the great crisis which now confronts the British Commonwealth of Nations will speedily pass away, and that the cause of democracy and freedom will emerge triumphant and never again be challenged or denied in the years to come.”

With that we wholeheartedly concur. Hon. members who have spoken during the present session have referred to the overseas situation, and to the significance of this world-wide upheaval. To me it could mean the end of civilisation as we as a people have come to know it, or it could bring about complete political, social, financial, and economic reform. I believe these things will come. With the Treasurer I earnestly hope that our fight for right against might, for freedom against tyranny and oppression, will speedily come to a successful conclusion, and that this country and the whole British Commonwealth of Nations will once again enjoy the freedom for which democracy stands—freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of action.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Progress reported.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 8 October.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.30 p.m.
