

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 1941

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The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) replied—

“£589,742 10s. 1d. It does not necessarily follow that these commitments are payable in any one financial year.”

EXPENDITURE ON REFORESTATION, 1940-41.

Mr WALKER (Coorooora) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“What was the expenditure in 1940-41 on reforestation 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 will be contained in the annual report of the Department to be submitted to Parliament shortly.”

PROMOTION OF UNIFORM AND OTHER POLICE.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“1. Is the status of a member of the detective branch higher than that of a member of the uniform branch holding corresponding rank? If so, in what particulars?”

“2. If the answer to 1 is ‘yes,’ when and how was the status of the detective branch improved?”

“3. What status was (a) gained by the detective branch, and (b) lost by the uniform branch?”

“4. Is he aware that there is grave discontent in the Police Force due to preferential treatment of members of the detective branch in the matter of promotion?”

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) replied—

“1. No.

“2. See answer to No. 1.

“3. See answer to No. 2.

“4. No.”

OPERATIONS UNDER CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS HIRING AGREEMENT ACT.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“1. Has any classification of films been made under the Cinematograph Films Hiring Agreement Act of 1940?”

“2. Has any standard form of contract been prescribed in respect of (a) all films, and (b) any class of films?”

“3. How many contracts have been registered?”

The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) replied—

“1. No.

“2. (a) No; (b) no.

WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER, 1941.

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

QUESTIONS.

STRIKE OF ENGINEERS, IPSWICH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley), for **Mr. MAHER** (West Moreton), asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“In reference to the engineers’ strike at the Ipswich Railway Workshops—

1. Was a secret ballot taken in accordance with section 51 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts?

2. Has the matter been referred to the Court?

3. Is any action proposed to make the law effective against illegal strikers?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby) replied—

“An early resumption of work on just terms is anticipated.”

LOAN-SUBSIDY SCHEME.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Treasurer—

“What was the total amount outstanding at 30 June last of commitments in respect of approved subsidies under the loan-subsidy scheme?”

"3. None. A standard form of contract is still under consideration. It is anticipated that this form will be available for submission to the Governor in Council at an early date. Until the standard form of contract is approved by the Governor in Council, no action can be taken to classify films or to register contracts."

PRINTING OF LETTER FROM MR. P. McCAFFREY.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) asked the Premier—

"Will he take action to have the letter of Mr. P. McCaffrey tabled by me on Tuesday, 23rd instant, printed and attached to the reply thereto of the Auditor-General which was ordered to be printed on Thursday last?"

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

"The answer is in the negative for the following reasons:—(1) The letter was not addressed to Parliament, and was not tabled by the hon. member of his own volition. It was ordered to be laid on the table of the House by the Committee of the Whole House; (2) the hon. member only quoted portion of the letter. The Standing Order under which he was ordered to table it is devised for the purpose of informing hon. members of the whole contents of any letter quoted; (3) the letter contains allegations of a defamatory character, and is not, therefore, entitled to the privilege of being made a parliamentary document; (4) Mr. McCaffrey is not an officer of Parliament or of the Crown; (5) the Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament, and it is the invariable practice to print his reports."

WORK OF STATE LIQUID FUEL CONTROL BOARD.

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

"1. What is the average number of letters, inward and outward, dealt with by the Liquid Fuel Control Board per week?"

"2. What is the number of additional employees since commencement of operations of the Board, and the additional cost thereof?"

"3. Is the State being reimbursed by the Commonwealth Government to cover the operations of this Board?"

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

"1 to 3. The Liquid Fuel Control Board is a Commonwealth instrumentality."

GUARANTEE OF QUEENSLAND FISHERIES (PTY.) LTD.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What are the following particulars of the Government guarantee to Queensland Fisheries (Pty.) Ltd., viz., (a) the guarantee, (b) the loss (if any) to the Crown?"

"2. Will he lay on the table of the House the papers relating to this matter?"

The TREASURER (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) replied—

"1. (a) £1,000; (b) £287 ls. 7d.

"2. I lay on the table of the House a copy of the Order in Council of 8 February, 1940, which was published in the 'Government Gazette' of 10 February, 1940, authorising the guarantee under the Industries Assistance Acts, 1929 to 1933.

Whereupon Mr. Cooper laid upon the table of the House the paper referred to.

PAPER.

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

Report upon the operations of the Sub-Departments of Native Affairs, Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases (South Brisbane), Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, Inebriates Institution (Dunwich), Even-tide Home (Charters Towers), Prisons, Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind, Westwood Sanatorium, and Licensing Commission.

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 30 September (see p. 540) on Mr. Cooper's motion—

"That there be granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1941-42 a sum not exceeding £300 to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor."

The TREASURER: Mr. Brassington, continuing the remarks I began yesterday afternoon, I want to say that the Opposition concerned themselves chiefly with individual aspects of the Budget, and no comprehensive review of it was made. Items were picked out here and there, and generally the criticism of the Opposition was rather directed to placing Queensland in a false light than to analysing the Budget. I propose to deal with those things that the Opposition say should be done. There was great admiration for other States, with a wholesale condemnation of Queensland and all its works. In fact, the great testimony in the Budget was the piecemeal way it was dealt with by the Opposition. There was no dissection of it.

But there was harmony on one point amongst Opposition critics, and that harmony was in their cry that taxation in Queensland is very unfair, that no remissions have been made in taxation in Queensland, whereas in the other States such remissions have been very abundant. I propose to deal with that aspect of their speeches first, and to get the subject in its right perspective I propose to

quote the words of the Leader of the Opposition, who said—

“The Government stand condemned as the only one in Australia who have maintained in full the taxation that was imposed in the emergency period of 1929-32 and the years immediately following. Every other Government in Australia have been able to give some relief to the taxpayers in their State.”

The facts are that the value of the annual remissions of the unemployment relief tax and State development tax granted by the present Government amount to approximately £1,458,000 annually. I take that to be a very fair remission.

For the benefit of the Committee I quote certain aspects of taxation in the other States, and in respect of New South Wales I quote an extract from the “Sydney Morning Herald” of 27 September, 1939. You will remember, Mr. Brassington, that the Leader of the Opposition said that remissions have been made in other States of the Commonwealth. Permit me to give something that occurred in 1939—

“Increases in taxation amounting to £3,900,000 are provided for in the State Budget which was presented to the Legislative Assembly yesterday by the Treasurer, Mr. Richardson. The new imposts include—

Company taxation: Increase from 2s. 3d. to 2s. 6d. in the £1.

Individual income tax rates: Increase of 8 per cent. Super tax of 1s. in the £1 on taxable income exceeding £2,000.

It is expected that additional revenue totalling £740,000 will be collected from income tax sources.

Motor vehicles: Legislation will be introduced to provide for a 12½ per cent. increase on the existing motor vehicles tax, and to increase drivers' licence fees from 10s. to 12s. 6d.

These additional charges are estimated to total £185,000.

Bookmakers' betting tax: Increase from ¼ of 1 per cent. to ½ of 1 per cent. on turnover.

Additional revenue amounting to £400,000 is expected from probate and death duties. Increased rates of stamp duty are estimated to return an additional £210,000.”

All that happened in New South Wales as late as 1939.

The Leader of the Opposition insisted that in the South there had been a general reduction of taxation since 1931-32. Permit me, therefore, to quote from the Budget speech of Victoria for the year 1939-40—

“After allowance has been made in the Estimates for all budgetary proposals, the Government find it essential to obtain additional revenue to the extent of £350,000.

“In order to raise this amount, it is proposed to increase the rates of ordinary income tax to provide £250,000 from

individual taxpayers and £100,000 from companies.”

Mr. Nimmo: Did they reduce the relief tax?

The TREASURER: They have promised to reduce the relief tax to a certain small extent, but they have increased other taxation. If any State is beloved of the Opposition it is South Australia. South Australia is held up to the Government continuously as a shining example. This is the Press report of the Budget speech of that State for the year 1939-40—

“It was stated in the Budget speech that income tax would be increased by 4d. in the £1, and certain adjustments in the rate of progression on incomes from property where the income is under £1,000 would be made. As a result of these adjustments it is anticipated that additional revenue of £315,000 will be brought in.”

“The Taxpayer,” the official organ of the Taxpayers' Association, had this to say in its issue of December, 1939—

“There is one grain of comfort in the fact that while New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, particularly South Australia, have either made substantial increases in taxation or are in process of doing so, this year Queensland slightly reduced her taxation.”

To get the Taxpayers' Association to admit that Queensland slightly reduced her taxation is something worth while.

So now I have exploded this one great statement of the Opposition that all the other States have reduced taxation whereas Queensland has made no reduction. I have shown that to be an absolute fallacy, and we have been able to brush this high challenge completely on one side.

Now let me turn to another aspect of the criticism of hon. members of the Opposition—that taxation in Queensland is very, very high. I call to their attention a table published in the “Courier-Mail” on 27 September, 1941, dealing with the proposal of the Federal Government concerning compulsory loans. That table shows what contributions will be made by the people to compulsory loans because of their taxation; if the taxation is high the compulsory loans are low, if the taxation is low compulsory loans are high. Here is the comparison—

Income.	Highest-Taxed State.		Queensland.	
	Tax.	Compulsory Loan.	Tax.	Compulsory Loan.
150	£ 7	£ 4	£ Nil	£ 11
200	12	10	1	21
250	24	9	15	18
300	36	8	24	20
350	48	8	34	22
400	61	6	45	22
500	88	7	74	21

So that I think we have exploded for ever this talk about Queensland's being a State of very high taxation, in particular, upon those people who earn the bulk of the money in Queensland and those who earn the bulk of the money throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Nimmo: You should tell the whole story.

The TREASURER: I am going to tell the whole story, and it is that Queensland has seen to it that taxation is placed upon the shoulders of the people best able to bear it. I am free to admit—what is the good of my denying it?—that when you get up to £1,000 and over Queensland stands as the highest-taxed State for individuals, but is not that the idea of taxation?

Mr. Maher: Why do you not bring in the report of the Taxation Inquiry Commission?

The TREASURER: I am reading from the latest report printed on the proposals of the present Commonwealth Treasurer, showing the taxation per individual and the amount of a man's money that will be taken compulsorily.

Mr. Maher: There is no getting away from the fact that this is the highest-taxed State per capita in Australia.

The TREASURER: It is all very fine for the hon. member for West Moreton to try to brush this aside with a sweep of the hand, and to talk about per capita taxation. Per capita taxation comes into it up to the point that in the figures I have quoted for returns up to £500 a year Queensland is not the State of highest taxation by a jugful. And let me remind you, Mr. Brassington, that that £500 that is mentioned in the table does not mean that the man's income is £500. The income may be £700 or £800, but there are remissions from that figure that bring the taxable income down to £500. Therefore it shows that on the bulk of the people who earn the money of this State taxation is not as high in Queensland as it is elsewhere.

Let me give you some more figures, Mr. Brassington. There are roughly 280,000 wage-earners in Queensland—I do not say for one moment that these figures are exact to the man—and there are roughly 1,000,000 people in this State. The number earning over £500 a year in wages is a beggarly 6,000. The 280,000 wage-earners in this State who earn up to £500 a year do not pay as high taxation as is paid in some other States.

I think those facts completely explode the second mine that the Opposition have laid in their charge that Queensland is the highest taxed State. Of course, per-capita payments might be brought into it, but when you come to the bulk of the people—the people who count and the people who create the wealth of this State—then it will be seen that Queensland's impost is not a particularly heavy one.

I now come to another phase of the arguments put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. He said that we have to realise that there is only a certain amount of money

that can be used for both war and civil requirements. It is essential that when there is a greater drain on the money pooled for war requirements we should save not only our money, but also our resources. He said that we should save for war production our real resources that would otherwise be used for civil production. Now, I am not going to say that the Queensland Taxpayers' Association is right, and I should not like to hold it up as being a body of people whose statements could not be questioned.

Mr. Muller: You said that it was right a moment ago.

The TREASURER: I said that it pointed certain things out. I shall read what a similar body, the Chamber of Manufactures, said about the views of the Leader of the Opposition, and this statement was made long before he made his. It is contained in the annual report of the Chamber for 1940-41 and is worth reading:—

“The Government . . .”

meaning the Commonwealth Government—

“ . . . obviously has been unable to determine what to do about civil industry. Shortly after the Prime Minister had stated that the production of civil commodities would be drastically curtailed, the Minister for Civil Industry announced the reverse, and a similar pronouncement was made by the Minister for Commerce.”

We have been hard-hit, particularly in the matter of the wage tax, child endowment, and other imposts that have been placed upon us; we have had to carry something like an extra £500,000 at least.

Mr. Nimmo: And you saved a good bit.

The TREASURER: We are saving a little. The Opposition insists that expenditure is much too high in Queensland and hon. members opposite have appealed to the Government to follow the examples of Southern States and cut expenditure to the bone so that more money might be given to the war effort. I felt guilty, Mr. Brassington, when they made those charges and I had an investigation made to see what was being done in Southern States. I found that in New South Wales the expenditure for 1940-41 was £61,609,000, and for 1941-42 it was estimated at over £62,000,000. In other words, New South Wales increased expenditure to the extent of £469,000.

An Opposition Member: Because of a Labour Government.

The Premier: To repay the deficits of the previous Government.

The TREASURER: We have been told that because of the amount of money being expended in Queensland by the Commonwealth Government we should cut our expenditure. It has been said that we need not expend so much money when the Commonwealth Government were spending £2,000,000 in this State in the war effort. But Victoria is the State where the big war expenditure is taking place. I propose to deal with Victoria now and say

that I found that the expenditure in that State for 1940-41 was £27,255,000 and estimated for 1941-42, £28,851,000, an increase of £1,596,000, notwithstanding the fact that an immense amount of money is being spent in that State by the Commonwealth Government in the war effort.

Now let me come to South Australia, the darling of the false gods on the other side of the Chamber. In 1940-41 South Australia spent £13,008,000 and this year proposes to spend £13,335,000, an increase of £327,000, notwithstanding the additional expenditure there by the Commonwealth Government.

Last year, Western Australia spent £11,421,000, and this year proposes to spend £11,725,000, an increase of £304,000.

Now I come to Queensland, the Cinderella State so far as Commonwealth defence expenditure is concerned. Last year we spent £21,511,313 and this year we propose to spend £21,772,235, an increase of £260,922. Let me set the matter out a little more clearly by showing the increases in the respective States. These are the round figures—

	£
New South Wales ..	1,469,000
Victoria	1,596,000
South Australia ..	327,000
Western Australia ..	304,000
Queensland	261,000

Therefore, it can be seen that what the Opposition have argued we should do, we have already done. We have also been asked by the Commonwealth to meet charges amounting to £500,000 that we did not have to meet last year, but in face of that we are increasing our expenditure by only £261,000. Therefore, we have decreased our expenditure over the year. The Opposition do not appear to be able to state the position correctly, and they have adopted that attitude either blindly, wilfully, or ignorantly. If there is one thing that is necessary at the present time more than another, it is that first and foremost we shall be fair to ourselves. I conscientiously believe that the Opposition are justified in entertaining a certain amount of distrust, not so much of others as of themselves. If the Opposition did have that natural distrust of themselves and they were compelled to face the facts, they would discover that they were wrong in many of the things that they said. Perhaps I can disagree with the Premier, who prompts me by saying that if the Opposition stuck to facts they would have nothing to talk about. All I can say is that if they stuck to the facts they would be talking about things that would be very disagreeable to them.

In his speech the Leader of the Opposition quoted figures showing expenditure by the State Government such as public-debt charges, cost of business undertakings, social services, and public-works administration. He concluded his remarks in this way—

“A comparison of the figures I have quoted discloses that the principal increase in expenditure comes under the heading of

social services. Expenditure under this heading, together with expenditure under the heading of public works, would appear to offer a greater scope for the scaling-down of spending, especially in view of the unemployment position at present.”

I think I am at liberty to ask the Leader of Opposition what social services he suggests should be reduced? I know that when the Moore Government were in power from 1929-32 they reduced social services. For instance, they reduced the allowance to State children, and after doing that and making other cuts they said to themselves, “We have now so reduced expenditure that we can make some allowance to the taxpayers,” and they promptly made the allowance. You will remember, Mr. Brassington, that in the interests of their own supporters they refused to reimpose the super land tax that would bring in £100,000.

Mr. Luckins: They reduced parliamentary salaries, too.

The TREASURER: That is not taxation.

Mr. Luckins: Yes.

The TREASURER: The hon. member may regard it as such. However, they did reduce parliamentary salaries, they reduced wages, they cut the basic wage, and they did quite a number of other things that were disagreeable to the people.

Mr. Luckins: The Commonwealth Government did it, too.

The TREASURER: I am not discussing Commonwealth affairs; I am dealing with Queensland. I may have some agility, but I have not the agility that is necessary to enable me to follow the debating jumping-jacks on the other side of the Chamber. They jump from subject to subject, and the moment you pin them down they have some other little hook on which they have a tale to hang. As the Leader of the Opposition desires that the expenditure shall be cut, and as he desires that expenditure shall be cut in social services, I have the right to ask him: will he cut the vote for education, for instance?

Mr. Maher: That has got whiskers on.

The TREASURER: I ask him: will he cut the vote for the administration of justice? I ask him: will he cut the vote for State children? I ask him: will he cut the hospitals vote? He dare not say so. He can make this sweeping assertion that social services are too high and that the expenditure should be reduced so that when the opportunity comes he can say, “I placed this matter before the people in my discussion of the Budget in 1941; I prepared the people for the fact that I would cut the vote for social services.” If that is his gospel then it is quite possible the people will have some objection to it.

Mr. Maher: Good old demagogic stuff!

The TREASURER: The hon. member for West Moreton is making quite a feature of this demagogic business. He knows the

word and he knows the meaning of it. He knows that demagogic comes from the Greek word "demagogic," meaning "demagogic." (Laughter.) Therefore, he is not going to be out of it.

I have mentioned to you just a few matters, Mr. Brassington, which I will briefly recapitulate. The chief criticisms of the Opposition have been these: there has been no remission of taxation—there have been remissions of taxation; and Queensland is the most highly-taxed State in the Commonwealth—it is not.

Mr. Muller: When were the remissions made?

The TREASURER: In the unemployment relief tax and in the State development tax.

Mr. Muller: You are collecting more from those sources than you ever did.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Fassifern cannot visualise the difference between the rate of tax and the actual collection of the tax. I want to go back, for the enlightenment of that hon. member. I think I told him yesterday that the hon. member for Bundaberg designated himself an Andrew Fisherite, but I think the hon. member for Fassifern belongs to the Captain Cook party. When Captain Cook was in Australian waters, there was no taxation. That is the party to which he wants to belong. He cannot see that if there are no people in a country that there can be no taxation.

Mr. Muller: I told you you are collecting more money than you ever did.

The TREASURER: I know we do. Why? Because more money is earned by the taxpayers coming within the ambit of our taxation. The hon. member knows that there was practically no money in 1931-32, because the party he supported reduced wages, starved industry, adversely affected manufactures, drove money from the State, put people on penury road, and consequently the people had no money to pay taxes. This Government by careful and wise administration have husbanded industry, put people into work, and given the opportunity to the people to earn wages for the collection of income tax. The hon. member for Fassifern cannot see that because people are enjoying bigger incomes, because more people are earning wages, consequently they are in a position to pay the State development tax. We are collecting more from the State development tax; nevertheless the rates are lower. The hon. member for Fassifern is the type of man who would go into a corner grocery store and say to the proprietor, "What is your turnover for this year?" and when the proprietor replied, "£2,000," would ask the further question, "What was your turnover last year?" and on receiving the reply, "£1,000," would say, "Good heavens, you must have doubled your prices." It would be absurd to say that because this corner grocery man had doubled his turnover he had doubled his prices, but by the same process of reasoning the hon. member for Fassifern insinuates that, because

we collect more taxation, we have increased the rates.

Mr. Maher: Do you ever think of reducing costs while your turnover is increasing?

The TREASURER: We have reduced costs, and at the same time increased our turnover. We have shown that in this Budget. We are increasing the turnover of the State.

Mr. Luckins: What about refunding some of that tax to a lot of taxpayers who have paid it in error?

The TREASURER: We have refunded it, and where people did not understand they had overpaid they have been informed of the fact.

I have destroyed the boggy of increased taxation and the boggy that Queensland is the highest-taxed State. I have also exploded the statement that Queensland is a spendthrift State. It is not.

Now I come again to South Australia, which attracts the Opposition as a magnet attracts steel. Because of this wonderful attraction I poked my nose around the corner to look at South Australia—my inquisitiveness led me that way. South Australia is getting grants from the Commonwealth Government each year on the report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. In 1935 South Australia reduced its taxation and in the financial year 1935-36 there was a reduction in taxation collected from companies from £453,394 in 1934-35 to £363,048, a drop of £90,346. Because of that reduction in taxation the Commonwealth Grants Commission gave that State more than £90,000. Could we not reduce taxation under the same circumstances? In 1934-35 the Federal grant to South Australia was £1,400,000, and in 1935-36 it was £1,500,000, an increase of £100,000—South Australia having reduced its company taxation by £90,000.

Let me give the Committee the figures for the present year. The South Australian Budget this year provides for certain taxation remissions amounting to £80,000, but again the Commonwealth Grants Commission has come to the aid of South Australia. It should not be overlooked, however, that in South Australia's Budget for the year 1939-40 income-tax rates were increased by 4d. in the £1, and certain adjustments were made in the rate of progression on income from property, where the income was under £1,000, and that it was estimated that these increased rates would bring an additional revenue from taxation sources of £315,000 for that year.

Although South Australia is reducing taxation this year to the extent of £80,000, the Federal grant recommended for this year is £150,000 more than last year.

An Opposition Member interjected.

The TREASURER: We prefer not to be that type of State. We make a stand upon what we believe to be the natural wealth of this State, the capacity of the State and the people in it, and the resources of the State

that provide them with the opportunity to live.

Mr. Pie: Should we not get something to take its place?

The TREASURER: That is a subject for inquiry and requires careful consideration.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission's recommendation relative to special grants for the current financial year was reported in the Press on 18 September, 1941, as follows:—

“The new grant assessed for South Australia was £1,400,000, but as this appears to be in excess of the State's needs for the current financial year, the commission consider it would be in South Australia's interests if it recommended that £250,000 be deferred until the following year.”

They are admitting that the grant is greatly in excess of the requirements of South Australia. No wonder hon. members quote South Australia as a wonderful State when it gets an average of £1,000,000 special grant from the Commonwealth Government. What could we do with a similar grant in the way of remission of taxation?

Mr. Maher: There is no comparison.

The TREASURER: Of course there is no comparison if hon. members do not want a comparison. Hon. members opposite are cornered. The moment they are proved to be in the wrong, the moment I show that the figures are against them, they say there is no comparison.

I think I have disposed of that charge. Now I want to look at something else, and look at it in a new light—that is, the matter of the finances of the Railway Department.

The finances of the Railway Department have always been part and parcel of consolidated revenue. The receipts go to consolidated revenue and the expenditure comes from consolidated revenue. In the past, up to the time when the Moore Government passed a certain Act, the Opposition of the day had two barrels to their gun. They used to say, “Look at the fearful deficit of £1,400,000 in the Railway Department,” and having dilated on that fearful deficit they turned to the State deficit and found that it, too, was £1,400,000, or round about that sum, because of the deficit in the railways. The point is that they used to show it not only in the railways, but also in the State's finances as a whole. They made it appear there were two huge deficits, whereas there was only one, occasioned by the deficit in the Railway Department, and as the hon. member for Gympie remarks, “They probably missed with both barrels.”

Certain investigations were made into the working of the railways, covering a period of 40 years, from 1887-88 to 1926-27. After revenue had been received and after working expenses had been paid, there remained a certain net revenue. That net revenue should go towards paying the interest on the cost of the construction of the railways. Over that period of 40 years the interest on the capital invested in the railways paid by the Treasury amounted to £49,000,000, and the net revenue

of the railways, the amount that remained after working expenses were paid, was £25,000,000. So over that period there was a loss, and the actual charge on consolidated revenue for that 40 years' period amounted to £24,000,000. But that is not all the story. Over that period of 40 years no charge was made for depreciation and no reserves were created. In 1931-32, as I believe the hon. members of this Committee are now aware, because we have heard certain rumours to that effect over the past week or so, the railway capitalisation was reduced by £28,000,000. The Auditor-General of the day had this to say about that—I stress this point, inasmuch as it is worth remembering—

“This capital reduction was effected in the books of account as at 1 July, 1931.”

A minute before midnight on 30 June, 1931, the railways were burdened with a tremendous debt. At one minute past midnight, or one minute after 1 July, 1931, began, the railways were relieved of that debt. But there had really been a passing on to the Treasury of what they could not meet. What were they doing with the £28,000,000? They were merely passing it on to the Treasury. They were not making any alteration in the actual debt. It was as the auditor has said—the reduction was effected in the books of account as at 1 July, 1931.

Mr. Luckins: A good proposition.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Maree states that it was a good proposition—from a business point of view. Let us look at it in that light. Here is a man, we will say, owning the two things, the State of Queensland and the Railway Department. He says, “The State of Queensland has had to bear the deficits of the Railway Department over past years. What I will do is to cut down their capitalisation so that they will not have deficits. Of course, there will still be deficits, but they will be the State's deficits; the State will still bear the deficit of the Railway Department.” The same man, the State of Queensland, has still to carry the Railway Department.

Mr. Luckins interjected.

The TREASURER: Free from political control? The hon. member should know, if he knows anything at all, that no Government can divorce itself from those things that are under their control. They must have some control in matters of policy. Does he think that the Government of Queensland sit down and write a letter to the Commissioner for Railways that a train to Wynnum will have to be sent out two minutes earlier or arrive at its destination three minutes later? Does he think that the Government of Queensland interfere with the administration of the Railway Department? Of course, they do not. What would be the point in paying the Commissioner £2,000 a year if we are to do the work?

Mr. Clayton: Why do you not get the men back to work?

The TREASURER: The hon. member wants to drag in something else. Let us keep

to this aspect of the Railway Department that we are considering. This was purely a book entry that was effected on that date.

Mr. Maher: An ex-Commissioner of Railways told me that he had to put men on in the workshops at the direction of the Minister.

The TREASURER: Perhaps that was so during the Moore Government's time. I have been the member for Bremer for 26 years, and I can say that for the great bulk of that period men have gone into the workshops of the Railway Department through the Labour Bureau in accordance with their registration and their suitability for the job, and the hon. member for West Moreton, being the representative of the electorate adjoining Bremer, should know that.

Mr. Maher: This is at Mayne.

The TREASURER: Of course, it would be somewhere else. I should not be at all surprised if the man who said it is now dead. It is very easy to say these things. A man who has made a failure usually can blame somebody else. It is wrong to think that the Government concern themselves with affairs of administration. They have a Commissioner to do that.

I have said that the writing down of that asset made absolutely no difference to the finances of this State. In 1931-32 the Auditor-General had this to say—

“An arbitrary writing down, such as the one under review, is generally difficult to justify on any occasion. In this case one effect of such action is to reduce without any definite basis the capital cost of the State's main loan asset, leaving a result which bears no relation to its intrinsic worth. At 30 June, 1931, the cost of this asset represented 57.2 per cent. of the public debt of the State, a phase which must not be overlooked when considering such a transaction. The net effect from a financial point of view is no different to what has obtained in the past, when the Treasury carried the operating loss.”

I think that is very clear. We must get it firmly fixed in our minds that the losses incurred by the Railway Department are still borne by the Treasury.

When the Moore Government effected this writing down of the railways they could have done something to show their appreciation of the position. In the year prior to the writing down, the loss on the railways was £1,619,000—this was £39,000 less than the deficit of the previous year, 1929-30. But what did the Moore Government do during that year? They reduced the basic wage and made percentage reductions in salaries totalling £357,000, they reintroduced the 48-hour week, which made a difference of £109,000, they reduced wages and salaries, generally, to the extent of £294,000, and effected other reductions amounting to £292,000 effecting in all reductions aggregating £952,000. Notwithstanding these reductions, notwithstanding that cheapening of the running of the service, their loss was still nearly £1,600,000.

It has been shown by figures that have been brought to this Assembly that the profits, according to a certain understanding that was allegedly arrived at under that Act, have amounted to £740,000 over the nine years since 1931-32.

The losses for the same period were £375,000, and therefore the net result was £365,000 over the whole period.

The Financial Agreement into which this Government entered with the rest of the States and the Commonwealth makes it imperative that year by year we shall meet the bill presented to us by the Commissioners of the Commonwealth National Debt Sinking Fund. Every year we are presented with a bill saying that such-and-such an amount is Queensland's obligation to the sinking fund. It says, “We should be glad to have your cheque at your earliest convenience.” Queensland has always met that demand. This Parliament wrote £28,000,000 off the public debt of the railways, and notwithstanding that fact the Sinking Fund Commissioners have come along year by year and presented their little bill of £70,000. In nine years we have paid £630,000 on account of the debt of the railways that was written off by the Moore Government and handed back to the Treasury. On the present railway debt we have paid to the sinking fund £856,000 and since 1 July, 1931, to the end of June last the Railway undertaking has benefited to the extent of £346,000 for maintenance, capital works, and general improvement works effected from the unemployment relief tax and State development tax, no part of which has been debited to the Railway accounts. Actually an amount of £1,832,000 should be set off against the recorded nominal profit of £740,000 or the net profit of £365,000. By some mysterious method somebody has found that the Treasury has somehow disguised £740,000 belonging to some imaginary account called the Railway Renewals and Replacements Reserve Fund. We have met £1,832,000, against an alleged profit of £365,000 over the same nine years.

You have, Mr. Brassington, to look at this thing fairly and squarely.

Now let me take the words of the hon. gentleman who introduced the motion for the writing-off of the debt. I believe he must have known something about it, because he discussed the matter with the then Commissioner for Railways, and anybody who had anything to do with the Commissioner of those days, and prior to 1929, knows how earnestly he advocated the writing-off of the capital debt. Mr. Godfrey Morgan was the Secretary for Railways at that time, and he was in charge of the Bill. The then Leader of the Opposition, the present Premier, made the suggestion that the railways should be expected to meet full depreciation charges. Mr. Godfrey Morgan made the following comments:—

“There is something in the contention of the Leader of the Opposition that we can thrash out the matter in Committee as to whether the payments to a sinking fund for

depreciation or renewals—I do not care what term is used, for a renewal fund and a depreciation fund are one and the same thing.”

The Secretary for Railways of the day said that the depreciation fund and the renewal fund were one and the same thing. He went on further to say—

“So far as the Bill is concerned we make a provision for payment to the sinking fund in the event of a profit being made; but, in the event of there being no profit, the money will still be spent.”

Mr. Maher: Out of the special fund?

The TREASURER: No. In the first year there was a loss of £27,000 under the new method of book-keeping, and it had to be met by the Treasury. I want the hon. member to listen to these words of Mr. Godfrey Morgan—

“No Government will allow the railway assets to depreciate in value, or the rolling-stock or permanent way to become dangerous. No matter what Government may be in power, whether we are able to set aside 1 per cent. for a sinking fund or not, the rolling-stock and permanent way will be kept in a state of repair. If there are no profits, then, as has been the case in the past, the amount expended will be paid from the consolidated revenue.”

That has been the case, and there have been no profits to set aside when you consider the amount spent from the consolidated revenue for the very things for which this money was supposed to be used.

Mr. Morgan went on to say—

“The figures show that during the first year we shall not show a profit; but that does not say that we are not going to keep our rolling-stock or permanent way in good order. That is why I repeat, that, as we are taking this step, we should have written off £35,000,000. I say we are not doing it properly by writing off £28,000,000.”

Can you imagine the limited vision of the then Secretary for Railways? Why did he not write off the whole of the capital indebtedness of the railways, and have done with it? Can you not see the fallacy of the whole business? Here was a gentleman in control of the Bill, writing off £28,000,000 and regretting it was not £35,000,000, when he could have carried his regret still further and wiped out the total indebtedness of the railways?

Mr. Maher: He wanted to give the railways an opportunity to show a profit.

The TREASURER: He could have made sure by writing off the total indebtedness and by making all the charges on the Railway Department charges against the Treasury, thereby allowing the Railway Department to have the entire profit.

Here is another interesting matter that I should like to tell the Committee. This

Secretary for Railways, Mr. Godfrey Morgan, pointed out—

1. That the Bill provided that the capital indebtedness shall be reduced by £28,000,000.

2. It also makes provision for a renewals and replacements fund.

He went on to say—

“This Bill provides that for the purpose of making provision for renewals and replacements there shall be created a fund equal to 1 per cent. of the capital indebtedness, provided there is a profit. If there is no net profit, the fund will not be provided.”

The then Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier, interjected—

“The renewals and replacements fund will depend upon the earnings exceeding fixed charges.”

That was a pertinent interjection. Now, what are fixed charges—interest on railway indebtedness, cost of renewals, and cost of replacements. They are the fixed charges, and to the interjection the then Secretary for Railways replied, “Exactly,” thereby agreeing completely with the then Leader of the Opposition and now the Premier.

The then Minister went on to say—

“If there is no profit the cost will have to be defrayed out of consolidated revenue just as it is defrayed out of consolidated revenue at the present moment.”

Mr. Maher: He was not looking at interest as being a fixed charge.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs: It is a fixed charge all right.

Mr. Maher: It was outside the scope of the Bill that he made that admission.

The TREASURER: I have demonstrated clearly what was the intention of the Government of the day. Occasionally, I have read statements by judges of the Supreme Court, learned men who know their job, in which they have said, “It is part of our duty to see if we can ascertain what were the intentions of the Legislature. The intention of the Legislature may have been so and so, but, unfortunately, the Act says so and so and we must be guided by the wording of the Act so as to give effect to the intention of the Legislature.” But, we are not bound by any hard and fast rule or by any hoary precedent. We have to interpret things in the light of what we know, and we know from the extracts I have read just now what was the intention of the Secretary for Railways in the Moore Government. We know what the intention was. He was the head and forefront of the Government of the day in railway matters, and he was a man who took a great and keen interest in the railways. He persuaded his Government to reduce the capital expenditure of the railways by £28,000,000, although he wanted to reduce it by £35,000,000. A commission of three was appointed to inquire into the matter. The majority report recommended a reduction

by £35,000,000, the minority report recommended a reduction by £24,000,000, and the Government, as a sort of compromise, made it £28,000,000—just an arbitrary figure.

The man who knew the main job, the man who had his finger on the vital part and knew the inwardness of it, Mr. Godfrey Morgan, in reply to the interjection by the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier, that the fund would depend upon earnings in excess of fixed charges said, "Exactly." I have shown that we have paid fixed charges on the old debt amounting to £630,000, and fixed charges on the present debt amounting to £856,000. It is astonishing that any hon. member should desire to continue to flog a horse that is well and truly dead.

Mr. Maher: The Act did not give you that privilege.

The Premier: You are wrong there. The legal opinion is that we have acted strictly in accordance with section 7 of the Act.

Mr. Maher: I will check up on that.

The Premier: You can check up on it as much as you like, but you will have to get a better lawyer than the man who framed the question for the hon. member for Oxley.

The TREASURER: Having disposed of that additional boggy, let me get on to another boggy raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition said—

"Of the total of £5,032,800, only the following can be classified as rural development or rural development purposes:—

	£	£
Land settlement: Water facilities, main stock routes	9,000	
Special loans for rural development: Ring-barking, &c. ..	3,000	
		12,000

On the last item, the sum of £4,073 was expended last year.

	£
Cotton and irrigation ..	201,300
Bureau of Rural Development	256,000
Mining	51,600

Last year, the amount available to the Bureau of Rural Development was £297,331. The grand total of these items is £520,900."

Those are the words of the Leader of the Opposition, but it is not a full statement; consequently it is not a fair statement. I believe the least we can do is to be fair. I want to tell the Committee what the position is.

The Leader of the Opposition in making reference to the co-ordinated programme of works, as set out in the Budget, said that from a budgeted expenditure of £5,032,800 only £520,900 could be classified as expenditure on rural development. The Leader of the Opposition omits the expenditure of £615,100 in respect of land settlement and forestry, and gives no credit to the Government for such items of expenditure as main

roads £1,026,000, mining £51,600, and loans and subsidies to local bodies £665,200, which expenditure is largely in rural areas. When I put all those items together I find that the Government this year are expending over £2,000,000 on rural development. The Leader of the Opposition classified the amount as £520,900. It is well over £2,000,000.

Let me go back a year or two for the information of the Committee. From 1 July, 1932, to the conclusion of last year, this Government spent £7,600,000 on rural development. This sum has been spent in advances to settlers, loans to various developmental projects, such as water facilities, irrigation, access roads, forestry, public estate improvement works, &c. The average annual expenditure on those projects over the past nine years was £844,000, against an average expenditure by the Moore Government of £375,000.

Mr. Nimmo: Were the periods comparable?

The TREASURER: No, the periods are not comparable by reason of the fact that the Moore Government were in power during a depression, and money was scarce, but it must be remembered they made that depression worse by making money more scarce. You remember, Mr. Brassington, that when the McCormack Government went out of office they left a fair wad of loan money in the Treasury for the incoming Moore Administration, but that Administration preferred to lend money to Governments in the South, so that they might proceed with developmental works while Queensland starved.

Mr. Nicklin: Are you right in saying that the Moore Government spent only £375,000 a year on the average on rural development and main roads?

The TREASURER: I said their average expenditure was £375,000.

Mr. Nicklin: Does that amount include main roads expenditure?

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. Nicklin: Why then include that expenditure in one set of figures and leave it out of the other set when making your comparison?

The TREASURER: I have left out the expenditure on main roads from both sets of figures in my comparison. (Opposition interjections.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that hon. members on my left will allow the Treasurer to deliver his speech.

The TREASURER: The items of expenditure included in the aggregated expenditure of £7,600,000 from 1 July, 1932, included advances to settlers, loans for various developmental projects, such as water facilities, irrigation, access roads, forestry, and public estate improvement works. The average annual expenditure was £844,000. How could that include main roads expenditure, when that expenditure was well over £1,900,000?

Mr. Nicklin: Why did you mention that expenditure in quoting the average expenditure of the Moore Government?

The TREASURER: I mentioned it the previous day to show that your Government had not been fair to rural development. On the matters I have mentioned the average annual expenditure of this Government over the last nine years had been £844,000, whereas the Moore Government's expenditure on the same projects was £375,000.

Mr. Nicklin: Do you remember interjecting when I was speaking on that point?

The TREASURER: I believe I did; I will not say that I remember.

Mr. Nicklin: You took exception to what I said, but I said that expenditure on main roads was another item.

The TREASURER: It is quite possible I may have interjected.

I think my statement deals fairly and fully with a number of matters which have been brought forward by members of the Opposition. There are one or two other matters of importance to the people generally on which I wish to touch.

We have had a fair amount of talk about post-war planning, and I think that if we could have a conclusive talk on that subject it would not be out of place.

If the Opposition make one mistake more than another it is the mistake about the drift to the cities. I am much concerned about what is called the drift to the cities. I have said previously that I do not think there is any such thing. I believe, however, that the movement of population that is thus described is natural and will continue. It is useless for us to talk about a drift to the cities if we have no knowledge of the subject. Cities are not of recent production. They have been with us for many centuries and began in the first place because there was need for people to get together. A man who has made some study of the question said that cities were the most marvellous material manifestation of man. The more you look at the city the more you are struck with the truthfulness of that description. In the early days people were forced to build a sort of rude stockade for the purposes of defence, and so village life began, and there was the very beginning of the thing that has built civilisation—the division of labour and the responsibility for labour. It also illustrated the necessity for dependence, one upon another. In that we see the very first glimmerings of our civilisation. If one wants to have some idea of what happened one must read ancient history. He will discover, for instance, that for reasons of defence the city of Athens was built on the slopes of the Acropolis. That was one of the cities built for defence. Rome on the Tiber was another. Congregations of people may exist only if there are facilities for those people to get food from the surrounding rich lands. Consequently transport of some form became necessary, and as the mode of transport of that day was the waterway we find the cities in the early days were

built upon waterways. The cities of the Nile and on the banks of the Euphrates are wonderful results of that rule. There is an exception to the rule, the city of Jerusalem, which was built not on the waterway but where the caravans from various parts of the East met and where there were trade and commerce. It may be interesting to note a further development of this rule in the case of the city of Rome. Later on that city exacted taxation from a vast area of the surrounding country. In the main, however, trade on the waterways had as its necessary corollary the growth of the cities. We have to-day cities of 1,000,000, 2,000,000, 3,000,000, and 5,000,000 and within their boundaries not one atom of food is grown, not one raw material is produced for the huge manufactures that go on in a huge population. For us to talk about the drift to the cities when we know these things have happened is one of the things we want to combat.

New York with a population of 7,000,000 is built on the Hudson River, which runs along the Mohawk Valley, and London is built upon the banks of the Thames because of the convenience of the waterways for trade and commerce. Trade and commerce exercise as much control over the growth of cities to-day as in the times of the greatness of Alexandria and Carthage.

It is true, too, that the industrial revolution was responsible for a remarkable growth of the cities as we have known them over the last 100 years. For that reason, I want to give the Committee some very important figures. In 1880, there were six cities in the United States with a population of over 8,000, and 4 per cent. of the population of the United States was in these six cities.

In 1930 there were 1,200 cities in the United States with a population of over 8,000, and 49 per cent. of the population of the United States was in those cities. The next figures I could obtain were for 1934, when 56 per cent. of the population of the United States was in the 1,200 cities of a population of over 8,000. It was the hon. member for Nanango who some little time ago drew attention to the fact that there was no drift to the cities in the United States. As a matter of fact, there is no drift to the cities, but because of the development of a higher civilisation there is that call from the cities that must be answered, and it is answered year after year. One need only refer to Great Britain. In 1800, approximately 28 per cent. of the population lived in the cities, whereas, to-day, the percentage is 80 per cent.

To what is that due? It is due to the fact that the factories built in the cities attract population. Factories could be erected in the country. That has been done in the past and is being done to-day. Population is attracted to the factories. We have built cities by erecting factories in a certain locality, and that will continue irrespective of anything we might do.

Another factor in the growth of the cities has been the use of machinery. In 1800, when the cities had virtually no population,

the only work on the farms not done by back-breaking labour was that done by the plough and the harrow, and that was merely because the people could harness an animal to these machines. All the other work, such as reaping, threshing, and milling, was done by manual labour. But what work is done of that description by that method to-day? Virtually none. One hundred years ago, or even less than that, there was no such thing as a mowing machine, a reaping machine, a thresher and binder, a disc plough, a tractor, or a separator. There was no such thing as a 5-ton churn. All these things have been introduced, and their introduction has brought people to the cities. The very manufacture of these utensils has meant that a greater number of people shall live in the cities and that a smaller number of people are required in the country. To-day, one man in agriculture produces as much as 10 men 50 to 70 years ago. These facts are established by statistics.

Mr. Edwards: That is not true.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Nanango says, "That is not true." He was there and he knows.

Mr. Edwards: We are not talking about America, we are talking about Australia.

The TREASURER: I am talking of the world generally. I am giving the history of the growth of cities and the history of the cities in Australia will be the same as that of those in any other part of the world. The hon. member would force people on to the land when there is no call for people on the land. If he wants them to go back to the garnering of the harvest with the scythe, there may be such a call, but he and those associated with him strive for better conditions in the country. They are entitled to them. They plead for improved facilities for the man on the land, and so long as they do these things they will encourage the very position that has arisen to-day, which is inevitable. Of course it is inevitable—we must face this fact fairly and squarely. It is no use trying to force people on the land when there may be no inducement to them to go there. We have to make sure there is the inducement. The land can carry only a certain number of people, and that number is governed by the demands of the city in the matter of supply, no more and no less; or what the market demands in the matter of supply, no more and no less.

Every person who looks fairly and squarely at the position recognises that unless there are big cities there is no call for the country to feed them. There would be no call for us to export butter to Great Britain if there were no big population in the cities there. There would be no call for us to sell our wool to America, China, Japan, or anywhere else if they had no big populations in their cities. The fact that large populations are in the cities gives rise to that particular call, and all we can hope to do is to meet it. This loose talk of putting thousands and thousands of people on the land is the wrong type of talk.

There is nothing at the back of it. We have to get some view of history if we are to look upon the situation fairly, squarely, and honestly, and attempt to make some provision for post-war planning. We are not going to make it by glibly talking about placing all the returned soldiers, or even a fair proportion of them, upon the land. That is not possible. As a matter of fact, the Commonwealth Government have a regulation compelling all employers to re-engage the men who leave their service for enlistment purposes.

Mr. Luckins: That is compulsory.

The TREASURER: Yes, and I think it is an excellent thing, and disposes of a fairly big percentage of the men who will go overseas. They are sure that they will regain the positions they left. But I am not saying that we should be satisfied with that. I do believe that we should make some provision for those men who will be at a dead-end, but we are not going to make provision for them by airily saying, "Oh, let us go in for land settlement." What does land settlement mean to-day as compared with what it meant 80 years ago? Eighty years ago it meant a horse, a cow, a plough, a harrow, and a handful of seed, but to-day it means prepared land, a good house for the man to live in, equipment, machinery, and stock; and no man can be put on the land decently, I venture to say, under £1,000.

Mr. Luckins: If he has a certain amount of money himself—

The TREASURER: If he has a certain amount of money himself he is settling himself.

Then there is another thing that we must consider—the adaptability of the man to the land. A man must be of a particular turn of mind, he must have some knowledge of the job—a knowledge that is just as necessary to him as the knowledge that a carpenter must have of his work is to the carpenter. I do not think we can give a man a horse, a cow, a plough, a harrow, and a handful of seed and say to him, "Go and be a farmer and become prosperous." It is absurd, impossible, and I do not think we can do the job effectively unless we train the men who are to take up that work, who are willing and eager to do that job, thoroughly and satisfactorily.

If there is one thing we must avoid, it is this loose talk about settling men upon the land. I think that is the worst kind of talk. It is loose, it gets us nowhere, and it means nothing.

Mr. Luckins: It is just something to talk about.

The TREASURER: It is merely a little bit of lip-service and we have to give something a little better than that.

Mr. Nimmo: Do you not think the man on the land is entitled to a better reward than he gets?

The TREASURER: I do, and if all Governments were of the mind of the present

Government of Queensland, he should get a return, but unfortunately we do not control the London market, unfortunately we do not control overseas markets, unfortunately we do not control shipping and their costs and charges, unfortunately we do not control many of the things that operate against his getting the return he should get.

Mr. Maher: You are satisfied to let him get his reward in the hereafter.

The TREASURER: I am not. I believe that he should get his reward now like everybody else, and the thing that the Labour Party has striven to do over the years has been to see that there is more decency in the paying of the rewards that are due for labour. The Labour Party has done a tremendous amount in that direction, and nobody can deny it. As a matter of fact, over the past 30 years—and I will make this admission—all Governments have been inclining towards a greater humanitarianism—that may not be the exact term, but it is near enough. I should say that the trend of all Governments has been towards greater humanitarianism, and it should be towards still greater humanitarianism. To talk airily about putting people on the land and about a new order that is going to come into being will not get us anywhere. The new order that is going to come into being will come; it is our job to see that it is the right order. I am satisfied that there is one thing about it that we must not allow. We must not allow it to be just a drift. I do not think we can afford to allow that. It will move, and move fiercely, and it will be the job of the people in control to see that it moves in the right direction.

I believe that the new order will demand a fuller life, but a fuller life will not necessarily mean greater comfort and greater ease. It will mean that we shall render a greater service to the community. A greater service to the community will not be a haphazard sort of a thing. It will not be a voluntary thing—it will be a compulsory community service. It will not be an easy matter for us; we shall not slide into a new order; everything will not be bright and shining. I believe that after the war conditions will be much more difficult for all of us. It will be more difficult for us to pursue the right course than it is now. We shall have to do this thing step by step, and I believe that every step will be a painful one. If there is one thing to revere and look up to it is progress. We cannot be satisfied to let things slide and drift, as there seems to be an inclination to do to-day.

I am satisfied that we shall not be satisfied with the view of democracy we take in these days. We have certain responsibilities. Citizenship gives us certain rights, and demands of us the performance of certain duties. As I have said, our general conception of duty is what the other chap shall do. The only man to whom any man will be able to say, "This is your duty," is the man he sees in front of him when he stands before a mirror. In other words, we shall have to

tell ourselves what our duties are. Then, I believe, we shall get a better vision than we have at the present time. The new order will not carry any passengers. Those people who can and will not, will not be tolerated. The new order will have to see that there is no division of service, that the only service will be community service. It will have to get rid of him who says, "My duty is to look after myself and those connected with me." Such a man will have to have a better understanding of life in the community and know that his duty is to the community, and realise that if he does his duty to the community the community will do its duty by him. I am speaking about the community as a whole, and those people who will not be with us will not be of us.

I ask that we give up all loose talk about settling people on the land and the drift to the cities. Let us not talk about the new order as some new haven into which we shall slide quite easily, naturally, and pleasantly. We shall not slide easily, naturally, and pleasantly, because whichever way we go will be hard, but it is our duty to see that our move is in the direction of benefiting the whole of the people.

Mr. Edwards: You are talking loose talk now.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Nanango has arrived at that stage in political life when nothing is any good. I am afraid to say that he has begun to live in a state that might be described as, "Oh, what is the use?" I am pleased to say that notwithstanding my long political life, I have not yet arrived at the stage when everything is good and nothing better can be done. We can do much more than we are doing, but it will not be done by lip-service.

Mr. Luckins: Let us co-operate.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Maree reminds me of the elephant and the rooster that were parked in a stable one night. The rooster said to the elephant, "Let us agree to keep perfectly still during the night, otherwise we might trample one another to death."

The hon. member for Maree, who knows that he will have to co-operate, says, "Let us all co-operate." That is a great and glorious admission. I trust that he will accept fully, frankly, and freely the co-operation that will be placed upon him, and that he will live long enough to thank those people who have placed that co-operation upon him.

Item (Aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor) agreed to.

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1940-1941.

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (BALANCE OF VOTE).

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

"That £3,532 be granted for 'Executive and Legislative—His Excellency the Governor (Balance of Vote).'"

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (11.57 a.m.): I was very pleased to see that His Excellency the Governor had been granted a further extension of his office. He has proved himself a worthy citizen, and a man who is willing to help the people of Queensland in every possible way. The expenditure required for the maintenance of office of Governor is money well spent. When the hon. member for East Toowoomba was speaking in this Chamber the other day he said that probably the Premier would be going into another job, or into other quarters, and although we were more or less jesting there is the persistent rumour that the Premier might accept the Governorship of this State. I do not know whether he can give us any inkling as to his intentions about taking over this very high office. I think it is advisable to have an outside man as Governor. Some people may ask, "Can we not find a man in this State who can fill the position as well?" But I do not hold with the view that question suggests. A man who comes from the hub of the universe, from the centre of the Empire, is a disinterested party, one who can hold the scales evenly, and can carry out his duties without favouring one section of the people more than another.

The system of importing Governors has been of great benefit to this State, because every one of them who has retired and returned to the Old Country has gone back as an ambassador from Queensland. When I was in England I went down to Queensland House, where I saw the late Sir Matthew Nathan, a former Governor of Queensland, with his coat off and busily engaged in indexing a great number of books which he said were the books that he had collected while he was Governor of Queensland. He said it was his intention to present them to Queensland House for the use of people who desired to gain a knowledge about Queensland, and that it was his intention to hand them over without any cost to anyone.

Sir John Goodwin, Governor of Queensland, asked me what I thought was the most charming place in England. I said that I thought it was the country in the Lake Windermere district, up towards Ambleside. He replied, "That is remarkable, because I had an estate there, but I had to sell it while I was in Queensland, in order to maintain my position there." It can be seen that Governors are called upon to spend in excess of the amount provided for them by the Government in the maintenance of their office. The expenditure on the office is a wise one in the interests of the State. I do not know whether the present Governor intends to relinquish his position at the expiration of his present period of 12 months. I hope not. I hope the fact that he has had his term extended for only 12 months is not significant. It looks as if Sir Leslie Wilson had become our permanent Governor, and, as I said before, he has done his job very well.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (12 noon): What the hon. member for Oxley has said prompts me to make some comments with reference to the position of Governor of this State. I have always held the view that it is a good thing to maintain touch with Great Britain through the office of Governor, but I have no objection to the appointment of an outstanding Australian to the position. We have thousands of men in Australia well equipped in every respect to discharge the high functions of either the office of Governor-General of the Commonwealth or Governor of the State of Queensland, but it is important to us in every way to retain at least one Imperial link. It is in these days that we must recognise to the full that under the Statute of Westminster we have the utmost freedom. We are masters of our own affairs, and there is no interference whatsoever by the Imperial authorities in the functions of government, either Federal or State. To that extent we are an entirely free people, and masters of our own fate and destiny. We are all held together throughout the Great British Commonwealth of Nations in the symbol of the Crown.

The Premier: You are speaking now in a Commonwealth sense. The State Governor has more authority than the Governor-General.

Mr. MAHER: I am speaking in a general sense, because once we allow any wedge to be driven into the principle by saying we will accept an Australian for the high office of Governor it will not be long before the wedge will be driven further and a request made for the appointment of an Australian as Governor-General. There is no doubt in my mind as to the qualifications of an Australian for the position, but in view of the complex civilisation we live in and the dangers of increasing populations in the more closely-settled countries it is the duty of the Empire to stand more closely together. The late Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain said that the day of small nations had passed, and the day of Empires had come. I think that is very true to-day. We have seen the many races that formed the old Habsburg Empire divide into smaller nations; because of inter-racial feuds and differences, they were unable to stand together. We have had it demonstrated in this Great War that because certain nations were not welded into one great State standing as a barrier to the German Reich they were overrun one by one.

This all emphasises the principle that peoples with a common interest and affinity should stand together, for thus they will be better and more strongly equipped to meet danger and less likely to be assailed. It is, therefore, highly important that this country should maintain the Imperial link, and the least thing we can do, having regard to the fact that we are all of the British race, is to maintain through the offices of Governor-General and Governor our link with Great Britain. That is the least we should do to weld this great Empire together.

It is on those grounds I support the view that it is desirable that any further appointments to the office should be made by His Majesty The King, in the way that has been followed since the foundation of Australia and its States.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (12.6 p.m.): I wish to pay a tribute to the great service rendered by His Excellency the Governor during his stay in Queensland. One characteristic of the people of this State that attracts His Excellency is their democratic outlook. He appreciates Australian sentiment and Australians. We have been fortunate in having him for so long, but we realise that in the ordinary course men who are appointed to this position go Home at some time. If His Excellency should go during this period of great international stress and war it would be foolish for us to take up the attitude that there was no Queenslander capable of fulfilling that high office with credit to himself and honour to this State. The close ties that bind us to the Empire would be in no way impaired by such an appointment. I do not think it is wise to support the outlook that anyone who came from the Old Country could maintain the Empire spirit to a greater extent than a local appointee. I believe that Queenslanders, particularly those who have been in public life, are just as intensely loyal to our King and Empire, and cherish the ideals we are fighting for as dearly as anyone coming from any other part of the Empire. I think the appointment of one of our citizens to the office of Governor would be highly satisfactory and would maintain the bonds of Empire to the same extent as if the appointee came from Britain.

We are grateful to His Excellency for his excellent work in this State since the war began and his endeavour to bring us together in the fight against the things that threaten us. He has undoubtedly rendered a service that will be appreciated by Queenslanders for all time. If he has to return to the Old Country in the near future, and in view of the difficult times we are going through, I think we could easily find a very eminent Queenslander to fill the position. Such an appointee would receive the same support from Queenslanders as the present Governor receives. Queenslanders and Australians are looking at this Empire tie in a different spirit to-day than in the past. We recognise that no matter what part of the Empire we may be in we are close to each other.

I offer my congratulations to His Excellency Sir Leslie Wilson on the wonderful service he has rendered to Queensland during his sojourn here.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (12.10 p.m.): I appreciate the remarks that have been made by hon. members regarding the activities of His Excellency the Governor. There can be no doubt that Sir Leslie Wilson has given very valuable service to this State, and that service is appreciated by all sections of the community in Queensland.

Mr. Maher: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He has interested himself at all times in everything that strengthens the nation. Everything that goes to build up character he has encouraged and supported. He has received His Majesty's commission on two separate occasions, and his time has now been extended for a further period of a year. Whether that will be the final extension, I am not in a position to say.

Hon. members should realise that the appointment of a Governor of a State is made on the nomination of the Secretary of State for the Dominions. In the past, the question has arisen whether that nomination should be made by the Government of a State. In other words, who can say that the Secretary of State for the Dominions is more capable of making a recommendation to the King than, say, the Premier of the State concerned?

Mr. Nimmo: Cannot the State say that a man is acceptable? I think you would have a say in that.

The PREMIER: I am pointing out that the nomination or the initiative is in the hands of the Secretary of State for the Dominions, a Minister of the British Government. It could be argued that a member of the Queensland Cabinet, or the Queensland Government as a whole, could give a recommendation of equal value to that of any Secretary of State in England. A number of people who hold office in Great Britain during normal times may know very little about the Dominions. They may not even know the geography of the Dominions or very much about the aims and aspirations of their people. I have heard members of the House of Commons, when discussing Imperial affairs, talking glibly about "our" possessions overseas. I have not failed to protest against that Piccadilly attitude.

We take the view in Australia that Australia is owned and controlled by the Australian people, those who are its citizens now and those who will be its citizens in the future. We recognise that under the system of the British Commonwealth we have probably devised the best form of government that has yet emerged in any country. Having regard to the history of government, it is a very interesting thing that there is no precedent, so far as I know—and I have been a very careful student of history all my life—for a Commonwealth such as ours. We are bound together effectively by invisible links. We are bound together, not by any legal enactments that can be enforced in a court of law but chiefly by a common sentiment, a common desire to extend the benefits of civilisation.

Unity is strength, and the British Commonwealth, united, is the strongest individual unit, economic and otherwise, in the world to-day. But no long document, no weighty tomes, play any part in that form of control. Each part, according to its intelligence, energy, and vision, is self-governed. We are united in common kinship, in common sentiment. Speaking broadly, I should say that the British Commonwealth of

Nations is not only unique in history but is the greatest force for civilisation in the best sense that has yet emerged in the evolution of the world.

The British Commonwealth stands for the advancement of human liberty. It lays no bounds to the extension of human liberty. Human liberty can be extended to the widest possible bounds compatible with human responsibility. There can be no liberty without corresponding responsibility. Our form of government has been a gradual growth, an evolution, a slow unfolding, and no-one can contemplate with equanimity any disintegration of what we are proud to call the British Commonwealth of Nations.

At the time of the conference held very early in the century, which was attended by the late Alfred Deakin, the late Earl Balfour, of Great Britain, made a speech that evoked wide attention at the time and has since been proved to have been prophetic. When he welcomed the various delegates, he looked into the future and drew a picture of the development that the British Empire was likely to take. It is of tremendous interest to read that speech to-day, in the light of events that have taken place over the last 35 years. It showed a wonderful knowledge on the part of the speaker, not only of history but of the tendencies that were developing at that time, and have come to fruition since and have been embodied in what is known as the Statute of Westminster.

Under that statute, each Dominion has complete control of its destiny and its own affairs. Yet, we are united in sentiment, in economic interest, and regard ourselves as one people having the same flag and the same destiny. The link with the Crown is largely the sole legal attachment to the British Crown.

Governors of States have certain duties and obligations that are set out not only in the Constitution itself, but in the instructions to Governors. If hon. members have not read them I advise them to do so, because they are very interesting. We in Queensland have power to amend our Queensland Constitution. We have power to pass any law that does not infringe the law of the Commonwealth or the treaty obligations into which Great Britain and the Commonwealth have entered. It is the duty of the Governor to reserve for the Royal Assent any measures that might have international implications. In such a case, the Attorney-General of the State is the adviser to the Governor on the question whether any Bill should be so reserved for the Royal Assent. A Bill reserved is, of course, scrutinised by the British legal authorities in relation to contractual obligations that might be involved between the Commonwealth and other countries and Great Britain and other countries. With this exception, we have complete self-government, and the only consideration that enters into the matter is the right of nomination of the Governor. As I said earlier, a nomination is made by the Secretary for State for the Dominions, and I take the view that it would not in

any sense weaken the Government of Queensland if the nomination was in the hands of the Government of the day. That is the factual relation in respect of the Governor-General. The Commonwealth Government have the right of nomination, and they exercise that right. Governors-General appointed in recent years, particularly since the passage of the Statute of Westminster, have all been nominated by the Commonwealth Prime Minister. Does anybody object to a Governor-General so appointed? I have not heard that any valid objections have ever been put forward. Of course, the Government of the day have certain powers in relation to these things, and they are exercised, and there is no doubt that the present Government and succeeding Governments will continue to exercise those powers.

Suffice it to say, however, that it is very pleasing to know that we have as our present Governor and his good lady people who have endeared themselves to Queensland, and a man who has carried out his obligations to the State in so admirable a fashion.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I should advise the hon. member for Oxley to disregard rumours in future. "Rumour is a lying jade," said one of the world's greatest poets, and who am I that I should presume to contradict that great authority? It is very touching, however—I feel stirred to the depths of my being—to see how many people are concerned for my future. It is a form of loving-kindness for which I am very deeply grateful. But I would point out to those otherwise well-intentioned people that there is nothing I want that anyone can give me. That statement of moral philosophy is one that hon. members might ponder—there is nothing I want that anyone can give me. If the hon. member for Oxley bears in mind those words of the immortal bard, "Rumour is a lying jade," he will not fall into the grievous error he is so prone to fall into when discussing matters in this Chamber.

Item (His Excellency the Governor—Balance of Vote) agreed to.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (12.26 p.m.): I move—

"That £90 be granted for 'Executive Council.'"

The vote is the same as last year.

Vote agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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

"That £31,038 be granted for 'Legislative Assembly.'"

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (12.28 p.m.): I should like to make some reference to Parliament and to matters related to this vote. It is rather a hackneyed saying that

we owe a great deal to our parliamentary institutions and that it is the pride of free people to send representatives to Parliament. So far as my observations go, I think that the business in this Parliament is done in a dignified way, and its conduct equals and possibly excels that of other parliamentary institutions that I have had occasion to visit. However, I think it is desirable to maintain the old-established practice in this Assembly, that an hon. member in addressing himself to the various subjects submitted for our consideration should rely on his own ability to express himself freely and lucidly without resorting to the reading of his speech.

I am willing to concede this right to the Premier or a Minister of the Crown or Leader of the Opposition, especially when a highly intricate or involved Bill is before Parliament, or when any important statement has to be made and it is necessary to weigh one's words very carefully. I concede quite willingly to those who carry the responsibilities of Parliament the privilege of reading such statements, but so far as the general rank and file of the House is concerned we are not maintaining the ancient tradition and standing of Parliament if we allow hon. members to read their speeches.

Mr. Dunstan: Parliament is usually indulgent to a new member.

Mr. MAHER: That indulgence is entirely within the discretion of Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees. A new member will never find his feet if he is going to read his speech every time he gets up. He will never gain confidence in himself. We have all been new members in our time and no-one could have been more nervous than I was when I rose for the first occasion. In fact, my knees knocked.

The Premier: As a matter of fact, mine still knock.

Mr. MAHER: No man ever attains to any distinction as a public speaker unless he is slightly nervous. It is the man who is nervous before he gets up to speak who often rises to the greatest heights of oratory. I read an article about Mr. Lloyd George in which it was said that before delivering a speech in the House of Commons or in any of the large cities of England he literally shook with nervousness. I can understand that. Every man in parliamentary life is seized with a certain amount of nervousness and apprehensiveness, particularly before he rises to deliver any important speech, and he has to conquer that feeling as best he can. Even Disraeli, who rose to the greatest heights of oratory in the British House of Commons, twice failed to hold the House when he came in as a new member because of sheer nervousness. If men like Disraeli had been allowed to read their speeches constantly they would not have attained that masterful and dominant position to which he subsequently attained.

If the Premier, from whom we have heard some notable speeches in this Assembly, got into the habit when he entered Parliament of reading his speeches on every occasion he

would never have trained himself to become the effective speaker that he is and he would never have conquered his initial nervousness. Parliament loses its interest completely when hon. members are compelled to sit and listen to long, windy orations that are read.

Someone told me the story of two old Scotchmen coming from Kirk on Sunday. One said to the other, "What do you think of the new minister, Jock?" Jock replied, "I don't think ower good of him at all." His friend continued, "What is wrong with him?" and Jock replied, "In the first place he read his sermon, in the second place he read it badly, and in the third place it was not worth reading at all." That is the position we are getting into in this Parliament. I do not think that Parliament should tolerate the reading of speeches by hon. members. It gives an hon. member a certain advantage over other hon. members. It enables him to use polished phrases, or—it is possible—to pay some "ghost" to write his speech for him and get it into "Hansard" with all its grandiloquent phraseology, to be afterwards circulated among his constituents. They are then inclined to think that their representative is an orator. That hon. member has an advantage over the hon. member who gets up and makes an extemporaneous speech from the wealth of knowledge he has accumulated from experience, or as a result of study, industry, and research to equip himself as a public man.

I think Parliament's charm and interest lie in the fact that members have to get up and rely on their own resources when delivering a speech. I must say that I found it very interesting during my term of five years as Leader of the Opposition to sit here all day long and listen to all types of men speaking. Some of them spoke with a little difficulty at times, some awkwardly for the first time, nevertheless, they all had ideas to express.

The Premier: The great thing is the idea.

Mr. MAHER: The great thing is the idea, as the Premier says. The great thing is a man's experience and the expression of his views in his own natural way, so that we can judge his earnestness and sincerity. That is the point. Anybody who gets up and monotonously reads out something does not give those who are listening an opportunity to judge his earnestness, his sincerity, or his value to the nation. I am not reflecting on any hon. member who has read his speech. I am only dealing with the principle. I realise that there is a natural inclination in a new member to take the line of least resistance and read out a written statement. While it is possible for that to go on, one cannot blame members for seeking the easy way. I think our Standing Orders should be so framed that tolerance might be accorded to a new member for his first session, but after he had accommodated himself to the atmosphere of the House—and when the second session opened he should have done that—he should be big enough and strong enough to get up and state his views and combat interjection, and in that way develop into a useful member of this

Assembly. If we are going to treat a new member as a hothouse plant he will hardly survive the icy winds that blow in this House at times.

The Premier: Sometimes they are not icy; they are scorching.

Mr. MAHER: They are scorching hot or icy, according to the political temperature. After all, is there not an interest in that? We have our ups and downs; we give our blows and take the other fellow's blows, but we sometimes sit down in a reminiscent mood and say, "Well, it was hot, but I enjoyed the fun." I think there is a good deal in that. It is in the clash of argument and the ebb and flow of debate that progressive views are given. In public speech and argument and in the exchange of views we learn, we sometimes alter views previously held, and sometimes our views are strengthened.

In this Assembly we have opportunity of gaining knowledge and experience by listening. I remember, when I came here first, the late member for Bundaberg, Mr. Barber, asked me not to be biased in any way, but to sit and listen and I should hear wisdom from both sides. While we sometimes hear a good deal of what is termed "boloney," at the same time there are members from both sides who make very useful contributions to debates, and those who will sit and listen can learn. They can make themselves much more capable and informed by listening and absorbing all they can, crystallising and dissecting it in their minds and trying to decide, from their point of view, what is reasonable and just.

At least, that has been my experience here. I emphasise that I make this appeal to the Committee this morning, not out of any sense of prejudice or ill-will to any new member who has been in the habit of reading his speech, but rather to uphold the principle that a man should, as soon as possible, accommodate himself to the atmosphere of Parliament and learn to deliver a speech based on his study the night or morning before. He should come into the Assembly with the facts marshalled in his mind, and do his best. The House is tolerant of a new member and understanding, and, therefore, the member should make the effort.

Of course, the Premier, as leader of the House, is in the best position to encourage this practice, but I hope the members of the Standing Orders Committee will take what I say into consideration. I repeat that, in making this contention, I allow for the right of the Premier, his Ministers, or the Leader of the Opposition to read a deliberate statement on an important matter at any time.

The Secretary for Public Lands: There are not many hon. members on this side of the House who read their speeches.

Mr. MAHER: I am not submitting this matter in any party spirit. I am not charging any side of the House with this bad habit. I merely say that it is not for the good of Parliament to allow it to continue,

otherwise it will be found that it will gradually extend and member after member will stand and bore the House stiff, to say nothing of our friends in the "Hansard" and Press galleries, with longwinded orations that have been written out. The House will lose all its interest in such circumstances.

A Government Member: Possibly supplied by somebody else.

Mr. MAHER: That is so. To make use of a picturesque simile that I have heard the Premier use in this House, an hon. member could be used as a gaspipe for somebody else to blow through.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (12.43 p.m.): The hon. member for West Moreton has raised a very interesting subject. If hon. members care to read "May," on parliamentary procedure, they will find evidence of a gradual development of speaking from notes to speaking extempore and the discountenancing written speeches, and there is always good reason, as I have pointed out on occasions, for Standing Orders or a rule of parliamentary practice or principle. Obviously, the reason why written speeches have been frowned upon was the conviction that members should be creative. In other words, they should speak and vote in Parliament as they themselves think proper; they should not be the agents or spokesmen of others. Many people have acquired the habit of reading speeches, which they can carry off admirably. I have known hon. members to read speeches in this House, perhaps contained in folders such as I have in my hand, and one could not really swear that they were reading those speeches at all, so trained were they in speaking from a written speech; and that applies to sermons.

I can remember the first speech I made in this House. As most people know, I have always been afflicted with a shy, retiring disposition. When I was selected on the first day of my entry into Parliament to second the Address in Reply, I knew nothing about Standing Orders or parliamentary practice, and I took the precaution of writing out a speech. I started to read that speech, with more or less trepidation, and the hon. member for Croydon, the late Mr. Murphy—and a very fine, estimable, gentleman he was—interjected, "What newspaper are you reading?" That annoyed me, and I dropped my notes. I replied to him adequately. (Laughter.)

Mr. Macdonald: Did he understand you?

The PREMIER: Oh, yes. (Laughter.) Unlike the hon. member for Stanley, I have never had any difficulty in that respect. (Laughter.) He did me a good turn, really, by interjecting, because I proceeded to speak for about 20 minutes without reference to my written speech.

Nothing irks me more to-day than to have to read a speech. Of course, some speeches have to be written. The policy speech is a notable example, and no-one is more delighted than I am when I have finished reading my policy speech. The same applies

to the Budget. I am always more at home, with myself, at any rate, when speaking with the minimum of notes. Of course, that is the result of fairly long experience, fairly wide reading, and a very intensive study of the subject upon which I may be called upon to speak.

Actually, there is no such thing as an extempore speech on any important subject. If a man rises, speaks without notes, and makes an excellent speech, that is the result of profound thought on the subject or subjects beforehand. It is also the result of a well-trained and well-ordered mind.

In some Parliaments, Ministers always read their speeches. In recent years Ministers in the Commonwealth Parliament almost invariably read their second-reading speeches. In this Parliament that is not a common practice.

Ministerial statements relating to policy can and should be read, because a high degree of accuracy is required in order that not only hon. members but the public may be correctly informed. The Premier, or a Minister, is entitled, when making a statement on policy, to read it in Parliament, and that is, in fact, in strict conformity with the Standing Orders.

It is obvious that a statement that may involve foreign relations—a statement made in the Commonwealth Parliament, for instance—must also be written and read, because the misinterpretation of a word can often lead to a misinterpretation of what is meant. On occasions, where contractual obligations are involved, I have read the greater part of my speech. I did that when dealing with the State Electricity Commission Bill, a large section of which dealt with franchises either held or to be granted to the City Electric Light Company. That Bill contained the basis upon which all subsequent negotiations depended.

It was therefore necessary in the public interest that the full implication of the contractual obligations of the Crown and the company should be fully and adequately set out. Any error of statement might have resulted in a loss to the Crown or an injustice to various companies. So I read the greater part of my second-reading speech on that occasion.

The Speaker of the day called attention to the fact that I was reading my speech on that occasion and expressed the opinion that it was against the Standing Orders. I disagreed with him, and stated my reasons for so doing. I pointed out the practice followed in the House of Commons, and a letter was subsequently written by the Clerk of the Assembly to the Clerk of the House of Commons in connection with the matter. Sir Gilbert Campion replied on 21 December, 1937, and I think that his reply should be recorded so that the position should be known. Where our Standing Orders are silent the House of Commons practice is the authority, and that authority is generally quoted from Sir Thomas Erskine May's "Parliamentary Practice." Mr. Dickson wrote to the Clerk of

the House of Commons, and this is the reply to which I have referred—

"Dear Mr. Dickson,—I am sorry not to have replied earlier to your letter of the 24th November. It only reached me this morning. It had evidently been delayed by an accident en route and was forwarded in a damaged but readable condition from the Returned Letter Section of the Post Office.

"I have read the pages of 'Hansard' enclosed with your letter, and considered the situation which arose in connection with the reading of the Prime Minister's speech in the light, first of all, of the passage on page 303 of Erskine May. I may say, incidentally, that this passage will be modified in the new edition which I hope will be published in the course of the coming year.

"Taking the rule as set out in Erskine May at its face value, I think it will be generally agreed that it has two main objects—

(1) It is intended to secure that speeches shall not be made by proxy—that they shall not be verbally inspired from outside. This is sufficiently indicated in the note on page 303 of May.

(2) The second main object of the rule is to encourage debate. Set speeches make debate impossible. In this connection, I might refer you to some remarks made by the present Speaker on his re-election in 1935. (H. of C. debates—1935-6—307 c. 7.)

"The question then arises whether this rule is always obeyed literally, and secondly whether there has been any change in recent practice.

"It is very difficult to tell from observation alone whether the practice of reading speeches is increasing. Some members are cleverer in concealing their manuscript than others, and it is difficult to tell the difference between a speech which is read in extenso and one which is merely based on what is called 'copious notes.' The Speaker does not generally intervene unless he is asked for a ruling by a member. The enforcement of the rule depends principally on the feeling of the House, and I think that in practice the following exceptions are generally recognised:—

(1) Ministerial statements in opening the second reading of an important or highly technical Bill, or when a statement is particularly important as in the case of a statement on foreign affairs, are frequently read without objection being raised.

(2) The House is generally indulgent to a private member who is moving a motion or opening a debate and the Speaker, if appealed to, generally puts the matter aside by saying that the member has evidently provided himself with very full notes. As it happens the Speaker has this morning made such a reply in connection with the speech of a member who was moving the second reading of a private member's Bill.

“On the other hand, the House is likely to be impatient with members who read prepared speeches when they should be dealing with the arguments of previous speakers as this is contrary to the whole purpose and meaning of debate.

“Perhaps I may summarise the result of what I have written above by saying that the rule, as laid down in May, is applied in the spirit rather than in the letter, that exceptions are allowed when they are not inconsistent with real debate and that perhaps in the present century the rule has been applied progressively with slightly greater latitude.

“Let me add in conclusion that Sir Horace Dawkins resigned last summer, and that I am replying to your letter as his successor. I hope my reply may give you the information you want and that you will not hesitate to consult me on any future occasion.

“Yours sincerely,

“(Sgd.) G. F. M. CAMPION,

“Clerk of the House of Commons.”

That letter bore out the validity of the contention I made at the time that a Minister in introducing a Bill that was highly technical in character and one involving contractual obligations on the part of the Crown was entitled to read his speech. The same applies to a statement of policy and also to a Ministerial statement on foreign affairs.

I am in entire agreement with the views expressed by Sir Gilbert Campion. They are only common sense, and they are based on what may be described as a sense of the fitness of things. No hon. member should be allowed to read a speech that is not his own, and care must be taken to see that that habit does not grow. At the same time, an important statement involving far-reaching considerations cannot be trusted to what is called an extempore speech. As Sir Gilbert Campion points out, wide latitude is allowed, but in the case that gave rise to the letter to him for an expression of opinion no hon. member raised a question of order, which in itself was an indication that Parliament has a general understanding of the fitness and relative importance of things.

In that case a Bill of far-reaching importance was before Parliament. The Minister introducing it had to be fair to the public and the company involved and at the same time bear in mind that the interests of the public must at all times be paramount. I, therefore, recited in the written document quoted all that was involved and the basis on which future contracts were to be made. The advantage of that course has been amply demonstrated since then, because in negotiations with the electric authorities that second-reading speech is taken as the proper interpretation of what the law means. Is there anyone in this Committee, no matter how qualified a speaker he may be, who will contend that such an interpretation of the law could be given unless it was carefully prepared and written out beforehand?

On such occasions as those I have described the reading of speeches is eminently justified, and Sir Gilbert Campion pointed that out in his letter. I, too, have a letter from Sir Gilbert Campion stating that the contentions I put forward at that time were fully justified and in accord with parliamentary practice.

When dealing with a public matter of this kind we have to consider the opposite possibility—that there is the danger that speeches will be ill-prepared, ill-considered, and ill-thought out. I can remember some very eminent men who were members of this Parliament. They read history, they studied economics and psychology, they knew their Gibbon, and they carefully prepared their speeches. It used to be the practice in those days for men making second-reading speeches to quote eminent authorities on the subject with which they were dealing. To a very large extent that has been discontinued in recent years. That is to be regretted because if hon. members read up authorities on the subject and quoted them in the course of their speeches it would be an indication that they did their own thinking inasmuch as they had sought recognised authorities to support the conclusions or decisions they had arrived at.

Therefore, it is a matter very largely not only of practice, but of the expression by hon. members of their views in the way that suits them best. There is only one case in the 26 years that I have been in Parliament in which I have known an hon. member to read material that was not his own. On one occasion, an hon. member criticised the Budget. He was making a very good job of it, but I have a very good memory—I can memorise a great deal of what I have read, particularly if it is matter that is well written or a case well stated—and while this hon. member was speaking there was something very familiar to me in what he was saying, and during the luncheon adjournment I went to Mr. Murray, who was then librarian—a very fine character and a great help to young hon. members particularly; I owe a debt of gratitude to him for his many kindnesses and the way he helped me as a young hon. member of this House—and I asked him if he had a copy of the “Round Table.” He said, “No, so and so has it out,” mentioning the hon. member who was speaking. I then sent down and bought a copy of the “Round Table” and when I rose to reply I was able to start off at the line where the hon. member to whom I refer had stopped and finish the quotation. The hon. member had evidently committed it to memory or he had it in his papers in front of him and was so good at reading out anything that to all intents and purposes it looked as if he were giving extempore expression to his own ideas. The point I make is that his case would not have suffered if he had said to the House, “Mr. Chairman, I am quoting from the ‘Round Table’ of a given date, and the reply by so and so and so and so.” If he had done so his contribution to the debate would have in no way deteriorated in quality.

An Opposition Member: It would have been more honest.

The PREMIER: It would. I like to see hon. members preparing their speeches even if the notes they make are very copious. It is an indication of industry and application, and proof that the man has taken trouble with his material; and the House is advantaged thereby.

I do not think any hard and fast rule can be laid down. I personally prefer to speak with a few notes written on paper about the size of an ordinary envelope unless I have occasion to quote figures, and then naturally I have them properly prepared. But everyone is not the same. I can remember reading somewhere that the Prime Minister of Great Britain memorises his speeches. He writes them out in his own handwriting. Probably he does not do so now, because he is too busy, but in his early days he used to write out his speeches and in writing them out he committed them to memory. There is record of an historic occasion when he was introducing a Bill as President of the Board of Trade and paused for a word, so that a break in the continuity of his thought took place and he could not continue. He asked leave of the House to discontinue his speech and resume it at a later hour of the sitting. Hon. members tried to help him by suggesting the word, but the words they suggested were not the word he wanted and he was not able to continue.

The subject the hon. member has raised is all very interesting. I am interested in the different methods that different people adopt, but the thing I wish to emphasise is this: I do not judge any man's contribution to a debate by the manner in which he speaks. Naturally, we all like a man to have a pleasant personality and a pleasant voice, to marshal his arguments well and state them well, but the thing that counts is the man's own thought, the thought born and fashioned in his own mind, hammered out on the anvil of his own intellect. A man's own thoughts are infinitely more precious than those of any other man on the same subject.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is the view I take, and I think that if it was left to the good sense of Parliament we should recognise that men have different methods of preparation. If we are satisfied that the man is interpreting only his own views on any subject before the House I should not have any objection to his reading his speech.

Mr. Maher: We do not want to develop into a reading circle, instead of a debating Assembly.

The PREMIER: There is that point, and that was emphasised in the letter I quoted, but I think that the good sense of Parliament, which lies deep in the minds of most hon. members, is sufficient to enforce it without any hard and fast rule. Men vary so widely and their methods, too, that it is very hard to draft a Standing Order that would do justice to all concerned. From my own experience I know that men are nervous at the beginning. I also know that those who are nervous are the most effective—personally,

I am nervous. (Laughter.) I regard as the most insufferable person in the world the chairman who starts to tell the audience what the speaker is going to talk about. (Laughter.) I prefer a chairman to speak for about three minutes and then let the speaker of the evening get on with his job. It reminds me of a very good story, which probably all hon. members know, about the late T. P. O'Connor. The chairman of the meeting was a member of the House of Lords. T. P. O'Connor was down to lecture on a given subject, and the chairman took about 40 minutes to introduce him. He then said, "I now call on Mr. T. P. O'Connor to give you his address." T. P. O'Connor said, "My noble earl, ladies, and gentlemen, my address is 10 Fleet street. Good-night."

Mr. Maher: I do not blame him.

The PREMIER: Neither do I. But on the general question I think it can be left to the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, and the good sense of the House to see that Parliament remains a deliberative Assembly.

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango) (2.29 p.m.): I listened very attentively to the speeches made by the hon. member for West Moreton and the Premier on this subject, and was particularly interested in the question of the nervousness of men in public life. Many public men endeavour to cover up their nervousness and succeed so well that their listeners do not observe that they are nervous. I remember on one occasion a member, who had been a Minister of the Crown for many years, visited my district to open a show. When he was collecting information and making his notes, he said to me, "I wish this was over." I said, "Why?" He said, "If you knew how nervous I am about getting up before these people and talking to them on a subject about which most of them know a great deal more than I do." I was astounded to think that a man who had been a Minister of the Crown for many years, a man who had had to take part in verbal battles in an Assembly much more important than the opening of a country show, should be so nervous.

I have been very interested in the speeches we have just heard, because I realise that as members of the Legislative Assembly we should take great pride in preserving the traditions of Parliament—in my opinion it is a great honour to be a member of this Assembly—but the fact is that Parliament has fallen into great discredit of recent years. Whether that is due to party politics, the methods by which the government of a country is carried on, taxation, or any other causes, I do not know. I am unable to discover the reason for it, but I do say that we should forget party politics and see if we cannot remedy the position at least to some extent. It is my honest belief that four out of every five men in the street would tell us that it is time State Parliaments were abolished. Perhaps such people are uninterested, perhaps they are not following what is being done by State Parliaments. It may be that they think all members of

Parliament come here merely to wrangle, and are not seriously desirous of carrying out the business of the State, and that therefore the present high cost of governing the country is unnecessary.

I feel sure that those of us on both sides of this Committee who have been here for many years take great pride in Parliament. Those of us who look upon the matter seriously must realise that we have a great responsibility, and enjoy a great honour in representing this wonderful country and governing it to the best of our ability. We are members of an institution that makes the laws upon which the welfare of the country and its people depend. We owe an obligation to our country and our people to give serious attention to the way in which the country is governed.

I believe that what I say about Parliament's being in discredit is correct. Of course, I cannot be sure that those people who tell us that State Parliaments should be abolished would be of the same opinion if they were asked to consider the matter seriously and give a definite opinion, but what I have suggested I have found to be the general opinion of the people outside Parliament.

Mr. BRAND: I think a good deal is due to the Press reports of what takes place in Parliament.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is a good deal in that. I do not think that the metropolitan Press in particular reports the debates of Parliament in a way that is in the interests of the people as a whole. Of course, that is the business of the Press, but it is certainly not in the interests of this wonderful country. I believe that if a referendum was taken three out of every four people would vote for the abolition of State Parliaments, and I regret that it should be so. If there is something wrong with the attitude of people to members of Parliament, it is about time the position was rectified. I have heard it said, "It does not matter what party you put in, they are all the same. They never do what they should do in the interests of the State." Now, that is a very bad feeling to have abroad, and it is our duty to prevent that sort of thing from going on. Let us try to make the people realise that they are Queenslanders, and they have a great responsibility upon their shoulders.

We members of Parliament have our responsibilities to the State; in fact, there is a responsibility on every individual in the community, whether in Queensland or any other part of Australia. There is a great responsibility on the shoulders of public men. It would be a good thing if we could find out what has caused the present feeling, because then we might evolve some method whereby it could be removed from the minds of the people. If that was done we might be able to renew the respect that is due to Parliament.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (2.39 p.m.): In adding my contribution to the vote before the Committee, I wish to say that members of Parliament are elected by the decision of

the majority of the people in their electorates to govern in the interests of the nation as a whole. Parliament is responsible for the making of good laws, for the development of the State, and attending to matters of national importance. Unfortunately, there are many people in Queensland and in Australia who are prone to criticise members of Parliament without a knowledge of the work they are doing. I have recently been subjected to criticism by a scurrilous rag of a paper and I am taking this opportunity of replying to it.

The editor of this paper is a person by the name of Ranger who has served two terms of imprisonment in His Majesty's gaol at Boggo Road for false pretences. Another man connected with that paper is a well-known abortionist, Dr. Ross, who is a half-bred Japanese and is commonly known as Jappy Ross. I have been attacked by the paper in question because I have been rendering some service in connection with the war effort. I make no apologies to anybody for having done that. From a financial point of view I have been worse off. I have not stated that I have given my money to charity. A person who does anything for charity does not broadcast what he has done. I am taking this opportunity of replying to these people so that the people of Queensland will know exactly who the two individuals are. I repeat that Ranger has served two terms of imprisonment and that Ross is a well-known abortionist. I make that statement in this Committee to-day so that the people who have read the criticism of me for what I have done will know exactly the calibre of those who criticise me. The paper I refer to is "The Clarion."

I want to state further that inquiries concerning me are being made, particularly as to what I am doing at the present time. I can assure those who are inquiring that if they want information about me, I am quite willing to give it to them. I joined the army for the purpose of doing what I could in the war effort. I was told when I joined that I should be able to get leave if I wanted time to go to Parliament to attend to any important matter. Only the other day leave was refused me and I was told that the only way to get it was by applying for my discharge and re-enlisting after I had completed my business. I refrained from coming to the House and making a speech here during the time I was connected with the army. I have received a clean and honourable discharge and perhaps will go back later. I want the public of Queensland to know where I stand in connection with this matter.

Our form of government in Australia, and throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations, is the democratic form. Under it representatives are elected to control Parliament at the behest of the majority of the people. These representatives have, in turn, been eulogised and attacked by outside influences. I myself have been attacked, and I have in my possession many documents—I cannot read them in this Assembly—showing that other hon. members have been

attacked by persons who have not been able to obtain a seat in this Assembly. Those pamphlets have been circulated by the Communist and other parties, who are anti-British and anti-Australian. In fact, they are opposed to our people's giving of their best in this war. To-day, we are engaged in a fight for democracy to enable the people of this great Commonwealth of Nations to elect, by popular vote, their representatives to a deliberative Assembly. I am quite sure that Britain will emerge successfully from this war and that our present democratic system of government will continue to flourish.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Gympie) (2.36 p.m.): The Premier very correctly stated the practice in the British Parliament in relation to the reading of speeches. He also set out the occasions when the reading of speeches or statements was fully justified, either by the leader of the House or Ministers when introducing technical and intricate measures and on declarations of policy. May I, as one of those long-enduring and long-suffering persons who, as Speakers or Temporary Chairmen of Committees, are called upon to listen carefully to debates, express my hope that this question that has been raised was not engendered by party animus against any hon. member of this Assembly?

Mr. Maher: Hear, hear! Not at all.

Mr. DUNSTAN: After all, the Premier has disclosed, by reading the letter of Sir Gilbert Campion, Clerk of the British House of Commons, that that House is usually indulgent to new members. That is because many of those members may be nervous before an august assembly such as this and, therefore, desire to be careful in their utterances lest they be criticised.

There are many instances in which we should not be too rigid in the enforcement of the Standing Orders or usages in this Assembly. I do not know whether hon. members know that in the British House of Commons, on whose practices and rules we have fashioned our own, there is a rule that books, papers, and periodicals shall not be read in the House by members during a debate? We know, too, that many of our British statesmen prepare their speeches very carefully and then memorise them, because of their importance. Who, for instance, could extemporise such a sentence, or phrase, uttered by a British statesman in regard to the war then in progress wherein he said—

“The angel of death is abroad in the land; you can almost hear the beating of his wings.”

The rule discountenancing the reading of speeches is a usage of the British Parliament; but frequently, in other parts of the world, particularly in the United States, it is a common practice to read speeches in debates. I think, particularly, of that speech of the late Abraham Lincoln, at the Gettysburg celebration in 1863, when he said—

“It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us

. . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people by the people for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

No-one can imagine that such a passage was framed or spoken extemporaneously. It is one of the most profound and beautifully-phrased declarations on political and national policy ever made.

During my 20 years in Parliament I have heard the prayers read before the sitting of the House session after session, and I have never heard the Speaker say that prayer extemporaneously.

So there are occasions when speeches can be read. As the Premier has said, a great speech prepared by a member from his own thoughts and by his own industry is often of great value. On the other hand, an ungrammatical speech that is full of sincerity, force, and thought can still be a great speech.

Early in my career I was taught the value of the ability to think upon one's own feet. Many years ago, before I was in Parliament—while I was editor of a paper—two Labour members arranged to hold a joint meeting at Glastonbury, the boundary line of the Wide Bay and Cooroola electorates. They asked me to accompany them. The two candidates made very good speeches indeed, and then there was a call for Tom Dunstan to say a few words. I had never spoken in public before. I can tell you it was with great trepidation I rose upon my feet. I said, “Ladies and gentlemen, I think it is more appropriate for me to address the people of Glastonbury than either of the two candidates.” I could see that they thought to themselves, “By jove, he fancies himself.” I said, “The reason for that is this: Glastonbury was a very old place name in British history, and the people of our Glastonbury should be proud to be associated with such an old name in the annals of British history. Secondly, there was a great reformer of those old days in the person of Saint Dunstan, who, in the year 943, became the abbot of Glastonbury. He was a noted reformer of his time, and served under several kings.” I was proceeding to say that I was very proud to be a descendant of that noted reformer in his time when I suddenly remembered that Saint Dunstan was a bachelor. (Laughter.) I assure hon. members it took some agile mental steps to get out of that.

I think that the Premier and the Chairman of Committees, the Speaker, or whoever may be in control of the House, exercise very good judgment in regard to speakers and the method of making their speeches. The difficulty very often is to tell where the reference to copious notes ends and the deliberate reading of a speech begins. After all, we can say that in this Assembly the man who is in earnest, who is trying to express something that is the result of thought, can always be justified even if to a large extent he depends on prepared notes.

In regard to the debates in Parliament generally I would say—and I say it with all sincerity, even though I am a pressman—if there is any depreciation abroad in the minds of the people generally about members of Parliament, to a very large extent it is due to the Press and their desire for what they call “good copy.” The term “good copy” does not necessarily mean copy of virtue or merit. You know as well as I know that men and women can be very decent members of society, living virtuous lives, following high ideals, obeying the laws but they very seldom get a line in the Press.

We often see that things that are of no moment, speeches that are more disorderly than anything else, offensive remarks and belittling references by one member to another, get headlines in the Press, whereas the thoughtful speeches are ignored. It has occurred to me that what we need in this Parliament is an observer and a writer. He may be a member of Parliament or an officer of Parliament, but his work would be to write an impartial resume of what took place in Parliament—speeches and parliamentary Bills—and have it printed and circulated throughout the country. The public would then know what hon. members were doing, and what they said and how they conducted themselves in the work they were doing for the State of Queensland.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (2.55 p.m.): The calm and logical conduct of this debate is an example of Parliament at its best. I do not say that in any spirit of levity, but with full meaning. It is a pity that all our debates are not conducted in the same manner and spirit.

It must be remembered that we as a nation are fighting for our liberty and our democratic institutions, and it will be admitted that the greatest of these institutions is our Parliament. Hon. members in the course of this debate have said that Parliament is not held in the high esteem that is its due, and that gives rise to wonder as to why this should be. After all, it is a particularly serious matter, and one that should not be lightly dismissed. We have to examine and rectify, if we can, the feeling abroad in the land, a feeling that is derogatory to Parliaments and parliamentarians. If we as parliamentarians are in any way responsible for that opinion, it is our duty to endeavour to alter it if possible.

There is no doubt that the time is coming when there will be a growth of “isms” in this land, which may be to the detriment of our parliamentary institutions. If people have not the proper respect for Parliament, there is a great danger that our Parliaments and parliamentary institutions may go under. In view of these circumstances, there is an obligation on us all to take all the steps we can to ensure that Parliament meets with the respect that is its due. Many years ago parliamentarians were respected, and now, when we hear some of the things said of them, one wonders whether they are not suspect. There is no reason for that. I firmly

believe that every hon. member of this and similar Assemblies in this great country of ours realises the responsibilities he has undertaken as the representative of the people, but we must accept some of the responsibility for some of the things that happen and lead to certain remarks about us. A responsibility devolves on us to set an example that will create a better opinion of ourselves and parliamentary institutions generally.

I agree with the hon. member for Gympie that we need the co-operation of the Press. There is no doubt that the reports we read in the Press are not a true reflection of the work done in this Assembly. They publish too much of the froth and not enough of the kernel, they say too little of the solid work done here. There appears to be a practice with the Press to report everything that is sensational to the detriment of things of value.

If there is an undignified scene in this Chamber, the Press, instead of rightly condemning the circumstances that gave rise to it, give unwarranted publicity to it, and the people then gain the impression that that is all that Parliament does. If an hon. member refers to another hon. member as a liar, or speaks of him in similar terms of endearment, he “makes the headlines,” whilst a man who offers a constructive suggestion, one that will bring benefit to the State, gets no mention at all. I appeal to the Press for their co-operation in this respect. Let them give us less of the froth and more of the real substance of things that happen in Parliament.

I should like to make one or two suggestions in connection with the conduct of this Assembly. They have been made previously by the hon. member for West Moreton and the hon. member for Port Curtis, and are therefore not new. I think it would be advantageous if Parliament met more frequently than it does. I do not mean that we should meet for a longer period, but that we should have two sessions instead of one. If my memory serves me, I believe that when discussing this vote last year the Premier told the hon. member for West Moreton that he would give the matter serious consideration and perhaps discuss it with him during the recess. I do not know whether he has given it any further thought.

The Premier: I have not discussed it with him.

Mr. NICKLIN: I mention the matter with a view to bringing it before the Premier's notice, in the hope that he will consider it further and perhaps take action along the lines suggested by the hon. member for West Moreton and the hon. member for Port Curtis. It is my firm belief that such a course would enhance the reputation of this Assembly. I suggest that we might divide our present session into two. We could have a legislative session early in the year and a Budget session later. I think we are the only Parliament in Australia that meets but once a year. Of course, I realise that here we have no Upper House to consider, but the fact

that we are in recess for eight months of the year gives people who wish to speak of Parliament in derogatory terms an excellent weapon with which to attack us.

Many people do not realise the amount of work that a member of Parliament has to do to carry out his duties as a representative of the people faithfully. A big section of the community think that because we are not in session we are doing nothing, that we are drawing our salaries and giving no return to the State. I feel confident that if we met more frequently it would help to raise the stock of Parliament, which, I am sorry to say, is at a low ebb in the opinion of a number of people.

The Premier: I have not noticed that.

Mr. NICKLIN: I think the Premier must have heard comments about parliamentarians quite frequently.

The Premier: I have heard comments about your party, but I have not noticed any change in the public's attitude towards Parliament.

Mr. NICKLIN: I think the Premier must have heard the comments to which I have referred. I think he realises that what I am saying is correct. The criticism is not confined to any section of the House by any means. We all have to accept responsibility. We all get the kicks and criticism.

Another matter that I should like to mention, and not in any spirit of criticism but with a view to helping the work of this Assembly, is the presentation of the annual reports of the various State departments. The reports of many of the important departments are not available to us even now, although we are well on the way with our consideration of the Estimates. We realise the difficulty of getting these reports out, but I am wondering whether the suggestion offered by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs that the reports should be made at the end of every calendar year instead of at the end of every financial year, as at present, would not mean that the reports of all departments would be readily available to Parliament when required. I know the difficulty that might be experienced, but I think the Premier will appreciate the fact that for the intelligent discussion of the Estimates it is necessary to have the departmental reports.

The Premier: If you made them for the calendar year, and you budgeted for the financial year, Parliament would get out of focus. There is a real difficulty there.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes, I think it would be a difficulty—

The Premier: You would get over it better by having a financial session.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes. I am sure the Premier will agree that intelligent debating of the Estimates is handicapped by the absence of the annual reports.

I might also mention that occasionally Ministers of the Crown are not helpful to

hon. members in that they tend to give evasive answers to questions. Some questions are evasively answered for no real reason whatever. Questions are asked for the purpose of obtaining information, and have no political spleen behind them. I think, summing up, that if there was a more prompt tabling of annual reports and an adjustment of the sessions, and if Ministers would refrain from thinking that every question asked has a political sting, we should arrive at a more helpful method for the working of—

The Premier: A great deal depends, of course, on how questions are framed.

Mr. NICKLIN: I agree. If those suggestions were adopted we should be able to, as the opening prayer says, settle the business of this House on the best and surest foundations.

I feel that the debate has been of value; it has, at any rate, been an interesting one. I hope the suggestions made by various speakers will be heeded, as they were made with a view of uplifting the prestige of Parliament.

Mr. TAYLOR (Enoggera) (3.15 p.m.): I feel that I want to contribute a few words to this debate. I was surprised at the very moderate tone adopted in the suggestion that Parliament should evolve into a mother's meeting at which everything but the children would be discussed. I do not think you would bring out the best of debate on any Bill or subject under those conditions. I maintain this Parliament is as well conducted as any Parliament in Australia. I wonder what would happen in the British House of Commons in a debate on a speech delivered by the Right Honourable Winston Churchill in connection with the war, if it was conducted on the basis advocated by hon. members this afternoon. I believe that Parliament has lost prestige in the minds of the people, not because of the manner in which debates are conducted, but because Parliaments do not control the laws they make in the manner they should. As a matter of fact, one of the main reasons why Parliament does not enjoy the same prestige as it did a few years ago is that in abnormal times Parliaments make laws, and after the abnormal period has passed, make no effort to repeal them. Those laws become, in effect, laws for normal conditions, when they should not be there at all. I refer to the War Precautions Act that was passed during the last war, and still remains on the statute-book of the Commonwealth. The same thing will happen to the National Security Act, which was placed on the statute-book in recent times by the Commonwealth Parliament. There is also the Public Safety Act that has been placed—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! That matter has already been the subject of a motion, and has been fully dealt with.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am dealing with legislation passed by Parliament.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot reopen the discussion on the Public Safety Act.

Mr. TAYLOR: Those Bills have been made law.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: The regulations promulgated under them are only tabled in Parliament once in every 12 months. There is a tendency for hon. members to forget that these things require to be reviewed from time to time. If that were done by Parliament, the people would not lose confidence in Parliaments as they have done.

The people won freedom under the Bill of Rights and it is up to Parliament to see that they get that freedom and, if the necessity for abnormal legislation arises, as in war-time, Parliament should see to it when the emergency ceases to exist that legislation is repealed. Then the rights and freedom of the people would be restored in full, particularly as we understand them under the Constitution.

There is another factor that brings individual members of Parliament into disrepute—that is, that to-day members of Parliament are looked upon by a large section of the community as glorified labour agents. The representatives of the people enter this Assembly not to act as labour agents but as legislators and statesmen. Parliament, in its wisdom and at its leisure, may evolve some form of legislation to protect a member of Parliament and enable him to say, "If you want a job in the Government service you have to go to one of the recognised labour exchanges or some other recognised source of employment." That would help to raise the prestige of Parliament. I, as well as others, have been forced into the position at various times of approaching members of the Cabinet to try to get jobs for men. That is a fact generally recognised, whether the Government are Tory or Labour.

Another question we might consider is whether the Government should not publish their own paper. I know that this suggestion will not be hailed by hon. members with any degree of unanimity. Many complaints have been made about the way in which the Press handles parliamentary reports. That is due to the fact that the Press has no competition. In the metropolitan area we have a morning daily and an evening daily. These journals have an absolute monopoly of the news to be got within the State or within the metropolitan area, as the case may be. They give the reading public whatever space they choose to allot to news items, while the reports themselves are written according to the policy of the newspaper and the ideology of the editor or reporter handling the news matter. It may be said that Parliament could have its own newspaper and do some very valuable work with it. It would be costly, but, doubtless, the cost would be more than offset in the value of the news given to the people, particularly with regard to the legislation Parliament considers. We must

also recognise the fact that while hon. members play an important part in moulding public opinion, that public opinion is invariably moulded in accordance with the policy of the newspaper. Parliament should set up its own newspaper with the object, not so much of moulding public opinion, as of giving the people a full, true, and correct report, as "Hansard" does of debates, on legislation introduced in this Assembly. "Hansard" is a costly undertaking, and the people cannot afford to buy it as they would the broadsheet. If we take into consideration some of these suggestions we may be able to get out of the difficulties Parliaments are found in to-day.

We should also consider the question of dealing more directly with legislative enactments. I say that without any fear of doing any injury to the Government, or to any member of Parliament. I feel we should get more direct contact with the legislation that is passed and with its administration by the Government of the day. We should at least have information placed before members of Parliament before it appears in the public Press. Very often a member of Parliament goes down the street, not having seen the morning paper, or afternoon paper, as the case may be, and he is spoken to by someone who has seen it who says to him, "What is so and so that was decided by the Executive Council?" If you know nothing about it you cannot discuss it. I contend that members of Parliament are at least entitled to firsthand information about any enactment that may be given effect to by the Cabinet as the Executive Council, instead of getting that information through the Press.

The parliamentary system that has grown up over the centuries in the British Commonwealth of Nations is the Cabinet form of government, in which 80 per cent. of the actions of the Government are precedent, and only 20 per cent. deal with actual necessity. That is a recognised formula that can be applied to the parliamentary system of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Although we have to have Cabinet government during the time Parliament is not in session, it should be at all times recognised that members of Parliament should get information before the Press, so as we can discuss it with members of the public after they have seen it in the Press. I do not think any hon. member would violate his pledge and divulge anything to the Press before the authoritative statement was issued to the Press. I know that members of the caucus on both sides of the House know perfectly well that things have leaked out—even from Cabinet meetings—consequently we should all be placed on the same plane, every man should be put on his honour and made to respect the information he gets. I feel that members of Parliament should get their information firsthand and not have to rely on the garbled report that may appear in the Press.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! During the course of the hon. member's remarks I had occasion to call him to order for mentioning the Public Safety Act of 1940.

On consulting the Standing Orders I find that Standing Order 120 states—

“A member shall not digress from the subject matter under discussion, or comment upon expressions used by another member in a previous debate of the same session; and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections, shall be deemed highly disorderly.”

On consulting the journals of the Legislative Assembly I find that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Nieklin, moved the following amendment to the motion moved by the hon. member for Gregory:—

“We wish to inform Your Excellency, however, that in the opinion of this House it is essential to safeguard democratic principles of government in this State by the following amendments to the Public Safety Act of 1940.”

He then went on to state the amendments he suggested. The debate on that amendment being now concluded I do not intend to allow any hon. member to discuss the Public Safety Act.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (3.22 p.m.): I wish to congratulate the Treasurer on showing a reduction in the amount of this vote. It is money well expended. Our democratic institutions are worth preserving and fighting for. I do not know of any other occasion when the public are so excited as they are at election time, but after the votes are counted the public are perfectly satisfied. I think that is as it should be. Our method of electing Parliament is an excellent example of what can be done by the free exercise of the franchise. I do not say the cards are not stacked up to a point at certain periods, but the fact remains the people are satisfied when the election is over. Although there is a good deal of excitement at election time everything works out all right.

Talking about the bringing of Parliament into disrepute, I think that rests with hon. members themselves. When any hon. member of the House tries to belittle another hon. member he is belittling himself.

Naturally, the public take notice of what happens here. I take it that every hon. member who comes into this Chamber is actuated by the motive of doing some good for his country. He endeavours to do the best he can, and any matter he brings forward is not for his own good but in the best interests of the people. But in the debate on the Financial Statement, for instance, a number of hon. members discussed matters altogether foreign to the Budget. I know that the Standing Orders allow a very great latitude, and hon. members may discuss almost anything, but the bringing up of certain matters in this debate was merely done for propaganda. They did not come at all within the scope of the debate. Many of the speeches belittled the Federal Parliament, and the public, reading the remarks of hon. members—

The Premier: You are not entitled to another “go” on the Budget in this debate.

Mr. NIMMO: I am pointing out that hon. members could improve the tone of debates by keeping to the subject-matter before the Chamber. We are now discussing how we can best improve Parliament.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not entitled to another discussion on the Budget on this vote. He may discuss the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. NIMMO: We can endeavour to improve the tone of Parliament by endeavouring to be more considerate of each other.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the matter of a longer session of Parliament. The public are discussing that. They say that the present Government rush business through the House to get into recess as quickly as possible. They have the feeling that their elected representatives are not allowed to discuss in this Parliament matters that should be discussed. On this occasion the Estimates will probably be out of the way before we get the reports of the Auditor-General or of the departments. Up to the present, we have had the report of the Agent-General and only one or two other minor reports dealing with sinking funds. Very few of the reports have come to hand. When hon. members ask questions of Ministers, what do we find? Only this morning the Secretary for Public Lands gave a reply to a question that I consider to be very wrong.

The Secretary for Public Lands: But none the less true.

Mr. NIMMO: The hon. member for Cooroora asked the Secretary for Public Lands what was the expenditure, 1940-41, on reforestation under certain headings, which he gave. The Minister replied that the information will be obtained when the annual report is tabled in Parliament. Probably the House will be up before that report comes to hand.

The Premier: You did not give his full reply. He added the word “shortly.”

Mr. NIMMO: To all intents and purposes that was the reply he gave, that it would be obtained in the annual report.

The Premier: “Which will be presented to Parliament shortly.”

Mr. NIMMO: The hon. member for Sandgate asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry to give information as to the number of persons in receipt of ration relief at 30 June last, and the total number of males registered as unemployed at all labour exchanges at the same date. That is a reasonable question for an hon. member to ask of a Minister, and he should get a straightforward reply. The only reply he got was, “All the information is readily available at the Department of Labour and Industry.”

The PREMIER: I rise to a point of order. We are now dealing with a specific vote under the heading of “Legislative

Assembly," and if, under this vote, we debate the replies of the different Ministers to questions, it can be done over again when the Estimates in Chief of the different Ministers are being considered.

The point I am making is that this vote comes under the control of the Chief Secretary and any discussion relating to questions asked of the Chief Secretary would be relevant, but those asked of other Ministers would not. In other words, the matter of questions and information sought by hon. members should be raised when each Minister's vote is under review.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! As the hon. member for Oxley was discussing matters outside the scope of the vote, in referring to Ministers' replies to questions generally, he was not in order. I ask the hon. gentleman to confine his remarks to the matter before the Committee.

Mr. NIMMO: The point I am making is that Ministers must treat members of Parliament with every courtesy and give them the information they require if they desire to give the country the confidence it should have in us. Whilst discussing this vote, I should like to pay tribute to the reporting staff of this Assembly. To my way of thinking, that staff is deserving of every credit and every praise.

The hon. member for Enoggera suggested that the Government might issue a paper of their own. I hope that no notice is taken of that suggestion.

Mr. Taylor: I said that Parliament might.

Mr. NIMMO: You said the Government.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. NIMMO: The hon. member for Enoggera suggested that a paper should be issued either by the Government or Parliament, but I hope the Premier will not allow that because it would lead to the establishment of another State enterprise. We already have "Hansard," and I know of only one occasion on which any issue of "Hansard" has had to be reprinted. As a general rule there are enough copies of "Hansard" to meet the requirements of all who wish to obtain them. It would be a mistake for the Government to publish a report of proceedings of this Parliament in a separate paper to be issued by the Government.

I should like to make favourable mention of the wonderful training that our reporting staff has from the beginning of their career right through. I have been in Parliament for some time now, and I have noticed how remarkably well these men have come along, and the progress they have made. I feel sure that the reporting staff have an irksome duty to perform. At times they have to be extremely resourceful, and possibly the training that they have received in this branch of the service fits them for that emergency.

I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to say how sorry we all were to hear that a brilliant young member of the reporting staff who enlisted in the R.A.A.F.—Fred Grant—lost his life in England while doing his part for his country, even though it was in an air accident. I had the highest of admiration for that young man. He was a wonderful young fellow, and I feel sure that all hon. members of this Assembly deeply regret his untimely end.

I should like to pay tribute also to another member of our reporting staff, who is fighting his country's battles overseas in the Air Force, Eric Lloyd.

If all the departments covered by the Estimates were carried out as economically as that under review, no fault could be found with them. This small expense of £31,000 provides one of the best safety-valves that Queensland has, and if hon. members will only endeavour to elevate the tone of proceedings in this Parliament we shall certainly regain the good will of the people of Queensland.

I was indeed surprised to notice the reading of speeches in this Parliament. I quite agree that Ministers should read statements. If a Minister has a statement to put before the Assembly, it is only right that he should read it. I agree, too, that it was necessary for the Premier to read his second-reading speech of the State Electricity Commission Bill. Other Ministers can read their statements with profit to this Parliament. For an hon. member of this Committee to get up and read his speech is, however, belittling Parliament.

Mr. Sparkes: What about a new hon. member?

Mr. NIMMO: A new hon. member gets every encouragement. It is an understood thing that when a new hon. member is making his first speech no other hon. member interjects.

Mr. Moorhouse: You did on my first speech.

Mr. NIMMO: No hon. member interjects unless the hon. member speaking makes a charge against somebody. It has been an unwritten rule that there shall be no interjections when a new hon. member is delivering his first speech. I have before me a copy of May's "Parliamentary Practice," to which we refer in any matter not covered by our Standing Orders. The passage I desire to quote states—

"A member is not permitted to read his speech, but may refresh his memory by a reference to notes. The reading of written speeches, which has been allowed in other deliberative Assemblies, has never been recognised in either House of Parliament. A member may read extracts from documents, but his own language must be delivered bona fide, in the form of an unwritten composition. Any other rule would be at once inconvenient and repugnant to the true theory of debate."

I think that sums up the position adequately. I believe that the hon. member who just interjected read his speech and I think it was done without thought on his part. We witnessed a splendid illustration of reading speeches only the other day. One hon. member of this Committee read his speech and the next speaker did not. These gentlemen were both new members to this Committee. The first was a poor speech and hard to listen to, the second was quite interesting and good.

We have to look at this matter fairly and endeavour to do those things which tend to uplift Parliament and not belittle it.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 3.40 p.m.