Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 1907

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER, 1907.

The SPEAKER (Hon. John Leahy, *Bulloo*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PAPERS.

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

(1) Regulation, as of 22nd October, 1907, under the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898.

(2) Report on plague in Queensland, 1900-1907, by Dr. Ham, Commissioner of Public Health.

QUESTIONS.

REGULATION OF SALE OF PATENT MEDICINES.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Premier—

Is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for the suppression of quacks and the regulation of the sale of patent medicines this session?

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*) replied—

The matter will be considered.

VICTORIAN INSPECTION FEES ON PINEAPPLES AND CITRUS FRUITS.

Mr. LESINA asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Has his attention been drawn to the statement contained in the issue of the *Sun* newspaper dated Sunday, 27th October, 1907, regarding the imposition by the Victorian Government of certain inspection fees on pineapples and on citrus fruits?

2. Is it true, as stated therein, that twenty-five cases of Victorian apples which were condemned in Brisbane were afterwards exported to Victoria and readmitted and classed as Queensland apples?

3. Similarly, is it true that 184 cases of what are alleged to have been Queensland persimmons, and of which twenty-six cases were condemned as affected with fruit-fly, were exported from Queensland to Victoria during the period March to August, 1907?

4. Will the department take action to defend the interests and protect the reputation of Queensland fruitgrowers?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. T. O'Sullivan, *Warwick*) replied—

1. Yes.

2. Apparently so, from the return received. This would be done for statistical purposes, Queensland in this case being the State whence the fruit came. In a similar manner, for statistical purposes, Queensland fruit returned from Victoria would be classed as Victorian.

3. No.

4. The Department of Agriculture in Victoria has already been communicated with.

OLD AGE PENSIONS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

* Mr. DENHAM (*Oxley*): The giving of aid to the aged poor is a matter which commends itself to all right-thinking people. I do not know that even the white races can claim for themselves a monopoly of this considerate attitude towards the aged poor. But at the present time it is a question which is forcing itself upon all people in a very pronounced manner. I do not think, however, that this Bill should be regarded as giving much to the aged poor, because there are discriminations in it which make it particularly nasty. That is evident from the debate which took place last week on the Bill. Nearly every hon. member who has spoken on it has found fault with the Bill.

Mr. LESINA: Or damned it with faint praise.

Mr. DENHAM: Or damned it with faint praise. If we analyse the Bill we shall find that it is really a discount upon all provident action. If a person happens to have cash to the amount of £10, he cannot qualify for a pension; or, if he makes application, he has to go before a court and submit his affairs to a certain amount of investigation. This question has forced itself upon the public mind of Great Britain for a long time past. Mr. Chamberlain, among others, has taken a keen interest in old age pensions, and on one occasion he suggested that the fund to provide for old age pensions should be secured from the import duties in respect of grain. In Germany they provide for the aged poor, and indeed for all persons who reach a certain age, out of an insurance fund. The same can be said of Austria. They have a very fine system of pension law, under which the worker contributes a portion of the fund and the employer a portion, so that when the individual reaches a certain age he can claim, as a right, the protection of the pension law. But this Bill is rather in the nature of a sham. It is certainly a blow at thrift, because, as I have already stated, if a man has £10 in cash he is disqualified—he has no right to participate in the benefits of the old age pension.

Mr. RYLAND: It will not take him long to spend that.

Mr. DENHAM: I think this measure will encourage him to dissipate anything he may have gathered. It will discourage a man from thrift, because he will know that when he reaches the age of sixty-five he will be disqualified for a pension if he has £10.

Mr. LESINA: Is there such a provision in connection with the police superannuation fund?

Mr. DENHAM: The police contribute only 4 per cent. of their wages, and they are able to gather as much property as they please, or have as much capital as they like, and when the time for retirement comes they can claim their pensions as a right. Having regard to the reception which this Bill has met with in the House, I think it would be far better to retire the Bill, give 10s. a week to those who are now in receipt of indigence allowance, and give the Government time to formulate a good scheme. It appears that the Government have been so busy during the recess with other matters that they have not had opportunity or time to carefully formulate a good scheme. If hon. members will look through this Bill they will find that it is a copy of the Victorian Act. I do not know that that is a strong recommendation for bringing it before this House for adoption. There is a good deal in this measure which is repugnant to all kindly feeling. I grant you that it is a difficult question. It is a question which at the present time is receiving close investigation in the old land, where it is desired that some scheme may be devised under which a man or woman when he or she reaches a certain age shall have some provision made for them. In a recent issue of the *Times* there is a very valuable communication from a number of gentlemen who for years past have interested themselves in this question, amongst whom is the recent Registrar of Friendly Societies. I do not propose to read the whole of their long letter, as it would be wearying to the House to do so, but there is a portion which I am justified in occupying the time of the House in reading—

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Sir,—As the Chancellor of the Exchequer has intimated his intention of appropriating next year a sum of money towards the provision of old age pensions, and the House of Commons has in principle accepted his proposal, it has become most important to consider the conditions under which such pensions should be granted, and it is not too early to begin the discussion of them, as the question is one of great difficulty.

In his inaugural address at the Folkstone conference on the 20th instant the Grand Master of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity, is reported to have said:—"What was wanted was a properly devised old age pension scheme to suit all classes of friendly society members as well as the community at large, and such a scheme could be prepared." The plan suggested in this letter shows how this demand may be met.

There are three ways (and, we think, three only) in which the demand for old age pensions could be complied with.

1. Granting a pension to everybody at a certain age. This is logical, but it is intolerably costly.

2. Granting a pension to persons selected as being "necessitous" or "deserving." There can be no uniform test of need or merit. Thus, the people of Victoria, Australia, grant pensions to 17 per cent. of the population above 65 years of age, while the people of New South Wales grant them to 44 per cent.

3. Encouraging and assisting persons who are willing to make some sacrifice to entitle themselves to pensions. This may not be free from difficulties, yet we believe it to be less open to objection than the others. It has, at least, this support—that the effective test whether a man desires a pension or not is whether he is willing to pay something for it.

The HOME SECRETARY: We propose to grant a pension to 40 per cent.

Mr. DENHAM: I question very much if 40 per cent. will qualify under the stringent provisions of clause 8 of this Bill.

Hon. R. PHILP: Not 20 per cent.

Mr. DENHAM: No; not 20 per cent. Of course, in Committee that clause may be very greatly altered, and I think it will be before it leaves Committee. The letter goes on—

As a means of encouraging the provident insurance of old age pensions the Government might apply a system which is already embodied in the existing law. That system was established in 1819 by the 59 George III., c. 128, and is still in force under the Friendly Societies Act, 1896 (59 and 60 Vict., c. 25, s. 42). Under these statutes the Government receives from friendly societies the money derived from the contributions of their members, and allows on such contributions a fixed rate of interest during the whole continuance of the lives of those members. We propose that this principle should be applied to contributions made for the special purpose of insuring an old age pension.

They then go on to further expatiate on those lines. Their proposition is that the Government shall give a large amount of interest on the moneys of friendly societies for the purpose of giving men when they reach the age of sixty or sixty-five years a pension as of

right. This is not a political question. The writers of the letter from which I have quoted say—

> The proposal we make is as we have said not without difficulties, and there are those who think that the suggestion will carry the Government beyond its legitimate province; we have some sympathy with this view, but, as political parties seem to be pledging themselves past recall to legislation for the promotion of some scheme for the assistance of old age, we may respectfully submit that the plan above sketched is less open to objection than any other.

It is clear that in the old land there is a large amount of interest being taken in this matter, and that all political parties are becoming committed to it. I should like to see a good system introduced in this State. I cannot regard the Bill which I now hold in my hand as being a good Bill for meeting the difficulty. I think it would be quite possible to devise a scheme somewhat on the lines of the Austrian or German system, by which there might be a laying aside on the part of the individual, subsidised by the employer or by the State, but make it so that any man, as soon as he reaches a certain age, shall receive the amount of the pension, not as an act of grace, not because he is a pauper, but because he has contributed to the fund, and because it is his natural right.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: He is practically providing for himself.

The HOME SECRETARY: You want him to contribute to it?

Mr. DENHAM: Something of that sort. This Bill shows lack of consideration on the part of the Government in laying hold of the least satisfactory Old Age Pensions Bill and appropriating it, so that it would be a kind of stopgap—a make-believe—to grapple with a very serious question. The senior member for Maryborough, in speaking on this measure the other night, said that, apart from the name, this was not an old age pensions scheme at all. The name is there all right, but when you come to examine the Bill you find it surrounded and hedged with difficulties which make it unpleasant, if not impossible, in helping the poor of the State who are desirous of coming under it. Every member who has spoken has expressed entire dissatisfaction with the Bill. As I said, I think it would be better if the Bill were withdrawn, and, instead of giving 5s. a week as the indigent allowance, make it 10s. a week during the currency of this year, so that in the recess the Government might mature a plan and a scheme that will conserve the independence of the individual, and entitle him at the proper time to go in for the assistance he so much needs in his declining years.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: They can do it for less than £20,000 a year.

Mr. DENHAM: I want to see the spirit of independence fostered in Australians, but instead of that we see a spirit of dependence and pauperising in this Bill which is repugnant to the members of this Chamber. We should have this Bill so that our people will be able to look forward to their declining years with some degree of equanimity. Of course, it is all purely a question of cost. What can we afford towards it? We certainly cannot afford to pauperise our people whatever else we do. It would be far better to continue our present system.

Mr. KENNA: Does not that pauperise them?

Mr. DENHAM: No; I think not.

Mr. BOWMAN: Are they not pauperising the inmates of Dunwich?

Mr. DENHAM: I am not for the moment referring to Dunwich. I am referring to the indigent allowance.

Mr. KENNA: You wanted to take away the vote from those who get the indigent allowance, or your party did.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: This Bill will not relieve Dunwich.

Mr. DENHAM: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley referred to Dunwich. The opportunity presented itself a few weeks ago when the hon. member could have taken the opportunity to give the inmates of Dunwich a vote, but he did not avail himself of this opportunity when the Bill was before the House.

Mr. BOWMAN: You are opposed to that yourself.

Mr. DENHAM: I was always opposed to it, because the principle would be unfair to put into one electorate all the inmates of Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. Some of those inmates have been there for ten or fifteen years, so how could you put them into the electorates where they last resided? Under this Bill a poor man who makes an application for an old age pension is dragged before the court nearest to where he resides, and the whole of his past life is dragged up against him, not to help him to get the 10s. pension, but to put every conceivable barrier in his way to prevent him from getting that which this Bill is said to confer on him. This Bill is all make-believe. It is put forward to satisfy us that it is an Old Age Pensions Bill, but when you analyse it you find that nothing like £120,000 a year will be paid under it.

The HOME SECRETARY: You do not want to see it become law.

Mr. DENHAM: I want to see it a good law and not a hollow sham. The 10s. a week should be given to everyone in need, when they are sixty-five years of age. The one qualification for the pension should be dire need, and we should conserve the independence of our people by contributing towards their maintenance when they become old in life. This Bill, when you analyse it, makes poverty a crime. The very fact of a man needing 10s. a week makes it a crime, because he is dragged into the open court, and the whole of his past career is dragged up against him. Has he been a drunkard? Has he neglected his wife? Or has he been imprisoned for three years? If he has done any of these things, then he cannot qualify for the pension under this Bill. This is a bad Bill, and I cannot congratulate the Home Secretary on the way he introduced it. We looked forward to it with a great deal of anticipation. Again and again during the debate on the Address in Reply this Bill was spoken of as being evidence of the democracy and progressiveness of the Government. If this is their democracy and this is an indication of their progressiveness, then I say that instead of "gang forward" their true motto should be "side track." We remember at the commencement of the session the leader of the Government spoke of the political situation, and he said he did expect a pretence of support from the Labour party. But "pretence" has been the keyword of the whole session. This is another of the series of pretences and pretending Bills. (Hear, hear!) If the time is opportune, as the Home Secretary says, for the introduction of a measure such as this—because he candidly and honestly admitted that the finances of the State up to the present had not been such as to allow of the passage of this measure, but now that the finances of the State had improved it was an opportune time to pass it. If, then,

the time is opportune, let us have a genuine Bill, one in which Queenslanders can take some pride. The question of old age pensions is not a question of parties. It is a question of ability to meet the demands made upon the State. There is no new principle in this Bill. There are Old Age Pensions Bills in New Zealand and Victoria. There is also one in New South Wales, and, I believe, they have also got one in Western Australia.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Are you prepared to make this Bill a good one?

Mr. DENHAM: I am. You want to make a complete clean sweep of this one, and incorporate in the measure a spirit of independence by which the individual will contribute towards a fund from which, by and by, he shall be able to enjoy his pension no matter whether he is earning £1 a week or whether he may have £100 in his pocket, instead of the £10 mentioned here.

Mr. RYLAND: We will have to wait forty years for it.

Mr. DENHAM: That is the peoriod the Children of Israel wandering in the wilderness had to wait for. They wanted the promised land, and they did not get it, although they waited forty years for it. A man to get the old age pension under this Bill must not have £10, and if he has property worth £100 he must surrender it. Now, it is contemplated that £120,000 will meet the needs of the case. That runs into about £330 a day. It seems a large sum for a State such as this, but I believe the people of Queensland are quite prepared and willing to assist the men who have spent their days toiling in the bowels of the earth, and who have brought up families, also the men who have toiled in the bush and brought up families, or the men who have toiled in the cities and brought up families; but I expect the single man, who has no one else to care for beyond his own selfish self, to make provision for himself, and not fall back on the State for assistance. The principle of assisting the aged poor is no new principle, as it has been in operation in connection with the indigence allowance.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is not enough.

Hon. R. PHILP: Why did you not increase it?

Mr. BOWMAN: I tried to increase it.

Hon. R. PHILP: You have been in power four years and you have not increased it.

Mr. BOWMAN: I was never in power.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. DENHAM: There is nothing new in the principle about the strong bearing the burdens of the weak. That is a grand old principle which I entirely believe in, and I am quite prepared to embody such a principle as that in the statutes of Queensland. I do my fair proportion towards that individually, and as a taxpayer of the State I am prepared to do more. I do not believe in this sham Old Age Pensions Bill which I now hold in my hand. In Victoria there are 10,786 persons receiving the allowance out of a population of 67,500 over the age of sixty-five years. It costs Victoria £186,957, at the rate of 8s. a week. In New South Wales there are 21,406 persons receiving the pension. You will notice that the population of New South Wales is decidedly larger than that of Victoria, rather more than double.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No, no!

Mr. KEOGH: Yes; 300,000 more.

Mr. DENHAM: New South Wales has a population of 1,300,000.

Hon. R. PHILP: One and a-half millions.

Mr. DENHAM: The population of New South Wales is greater by one-fourth than that of Victoria, at any rate. But their contribution in respect of the old age pensions is three times as great as that of Victoria. They contribute £500,000 in pensions in New South Wales. In New Zealand there are 12,582 people who receive the pension, and they get £312,018. The question, after all, is this: Shall need be the impelling power? What shall be the power that shall control this State to assist declining years? Why have such restrictions as are contained in this Bill been inserted? Is the Government afraid that the amount which the State shall be called upon to pay is too large that they hedge it round with such impossibilities? If we examine this clause 8, what do we find? There are a number of subclauses that refer to the qualification. Subclause (i.) is certainly a proper qualification. It says that no person shall receive a pension unless he is residing in Queensland on the date when he makes his claim to the pension. That is all right. Some day, when there is a Commonwealth old age pensions law, things will be different so far as that is concerned. Subclause (ii.) says that he shall not receive the pension unless—

on such date he has so resided, whether continuously or not, for at least twenty-five years.

Now, there are a great number of persons, both men and women, over the age of sixty-five years, who have lived in Queensland for the last ten or fifteen years. They have been respectable citizens of the State, and yet they have to go into open court and apply for the old age pension.

Mr. KENNA: As a right and not as a charity.

Mr. DENHAM: The law says that you shall not have it as a right, and if you have not been resident in Queensland for twenty-five years out you go. We know how rigorously the officers of the various departments interpret the instructions that are given to them in these matters. Take the next subclause. It says unless—

he has not been absent from Queensland, whether continuously or not, for more than five years during the time from which the said twenty-five years began to run.

How many of our good citizens who were engaged in mining pursuits, and as timber-getters and other pursuits, such as mechanics, builders, and masons—how many of these men, when we have had the times of stress, such as we had in 1893, found it necessary, for the protection of their wives and homes, to leave Queensland and go South to look for work? We know how work fluctuates in Australia. At one time mining was vigorously conducted in Western Australia, and may be now for all I know. Large numbers left Queensland to go mining in Western Australia; and, if they have been absent more than five years during the last twenty-five years, they will be told,

[4 p.m.] "You cannot have a pension as you have been absent more than five years. You are not qualified." Those men left Queensland through no fault of their own, but to try and improve their condition, or to provide for their families; and, when they come back to their old haunts, they find themselves disqualified under the provisions of this Bill. Then look at subsection (v.)—

During the two years immediately preceding such date he has not been convicted three times or upwards in respect of drunkenness.

I suppose there are few, if any, in this Chamber who have a greater abhorrence of drunkenness than I have; but such a provision indicates an intention to restrict the operations of the Bill to the widest possible extent. It is a case of raking up a man's past, and exposing his failing in open court.

The HOME SECRETARY: You talk as if the open court were something new. It is in vogue in New Zealand, New South Wales, and Victoria.

Mr. DENHAM: In New Zealand they have not this provision.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, they have.

Mr. DENHAM: Then—

> During the five years immediately preceding such date he has not for any offence or offences been imprisoned for any period or periods amounting in the whole to six months or upwards.

Are these men who have reached the age of sixty-five to be cast out and told they must earn their own living or starve, or they can commit crime again and go back to gaol? I think it is more costly to keep old men in gaol than to give them 10s. a week and keep out of gaol. The whole of the provisions in clause 8 are such as to reflect seriously upon the intention of the Government to really assist those who are in need. Look at subsection (ix.)—

> His average weekly income during the six months immediately preceding such date has not amounted to 10s. or upwards.

There are plenty of old men who can earn rather more than 10s.; and yet if they hapen to have earned more than 10s. a week during the six months preceding their application they cannot get a pension. Is this a sweating Bill? Is it the intention of the Government to bring down the wages of old men? They must either go idle for six months or accept a lower wage, in order to come within the scope of the Bill. As for subsections (x.) and (xi.), they discourage thrift in the highest degree. The powers of the court are extended to call in officers of the Government Savings Bank or other institutions to give evidence as to the financial position of applicants. The more you look into this measure the more you see that the idea is to put as many obstacles as possible in the way of those who may be in need in their declining years. Just look at clause 10—

> The amount of a pension shall in each case be at such rate as, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, the Minister deems reasonable and sufficient, but shall not exceed the rate of 10s. per week in any event.

Clause 11 provides—

> A pension shall be at such rate as will make the total income of the claimant from all sources not more than 10s. per week: Provided that to the extent of 2s. per week. . . . such sum shall not be taken into account.

So that an old man sixty-five years of age is encouraged to work for 2s. a week. If he earns more, it will be deducted from his old age pension. Clause 15 is a clause that wants some modification when the Bill gets into Committee, which I hope it will not, because I sincerely hope that it will be withdrawn, and that the indigence allowance will be continued on a larger scale, so that time may be given to the Government to consider the whole question and to bring up a Bill that will be acceptable. Such a Bill should be on the lines of the individual contributing a small portion towards an assurance fund, which he will get if he falls ill, or when old age comes upon him. My sympathy goes out to those who have battled in life, and who have reached the declining years of their life, and who are in need of assistance; and I am quite prepared to render the Government every possible help in framing a measure to give assistance to those who are in dire need. This, like others introduced, is a make-believe Bill. The Children's Courts Bill is largely make-believe, becuse the one thing to make it a success is for a superintendent to go round investigating and reporting.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not so.

Mr. DENHAM: No provision is made for that. Then there is the Local Authorities Bill. It gives no help to local authorities, but it imposes more obligations upon them. Then this Bill is not truly named an "Old Age Pensions Bill." We are now in the third month of the session, and, so far, no business has been done of a constructive character. So far there has been no business whatever to develop the resources of the State. It is a case of marking time—of make-believe—of throwing dust in the eyes of the people. This is one of a series of Bills for throwing dust in people's eyes. A big flourish of trumpets has been made, but ardent supporters of the Government to right and left have one by one spoken of the Bill as only a Bill to assist old people in name and not in fact.

Mr. ADAMSON (*Maryborough*): The hon. member for Oxley has made a strong party speech. So far as that is concerned, I suppose he feels perfectly justified in doing all he can to damage the Government.

Mr. DENHAM: I want to assist the Bill.

Mr. ADAMSON: There is a great deal in what he said in his speech with which I agree. Still, I am very pleased that the Bill has been introduced.

Mr. KEOGH: It is a botch.

Mr. ADAMSON: It may be a botch, but it may be improved. In my opinion, the Bill is defective, and I hope it will be amended in Committee, and it will be made one of the best Old Age Pensions Acts in the Australian States or in the world.

Mr. DENHAM: It will have to be recast altogether then.

Mr. ADAMSON: I hope it will be very considerably recast. The hon. member for Oxley referred to certain schemes for making provision for old age. He spoke about the schemes in Germany, in Austria, and the scheme that Mr. Chamberlain has proposed. He did not mention the scheme that Canon Blackley proposed some years ago. All these schemes are based upon the principle that men are to pay a sum of money so that they may be paid a certain amount at a certain time of life. In my opinion, they have no right to be called old age pensions. They are practically superannuation allowances, or benefits towards which the beneficiaries have contributed to a certain degree. I think that these things may be good in their own way. Perhaps they are better than that old age should not be provided for; but I am of opinion that this State, and the nations of the world, should seek to give their old people a pension as a right, and not as a charity. I am reminded that such a man as Mr. Charles Booth, the writer of the two remarkable volumes "The Life and Labour of the People of London," proposed a universal scheme—a real old age pensions scheme. I am reminded that Mr. Sydney Webb also proposed a real pension scheme—not a mock thing. I was reading a book published only the other day, called "The Socialists' Budget," where Mr. Philip Snowden

has proposed a very striking and very just scheme for old age pensions. In speaking about the German schemes, I would like to read an extract from a book that has been written particularly on that subject. Mr. J. A. Spender, in his work "The State and Pensions in Old Age," says—

When we pass outside the universal scheme we are faced with a variety of alternatives. The State may do one of five things. It may (1) follow the German example and conduct the whole operation of insurance on a basis of contributions made by the persons insuring, or (2) it may make a fixed contribution to annuities when they fall due, or (3) it may make a subvention proportionate to the annuity which an individual has secured for himself, or (4) it may undertake the investment of private funds at a higher rate of interest than is ordinarily given, or (5) it may make certain grants to local or Poor Law authorities, to be disbursed at their discretion for this particular object. All schemes that have hitherto been proposed rely on one or other of these methods, or combine several in one scheme.

The same writer, speaking about the universal scheme of Mr. Webb, puts it in this way—

One scheme and one alone has the merit of dispensing with all actuarial calculations. This is the proposal that 5s. a week should be given to every man and woman who has attained the age of 65. Here the liability of the State is either known or can be predicted with almost absolute certainty. In England and Wales there are at present about 733,000 women and 590,000 men above 65 years of age, or in all, about 1,320,000. At £13 per annum each a universal pension list would reach about £17,000,000 per annum. Scotland, on the same calculation, would figure for about £2,500,000, and Ireland, with her large proportion of old people, for over £4,000,000 more. The total for the United Kingdom would thus be £23,500,000. With a pension scheme, out-relief for the aged would necessarily come to an end, and we should thus ultimately save about £4,000,000, making the net cost something less than £19,000,000 for the United Kingdom, and about £14,000,000 to England and Wales.

This writer takes up a logical position. He realises that the old people of Great Britain have a right to a pension, and he faces the cost in a fair way. He realises that, whatever the cost may be to Great Britain, that cost ought to be met in the interests of the men and the women who have borne the burden and the heat of the day. Mr. Charles Booth realised that while these estimates that have been placed before the people were costly, yet they were correct, and he also realised that the money would have to be found. He also came to the conclusion that something like 15 per cent. of those who are past sixty-five years of age would never apply for pensions. Archbishop Temple, who was a great advocate of Mr. Booth's scheme, estimated that the percentage of those who would not apply for the pensions would be very much higher than 15 per cent. In England to-day there is a sort of old age pension in existence already, carried on by the Engineers' Union, and Mr. Barnes, the secretary of that union, finds that of all those who have a right to the pension—having paid a certain amount for it—23 per cent. less than was expected have applied for it, and he goes on to show that this scheme is working out in a beneficial way. Mr. Barnes advocates that there should be a universal old age pension scheme so far as Great Britain is concerned. It is a scheme of that kind that I would advocate at the present time. Mr. Booth's scheme has the merit of simplicity and correctness, it is easily understood, and the simple qualification is that a man or woman shall have attained the age of sixty-five years; whereas the German scheme, Canon Blackley's scheme, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's scheme, and other schemes I have read of are really encumbered with so many details as to made them very complicated. In my opinion, there is no need for a man who receives a pension at sixty-five years of age, after he has worked in a country for so many years, to be regarded as a pauper. He ought to receive it as a right, and as a man who has done something for his country for what they have given him. This leads me to say that I think it is a pity that the Government have not adopted a universal scheme like that of Charles Booth's. If they had done that we could have claimed it as a real socialistic measure, but because the present Bill is hedged round by so many restrictions, one feels it is not the kind of measure they can support unless it is amended, and that it will not do for the old people of Queensland what ought to be done for them when they reach sixty-five years of age.

The HOME SECRETARY: How would you have met the cost of a universal scheme?

Mr. ADAMSON: I will come to that further on, and say what I think on that matter. I stand for this universal scheme for this reason—every man should have this pension as a right, and because he has fulfilled the duties of a citizen. I hold if a man has been a worker for sixty-five years, if he has been bearing the burden and heat of the day in any country for all that time, he ought to be a pensioner by right. Then, I hold that if we have this universal scheme it will remove the stigma of pauperism. If everybody gets a pension, nobody will point the finger of scorn at another because he is a pauper; if a rich man has a right to the 5s. or 10s. a week which may be fixed, he cannot point to the man who is poor and say that he is a pauper. I hold we should seek in every possible way to prevent such a word being bandied about in relation to those who receive old age pensions. I take up this position because already we pension a lot of people. We pension our soldiers because they do certain things for their country. Only a few years ago Lord Roberts, because he slew a lot of men in South Africa yonder——

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh! Question!

Mr. ADAMSON: He did certain service for his country, as some people would say; because he did that we gave him £100,000, which, at 4 per cent., is a perpetual pension of £4,000 a year. The same thing is true concerning a lot of civil servants in the British Empire, and there has been in the past a number of civil servants who have received pensions in Queensland. There are numbers of civil servants to-day who, while they are contributing a certain sum, are going to get a higher pension than they have really contributed. It is because I see that civil servants and soldiers are receiving these pensions that I say that those men and women who have worked hard in the interests of their country as pioneers and in other ways should receive this pension as a right. I know some people say that we cannot afford it. The Home Secretary has already hinted that it cannot be afforded.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: What does money matter?

Mr. ADAMASON: Whatever the interjections of the hon. member are worth, I do not think they are worth very much. We have to face the matter of money, and he knows that as well as I do. People have said that this could not be afforded. The same thing has been said in Great Britain as it has been said here. Mr. Fletcher, who was the editor in London of the *Daily Chronicle*, and afterwards of the *New Age*, and who is one of the finest writers living to-day, a man full of humanitarian instincts, speaks of the matter in this way—

Those who talk this way about the impossibility

of old age pensions ignore the fact that we have already a State pension scheme in Great Britain costing £10,000,000 a year. Under this scheme we grant pensions of thousands and even tens of thousands a year to princes, lord chancellors, bishops, generals, for services which it would be better for us to dispense with. The national income is nearly £2,000,000,000 a year. It is positively wicked to say we cannot spare a few millions out of that to keep our poor from pauperism or starvation in their old age.

Just the other day Lord Cromer, because of what he has been doing in Egypt—he has been receiving a big salary all the time, and no one that is sensible will decry the work he has done in Egypt—received £50,000 from the nation, which at 4 per cent. would give a perpetual pension of £2,000 a year. Since we are doing this for men who have plenty of money, and are not in want at all, then why should not those who are disabled on the industrial battlefield be provided for? The wages of the great mass of workers are not sufficient for them to make any great provision for old age. The average wage of an Australian miner is less than £1 10s. per week. Go to the sawmill hands, to the women workers, and see what the average wage is, and you cannot help coming to the conclusion that these people have a hard time all the way through life. They have burdens to bear that they ought not to be called to bear, and they have not a chance of the pleasures of life which other people have. And if other people have a right in old age to a pension, then we claim that those people ought to be provided for as well. It is objected by some that there are people who are unworthy of a pension, and this Bill practically stigmatises certain people as unworthy of an old age pension. We are told about their thriftlessness. Our friend, the hon. member for Oxley, talked a good deal about thrift—he very often talks about thrift, and I have no desire to say anything against thrift, but I know there are some people who, no matter how thrifty they were, would not be able to provide for their old age to any great extent. I would say to those who raise this objection concerning the dissipation and thriftlessness of some people, that we have to take a lot of things into consideration. Before any man in this House has a right to condemn a man or woman because they are poor in their old age, there are a lot of things to be considered. We have a right to consider their heredity, what kind of parents they had; we have a right to consider their environment, what have been their surroundings all through their lives; and we have a right to consider the low wages they have had, the enforced idleness, the unfortunate circumstances, and the crushing and cut-throat competition that goes on in the world to-day. Here I want to quote a passage from Zola's "Rome." There are some people in this Committee who would take a great deal of notice of him who would not take much notice of me. I do not take up a great deal of time in the House, and I feel in quoting this that I am bringing before hon. members something which it is well for them to consider—

> In every household Pierre heard the same story. There had been youth and gaiety at the outset, brave acceptance of the law that one must work. Then weariness had come, what was the use of always toiling if one were never to get rich? And so, by way of snatching a share of happiness, the husband turned to drink; the wife neglected her home, also drinking at times, and letting the children grow up as they might. Sordid surroundings, ignorance, and overcrowding did the rest. In the great majority of cases, prolonged lack of work was mostly to blame; for this not only empties the drawers of the savings hidden away in them, but exhausts human courage, and tends to confirmed habits of idleness. During long weeks the workshops empty, and the arms of the toilers lose strength. In all Paris, so feverishly inclined to action, it is impossible to find the slightest thing to do. And then the husband comes home in the evening with tearful eyes, having vainly offered his arms everywhere, having failed even to get a job at street-sweeping, for that employment is much sought after, and to secure it one needs influence and protectors. Is it not monstrous to see a man seeking work that he may eat, and finding no work and therefore no food in this great city resplendent and resonant with wealth? The wife does not eat, the children do not eat. And then comes black famine, brutishness, and finally revolt and the snapping of all social ties under the frightful injustice meted out to poor beings who by their weakness are condemned to death. And the old workman, he whose limbs have been worn out by half a century of hard toil, without possibility of saving a copper, on what pallet of agony, in what dark hole must he not sink to die? Should he then be finished off with a mallet, like a crippled beast of burden, on the day when ceasing to work he also ceases to eat? Almost all pass away in the hospitals, others disappear, unknown, swept off by the muddy flow of the streets. One morning, on some rotten straw in a loathsome hovel, Pierre found a poor devil who had died of hunger and had been forgotten there for a week. The rats had devoured his face.

Of course I know that this is sensational, and I know that Zola is regarded as a sensation-monger, but I know that no man has done more for the poorer classes of the world, for justice, for right, and for humanity than Zola did in France, and has done throughout the world. In this State of Queensland there are men being brought down to want because of the same causes; enforced idleness and other things sap away their strength, and prevent them attending to the things they otherwise would attend to. Of course, I know that much poverty is caused by drunkenness, and I do not want to excuse it, but I also know another thing—and I want to emphasise this—I know that a great many wealthy men in Queensland and in the world to-day have got their wealth in a peculiar manner, not at all by the best means, and some of them have got it by open daylight robbery; and if we are going to condemn the poor man who has become dissipated in search of pleasure and happiness through drink, we have a right to condemn the man who has become rich through his exploitation of the poor. But to those who would blame and penalise those less fortunate than themselves, I would commend these words of Robert Burns—

> Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler sister woman,
> Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
> To step aside is human.
> One point must still be greatly dark—
> The moving why they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far, perhaps, they rue it.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Who made the heart, tis He alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord—its various note,
> Each spring—its various bias;
> Then at the balance let's be mute,
> We never can adjust it;
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted.

In judging those who are poor and dissipated, we have a right to consider their heredity and environment, and therefore I plead that the only qualification for old men and women to a pension should be that they are sixty-five years of age—personally, I think it should be fifty-five years—and have resided in this State not twenty-five years, but fifteen years. This Bill is not as good as the New Zealand Bill. It is not as good as the New South Wales Bill. As has been said again and again in this debate, it has been taken from the very worst Old Age Pensions Bill in the Australian States

—the Victorian Bill—which has been called a charitable dole to the workers of Victoria. In Victoria the old workers are not coming under the Act in the same proportion as they are coming under the Acts in New Zealand and New South Wales. Let anyone read his "Coghlan," and he will find that [4.30 p.m.] in New South Wales the people take the pension because they feel it is given to them as a right. In the preamble of the New South Wales Act it is stated that those who have been taxed and who have been pioneers of the country should have a pension as a right. I hope that this Bill will be amended in Committee, and particularly that clauses 8, 15, 18, and 20 will be so altered that the measure will be made a very much more humane one than it is at present, so that men and women to a greater number than has been anticipated will avail themselves of the provisions of the Bill, and that we may find, not only 33 per cent. or 40 per cent. of those over sixty-five years of age availing themselves of the provisions of the Bill, but every old man and every old woman in Queensland availing themselves of its provisions. I trust that they will be able to obtain a pension as a right, and that nobody will be regarded as a pauper, but rather as a pensioner of the State by right. I believe that that is the way pensions should be given, and that the Bill should be amended in that direction in Committee. I am quite willing to support the second reading of the Bill, in the hope that in Committee it will be amended.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): I had not intended to speak on this Bill, and had no desire to do so until I heard the speech of the hon. member for Oxley. While listening to that hon. member I thought that if he had been sitting on the front Treasury bench and had been a member of the Ministry, how very heartily he would have defended this Bill. I have not got up to defend the Bill or to commend it to any extent, because I think it might be made a better Bill. The hon. member said that every hon. member who had spoken in this debate had condemned the Bill because it did not go far enough. I wish to quote a few remarks from a speech recently delivered by the hon. member for Lockyer, which I believe expresses the honest convictions of the Opposition in such a way as only that hon. member is game to put their views before the House. The hon. member for Lockyer said—

> You advertise to the world, "Come along to this country, and whether you are prosperous or not you shall receive at sixty-five years of age, provided you have lived here twenty years continuously, £26 a year." You say, on the other hand, to your own men, "Come along, never matter whether you have been profitable, as long as you have been in the State a certain time, and have not been imprisoned more times than this, and have not been convicted of this or that offence, then you can get £26 a year." But what about the man on the land, who has borne the heat and burden of the day? He is the man, after all, who has got to pay, and that is the very man, as I pointed out to the Home Secretary, who has to provide this—he has to pay this £120,000. Why should he be taxed? He is asking for a remission of taxation. The country people are able to pay their taxes now because the seasons have been prosperous, but where the shoe pinches is where is the money going to be raised from when it is required? The one source of revenue left is a land tax on the farmers. The Home Secretary stated we have the money now. In this year of plenty we have it—we have provided for it, but next year we shall be asked for £120,000, and if his basis of 44 per cent. of the people over sixty-five years of age is correct, what will we be asked for the next year? I want to point out to the Home Secretary and the country what will be asked for the next year.

To my mind that speech exactly expresses the opinions of the Opposition, but other members of the party dare not express those opinions in the honest manner that the hon. member for Lockyer has done.

Mr. BARNES: You have no right to say that.

Mr. MANN: I have every right to say it, because last night we heard a most pitiful appeal from hon. members to have farmers exempt from the Wages Boards Bill, because if they were not so exempt they would have to pay a fair wage. In the speech from which I have quoted, the hon. member for Lockyer claimed that farmers should not be taxed to pay old age pensions. If employers will not pay a fair wage, how, then, are we to prevent working men having to appeal for old age pensions when they reach the age of sixty-five years? We on this side hope that by paying fair wages to men they will be able to put by something to meet their needs when they become too old to work. The hon. member for Oxley said we should increase the indigence allowance to 10s. per week, withdraw this Bill, and bring forward a more perfect measure next session. The hon. member hopes that before next session there will be trouble in the camp, and that possibly there may be an exchange of members sitting on the front Opposition bench. If that happened, and times were not too good, we should see a state of things which we have seen before in Queensland during a time of national stress. We should see people knocked off the indigence roll wholesale, as happened previously when the Government the hon. member supported was in power. There is no reason to suppose that if they came back to this side of the House the hon. member would plead to get those people on the indigence allowance roll. But if the hon. member was over here he would claim that although the Kidston Government were justified in spending £120,000 a year in the shape of old age pensions when times were good, but now, when the State is in a bad way, and farmers were not getting in crops, and when dairymen were suffering from a plague of ticks or something of that kind, he would say that we should not pay these old age pensions, and that we should wipe them out for the present, or reduce the allowance to 5s. per week. When we were passing the Franchise Bill the leader of the Opposition, whom the hon. member now supports, moved an amendment to the effect that certain persons—that is, wife-beaters and others who have been in prison—should not have a vote. Possibly it was from that proposal that the Hon. the Home Secretary took the restrictions which are contained in this Old Age Pensions Bill, thinking that thereby the Bill would be made more agreeable to members of the Opposition. If we had brought down a first-class Bill, hon. members opposite would have said that it went too far altogether, and would have done their best to eliminate all the good things in it. But because that has not been done they are endeavouring to make the people believe that they would have given them a better Bill. They should remember, however, that if they got back on to the Treasury benches they would have to blame themselves for what they proposed when in Opposition, if they found they could not foot the bill. The hon. member for Oxley spoke about the scheme Mr. Chamberlain proposed to initiate in connection with an old age pension in Great Britain. The hon. member has as keen an intellect as any member in this House,

and he knows perfectly well that the scheme of Mr. Chamberlain was put forward simply and solely to capture the people of Great Britain—to induce them to vote for protection and the Conservative party. Mr. Chamberlain knew very well that if a tax was put on grain it would enable the British farmer to grow grain and compete against the outside producers—against Canadian, American, Russian, and other foreigners—and to supply sufficient grain to meet the needs of the home market. That being so, the fund which was to be collected at the receipt of Customs for the payment of old age pensions would get less and less every year, and would ultimately be wiped out as more land in Great Britain was brought under cultivation, and less grain was imported from abroad. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chamberlain put the bait forward without considering what would be its logical sequence, and when he examined it closely he found it was so foolish that he never mentioned it again, but dropped it like a hot brick. I sympathise a good deal with those hon. members who wish to make this Bill a better Bill, and I especially sympathise with the hon. member for Oxley, because he feels that he has made a mistake in leaving the present Government, and would like by his keen and persistent criticism of the Government to show that he is a dangerous opponent, and that he should be taken back on the Treasury benches, which I think he sincerely regrets having left. The junior member for Maryborough went into the financial aspect of the matter and put forward the plea, which I would support, that every person unable to work should get an old age pension. The only question is, who is going to foot the bill? Some members in the Labour corner talk about wiping out the income tax altogether. The hon. member for Clermont, who is a prominent member of that party, suggested that the income tax should be wiped out, and another member of the party wants free railways. (Laughter.) We all believe in providing old age pensions; we all think that an old age pension scheme should be as liberal and as generous as possible, but I ask hon. members are they prepared to foot the bill? As a landowner, I am prepared to pay a land tax, but I object to a man like Dr. Maxwell getting £3,000 a year and going scot-free. I wish to see this Bill made more liberal than it is, and I am willing to pay my fair share of the expense of providing old age pensions. I would ask those members who have got up and spoken about this matter in a high-faluting way whether they would sooner see the poll-tax reinstituted than that the old age pension should in any way suffer? I believe in a land tax, or in any fair system of taxation, but I do not believe in people advocating something that the other fellow has got to pay for. We have not, as they have in England, a big leisured class like the clergy and princely nobles, drawing an enormous revenue every year. There might be a few thousand pounds saved by doing away with our Governor and one or two other high functionaries, but that would not give us a large revenue; and it must be remembered that we have not only to provide for old age pensions, but that we have also to pay the cost of keeping a sufficient army and navy to defend our shores.

Mr. KEOGH: Do you want the old men to defend our shores?

Mr. MANN: I believe that old Kruger, when he was over seventy years of age—in fact, when he was over eighty years of age—was willing to defend his country. A man who cannot hold a rifle can at least dig a trench to protect those who are holding rifles. I believe that every man who is fit to defend his country should turn out, whether he is an old man or a young man, just as I also believe that every man who is able to pay should pay something towards the old age pensions or pay something towards the defence of our shores. I do not intend to take up the time of the House any longer, but to say that, in Committee, I will do what I can to make the Bill a bit better. My vote will always go for a land tax or the reimposition of the poll tax, instead of doing away with the old age pension.

* Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): The speaker before the last got up in the clouds, but the last speaker kept very close to the earth. (Laughter.) While I may not get up among the clouds, I am quite certain that I shall not get so close to the earth as the hon. member for Cairns. It seems to me, as a man of business, that this is a proposition which we should coldly and calmly consider. I do not think this is the occasion for any extraordinary display of sentiment, as some hon. members—including the hon. member for Maryborough—have indulged in. Whatever side we belong to, I take it that we are actuated by humanitarian motives, so that in the case of men and women who are in need—whether it is their own fault that they have no money, or whether it has been caused by misfortune—if it is a fact that they have no means then we must not let them starve, because humanity is the highest law, and we cannot overlook the obligations which humanity imposes upon us. In saying that, I cannot be accused of having no sympathy with the granting of old age pensions. The main objection which I have to the principle of old age pensions, as applied in this Bill, is that there is no attempt to provide that the persons who will be the recipients of these pensions should contribute a farthing towards the pensions. I hold in my hand a table showing what a very small payment made at the age of twenty years would enable a man to receive a pension at the age of sixty-five years. Who is there in Queensland who cannot afford to pay 10s. or £1 a year premium? With the amount of money which is paid into unions every year for particular purposes, when a man reached the age of sixty-five years it would give him a larger pension than is proposed under this Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is paid to a good cause.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: I am not called on to answer the hon. member for Fortitude Valley as to whether it is paid to a good cause or not. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that instead of these men paying £1 a year to their unions they paid £2. If this extra £1 was put into a proper fund and not into the funds of the unions—because it might be used for political purposes—then, if this extra £1 was put aside, it would provide all the money for old age pensions without any contribution at all from the consolidated revenue.

Mr. BOWMAN: What about the profits of the pastoralists?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: I dare say that some of the pastoralists have made profits in recent years, but most of them met with very heavy losses in previous years. However, I do not see what the profits of the pastoralists have to do with old age pensions, because if

they make profits they will contribute to the income tax, and will also pay their share towards this scheme, just the same as any other member of the community. Coming again to the table, we find that a man at the age of twenty, paying £1 a year, computing it at 2½ per cent., at the age of sixty-five years would be entitled to 6s. 8d. a week.

Mr. RYLAND: What if he starts to pay before he is twenty?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Then he will get so much more when he is sixty-five. I was allowing for his not paying until he had reached the age of discretion, which is an age some people never reach apparently. (Laughter.) Supposing that the money is computed at 3 per cent., and a man pays £1 a year from when he is twenty years of age and continues paying it until he is sixty-five, then he will be entitled to 8s. per week. I take it that in Australia money is worth 4 per cent. to the Government; taking it all round our loans cost something like that. On a 4 per cent. basis £1 paid from the age of twenty years to sixty-five years will give 11s. 4d. per week at the end of the sixty-fifth year. There is no question about this. This calculation was not made by me, but I believe it is as accurate as if it had been. (Laughter.) When such a comparatively small sum as this per annum would find the whole of the money necessary for old age pensions, it seems to me that we are doing nothing in this Bill to include the principle which prevails in some other countries—namely, that everyone should contribute something towards a fund of this kind, and that fund could reasonably be, and is in many cases, subsidised by the Government. If people contributed to such a fund, I should not object to the Government establishing a fund or making yearly payments which would have the effect of giving every man and woman a larger sum than 10s. per week, because, after all, 10s. a week to a man when he has to pay for clothes, boots, tobacco, and rations, does not leave him very much.

Mr. HAMILTON: Some people think that he could keep a wife on it.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: If payments of this kind were made, whether they were 10s. a year or £1 a year, and they were subsidised by the Government, then at the end of sixty-five years, instead of getting a sum of 10s. a week our old age pensioners could get 15s. or £1 a week.

Mr. RYLAND: What about the old people who are sixty-five years of age now?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: They would be treated the same as a man who is sixty-five years of age under this Bill. Whether it is their own fault or not that they are in need, it is our duty to assist them. There are various objections that can be held against the system of old age pensions. First of all, it does away with the spirit of thrift. I know socialists regard thrift as a crime. But we are bound to come to the conclusion that if thrift is not encouraged it is bound to be a bad thing for the community. While I am not opposed to the principle of old age pensions, and while I do not intend to vote against this Bill, I think it would be much better if, instead of a measure such as this now before us, an Old Age Pensions Bill were passed by the Federal Parliament. My reason for that is that if this Bill becomes law a man cannot be entitled to a pension unless he lives in this State for a certain time, whereas, if a Bill of this sort were passed by the Federal Government, then no geographical conditions would be allowed to stand in the way, and if a man went from Queensland to New South Wales he would get his pension just the same.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have not half read the Bill.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: I notice the clause relating to reciprocity, where you can arrange with the other States, but it is a clumsy way of dealing with it, and I think it would be an exceedingly simple matter if it were dealt with altogether by the Federal Government. About six or seven months ago we were told that the present Premier was in favour of a Federal old age pensions scheme, while he was against a State old age pensions scheme. I should like to know what has happened in the meantime, and to what we are to attribute the change of front on the part of that hon. gentleman. We have had nothing to show that the system which the Premier approved of six months ago is not a good system to-day, and we have not had any justification for his change of front. However, this measure has been brought to the House by the Government, and, whatever its defects or merits are, it will be carried by a large majority. There is one portion of this Bill which provides that relatives shall contribute towards maintenance. I am in sympathy with that provision, because in the past people have allowed their relatives to be maintained at the expense of the State without making any contribution towards them whatever. In every case where old people are being maintained, then it is the duty of their relatives to make some contribution. Why is it that this old age pensions scheme is applied only to those people who have attained the age of sixty-five years? Is there any particular magic in the sixty-five years? Some men are young at fifty, while other men are old at forty years of age. Take a man like the hon. member for Clermont, Mr. Lesina. That volatile person might be young at the age of seventy-five years, whereas a man like the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Ryland, might be old at forty years. This Bill ought to recognise the principle that it is not mere age which has to count as to when the pension commences; but there should be some discretionary power to enable a person to receive that pension if he is in need of it, and is incapacitated from work, whether he is twenty, forty, or fifty, or any other age. There are some crude absurdities in this Bill that would only exhaust my time and the patience of the House if I referred to them in detail. It is like the Scotchman's gun. It wants a new "lock, stock, and barrel." In connection with this matter, perhaps it might be pardonable if I referred to the arrivals and departures of people from Queensland in the last year, because it has some bearing on this question. We have been told that there has been a great increase in the population that has come into this State last year. I have looked up the latest tables on the subject, and I find that last year a few hundreds left this State more than came into it. With the single exceptions of Tasmania and Queensland, every State in Australia gained population last year.

The HOME SECRETARY: How many kanakas were deported last year?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: There were a certain number of kanakas deported last year, but they would not amount to more than 400 in 1906, because a certain number of them left previously. I just mention that matter because it affects the old age pension scheme when the numbers are taken as to the population in the

State. I do not know whether that is one of the reasons why the Bill has been [5 p.m.] introduced. It is not necessary that I should go into the details of the measure. I can only say, in conclusion, that the Bill will want very substantial alteration in Committee. Above all things, we want to establish the principle that the men and women who will ultimately benefit by this scheme shall contribute something on the basis I have suggested, and that the sum contributed by them shall be endowed in the most liberal manner by the Government.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): I wish to say a few words on the second reading, although I recognise that the Bill is principally one for Committee. I hope that it will be greatly altered in Committee. The question of old age pensions, in the abstract, is not a new one in this House. We have debated it for a good many years; but this is the first time that any concrete proposition has been submitted to Parliament. This is really an argument in favour of the advantage of private members discussing abstract questions on a Thursday afternoon. Many questions are debated on private members' day which, perhaps many years afterwards, are submitted in concrete form, and which but for those debates would never have resulted in the introduction of legislation at all. Credit is due to the hon. member for Kennedy for bringing up this question pretty well every year since he came into the House. Any Government which introduces an old age pension scheme at this late hour of the day should be able to bring in an up-to-date scheme, because there are old age schemes in other States and in other countries, and it should have been quite easy for the Government to take the best features of those schemes and embody them in the Bill which they submitted to this House. Unfortunately, on the present occasion the Government seem to have copied the most retrogressive scheme of the whole lot—that is, the Victorian. I am sorry that the Minister, when moving the second reading, did not give us more of the details of the scheme. Like some other hon. members, I thought that an old age pensions scheme came more within the province of the Commonwealth. Mr. Deakin said some little time ago that he was quite willing to do it if the State would find the money; but I have come to the conclusion that, if the States have the onus of raising the money, they might just as well have the credit of spending it, if there is any credit. I was rather struck with the argument of the hon. member for Lockyer. He asked, "Why should the farmer be taxed to provide old age pensions for the thriftless?" I might ask the hon. member why should the rest of the community be taxed to provide the subsidy to a steamship company to carry away the farmers' produce, to establish State farms, to engage experts in agriculture, or to establish an agricultural bank? I take it the farmers are just as well able to bear their burden of taxation as any other class in the community. It is almost sickening to hear some members get up and talk about the poor farmers. I recognise the value of the farmers to the community, but I do not see why they should not bear their fair share of taxation. One provision of the Bill is that persons who have been in the habit of spending their money in drink shall not be eligible for pensions. I am not one of those who stick up for drunkenness or drunkards; but, if you are going to prevent a man getting an old age pension because he has been convicted of drunkenness once or twice during the preceding two years, you are going to prevent some of the best pioneers of the country from getting pensions. Many old hands formed thriftless habits in past years when money and work were plentiful; and, simply because such a man has been intoxicated, he is to be prevented from getting a pension. I know that anyone who is in receipt of the indigence allowance, and who is reported for drunkenness, loses his indigence allowance. At the same time, I have seen persons who are drawing big pensions from the State going home drunk in a cab; and there is no talk about stopping their pensions. I do not believe in encouraging drunkenness, but this is hedged round with too many restrictions altogether. I would ask the Minister if any arrangement has been made for reciprocity with the other States. I see the Bill makes provision for reciprocity; but has the hon. gentleman got any intimation from the other States that they will reciprocate?

The HOME SECRETARY: There is no use attempting that until the Bill becomes law.

Mr. HAMILTON: There is no certainty that the other States will agree to this.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think it is more than probable that they will.

Mr. HAMILTON: There may be many deserving people in the country who will be debarred because they have not been twenty-five years in the State. It is no good calling this a pension. Like many who have spoken, I believe that when a person reaches a certain age, and has resided in the State for a certain number of years, and has given the best years of his life to the country, he should receive the pension as a right. This is not a right. A person can only obtain this pension if he is in an indigent state at the time he makes his application. He must not have more than £10 in his possession. There are many people in the State who are under sixty years of age who are receiving the indigence allowance of 5s. a week. This is only an extension of the principle of the indigence allowance—it is not an old age pension.

The HOME SECRETARY: Any man who has these qualifications will get it as a right.

Mr. HAMILTON: He may be sixty-five years of age, and may have resided in the country for more than twenty-five years; but he may not be able to satisfy some of the other conditions, and he will, consequently, not be entitled to a pension. It would have been much better to grant the pension as a right to all those who have attained the age limit and have spent a certain number of years in the State. If the applicant is likely to misspend the money, it should be paid to some person in the district in which he lives, who will see that it is not spent in drink; but it should not be taken away from the man. There are other circumstances which have been mentioned by hon. members which debar a man from receiving a pension, and I hope they will be wiped out, and that the Minister will accept a good many amendments in Committee. There is one provision which deals with persons who have served a sentence in gaol. I do not want to go deeply into that question; but no matter what a man's crime was, if he has paid the penalty, he should not be penalised by being refused a pension. Another objection is the publicity that is given. I do not believe in this open court business. I do not consider that anyone should be asked to go into open court to prove his claim. The Government have any amount of machinery at their hands in connection with applications for the

indigence allowance, and that machinery might be utilised for inquiring into the circumstances of an applicant without dragging him into open court. Why should an applicant be compelled to go 50 or 60 miles to where there is a court to prove that he is entitled to a pension?

The HOME SECRETARY: A commissioner has power to dispense with his attendance.

Mr. HAMILTON: The machinery the Minister has at present is quite sufficient, and I hope that in Committee the provision for dealing with applications in open court will be excised from the Bill. I also hope that a person will be allowed to earn more than 2s. a week. Complaints have been made to me in connection with the indigence allowance that a man can earn a few shillings here and a few shillings there, and why should he receive the allowance? But no man can live on 5s. a week, and he will have to be very economical to live on 10s. a week. He will not need to go to the theatre very often. Any man should be allowed to earn up to £1 a week. He should be allowed to supplement his pension of 10s. by another 10s., if he can earn it outside.

Mr. WHITE: The unions will not allow him to work for 10s. a week.

Mr. HAMILTON: The unions make provision for aged and infirm workers. Another provision that I do not like is that which makes children contribute to their parents' pensions. Apart from the sentimental side of the question, I know any amount of men who are married and have families of their own. Perhaps they are quite willing to provide for their parents, but they have quite enough to do to scratch along for themselves and their families. It is quite possible that a pension may be refused simply because an old man has some sons or some married daughters.

Mr. JENKINSON: What about relatives who are able to pay?

Mr. HAMILTON: Who is going to be the judge of whether the relatives are able to pay?

Mr. JENKINSON: The commissioner.

Mr. HAMILTON: He cannot know the ins and outs of every person's business. I know many people who to all appearance are fairly well off, but, in reality, they are not well off, and it takes them all their time to keep their heads above water. (Hear, hear!) A man should get the pension as a right, and his children should not be asked to contribute to it. In cases in which parents are granted the indigence allowance before they reach the age limit, and who, through infirmity or some other cause, are unable to earn a living, if they have children who are in a position to do it, those children should contribute something towards their keep. I would be quite willing to give the Minister power to enforce contributions of that kind. But that should not apply to an old age pensions scheme, because, if the applicants have reached the prescribed age, the pension should be granted to them as a right. I shall be prepared to assist the Minister in getting power to compel them to contribute something towards it but when a man has reached a certain age, no matter what his circumstances are, he should certainly be entitled to the old age pension. Under these circumstances, I think if the Minister is agreeable to receive a few amendments in Committee, although it may not come up to our expectations, we could make it a great improvement on what it is. We would be establishing the principle of our responsibility to all the aged in the State, and although the Bill, when it is passed through Committee, may not be as good as we could wish it to be, yet, later on, we could amend it to make it what it ought to be—an old age pension scheme.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): The hon. member for Oxley delivered a pretty strong speech against this Bill, and quoted from a correspondent of the London *Times*. He was followed in that view by the hon. member for Warrego, and I think some other members of the Opposition also expressed similar views on the last occasion that the Bill was before the House. Their arguments would be suitable to a civil service superannuation scheme, which will probably be brought before the House this session, but I do not consider they have any application whatever to an old age pension scheme, properly so called. The hon. member for Warrego has also, in that breezy manner of his, referred to the versatility and volatile character of the hon. member for Clermont, and propounded a further scheme, that we should have a kind of insurance fund; in fact, he spoke so effectively on the point that I think a particularly live insurance agent is lost in the hon. member. He illustrated the matter by saying if young men of the age of twenty provided £1 a year for forty-five years, they would build up for themselves a pension. The hon. member is perhaps speaking from his own conduct, as possibly he may have been one of those kind of good boys who have done the right thing through life; but we know that it is too much to expect that the whole community can, under any circumstances whatever, be induced to contribute to a fund from the time that they are twenty years of age until they are sixty-five. There is too much perfectness in that theory to be expected from humanity. I certainly do not wish to encourage human frailty as suggested by the hon. member for Musgrave; but I think this is one of the effects of life we cannot shut our eyes to, and which the Bill is trying to meet. I am not enamoured of the Bill. I think it is a wishy-washy production, yet I think the Government is to be commended for endeavouring to put it into legislation.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is a left-handed compliment.

Mr. LENNON: It may be, but I consider the Government are to be congratulated in attempting to put this Bill before the House and the country. But from my point of view they must have been in communication with a famous circumlocution office, because, as far as the Bill goes, it seems to me they are trying to discover "how not to do it" from the way the Bill is drafted. There is no genuine ring about it to show that they are trying to meet the demands of the community for a really sound old age pension scheme. Clause 6 deals with the age, and I do not see any special charm in the age of sixty-five. Of course it was necessary to fix upon some age, and the age of sixty-five has been adopted by most of the other States, but in a climate like Queensland we certainly ought to be more generous in that respect than New Zealand or Victoria. People wear out sooner in Queensland than they do in New Zealand, and, I think, sooner than they do in Victoria. If they fix sixty-five years in those States, I think we might with very good reasons make ours sixty, or possibly fifty-five. Then, again, there is a provision that a man shall live in the State twenty-five years, which is a very severe one indeed; and, although it is provided subsequently in clause 9 that a sort of interchange can be made with other States, yet, I think, twenty-five years is too long. My object in addressing the House is not to express the hope

that the Biil will be dropped, as the hon. member for Oxley suggested, but that it will be largely amended in Committee, and made a measure acceptable, not only to the House, but to the country. Subclauses (i.), (ii.), and (iii.) of clause 8 seem fairly good, but the whole of the other subclauses, right away down to No. (xv.), should be deleted from the Bill. I consider they are of a drastic, severe, and cruel character. Subclause (ix.) states—

His average weekly income during the six months immediately preceding such date has not amounted to ten shillings or upwards.

That is a very unworkable sort of scheme. A man might have been earning 10s. or 12s. a week for years, and to receive this pension he would have to go and voluntarily have his wages reduced to under 10s. to qualify for a pension. I think that is an absurd provision. It may be copied from New Zealand or elsewhere, but that does not render it more reasonable.

Hon. R. PHILP: A man may break down all at once.

Mr. LENNON: Then, again, there is a provision that he cannot receive a pension if he is possessed of any money over and above £10. It may be suggested that he may have a riotous indulgence to spend money, and try and qualify himself in that doubtful way to become a pensioner. Another paragraph to which I would direct the attention of the Committee is paragraph (xv.), which reads—

He has not at any time within twelve months been refused a pension certificate, except for the reason that he was disqualified on account of his age or for reasons which are not in existence at the time of the further application.

I consider that is altogether too stringent a clause. I do not consider that because a man did not succeed in getting his pension, perhaps by reason of not knowing how to go about it, or being an ignorant man, or possibly not giving due care, he should be disqualified—I do not think that should be considered at all. I consider if a man had applied twice, and had failed to satisfy the court, he should still be at liberty to apply again and prove his case. I will pass to clause 9, which requires continuous residence in Queensland for a very long period. All the subclauses to this clause are intended in my view to find out the way how not to grant pensions, to restrict the pensions, and to refuse them for the most trivial causes. If we are not in a position to give a generous old age pension scheme, it would have been very much better not to have introduced it at all, but, as the country is already saddled with a considerable expense to maintain indigent allowance and Dunwich and other charitable institutions, I think an Old Age Pensions Bill will be an improvement on those schemes. No doubt the Government, although rather pressed for time, will be prepared to consider amendments which may be proposed, or they might themselves draft some reasonable amendments which will meet with the acceptance of the Committee. Clause 10 provides that a pension shall not, under any circumstances, exceed 10s., but I think £1 would be a more reasonable amount. I think that providing a man is not idling, and likes to add to his pension by doing gardening work or any other kind of light occupation whatever, he might be permitted to earn up to 10s. per week in addition to the pension. I think a limit of £1 would be much more reasonable and humane. A man might be earning 6s. or 7s. per week, and the Government would come along and offer him 4s. or 3s. in addition. It is too paltry for consideration. The 2s. limit fixed by the Government is a very paltry one. One paragraph of clause 11 says—

But such pension shall be diminished by six pence per week for every complete ten pounds of the net capital value, assessed as hereinafter mentioned, of all accumulated property owned by the claimant.

The word "shall" is rather too strong, and I shall suggest the substitution of "may" at the discretion of the Minister. A reduction of that character is altogether too drastic. Clause 12 deals with the computation of income. A man may be receiving a pension of 10s. a week, and his friends may see that he is not getting too fat on that or living a riotous life, and offer him board and lodging to help him, but as soon as they do that the Minister deducts 5s. a week on account of board and lodging. I think that is a cruel thing to do. Even if a man is receiving 10s. a week, I think he will find a considerable difficulty in eking out an existence; and if his friends are thoughtful enough to offer him free board and lodging, I do not think it is any concern of the Minister, and I would like to see the clause wiped out. Clause 15 contains one of the most objectionable features of the Bill—the open court principle. I think rather than make these people parade their poverty before the country, and prove by their career that they are entitled to a pension, inquiries should be conducted in private, and every possible means afforded them of obtaining a pension, without having to show whether they have been drunk three or four times or been in gaol. I would strongly recommend the Minister to see if it is not possible to wipe out this provision altogether. Clause 19 says—

The Minister may at any time cancel or suspend or reduce any pension if he considers it expedient so to do, and the registrar shall amend the pension certificate accordingly.

I think that is giving the Minister too much power. I do not think he should have the power of cancelling or reducing pensions at his own sweet will. I think once a pension is obtained, unless a man gets into gaol for a life sentence or something of that sort, I do not think the Minister should have the power to cancel it. We might have a whimsical Minister administering the Act, and he might reduce the amount down to 2s. a week, which I believe would be the minimum. I think that is a condition which should not be allowed to exist in the Bill. With regard to the liability of relatives, I consider that clause 20, with all the subclauses, should be deleted from the Bill altogether. I know it is a popular belief that a Bill of this sort should be so constructed that relatives should be compelled to contribute. That is the one feature of the Bill that I dislike more than any other. If the relatives of a pensioner are not prepared to voluntarily contribute to his support, I think we should not drag them before the court to compel them to do so, and inflict degradation on the pensioner himself. I think any right-minded pensioner—if I may use such a word—would rebel at the idea of having his relatives compelled to support him, and unless they do so voluntarily I would make no application at all. The Bill might provide that the relatives might contribute voluntarily. Failing that, I should like to see the whole of these provisions deleted from the Bill, as I do not approve of the scheme at all. With regard to the court scheme, a poor man applying for a pension has to prove his case in open court, where the whole of his career may be brought out in evidence just to show that he is not a desirable person to grant a pension to. But very tender regard is shown to the feelings of relatives, it being provided in subclause (5) of clause 20 that "Every case under this section may, if the court thinks fit, be heard in private." Why such tender regard for the relatives, when no such regard is shown to the feelings of the pensioner?

[5·30 p.m.]

Mr. Lennon.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That does not mean the relatives only. It refers to the pensioner.

Mr. LENNON: I understand that it directly and specifically applies to the relatives, and not to the pensioner. I consider that the Government are fully protected, inasmuch as the whole of the property of a pensioner during the time a pension is granted to him vests in the Crown. Of course we know that the majority of men who apply for pensions have no property, but there will, no doubt, be cases where people have property. Where that is the case, the vesting of the property in the Crown should be sufficient without the other safeguards proposed in the Bill. Subclause (4) of clause 23 reads as follows:—

Except in special cases of the pensioner's illness or debility, it shall not be lawful for the registrar to waive the forfeiture of a pension twice consecutively to the same pensioner; and in no case shall forfeiture be waived unless waiver is applied for within the prescribed time.

That is binding a man down to all those specific dates. If he does not do a certain thing at a certain time he is not to get a pension. That is absolutely contrary to the spirit of old age pensions. Things of that kind are a blot on the Bill, and render the Bill a "how-not-to-do-it-Bill" rather than a real Old Age Pensions Bill. Clause 30 reads—

Where, in the opinion of a commissioner, a pensioner misspends any part of his pension, or mispends, wastes, or lessens any part of his estate or of his income or earnings, or injures his health, or endangers or interrupts the peace and happiness of his family, a commissioner may, on the complaint of the registrar or any paymaster or any member of the Police Force, make an order directing that until further order the instalments shall be paid to any benevolent or charitable society, minister of religion, justice of the peace, or other person named by the commissioner, for the benefit of the pensioner.

All that is very good, and is quite sufficient without the final portion of the clause—

or suspending the pension certificate pending the decision of the Minister thereon, or directing the forfeiture of so many of the instalments as the commissioner thinks fit.

All the words after "pensioner" on line 57 should be struck out, as the Government are sufficiently safeguarded without the final provision in the clause. If a man has misbehaved himself, if he does not keep fairly sober—and I believe that in this House some people do not always keep fairly sober——

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: That is not so.

Mr. LENNON: Not ever?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. LENNON: I mean when they go on their election campaigns, and they are singing "He's a jolly good fellow." However, I consider that in that clause the Government are amply protected by reason of their power to pay the money over to any charitable institution or minister of religion without depriving a man of his pension. Clause 31 is therefore unnecessary. Subclause (3) of clause 36, the last clause, says—

A statement in writing of the amount of arrears of payments due under any order made against a relative, purporting to be signed by the registrar or by a commissioner or the clerk of a court, shall be *prima facie* evidence that the said amount of arrears was due and payable upon the date mentioned therein.

That provision, and others which I have referred to as objectionable, should be deleted from the Bill. We should give a pension to every person as a right, or not at all, and should only deprive people of a pension who are confirmed in drunken habits, or who have spent most of their time in gaol. Even those who are of intemperate habits are entitled to some humane consideration; but under this Bill, if a man is convicted of drunkenness a couple of times in the year, he is deprived of his pension. I viewed with very great satisfaction the announcement previously made that the Government would introduce an Old Age Pensions Bill, and I sincerely hope they will not drop this measure, but that they will permit it to be very much amended in Committee, and pass it within the next week or so. I am very sorry I cannot say more in favour of the Bill that is put before us.

Hon. R. PHILP: It wants a new lock, stock, and barrel.

Mr. LENNON: Oh, no; the Bill is not so incurably bad that it is incapable of amendment. I do not go the length of those hon. members whose business it is to condemn measures emanating from the Government side of the House. That is not my business.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We are not condemning it.

Mr. LENNON: I should like to know what hon. members are doing then. The leader of the Opposition suggests that the Bill wants amending to such an extent that it needs a new lock, stock, and barrel. That is an expression I have heard before somewhere, and I have generally regarded that expression as a pretty substantial condemnation of anything to which it is applied. I approve generally of an Old Age Pensions Bill, and hold that a pension should be given as a right. But I do not approve of the stringent provisions in this measure. I approve of every possible facility being given for granting a pension, imposing, of course, necessary safeguards to prevent the Government being defrauded. I have to repeat the hope that the Government will permit the Bill to be so amended as to render it more acceptable to the House.

Mr. JONES (*Burnett*): When speaking on the Address in Reply, I made the statement that we could not judge of the measures forecasted in His Excellency's Speech by their titles, and I think the Bill we have before us this afternoon is an evidence of the correctness of that statement.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are a prophet, only you do not know it.

Mr. JONES: I may tell the hon. member that I particularly mentioned this Bill, and said that we might have an Old Age Pensions Bill which was so hedged round with restrictions that it would be difficult for a democratic party or Labour party to accept it.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Labour party is not very democratic.

Mr. JONES: The hon. member is not very democratic.

Mr. JENKINSON: More democratic than any member of the Labour party.

Mr. JONES: The only reason why I support the second reading of this Bill is that I hope it will be amended in Committee, for I really do not think it is worthy of a democratic country or a democratic party, and I am sure that it is not worthy of the humanitarian instincts and feelings of the hon. gentleman who was entrusted with its introduction. I hold the opinion that the first duty of the Legislature is to establish a fund out of which provision can be made for our aged poor, and that payment in the shape of a pension should be made to our aged people as a right for services rendered by them in the days of their youth and energy. But that is not the proposal in this Bill. The proposal here is simply to increase the amount of the indigence allowance, hedged with greater restrictions. The

hon. member for Warrego said that a scheme of old age pensions should be taken in hand by the Federal Government. With that statement I entirely agree. I think it is the duty of the Federal Parliament to take up this matter, but the Federal Parliament is not sufficiently democratic at the present time to pass such a measure. I am aware that there are reciprocity provisions in this Bill, but if the Federal Parliament took up this matter, and provided pensions for our aged people, the restriction as to residence would not be necessary. A man would not then require to have resided a certain number of years in a particular State before he became entitled to a pension. One of the objectionable clauses in this Bill is clause 8, which provides that no person shall receive a pension unless he fulfils certain requirements. For instance, a pension is not to be paid to a person who has been in gaol for a term of three years during his twenty-five years' residence in the State. According to my view of British law and justice, when a person has paid the penalty of his crime by undergoing a term of imprisonment, he is free. But if the restriction contained in this Bill is allowed to become law, a further penalty will be imposed on any person who has had the misfortune to have been placed in gaol. Another objectionable provision in clause 8 is that contained in subclause (ix.), which provides that if a man's average weekly earnings during the six months immediately preceding the date of his application for a pension has amounted to 10s. or upwards, he shall not be entitled to a pension. Most miners work very nearly up to the day when they are unable to continue their usual occupation, and that provision will debar a great many people from getting the benefit of a pension for six months. I think the period in that subclause should be greatly reduced. Again, where the net capital value of a man's accumulated property, whether in or out of Queensland, amounts to £200 or upwards, he will not be entitled to a pension. I know many old persons who have been thrifty, and who have provided themselves with a little home worth probably £200 or £300, and that is all they have got; they have no money. I contend that they are deserving of a pension, and it matters not whether they have £200 or £300 worth of property. I do not see why they should be compelled to part with their property before they can get a pension, because it only encourages them to part with their property in order that they may receive that pension. Another subsection of that clause states that an applicant for a pension must not be possessed of any money over and above £10. I think that is also a very objectionable subclause. A great many people, probably, outside this Chamber, are under the impression that the pension of 10s. is provided for all those over sixty-five years of age; but that is not so, because clause 10 says that the maximum amount of pension is 10s., and it remains in the discretion of the Minister to say whether he shall pay the maximum amount or not. I think that the minimum amount should be 10s. per week, or else it should be a fixed sum, and the Minister should not have the power to reduce the amount of the pension at all. The clause following allows an aged person in receipt of a pension to supplement his income to the amount of only 2s. a week. If a person earns 2s. a week and he is in receipt of a pension of 10s. a week, his total weekly income would be 12s. I take it that, provided he earns 5s. a week, he will receive a pension of 7s. a week so as to bring his pension up to the maximum amount of 12s. I hope that clause will be amended in Committee so as to allow aged people to supplement their incomes to at least £1 or £1 5s. a week. The age limit in my opinion is pretty high, although I am well aware that if it is reduced it will involve the expenditure of probably more money than the Government have placed aside for this purpose. In the case of those engaged in hazardous work, such as that connected with the mining industry, their lives are usually not as long as those engaged in out-of-door occupations, or occupations that do not compel them to go underground. That is one reason why I think the age limit should be reduced by at least five years. Another objectionable clause is clause 20, which compels the relatives to contribute towards the keep of their parents. In my opinion that is discouragement to thrift.

Mr. JENKINSON: Do you object to it?

Mr. JONES: Yes, I do. I think that every person should get the pension as a right It does not matter whether their children are in a position to keep them or not.

Mr. JENKINSON: You believe that everybody should have a pension.

Mr. JONES: Certainly. Everybody who reaches a certain age should have a pension. Clause 20 will be a discouragement to those who are thrifty, and the parents who have good and dutiful children will be penalised because the pension will only be paid to the parents of children who are doing nothing to maintain them. There might be other parents who are just as deserving of a pension and who have good and dutiful children, but because they have good children they do not reap the benefit of this pension.

Mr. MAXWELL: This Bill does not read so.

Mr. JONES: Yes, it does. There is a "liability of relatives" clause, which compels relatives who are in a position to do so to provide for their aged parents. I am not one who would advocate that it is not the duty of children to help their parents in their old age. It is the duty of children to do so, but I think if we are to have an Old Age Pensions Act on our statute-books the pension should be paid to every person who has reached a certain age as a right, and for services rendered in the past. Some of the farming representatives are afraid that they will have to pay a land tax to raise this money. The farmers do not want to pay a land tax.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: They are paying it now.

Mr. JONES: Where?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Through the shire councils.

Mr. JONES: You would get a lot more benefit if you paid a direct land tax.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No, thank you.

Mr. JONES: I would be out of order if I referred to that matter, but we will have an opportunity later on of discussing it in connection with the Land Bill. If one section of the community are afraid that they are going to be taxed to provide this fund, then the miners and those engaged in the mining industry might ask to be relieved of all the taxes they have to pay, so that they will not be called upon to provide for it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: What taxes do they pay?

Mr. JONES: They have a good many taxes. They have to pay for miners' rights and leases of land.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: We pay seven taxes.

Mr. RYLAND: Miners also pay the income tax

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No; they do not.

Mr. JONES: In my opinion the only remedy is a socialistic one. The matter of compulsory State insurance has been spoken of to-day. I believe in compulsory State insurance, and I am sure that a great many persons would not object

Mr. Jones.]

to pay something to contribute in the form of compulsory State insurance were they dwelling in a happy knowledge that in the case of accident or injuries to themselves they would be properly provided for, and in the case of death their dependents would be properly provided for, or in the case of old age that they would receive justly what they deserve in the shape of an old age pension. I am well aware that the House as at present constituted is not a Socialistic Parliament, and the day when that will come about is a long way off. A great many advocate compulsory insurance, which would provide a fund not only for old age pensions, but a fund for workmen's compensation, which Act, I may say, needs amending, and every person should receive compensation if he receives injury; or, if he meets with death, his dependants should receive it, or if he is invalided he should receive some allowance. I am one who advocates that system. I do not advocate a direct land tax for the special purpose of paying an old age pension; but under the form of compulsory State insurance, provision should be made for our aged poor, and we should pay them a higher pension than they would be receiving under this Bill. No person would object to pay the premium for that if he thought he would be properly provided for when old age overtook him. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill in the hope that it will be amended in Committee.

Mr. MAXWELL: How?

Mr. JONES: By altering many of its clauses —by altering nearly everyone of them. It is not worthy of this Parliament that this Bill was introduced in its present form.

Mr. JENKINSON: You want to amend it "lock, stock, and barrel."

Mr. JONES: No; we have got the title. (Laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON: You are easily satisfied.

Mr. JONES: The principle is there, and so long as we get the principle on our statute-book we can amend it this session and probably next session, also. I am not satisfied with the title only, and I hope that when we get into Committee, with the aid of my vote, we will have some of the objectionable clauses wiped out. This Bill is not worthy of the humanitarian feelings of the hon. gentleman who introduced it.

* Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): The Bill has met with considerable criticism from the Labour corner, and also from the Opposition; and I, myself, may have to make some further criticisms in the few remarks I have to offer on this Bill. At the same time, I am reminded that, when like measures were introduced in New Zealand and New South Wales, those measures were far from perfect. Such measures generally require to be amended "lock, stock, and barrel." I am not in favour of several of the clauses of this Bill. Like the hon. member for Burnett, and other hon. members who have spoken from the Labour corner, I hope the Bill will be considerably amended when it reaches the Committee stage. This Bill reminds me of a new ship when she has been launched. Very often, after the launching of a vessel, and some of her rigging is set up, she is redocked and a good many alterations and improvements made. I presume that, with the experience that has been gained by the other States, we shall see the necessity of amending the Bill further on. In fact, in New Zealand a similar measure to this has been amended on two or three, if not more, different occasions, and it has been the same in New South Wales. At the same time, after seeing the experience which the other States have had in this matter, I think that this Bill could have been brought in in a better form than it has been. This Bill is by no means perfect; in fact, I am inclined to think that it is almost an impossibility for any measure of this character, when introduced, to be regarded as perfect by any hon. member. A writer on the subject of old age pensions, some few weeks ago, made this remark—

> Now, as a matter of fact, the perfect old age pension scheme would give every aged person, man and woman, irrespective of what their position and income are, an old age pension. The old age pension should be universal, and there for either pauper or millionaire to draw if he requires it.

That is my view of the matter. At the same time, the Government should have benefited by the experience of the other States, and a measure more perfect than the one now before us might have been introduced. There are several clauses in the Bill with which I do not at all [7 p.m.] agree. It first deals with the age limit. In New South Wales, and I think in New Zealand, the age qualifying a person to apply for an old age pension is sixty-five years. I think that is too advanced an age, especially in the case of a woman. There are many widows who have been in Queensland for very many years, and who have assisted, to the best of their ability, to rear families, and who have also assisted their helpmates to build up this State, and who have been left practically penniless. We should make some discrimination between the qualifying age for a man and a woman. Sixty years should be the highest age at which a woman should be entitled to claim this pension. In reading the report of the Commonwealth Royal Commission that was appointed two or three years ago in connection with old age pensions, I find that one of the commissioners in Victoria made this statement, when speaking of the age—

> A special clause should be inserted in any Act dealing with old age pensions, giving a commissioner power to grant a pension in cases where a claimant does not comply with the ordinary requirements of the statute, but who nevertheless, through misfortune or misadventure, is rendered incapable of maintaining himself.

Speaking of the invalidity of pensions he said—

> This contingency is provided for under the German State pension scheme, and can be claimed when a man who is under seventy is permanently unable to earn one-third of his previous wages, but he must also have been a contributor for four years, when the claim is allowed irrespective of age.

I believe the scheme in France is subsidised by the Government. I find that a miner can claim his pension when he arrives at the age of fifty-five years, while a sailor can secure a pension when he reaches the age of fifty, if he has served twenty-five years at sea. We should amend our Bill in Committee so that anyone in unfortunate circumstances, and who has lost his health, or met with an accident by which he is permanently disabled, shall be able to claim the pension, despite the fact that he has not reached the age of sixty-five years.

Mr. WHITE: Do you propose that they should contribute?

Mr. BARBER: I prefer a proper Government insurance scheme that would cover the whole of the workers.

Mr. WHITE: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARBER: The German Act does not go as far as that. It only applies to workers in receipt of less than £100 per annum. Speaking of two and a-half years ago, there were about 12,000,000 German workers who came under the provisions of the Act; and I think about £3,500,000 was the amount expended per year for pensions. Regarding subsection (6) of

clause 8, which disqualifies a man who has been convicted of "getting on the bust" occasionally, I do not think any hon. member sympathises with the habitual drunkard. At the same time, I candidly admit that, among a very large section of the workers in Queensland, especially in the sugar districts and in the pastoral districts, there are numbers of men whose only opportunity for a little pleasure and comfort is the hotel. They are altogether separated from the refining influences of our city civilisation. In view of the influences of the hard, strenuous life they lead, those men deserve to be shown considerable sympathy, although they may at times "get on a bender." They get hold of some of that "chain lightning" which is supposed to kill at 1,000 yards, and we can well understand how they very soon get through their money. It is hardly a fair thing that those men should be disqualified from receiving an old age pension simply because they have been arrested for drunkenness on two or three occasions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have to be convicted.

Mr. BARBER: Then, a man who has had the misfortune to be placed in durance vile a couple of times is also ineligible for a pension. When a man has served his sentence he is supposed to have expiated his offence, and he becomes a free man. If the provision in this Bill dealing with that matter is carried into effect it will practically debar a considerable number of men. I do not consider that is at all fair. If a man has paid into an assurance society no one has the right, when he draws his money, to inquire what he is going to do with it. He can spend the lot in one day if he likes. He can "go on the spree," and nobody bothers much what he does with his money. Far from desiring to encourage men with certain weaknesses, where a man is possessed of the other qualifications entitling him to a pension I do not think we should debar him from getting it; although I hold, in connection with cases of the class to which I have alluded, that the money should be paid to some institution—which I believe is provided for in certain cases in the Bill—and that the man should be allowed to get the pension. Then subclause 9 of clause 8 refers to what a man's income may be when making application for the pension. It says—

> The average weekly income during the six months immediately preceding such date has not amounted to ten shillings or upwards.

To my own personal knowledge there is a considerable number of men in Queensland who have not been able to earn 10s. per week, even during the past six months, and I think that that is hardly a fair proposal. As a matter of fact, under our present system of indigent allowance, were it not for the fact that many of these old men are able to earn 1s. or 2s. per week by cutting a bit of wood, or garden scratching, the 5s. would not nearly see them through, and I think that that qualification should be wiped out. It is estimated that, taking the average rate throughout the Commonwealth, it costs £15 15s. 7d. per head per annum of the population simply for food and drink. Of course, there are other necessities required by every applicant who desire to have the provisions of this Bill extended to them. It is not sufficient that a man or woman should have simply enough to supply them with food, shelter, and rest; they require clothing and many other things. Many of the people who will become pensioners under this Bill have their periods of rheumatism, and various other "isms," and will require medicine and other little comforts.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How do they do now?

Mr. BARBER: It is a difficult matter to say how the poor old people squeeze through at all. It is a mystery.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you not think they would be better with 10s.?

Mr. BARBER: In connection with clause 15, under which the applicants are called upon to show cause why they should be given a pension, I think that the provision to bring people into open court is a very drastic one. I notice, also, that the police will be called upon to report. Under the present system, when a person puts in an application for the indigent allowance, that is the practice which is followed, and I do not like the system at all. The police do their duty well and faithfully, but I do not think the system is a good one. Many of the old people believe that the police rake up a lot of trifling matters, and send in an adverse report. When that matter was dealt with before the Royal Commission I referred to, I notice that Mr. Berriman, one of the Victorian old age pension commissioners, speaking on the matter, said—

> Beyond that, too, there is a weakness in the administration of our Act which must operate unfairly. When a claim is lodged, practically the first thing done is to call on the local constable for a report regarding the applicant. If that report is unfavourable, the registrar refuses to send the claim on for hearing, and the consequence may be that a deserving applicant never gets an opportunity of showing his right to the relief afforded by the statute.

He goes on to say that that is manifestly unfair, and practically makes the policeman the commissioner. That gentleman recommended that the rate should be fixed by the commissioner, and not merely recommended by him. Further on, clause 20 deals with the liability of relatives. I have always contended that, wherever it is possible, and it could be proved, that the relatives of our aged people were in a position to provide even 1s. or 2s. per week they should be compelled to subscribe towards the maintenance of their aged parents. I know that, under the present system of indigent allowance, many of the old people have been offered Dunwich as an alternative to the 5s. per week. I understand that, when a person is sent down to Dunwich, the department has power to compel relatives to pay a certain amount per week. We have no provision at present on our statute-book to compel relatives of those aged persons to subscribe anything towards keeping them. At the same time, I recognise that it is probably a difficult matter to decide as to when a person is really in a position to subscribe any fixed amount per week and when they are not, but I think that these matters should be dealt with by a special officer, and not merely on a report to the department by the local police officer of the district. These men do their best, but I do not think they should be called upon to do that class of work, as they have plenty to do otherwise. As I said before, it would be difficult to decide whether children were able to provide for their parents, but a scheme might be worked out to compel them to subscribe something. Turning again to the old age pension report, I find on page 202 that some questions were put to Mr. Berriman, who said—

> Relatives are liable under our Act for the payment of the pension granted, but the supervision in this matter to be effective should be close. The pension is a right and not a charity, but the obligation on the parent is clear, and that obligation is invariably evaded wherever it is possible to do so.
>
> I should like to see a system that would probe thoroughly each case, and which would be as careful to see that no attempt was made to obtain payment from a relative who had his hands full as to strive for an order against a relative who is able to pay. Each case should be presented to the court by a special officer and not by a police officer.

It is very difficult to say where we should draw

the line, but, seeing that we have an exception of £200 at the present time in our Income Tax Act, I think in the case of a married son with no family and earning 50s. or £3 a week, the State would be quite justified in expecting and compelling that son or daughter, as the case may be, to subscribe something towards the upkeep of their parents. We know that it might be a very difficult matter to ascertain where their children are sometimes. In Australia many of our young people, I am glad to say, as soon as ever they are old enough to earn their living, strike out for themselves. That is a characteristic of Australian life which I am very pleased to see—instead of hanging round too much on the old people. I think it would be a good thing for young men in a great many of our cities, as soon as they are able, to strike out " on their own," to get away into the back country, to mining or farming districts, and get work there. It will remove them from the evil influences of city life, and be better for them physically and morally and in every other way. There is just one other matter that I wish to refer to, and that is the question of the administration. I understand from the reading of the Bill that it is the intention of the Government to appoint a commissioner for this special work. Am I to understand from the Home Secretary that a special commissioner will be appointed, who will give his full time to this work?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; not at present. There will be district commissioners all over the State.

Hon. R. PHILP: The police?

Mr. BARBER: No; we do not want the police. We are asking these men to do too much. There are thirty or forty positions that many of these men now have to fill, and I think it is unfair to place any further extra duties on their shoulders. I think if a special officer with plenty of energy and enthusiasm for this kind of work were appointed by the Government to go round and make special inquiries into all these applications for pensions, it would pay the State to make an appointment of that sort.

The HOME SECRETARY: We could not do it.

Mr. BARBER: I do not believe in "can't," I do not believe that anything is impossible. When the Old Age Pension Commission held their inquiry in Melbourne, Mr. Berri-
[7.30 p.m.] man stated that it would be better if they had in Victoria a commissioner who gave his full time to this work. If that was considered necessary in a small State like Victoria, with 87,000 or 88,000 square miles of territory, surely it was far more necessary that a special officer should be appointed in a country like Queensland, which possessed such an extensive territory. Mr. Berriman, in his report on the subject, made the following observations:—

> The carrying out of the extensive and intricate provisions of an Act which entails the expenditure of close on £200,000, and which deals almost exclusively with those of our population who are too weak to help or assert themselves, should, in my opinion, be in the hands of a separate and a very fully qualified officer.
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> If that were so, and a sympathetic, enthusiastic, and capable man had his whole time to devote to the subject, I fully believe the State would save itself from much imposition, and the pensioners would gain through the extended supervision.
>
> Those who were intended to be benefited by the Act would not suffer, and those who impose on the administration would receive their deserts.

The Home Secretary said it was not the intention of the Government at the present time to appoint a special officer for that purpose.

The HOME SECRETARY: We think it can be done with the present machinery that is used in connection with the indigence allowance.

Mr. BARBER: Very well. I hope the Government will be able to accomplish the object they have in view. Although this measure is not at all the measure that I should like to have seen introduced, still I am very pleased that the Government are endeavouring to have the principle of old age pensions placed on our statute-book. Some hon. members, especially members of the Opposition section in this House, have become suddenly converted to the need of an Old Age Pensions Bill. It is only within the last few months that many of those hon. members have looked upon, or pretended to look upon, a measure of this kind with any favour at all.

Mr. PAULL: I have approved of old age pensions for years.

Mr. BARBER: The hon. member for Charters Towers is an exception. The question of old age pensions has been discussed year after year, on the motion introduced by the hon. member for Kennedy, but that motion has been generally talked out, or met with the strongest opposition.

Mr. KEOGH: Not by this side of the House.

Mr. BARBER: By some members on this side, and by some on the other side of the House. We were told that it was absolutely wrong on the part of these old people to call upon the Government to provide them with a small pension or allowance to tide them over the late period of their lives. We were told that if these people had been thrifty in their younger days it would not have been necessary for them to become pensioners of the State. That may be so in some cases; but I contend that hon. members, who put the whole of the workers in the category of the thriftless, are absolutely out of touch with the conditions of the workers in Queensland or in any other part of the world to-day.

Mr. KEOGH: You are now saying what is not correct.

Mr. BARBER: I am stating what I know to be a fact. Many of those people, even members of this House, who occupy fairly good positions to-day as farmers or as business men, may thank their stars that many of the aged persons to whom I refer were not as smart as they themselves were, because if they had been those people would not be in the positions which they occupy at the present time. What opportunity have a very large proportion of the workers in this State of putting aside any of their hard-earned wages or income for their old age? The majority of these people have been blamed over and over again for not being thrifty, and for not making provision for their needs at a later period of life. I maintain that only a mighty small number of those people have had any opportunity of putting anything aside for old age. A man with a family of four or five or six children finds it difficult to keep his head above water on a wage of £1 16s. a week, even if he earns that sum on the average; but in many cases his earnings are reduced by loss of time, holidays, and various other causes, down to £1 10s. and less per week. It is impossible for a man to save and put anything in the bank on such a wage as that. Although this measure is not as liberal as I anticipated it would be, yet there is a good framework in it, and I hope that when it reaches the Committee stage we shall be able to improve it considerably. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SUMNER (*Nundah*): As an advocate of old age pensions for many years in Queensland, I welcome the introduction of this Bill by the Government. According to the speeches which have been delivered, nearly every hon. member has a different scheme to propose, so that we can

imagine the many difficulties which surround the framing of a measure like that before the House. The reform proposed in this Bill is a reform which must come in every civilised country. The hon. member for Clermont said it was a deplorable thing that in a place like Queensland or Australia such a thing as an old age pension should be needed. I agree that it is very deplorable that in a State like Queensland, with all our boasted resources, and with our millions of acres of land, it should be necessary at this early stage of our history to make provision for old age pensions. It is a strange anomaly that in a country which has, perhaps, the greatest average wealth and the greatest average production per head of almost any country in the world, such a thing as an old age pension should be required. It has been asked why should this be? It is the necessary corollary of our industrial system. The introduction of machinery during the last decade, and the amount of production which has been accomplished by machinery, has led to the pushing of men aside, and this has something to do with the present poor condition of workers not only in Queensland but in every State of the civilised world. Andrew Carnegie —and I do not think any hon. member will call him a Labour man—has said that in American industries men over forty years of age are not wanted. The competition has become so keen and severe in the industrial world that workmen above forty years of age are not wanted. That is one of the chief reasons why old age pensions are needed. This question of old age pensions is forcing itself on the attention of people not only in Australia but all over the world. Owing to the industrial conditions which prevail, it is necessary that the young men of the community should provide for the men who are thrust out of industries when they become old, and I think the young men are prepared to do that. I believe that if a referendum were taken in Queensland as to whether the young men should provide for the aged poor in the form of old age pensions, a great majority would declare themselves in favour of such a proposal. When during my electoral campaign and at other times I have spoken on this subject, no sooner was the matter mentioned than I got the acclamation of the audience or the crowd I was addressing. I believe that our industrial conditions are responsible to a large extent for our old men being pushed right out of their natural channels. It is a strange anomaly that, with our boasted civilisation, we should have a civil list, and pensions for the military and navy, and yet give no pensions to those men who provide the money for the civil list, the military, and the navy. If any men are deserving of a pension from their country, it is surely the men who have served their country in the industrial warfare that is going on all over the civilised world at the present time. The Imperial authorities have had their attention drawn to this subject for some considerable time. We all remember how the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain almost swept the English constituencies on the subject of old age pensions some years ago. His idea was to connect old age pensions with the friendly societies, but he found, on making investigations, that his idea was incapable of being carried out. The friendly societies of England then made provision for themselves. They made provision for their members contributing to get a pension, and yet we find that the members of those friendly societies have not yet availed themselves of those provisions to any extent. I must say that, on reading this Bill at first, I began to wonder who were going to obtain any pensions at all under it. It seemed to me to be hedged about by so many restrictions that, I thought, on first reading it, not 20 per cent. of the people would be able to avail themselves of its provisions. I think that, after reading the Bill again, everything to ensure this measure being successfully carried out depends on sympathetic administration. I think that old age pensions should be undertaken by the Federal Government. (Hear, hear!) The Federal Government appointed a commission to go into this question, and they came to certain decisions. They decided that an old age pension scheme was necessary, but so far they have failed to put that scheme into practice. They had several ideas before that commission for the purpose of raising the money to meet the cost of the pensions. One was a wages tax of 2d. in the £1, which would realise £428,000. They suggested a duty of 3d. per lb. on tea and 3d. per gallon on kerosene, and this, it was stated, would bring in £800,000. Then an absentee land tax of 3d. in the £1 was recommended, as that would bring in £925,000. Then a tax of 1d. in the £1 on the unimproved values of land, with an exemption of £240, was suggested, which would bring in altogether £1,174,425; and it was also suggested that by taking over the tobacco monopoly, and allowing 3 per cent. for expenses, they would receive a sum of £1,331,000. Yet, after getting all this evidence, we find that the Federal Government are saying that while the Braddon clause stands in the way they cannot give effect to an old age pensions scheme. I certainly think that, in a country like Australia, where we have practically a moving population, any scheme of old age pensions should be undertaken by the Federal Parliament; but, failing that, I think this Government have done the right thing in bringing down this measure. The Federal Old Age Pensions Commission laid down in their report one basic principle, and that was that pensions should be granted as a right and not as a charity. I take it if an old age pensions scheme is to be worth anything, it must be founded on that principle. It must be on the principle that the pension is a right and is not given to a man as a charity. If it partakes of the charitable state at all, it will, to a great extent, destroy the value of the Act. The members who have spoken to-night have referred to several clauses of the Bill, and I also think that some of them need amendment. But if the Government cannot see their way to enlarge the Bill, I think we should take what we can get, and perhaps we shall be able to enlarge upon it as the State grows larger, when we shall be able to do more for our aged poor.

Mr. CREAGH: Will you support the Bill in that form?

Mr. SUMNER: I would like to see it enlarged, but rather than not have a Bill at all, I will take it as it is. The Federal commission recommended that a man should be allowed to earn an income of £52 per annum, including his pension, and I think we ought to adopt that recommendation. That is, if a man is able to earn 10s. a week and he gets a pension of 10s. a week, it will bring his income for the year up to £52. The Federal commission's recommendation in regard to property was that the value of property that a man might have should be £310. We are not far off that in the Bill now before the House. New South Wales fixes the maximum amount of property at £390. In New Zealand it is £260, and in Victoria it is as low down as £160.

Mr. RYLAND: This Bill provides for £275.

Mr. SUMNER: We are not far off the others in that. There are one or two amendments which could be made in this Bill to make it a good one. The age limit is sixty-five years here. In New South Wales they recognise physical infirmities. I think if we allowed the age limit to stand at sixty-five years and then made some

provision that if a man was knocked out of industrial strife by ill-health or physical infirmity, that the Government will do, as they have done in other States—deal with them as they do in New South Wales by taking into consideration his infirmities. Then, in New South Wales anyone who has been engaged in dangerous and unhealthy occupations is also considered. I think that should be taken into consideration in any old age pensions scheme. With regard to mining, it has been stated that miners are different to those engaged in other occupations, and they should be taken into consideration. A pension might be granted to them even before they reach the age of sixty years, let alone sixty-five years. If people are prevented from earning a living, something should be done to provide for them. We are told in this Bill that men who have been convicted three times for drunkenness are prohibited from applying for their pensions. I am against that *in toto*. I know plenty of men who are practically drunk all their lives. They are drunk every day. On the other hand, because a man happens to be arrested three times, you are going to debar him from getting a pension. Why, some of these men are some of the best men we have got to-day. I have got men working for me who have been up before the court half a dozen times; they are among the best men we have got, and I do not see why they should be deprived of the right of applying for an old age pension. We have heard a good deal about thrift, and that is a great economic question to-day, as economists in other parts of the world are arguing just now as to who is the greatest benefit to the country—the man who spends all he has got or the man who saves. Many of our pioneers to-day are men who have spent their wages freely when they got them. We are told that when the old age pensions are passed, the men who get them will spend the money in the country. That is exactly what many of our pioneers have been doing all along. I do not say that is an economic law, but I believe it is open to strong argument as to whether the man who spends his wages freely is not the best man in the country. There are no more prosperous places in this State than the mining fields, where the men earn good wages and spend them as they get them.

Mr. CREAGH: And they help to develop the district.

Mr. SUMNER: These are the places where everybody else does well besides the men who get the good wages. I think that men who have been apprehended once or twice have as much right to a pension as those who scrape and save and hoard up their money. The conditions are different. Take the case of a man with a family. I know many men who will deny their families even the ordinary comforts of living in order to scrape a few pounds together, while another man will spend his whole income to give his family the best of food and a good training to give them a good outfit for the battle of life. According to this Bill, however, the man who scrapes and screws is held up to the community as an example. The men who spend their money are generally the best men in the community, and I know they are often the best men to their children. Another clause in the Bill is that relating to the liability of relatives. If we are going to give a man a pension it is a mistake to come on the relatives for the payment of that pension. Where are you going to draw the line? You must have some limit, and you should say how much money a son is to earn before he can be summoned to contribute something towards the 10s. a week for his father or mother. I have no sympathy with the lad who will not help his father or mother in their old age. I think the man who neglects his father or mother is not worth much as a man. But, taking an average wage in Queensland, how many sons or daughters are in the position to help their fathers or mothers? Fully 95 per cent. of the Queenslanders are not in a position to do what they would like to do towards their old folk.

Mr. CREAGH: And that 95 per cent. would do it if they could.

Mr. SUMNER: I believe they would, but they are not able to do it. Take the wages of the average man in Queensland. It amounts to something like £1 15s. or £2 a week. It is a wonder to me how they manage to live on that wage. I know myself that we keep no servant, and we waste no money. We pay no house rent, and I know that I cannot keep my family on £2 a week, even with the utmost economy. Well, how is a man getting £1 15s. or £2 a week going to do anything towards keeping his parents?

Mr. HARDACRE: And pay big house rent as well.

Mr. SUMNER: I think there should be some limit, and it should be confined to those who earn a certain sum.

Mr. BOWMAN: Many get less than the figures you quoted.

Mr. SUMNER: It will also have the effect of setting families against each other, and make them quarrel amongst themselves. I had an instance of that the other day, when I applied to the Home Secretary's Department for the indigent allowance. I may say that the Home Secretary has been very sympathetic in his administration of that department. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KEOGH: The present one is, but the late Home Secretary was not.

Mr. SUMNER: I know one old man eighty years of age who has been forty-six years in Queensland. He has spent his whole time in the country, and has brought up a family of ten children. I applied for 5s. a week for him the other day, but because his sons offered to keep him, he could not get the 5s. The old man said that rather than go on his sons and daughters, who were not able to keep him, and could not afford to do so, he would go out West and battle again. And this old man has gone again to the West to battle for himself, although he is over eighty years of age, rather than depend on his children for support. I know he went away, because we subscribed to get him his railway fare, as he could not get a pass from the Government. There are scores of old men in Queensland to-day who are that independent that if you told them that if they got 10s. a week it would be taken from their sons and daughters they would scorn to take it, and would prefer to starve.

Mr. KEOGH: It will be taken out of my pocket and yours.

Mr. SUMNER: If I am doing well in the community I do not object to pay my share towards keeping the old people in this country, and I do not think that anyone else will object either. I think that an old age pensions scheme is favoured by all sections of the House, and I hope before this Bill has been passed in Committee that we shall have a Bill that will be acceptable to the people of Queensland generally. I certainly think the worst clause it that relating to relatives contributing. However, I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. McMASTER (*Fortitude Valley*): It struck me, when I looked at the front page of

this Bill, that the old adage still held good—that you cannot judge of a book by its cover. We must not judge of this Bill by its title. Anyone reading the title would think it was a Bill that was going to assist our worthy old people. With the exception of the hon. member for Nundah—who has spoken more favourably of it than any other hon. member—the Bill has not received the commendation of one hon. member. I have always believed that our aged poor should be taken care of, but this Bill is not going to take care of them. The Bill will humiliate them, and lay their financial position and their career open to public exposure. It is a Bill to pauperise and humiliate those who deserve assistance. The junior member for Maryborough said that the hon. member for Oxley had made a very good party speech. To my mind, the hon. member for Oxley showed the Bill in all its nakedness to such an extent that there was scarcely an hon. member but felt ashamed that the Government he was supporting should bring in such a Bill. The hon. member for Oxley showed conclusively that there is not a solitary thing in the Bill—except its title—to commend it to our aged poor. If the Bill comes out of Committee at all, it will not be known to the Minister who brought it in—it will be so altered.

[8 p.m.]

Mr. CAMPBELL: We shall not be able to alter the principle of the Bill.

Mr. McMASTER: It would be very much better to continue the present system of giving assistance to our worthy aged poor, until a proper scheme can be brought in that will not be so humiliating to those whom it is supposed to benefit. There is nothing new in the question of old age pensions. The system has been in vogue for a long time. I have made many appeals to the Government on behalf of poor people, and every Home Secretary, with the exception of the late Minister, has been very sympathetic. I never had much difficulty in getting the assistance I was asking for, though I could not get it very well from the late Home Secretary.

Mr. KEOGH: Nor anybody else.

Mr. McMASTER: I am quite satisfied that under the Bill as it stands not more than 20 per cent. of our aged people will apply for pensions. Rather then subject themselves and their friends to exposure in court, they will do without pensions. The clause that prevents a man earning more than 2s. a week is simply absurd and cruel. Many an old man may be able to earn 8s. or 10s. a week by doing light work in a garden, or acting as messenger; but he is not to be allowed to earn more than 2s. a week or his 10s. will be cut off. I would like to ask hon. members who make such a talk about a living wage whether they think a man can live on 10s. a week, and perhaps have to pay 5s. out of that for rent? Is that a living wage?

Mr. SUMNER: It is better than nothing.

Mr. McMASTER: I admit that it is better than nothing, but that is not what we were told this democratic Government were going to do. We were told that they were going to bring in a Bill that would provide for the deserving aged poor without pauperising them, and that they would be able to demand a pension that they could live on.

Mr. SUMNER: They only get 5s. now.

Mr. McMASTER: I say we should give them more. It would be very much better to increase the present indigence allowance to 10s. until a Bill is introduced worthy of being called a Bill to give assistance to our aged poor. An hon. member spoke about Dunwich; but Dunwich is not to be done away with. There is a clause in the Bill providing that a man who takes a few glasses more than he ought to take, instead of getting an old age pension is to be sent to Dunwich, or to some other institution. The Home Secretary told us last week that the present indigence allowance is not to be stopped, so I fail to see how this Old Age Pensions Bill is going to benefit the aged poor. I believe that the pension is purposely hemmed round with conditions, so that a raid shall not be made on the Treasury. There is not much humanity about sons or daughters, who are in a position to assist their parents, if they allow them to be in want. I know of cases of the kind; but it is very difficult to know just where to draw the line. I know other children who have to struggle to maintain their own families, and who do not see their way clear to assist their parents. But to haul relatives into court is going too far. I have no wish to protract the debate, because I should only have to repeat a great deal that has been said already. It would be much more humane and not so humiliating if the present system were continued in the meantime. The Home Secretary must see himself that the Bill will be unworkable, and that many of those who are entitled to pensions are likely to say, "That is not an old age pension. I would never think of coming under such a Bill as that. I would rather continue to get the present 5s. a week than get 10s. under the Bill." There are many clauses which have been referred to by hon. members, and it is unnecessary for me to allude to them. I do not think the Bill is at all likely to become law in its present form. If it does, there will not be 20 per cent. of the aged poor who would ask for pensions under it.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): I certainly would not have got up to speak on this matter were it not that an interjection that I made the other evening was taken up incorrectly. It was with reference to some persons who were receiving relief, and one of the parties in the business was a member of this Chamber. The *Hansard* staff and the Press took the matter down as though the party referred to was a member of the present House. Such is not the case. I referred to a party who was in this House when I first came into it. What I then said I am perfectly prepared to substantiate. That member had a mother and sister who were receiving relief, and an hon. member, who has lately taken his departure for the old country, asked that member if he would be prepared to give some assistance to his mother and sister, who were receiving relief from the ladies belonging to a society in South Brisbane. All that was contributed by that hon. member towards the support of his mother and sister was 2s. I am decidedly of opinion that where children are in a position to give assistance to a mother or father they should certainly be compelled to do it. I also think where a brother or sister are not able to earn a living through unforeseen circumstances, such as ill-health, the other brothers and sisters should be compelled to contribute towards their upkeep, equally as well as in the case of a father or mother. There are parties to-day in Dunwich Benevolent Asylum whose sons and daughters are in affluent circumstances. Some of them are in the employ of the Government, and are in a better position than some of the members of this House to keep their aged poor. They frequent aristocratic society, and have afternoon tea and other functions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who are those parties?

Mr. KEOGH: I am prepared to point out the parties to the hon. gentleman. In some of these cases the old people have been in the institution for years. I know a man who has got a brother

in the institution, and to-day he is a much wealthier man than many hon. gentlemen here; and why should not he be called upon to contribute to the upkeep of the brother, who through old age and infirmity is in that institution? These men should be brought to book, and made to contribute towards their aged poor. I may be somewhat heated on the matter, but it has come under my notice that many men are in a position to keep their relatives who are in Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, and they should be compelled to do so. The hon. member for Nundah is opposed to that course, but I think that is one matter which ought to be included. I think that if we increased the present indigence allowance from 5s. to 10s., we should not need the Bill at all. I am decidedly of opinion that the conditions of the Bill lower the dignity of the unfortunate people who wish to take advantage of the Bill. It shows up their poverty. Nothing goes more against the Irishman's nature than a position of that sort. It is beneath the dignity of any man to show up his poverty when he could easily be given the few paltry doles that you hand out to him. Give him the 10s. with an open heart, and without showing to the world that he is in receipt of it. I would ask the Minister if, in the case of a man and wife, the 10s. will be given to each, or will it be within the privilege of the Minister to reduce the amount? If £1 is given altogether, would it be within the province of the Minister to reduce it to 15s.?

The HOME SECRETARY: They would both be entitled to it if they proved the conditions under the Bill.

Mr. KEOGH: I am afraid that very few people will go into a court and prove their right to receive the pension. That provision ought to be excised from the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: They do it in open court in all the other States.

Mr. RYLAND: Not in New Zealand.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; and they come up every year for review in open court.

Mr. KEOGH: I think the age of sixty-five years is a little too high. I am over that age myself, and possibly I may come under the provisions of the Bill. I think we ought to draw the line at sixty, and that some relief should be given in cases of accident. I think the provision with regard to a man who has been convicted three or four times is a very great hardship. The hon. member for Nundah pointed out very clearly that some of the best men often took an extra nip, and might be brought before the court and convicted. There are perhaps some men who indulge, who are not brought up before the court, and yet perhaps are not as good men as those unfortunate fellows who spend their money a little more freely than they ought to do. I remember that forty years ago I was managing some stations for Mr. Henry Coxen, who now resides at Oxley. Men were paid very large cheques in those days, and they would go into the nearest public-house and spend their money freely. They "knocked down" their cheque, and after that went in and earned another cheque.

Mr. CAMPBELL: There was no Labour party then.

Mr. KEOGH: There was no Labour party in existence. I cannot allow the statement to go forth that the Labour party were
[8.30 p.m.] the only people who advocated old age pensions. The hon. member for Bundaberg said the Opposition party was opposed to old age pensions, but as long as I have been in this House the leader of this party has always been an advocate for them. As the leader of the Opposition says, at that time the Treasury was not overflowing with money; but there is now a better condition of affairs, and I hope the Minister will show a kindly feeling and do all that is possible to see that our old people have sufficient to live upon. I have known lately one or two instances where an old man or woman has been turned out of doors to starve, but the Government has done nothing to compel the sons or daughters to keep their parents. I am very pleased to see a measure introduced which will obviate that difficulty and compel children to contribute towards the support of their parents. I shall support the Bill as far as I possibly can, but some provisions in it which will tend to pauperise the people I shall endeavour to have omitted.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): The Government must feel that they are in a peculiar position with regard to this Bill. Most Governments who have introduced legislation of this character have been met with the objection that their proposal is too liberal, and that they were going to make the industrious and provident man provide an old age pension for the careless and thriftless. I suppose that, on looking over the debates which have taken place on measures of a similar nature to this in other Assemblies, the Government came to the conclusion that this was a very progressive measure, but they now find that members who have always opposed legislation of this kind want a more liberal Bill. I am very pleased to find that those members want something better than is proposed in this measure. The ideal Bill would be one which provided that everyone over a certain age, say sixty-five years—I believe that is a fair limit at the present time—should be entitled to an old age pension. Provision might be made to the effect that in the case of laborious work like mining, a man should be entitled to a pension at an earlier age, but sixty-five years is a fair age to start the thing with. To give a pension to everyone would, I suppose, involve the expenditure of a very large amount of money, nearly three times the amount that it is anticipated will be spent under the proposal contained in this Bill, and that is perhaps a little more than we could afford at the present time. The proposal of the Government is to spend £120,000 a year on old age pensions. If we gave an old age pension to everyone, the expenditure would be about £350,000 a year. I believe that if a special effort were made we could provide that sum, and give a pension to everyone of the age of sixty-five years and over, old age being the only qualification required. That is the sort of measure I should like to see adopted, but I do not suppose there is much hope of getting such a measure at the present time.

The HOME SECRETARY: You could not have a measure like that without raising more taxation.

Mr. RYLAND: This House might be asked to grant more taxation, but members might refuse to accede to the request. The leader of the Opposition reckoned that it would be just as good to go on giving an indigence allowance, increasing the amount to 8s. or 10s. per week, as to pass this Bill. On that point I do not agree with the hon. gentleman. There has been more inquiry in connection with applicants for indigence allowance than there will be in connection with applicants for pensions under this Bill. At the present time, with an indigence allowance of 5s. per week, the sum of £31,000 a year is being distributed among the old people of the State. If the allowance were increased to 10s. per week, then the total amount distributed would be £62,000. Under this Bill it is proposed to spend £120,000 a year on old age pensions.

The HOME SECRETARY: In addition to indigence allowance to those not qualified to come under the Bill.

Mr. RYLAND: I understand that that is the intention of the Government. Therefore, the proposal in this Bill is twice as good as the proposal of the leader of the Opposition, and I am prepared to accept it.

Mr. CREAGH: Are you prepared to accept the machinery principles of the Bill?

Mr. RYLAND: I am prepared to fix up the machinery provisions in the best way that this House will permit. As regards the suggestion that an insurance fund should be established, I do not agree with any such scheme. It is wrong in principle. An insurance fund has, as a rule, been advocated by the opponents of old age pensions. The leader of the Opposition suggested a scheme of State insurance, assisted by contributions from the employees, and perhaps from the employers. A system of that kind would have to be built up by the interest on invested capital, as we should have a long time to wait before any moneys would be available for distribution in the shape of pensions. We should have to wait about forty years before such a scheme would mature under normal conditions. It might suit the leader of the Opposition to wait forty years before making provision for the old people of the State, but what we want is an immediate provision for their needs.

Mr. JENKINSON: Why should we have to wait forty years?

Mr. RYLAND: Because people would have to pay into the insurance fund before they could get anything out of it, just as a man has to pay several premiums to a company before he becomes entitled to an endowment policy. A man is not entitled to an endowment policy on the payment of one premium only, and if we adopted an insurance scheme we could not pay a pension to anyone who had only made one contribution to the fund. I do not believe in piling up an insurance fund for the purpose of providing old age pensions. The principle upon which insurance companies are conducted is wrong in its economic basis. The interest may fall off at any time, or come down to vanishing point, and then the revenue of a company would be gone. The old people who will be entitled to pensions under this Bill have contributed to the revenue and assisted in building up the State, and they are entitled to a pension now; they should not have to wait for a long period until the necessary fund has been accumulated. There are some details in the Bill which I hope will not be there when the Bill becomes an Act. I think a pensioner should be allowed to earn more than 2s. in excess of 10s. a week before he becomes disqualified for a pension. At the least the amount should be £1. It was £1 in New Zealand, but last year they brought in an amending Bill which fixed the amount at £60 per annum. Referring again to the question of the liability of relatives, I know the definition restricts the provisions dealing with that matter to a husband, wife, or children. I do not think it should go even as far as that. The husband, wife, and son should be enough. A daughter should not be liable for the support of her parents. A daughter may be married, and if she was made liable for the support of her aged father or mother, that might lead to family disputes. Some hon. members have held up old age pensions as one of the proposals of socialism that was going to burst up the family tie, and do away with the affection that bound the father and the son, the mother and the daughter, together. It would do nothing of the kind; but a proposal such as that contained in the Bill might have that tendency. I am very pleased indeed to find that those who fought so strongly against socialism, and condemned it, saying that this plank of the socialistic platform would be a danger to society and tend to undermine the pillars of our civilisation, are prepared to adopt it at the present time not only as a socialistic plank but as a communistic plank, because the principle of giving a pension to everyone simply because he needs it is a communistic principle. It is a pleasure to know that members are moving in that direction, and I hope there will be no stem to the tide in this respect. It is gratifying to know that members of the Opposition have been forced into supporting a measure of this kind by public opinion. One member asked, "Where are we going to get the money from to pay these old age pensions? Were we going to tax the farmers, the dairymen, and the producers?" But he was as "a voice crying in the wilderness." The other members of the Opposition party who have spoken went to the other extreme, and said that they wanted a better old age pension than is proposed in this Bill. I suppose that members of the Labour party and those who have addressed public meetings at street corners have moulded public opinion in this matter, and induced those members to express themselves in favour of old age pensions. Coming back to the liability of relatives, I should not like to see a daughter followed for the support of her aged parent. There should be some mention of the amount that a man should earn before he was called upon to support an aged relative. A man working on the wharf, and getting 12s. or 18s. per week, should not be called upon to contribute to the support of his aged parent, neither should a man working in a mine on tribute and getting perhaps £1 10s. a week, out of which he had to pay expenses, be expected to make any such contribution. I do not believe in the principle of compelling relatives to contribute in this matter, but if we are to accept that principle in preference to losing the Bill altogether, then we should mention some specified sum, and I should say, a taxable income exceeding £250 per annum. They should not pay anything extra unless they have an income which is taxable to the extent of £250. There are sixteen disqualifications in the Bill which you have to get over before you can get the pension. It is like a sixteen barbed wire fence. I think some of these disqualifications should be removed. With regard to a man getting drunk two or three times, I do not think it is right he should be disqualified from getting a pension. I may say that these disqualifications will not affect my electorate very much, because my constituents are law-abiding, sober, temperate, good fellows. But I think, judging from the newspaper reports, that there will be some disqualified in the electorate of the hon. member for Mackay. The open court is mentioned here. I do not think that is right. In New Zealand, when there is an inquiry, it is only heard before the deputy registrar and the police magistrate. They are the only persons in the court when the investigations are being made. Then, in the case of a person in receipt of an old age pension going to a hospital, the pension is to be stopped while he is there. I do not think that is a fair thing at all. Perhaps, if it is made a time limit when he is in the hospital, and for the time he is there a certain part of the pension might be taken to pay for his support there, it would be better. I would sooner have the system which is in operation in New Zealand, where only a certain amount is commandeered from the old age pensioner when he is in the hospital, and the remainder is given to the man himself. These are things which we can fix up in Committee. On the whole I regard this Old

Age Pensions Bill with delight, even though it has some defects. With regard to the man who spends his money foolishly, we might provide that it should be given to a clergyman, or storekeeper, or sergeant of police, or schoolmaster, or any other public officer, and they will see that the pensioner gets "tucker" instead of money. It would get over this question, so far as drinking and mis-spending money is concerned. I am pleased at the way the Bill had been received.

Mr. DENHAM: Nearly every member has spoken against it.

Mr. RYLAND: The House is inclined to measure out mercy with justice. The hon. members are tempering justice with mercy—

> The quality of mercy is not strained;
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath: It is twice blessed;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
> The throned monarch better than his crown.
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> * * * * *
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> It is an attribute to God himself,
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Fassifern*): I do not know that I have been present at any debate yet where I have been more astonished than I have been during the discussion on this Bill. Since I have been a member of this Chamber I have never heard where there has been such a practical unanimity from both sides of the House in agreeing to the title of a Bill, and condemning the measure. The only man who had anything to say in favour of this measure was the Home Secretary himself, in moving the second reading of the Bill, and even then I believe he perpetrated one of the biggest libels ever cast upon our aged poor that has ever come out from this Chamber, or from any public platform in the whole of Queensland. The principles contained from clause 1 right to the conclusion of this Bill have been condemned by Ministerialists, by members of the Labour party, and by members of the Opposition. Whether it is the simplicity of the hon. members of the Labour party, or whether it is their desire to wilfully blind the electors of this State, I cannot say. I leave it for them to judge. They say they believe in the principle of old age pensions, and they are supporting the second reading of this Bill, but that they are going to amend it in Committee.

Mr. RYLAND: Hear, hear! Just the same as any other Bill.

Mr. JENKINSON: The members of the Labour party say "Hear, hear!" It is a notorious fact that those hon. members stated they were going to alter nineteen out of twenty clauses, when they know very well that when they get into Committee they can do nothing of the sort, as they cannot interfere, in the slightest degree, with the principle of the Bill. We are told that they believe in old age pensions, and believe in increasing the indigent allowance from 5s. to 10s. a week. Here, I say, by way of parenthesis, that it does not matter in the slightest to a man or woman who gets it whether it is given as an indigence allowance or labelled as an "old age pension." It is the money they want—money to keep them and to provide them with the necessaries of life—to keep them from want. But what do these hon. members say? They say they believe in helping these aged poor, but that the amount mentioned in the Bill is not enough. We will increase the amount from 10s. or 12s. a week, and make it £1 a week.

Mr. RYLAND: The Premier said that.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes; the Premier said that with his tongue in his cheek the whole time, knowing that if any attempt were made to alter the principle of the Bill in Committee that you, Mr. Speaker, in your wisdom, would rule it out of order. These hon. members know that when a Bill is brought down with an appropriation that it cannot be altered. You cannot put additional burdens on the State, no matter how keenly you feel about it. It is impossible for any member to increase the allowance to these people, or increase the money payable under this Bill by one single penny, because you cannot increase the amount of the appropriation granted. This same argument also applies to the question of the age. Hon. members in the corner, who were only speaking to the "gallery" and, through the "gallery," to their constituents, say they will reduce the age from sixty-five to sixty, thus bringing in another 10,000, who would not otherwise be benefited by this Bill. Where is the money going to come from to provide for those extra 10,000 people? There is no money on the Estimates to provide for them. And hon. members know that very well. Hon. members said that they regretted the restrictions that had been placed in the Bill. They said that because a man had been in gaol, or because he had been convicted for drunkenness, or for several other reasons that should not debar him from getting a pension. They said they wanted to liberalise this Bill, knowing very well that they could do nothing of the kind; and believing, as they do, that this measure has been brought in as a piece of political fireworks which is going through its second reading, and that will be the last we will hear about it. Then hon. members will go out and say to their constituents, "Look what fine fellows we are! We voted for an Old Age Pensions Bill, and we would have liked to have made it on a much better basis, but owing to the members of the Opposition, or some other party, we were not able to do it." Or perhaps they will say, "Time would not permit of its being done." I say that is all bunkum, and hon. members know it is bunkum. Yet they have given utterance to these thoughts with malice aforethought. So far as these principles are concerned, they know they cannot alter them one iota.

Mr. BOWMAN: You are uncharitable.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is not uncharitable. I am giving utterance to common sense. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley has the power in his hands if he likes to use it, and the members of the Labour party, if they are honest in their intentions, and believed that these principles would be incorporated in the Bill, then they have only got to inform the Premier, and it would happen the same as it happened yesterday when they would get "Yes, Mr. Bowman." We judge these hon. members by their actions and not by their protestations. "Actions speak louder than words." They tell us that this is only a palliative. They say they do not believe in it, but they simply talked about it for the purpose of gulling the people of the State; but that sort of talk is not going down. There are others here who are guarding the interests of the people who will see to that. It is admitted by the Labour party that this Bill is taken from the most conservative measure that exists in the continent of Australia, and why are they willing to accept it? Forsooth because it is labelled "old age pension." They want the people to believe that because it is called "old age pensions" they are going to get it. A little bit later on I will deal with the provisions of the Bill, and show that it will be practically impossible for any man or woman in this State to get this pension unless they go down and grovel in the dirt before the commissioner to get the money. Hon. members sitting on the Government side of the House, including the Home Secretary, and including the

members who support the Bill, are the true Conservative party in Queensland. Why, they are hidebound Tories compared with us. We are the Liberals.

Mr. BOWMAN: The Lord save us from Liberals!

Mr. JENKINSON: It is all very well for the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to laugh. I will convict him out of his own lips. He told us the other day that when Sir Horace Tozer was Home Secretary he gave us 10s. a week. Sir Horace Tozer is allied with the party now sitting on the opposite side of the House, and yet he gave us an old age pension of 10s. a week.

Mr. BOWMAN: You were opposed to it at the time.

Mr. JENKINSON: And this is the man they call a Conservative! What did a democratic Minister do—a member of the Labour party? He brought down the amount to 3s. 6d. per week, and because, forsooth, that was done by a Labour Minister, they asked the aged poor to believe it was in their interests that they should get 3s. 6d. instead of the 10s. that they got previously.

Mr. LESINA: We chased that Minister round the country and defeated him.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes, but they kept that Minister and his party in office, and allowed them to perpetrate what they afterwards said was an act of injustice to the poor. We must judge people by their actions rather than by their words. We are entitled from past legislation, and from the opinions expressed during the course of this debate, to be called Liberals. We call ourselves Liberals, and we have proved it by legislative action.

[9 p.m.]

Mr. BOWMAN: Why, you put on the poll tax.

Mr. JENKINSON: These people call themselves democrats, but they act as autocrats. The hon. member states that we put on the poll tax. We did nothing of the sort. There was a minimum income tax imposed when the affairs of the State were in such an evil condition that it was necessary to raise money; but it was only put on for two years. What did the hon. member's Government do—the Government that he put in office—when the finances of the State were in a very much better position—in almost as good a position as they are in to-day? They continued to collect that tax—a thing that was never done by the late Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: How long did Sir Horace Tozer allow the 10s. a week?

Mr. JENKINSON: I do not care if he only allowed one item for one particular week—the principle was acknowledged by him. The Home Secretary himself knows that the mere fact of that having been done is an acknowledgment that the late Government were more liberal in their provision for the aged poor than the present Government. It has been said that, because this Bill is called an Old Age Pensions Bill, it removes the stigma of charity from it. I am not one of those who subscribe to the belief that charity is dishonourable. There are people who have fallen down in the walk of life—people who cannot help themselves, and who are compelled to fall back upon their relatives, and receive charity. That is no disgrace. This measure surrounds every application for relief with tests, and the main test that will have to be proved is that people are not in a position to keep themselves. They will have to prove that they have not the wherewithal to keep body and soul together, and naturally they must take charity under whatever name it is called. There is no harm in using the word "charity." It is as broad an expression as one can use, and there is no degradation in charity either being given or being accepted by people who are worthy of it.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is pauperising all the same.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is not pauperising. I add my quota to what has been said by several members on this side. It would be far better—seeing there is no business in the Bill—and that is the main point——

Mr. BOWMAN: That is an empty assertion.

Mr. JENKINSON: Instead of holding out hopes that are not likely to be realised, it would be far better for the Home Secretary to pass a resolution in the Cabinet and increase the indigence allowance to 10s. We know very well that there is no intention on the part of the Government to spend the £60,000 on the Estimates for the half-year. The Home Secretary knows that as well as I do.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have probably arranged to have it knocked out in the Upper House. That is why you are talking so positively.

Mr. JENKINSON: I have always carefully refrained from referring to another Chamber. I believe it is out of order to use such an expression as that. I believe the members of another Chamber are perfectly competent to judge of the merits of any proposal without directions from this Chamber. In fact, I believe they are cast in that honourable mould that they would refuse to receive dictation. I am discussing the Bill on its merits, and I am quite satisfied the Home Secretary knows that what I am saying is perfectly true. He may not like it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Absolutely false.

Mr. JENKINSON: A great deal has been said about the desire to place people above want. Some members of the Labour party have said that people have fallen on evil times through their own fault. That may be so in some cases; but I do not blame every man. We are all likely to fall on evil times; and there should be some provision made for such people. But I have yet to learn that the people of this State who are charitably inclined have shut down their pockets and will not help those who have lived honest and deserving lives. You have only to take up any paper, particularly at the end of the year, to see the operations that have been carried on during the year by benevolent institutions, and to see how much private charity has done. One of the best ways to put an end to private charity is to make an old age pension applicable to everybody in the State. The men and women who are inclined to put their hands in their pockets, as business people have to do every day, will say, "No. The State is now providing for these people, consequently we will not do what we have been doing in the past."

Mr. LESINA: That is not the experience in New Zealand.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is exactly the experience in New Zealand. We have been told that New Zealand has a great democratic Government—a Government that is doing everything for the people.

Mr. BOWMAN: I have heard you hold it up in this Chamber.

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes: there are certain things carried out in New Zealand in which I firmly believe. But I have never been a "whole hogger."

Mr. BOWMAN: You are a "half hogger."

Mr. JENKINSON: I believe in picking out what is reasonable, and what is in accord with common sense. While on that question I may say that New Zealand pays the lowest amount

of any State in Australasia under the old age pension. That will probably come as a staggerer to the members of the Labour party. The average amount for the year ended 30th June, 1906—the latest returns that are available—was only £16 19s. for the year.

Mr. BOWMAN: You know that the maximum amount is £26 a year. You are misinforming the House.

Mr. JENKINSON: I will come to that a little later. In Victoria, which has been held up to reprobation, and which has been maligned as too conservative, the average pension was £17 6s. 4d., and in New South Wales £22 7s. 10d. I am quoting now from the latest figures available—that is, up to 30th June, 1906.

Mr. BOWMAN: Is not the maximum 10s. a week in New Zealand?

Mr. JENKINSON: It is, but the provisions safeguarding it have brought down the average from £26 to £16 19s. a year. The very same thing will happen here if this Bill becomes law. Nominally the pension will be £26 per annum, but the safeguards imposed will probably reduce it to £13 or £14.

Mr. RYLAND: In New Zealand some of the pensions are very small—4s. or 5s. a week—because they have other incomes.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is so, and that destroys the argument of members of the Labour party that people should get the pensions as a right, whether they are receiving 10s. a week or whether they are receiving £20 per week. I am of the opinion that very few people in receipt of a fairly good income would demean themselves by taking the pension. At the same time, in some of the States there are people who are mean enough, no matter what their incomes are, to take their pensions when they are made universal. I believe, with others who have spoken, that the introduction of this old age pension, if made applicable to everybody, will strike a blow at thrift. One great incentive in life for men and women to work is that when they come to the age when they are able to work no longer they may be independent of their relatives or anybody else. That desire is implanted in the human breast. This Bill will strike a blow at that principle. What are the main provisions of the Bill? I am rather sorry the Home Secretary did not go further into details. We find first that these conditions must be complied with: A man or woman must be sixty-five years of age. There is no provision for giving a pension to a poor woman with young children. There is no provision such as we find in the New South Wales Act for those who are permanently disabled. There is no clause here giving the Minister or anybody else permission to grant a pension to people whose circumstances will practically compel recognition of their right. It is said by members of the Labour party, "It is all very well. They can get the indigence allowance." But what comes of their argument against the indigence allowance? They say that it is a dole; but it appears they are quite prepared to dole out this charity to one section of the community, but not to give it to other people. No; they cannot get the pension unless they have been naturalised at least six months before they make the claim. There is another rather extraordinary thing. A good deal has been said about the pioneers, the men who have built up the country; but who were the owners of this country before they came here? The aborigines, and yet they are actually debarred from this. We hear no word of them from the other side of the House, probably because their skin is a little darker than ours; probably because it is that they have not got a vote, and, therefore, it is no use providing for them; but they are the same flesh and blood as we are, and they have to live. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who is generally so generous in this way, overlooked them, and would have nothing to do with them because they were not white.

Mr. BOWMAN: I am very ungenerous compared to you.

Mr. JENKINSON: I believe the hon. gentleman is right. If we could only analyse our private life, it is probably the truest remark he can make. We find a man or woman must have resided here a quarter of a century before they are eligible. It is not a question of whether people can keep body and soul together; they must have arrived within five years of their allotted life and have been twenty-five years in the State. And then they cannot get it if they have been in prison for six months during the preceding five years. This is rather a bad thing for the Government from one point of view, because if a man has been in gaol—I think the hon. member for Fortitude Valley gave a very pathetic illustration of a man who had worked out his sentence. He might want to come out and start a new life again, but there was no pension for that man. He was driven back again into the ranks of crime, because he had been convicted and served his sentence; and he would probably commit another crime and be sent down to St. Helena, where it would cost the State £64 a year to keep him there, instead of £26 a year. From a business point of view, we cannot probably expect anything from the Home Secretary. It is a bad business. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: We will get more from him than you.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is an extraordinary thing. I have not been able to understand the subclauses of clause 8, but it appears to me a mistake has been made in picking up a clause out of one Bill and a clause out of another and dropping them promiscuously into this. It says that—

> If the applicant during the five years immediately preceding has not committed any offence.

And then the clause says he is not entitled to the pension if he is a husband, and has not for twelve months or upwards deserted his wife. (Laughter.) That is the fun of the thing. Here is the Home Secretary introducing a Bill telling a man or woman that if they do not desert their partners for twelve months they are not entitled to a pension. (Laughter.) Subclauses (8) and (9) state that if a husband for the five years immediately preceding that date has not for twelve months or upwards without just cause deserted his wife, or the wife deserted the husband, they cannot get a pension. When the hon. member commences to look at it, he will find that it is very peculiar.

The HOME SECRETARY: You cannot read it properly.

Mr. JENKINSON: The clauses have been picked up promiscuously. They have not been scanned over, and probably the hon. member did not know and left it in the hands of the draftsman, and if it is an oversight probably it will be altered in Committee.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are all wrong.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. member will have an opportunity of proving that I am wrong. It is a fact nevertheless, as he will find. I am very much in favour of the arguments used by the Labour party, as well as by members of the Opposition, but object that because a man has been earning 10s. a week up to the time he makes application for the pension, he is to be debarred from the advantage. I think that is

an unjust provision. A man has been doing his best to prevent himself from becoming a burden to the State, and this liberal Government says, "No; you must have been a pauper for six months before you can get this; you must not have earned 10s. a week, otherwise you are debarred." Then another clause, which has been dealt with *ad nauseam*, and which, I presume, will be knocked out at the Committe stage, is that every claim will be dealt with in open court—the very place where the applicants would not like it to be—in the locality where they reside. Why should a man's past be revealed to people with whom he probably will have to live the rest of his days? What spirit animated the Home Secretary to include a provision like that? Why is it necessary? Why should people not be able to get this allowance without compelling them to grovel to the commissioner? I say it is one of the most unjust provisions in the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is in every Act in the States.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. gentleman does not speak by the book.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is in New Zealand, New South Wales, and Victoria.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. gentleman is not correct when he states that it is in the New South Wales Act. I have been reading over the debate to-night, and I find that Mr. Carruthers made a strong speech against it, and when the amending Bill was brought in that part was omitted. Then another thing is the confidential report as to the financial position. A man's position will be inquired into, even to the extent of getting the officials of a bank, who are under a pledge of secrecy, and cannot disclose private business of clients. This Bill actually provides that these men shall break the oath which they took when they entered the service of the bank. Is the hon. gentleman going to jeopardise a man's position in that way? If an officer refuses to do that then he is liable to a penalty. That is another iniquitous clause that no broad-minded Ministry would have attempted to include in the Bill. Then we find that these poor old decrepit people whom we are told have "borne the heat and burden of the day" should get this money to help them. The clause states that we will not take their word; they are not to to be relied upon; their evidence must be corroborated on all material points before they get the pension at all. It is not a question of right—the Government have lost sight of that. They have to bring a crowd of witnesses to prove that they are of the proper age, and are entitled to the amount. They have to do this in order that they may not be allowed to starve. This is a presumably liberal Government—a Government which the hon. senior member for Fortitude Valley, who holds them in the hollow of his hand, supports in this legislation. Then we find that the commissioner's decision shall be absolutely final, and there is to be no appeal; at least there is to be an appeal, but it is to be before a District Court judge. Here, a poor unfortunate man, who has not sufficient to pay for a crust of bread, is compelled to go before the court and ask to receive an old age pension, and the commissioner says: "No, we do not believe you; you have no witnesses to prove it"; and he is told then to go to the District Court. Who is going to find the money for it? How can a man find the money for it when he has not got a crust of bread? It is a farce for any Government to ask us as reasonable men with humanitarian ideas to accept a measure like this. The hon. senior member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Bowman, stated that this pension was going to be 10s., but I will defy him to prove that from the Bill. We find that it shall not be more than 10s., but it may be 1s. if the Minister so decides. Under clause 19 it is left in the hands of the creature of the day. If the Minister—a man "clothed in a little brief authority"—in his wisdom thinks it necessary, he can reduce it to the humble "bob." The hon. member for Fortitude Valley has actually told us he is going to vote for the second reading.

Mr. BOWMAN: Are you not going to vote for the second reading?

Mr. JENKINSON: I do not think it is a wise thing to divulge State secrets. (Laughter.) Further, if these people have been at all thrifty, and got a little for their old age, the Government says, "If you have got over £10 you are not entitled to a pension." There is absolutely no encouragement to thrift. This Bill is based to a large extent on the Victorian Act. I intend now to read a short extract from a Victorian paper as to how these provisions which operate in the Bill I hold in my hand operate in Victoria. This is not an isolated case. The Melbourne *Age* reports thus—

POVERTY BARS FROM OLD AGE PENSION.

At Melbourne City Court recently a woman, eighty-seven years of age, was charged with vagrancy. The police had nothing against her excepting her poverty, but she had frequently been charged with the heinous offence of being found at large with an empty pocket. Efforts had been made to get her into the Victoria Homes, but the place was full. Police Magistrate Cresswell asked how long she had been in Victoria, and she replied, "Forty years." "Have you applied for an old age pension?" he inquired. "Yes," she answered; "but through having been here so often I could not get it. I'm thinking of going into a convent." "That would be the best plan. I'm sure you would be well looked after there," said the P.M. "You are discharged. Now don't come back here again." "Never!" replied the old creature firmly, "never, as long as I have breath—and that will not be long."

That is how the Bill has worked out in Victoria, and, apparently, how the Home Secretary desires it to work in Queensland. At all events, we have only the past to guide us with reference to how things will pan out, and it will very likely be the same here. One or two interjections have been made with reference to the system in vogue in Germany, where it has worked very well indeed. Not only is it given as a right to people there, but they contribute to it themselves—not only the people, but the employers and the Government. When the hon. member for Nundah was speaking I interjected to the effect that the cost to the employees was between ¾d. and 2d. per week only, and then at the end of the term they got £25 per annum. That was subsidised by the Government, who give £2 10s. every year to each pension when it falls due. Like other hon. members who have spoken, I have a decided objection to clause 25. Under that provision a man who meets with

[9.30 p.m.] an accident or gets sick is deprived of his pension immediately he enters the gates of a hospital. That is the proposal which is made by this pseudo-liberal Government, which I denominate a hidebound Tory Administration. They propose that as soon as a man over sixty-five years of age who is in receipt of a pension becomes unfortunate enough to enter a hospital his pension shall cease. What sort of charity is there about that? Yet some hon. members feel inclined to support that proposal.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why do not you be truthful? Have not other hon. members denounced that provision as strongly as you have done?

Mr. JENKINSON: Yes, they have denounced it; but at the same time they are going to support the measure

Mr. BOWMAN: They are going to seek to improve it in Committee; and you know it.

Mr. JENKINSON: I know very well that they cannot improve what I have been referring to in Committee. The matters I have referred to are principles of the Bill, and once hon. members begin to touch those they will be ruled out of order, because we cannot impose burdens on the taxpayers of the State which are not authorised by the message recommending the necessary appropriation for giving effect to the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: Is there not room for amendments in the Bill?

Mr. JENKINSON: There is room for amendments, but it is absolutely impossible that the provision I have referred to can be eliminated, because that will be imposing a further burden on the people, and such an amendment cannot be accepted. Another objection I have to the measure is that it has evidently not been thought out, either by the Home Secretary, who gave us a debating society speech in moving the second reading, or by the Premier, who went throughout the length and breadth of Queensland advocating an Old Age Pensions Bill. What did the Premier do in regard to explaining the principles of this Bill? He had absolutely not a single word to say on the subject, but he pleaded with hon. members to keep their mouths shut—not in those words perhaps, but to that effect—in order that they might get the second reading passed. The hon. gentleman never attempted to explain the measure. I believe that, as a matter of fact, the Premier is ashamed of the measure. What has the Secretary for Public Lands to say on this question? What have other Ministers to say on the question? Not a single one of them has got up to support this Bill. If an Old Age Pensions Bill is to be passed in this State it should be based on a statesmanlike policy, and some provision should be made for the payment of the money that will be required under the Bill. That provision should be permanent, so that the payment of old age pensions should not be dependent upon the general revenue of the State, which fluctuates a good deal. The revenue is good in good times, and we are experiencing our good times now; but what will be the position when we have bad times? In all probability if this Government is in office the first thing they will do will be to reduce the old age pensions, just as in the past they reduced the allowances to hospitals and to the aged, sick, and infirm people of the State. We shall then be told that the finances of the State do not allow of the Government continuing an old age pension of 10s. a week, and that the amount must be reduced to a paltry 5s. There is no principle in this Bill. There is no principle in bringing down a measure for old age pensions which does not make permanent provision for the payment of those pensions. The Government could have increased the indigence allowance to 10s. per week for this year, and they could have done that by Executive minute. Had they adopted that course, they would have had time to prepare a comprehensive Bill on a sound basis. In New Zealand it has been found, after many years' experience, that the old age pensions scheme is such a burden on the consolidated revenue that it has become imperative to look round for means whereby this money can be provided from a particular fund. During the last thirteen years New Zealand has borrowed at the rate of £2,000,000 per annum; things have been flourishing, and they have been able to provide money for old age pensions out of revenue. But now they find that bad times are coming on, and they are setting aside 9,000,000 acres of land which are to be leased, and the money derived from the leasing of those lands is to be earmarked as a permanent fund for the payment of old age pensions. That is an attempt to place the old age pensions fund on a sound foundation, so that there may be no alteration or diminution in the amount payable for pensions. There is nothing to show that the pensions proposed in this Bill will be of a permanent nature. They are to be paid out of the consolidated revenue of the State, and that will necessitate further taxation. The very best thing that could be done with this Bill would be to throw it under the table, and let the Home Secretary increase the indigence allowance to 10s. per week up to the end of June next. In the meantime, the Government will be able to prepare and bring forward a Bill framed on better principles, and more generally acceptable to the House than the measure now under discussion.

* Mr. CREAGH (*Croydon*): Nearly every member of the House has spoken on this measure, and though I do not feel inclined to take up much time, still I feel that I am justified in making a few remarks on the subject, seeing that at the last election I supported the principle of old age pensions. The Home Secretary is not in a very enviable position with respect to this Bill. The hon. gentleman does not seem to have been at all serious in the matter. If he had been serious about it, I feel certain that the Bill would have been introduced in a different form from that in which it now appears before the House. An Old Age Pensions Bill was a proposal which occupied great prominence at the last election, and which was supported by the three parties in the House. The Labour party had advocated such a measure for years, but the Bill now before us is not the kind of measure that has been advocated or required. There are many clauses in this measure which will make it almost impossible for some men to get a pension. It will debar men who have any feeling of manhood left in them, after years of toil in this country, from getting a pension. I have read the Bill through three or four times, and I can hardly conceive how any Government, be it called democratic or conservative, could introduce a measure containing such stringent provisions. One thing that struck me very particularly in connection with those stringent provisions is that a man who imbibes a little too freely and becomes intoxicated will be debarred from getting a pension. The ordinary worker has a habit, after he leaves work, of going into the town, and having "a real good time"—spending his week's or his fortnight's pay. The workman in town does the same thing. On those occasions a man gets a little elevated, and challenges the whole universe to fight; a big policeman, with No. 16 boots, comes along, grabs him by the shoulder, and shoves him in gaol. The man is brought before the "beak" in the morning, and is fined 5s., or, at any rate, is probably convicted. In the ordinary course of events in the course of a couple of years he is convicted three times for drunkenness, and though in other respects he may have been one of the best citizens in the country and have done his best for the town in which he lives, yet because of those unfortunate occurrences he is debarred from receiving a pension. Such men are "run in" for drunkenness, while other persons in a higher rank in life, who are probably drunk every night in the week, are not "run in," and are considered ideal citizens or statesmen. But the poor "Johnnie" who helps to carry on the country, who pays his taxes honestly, who pays his bills honestly, who spends his money honestly, and who is "run in" honestly, is treated in this manner and denied an old age pension. Such men are soldiers of industry, and it is not

right that they should be subject to the disabilities proposed in this Bill, and I protest against such provisions. I have listened very carefully to the speeches made by members of the various parties in this House, and I am of opinion that the suggestion to increase the indigence allowance is a far more equitable proposal than the general scheme of this Bill in its present form. It may be said that members who supported this measure at the election——

Mr. JENKINSON: No, not this measure—the principle of old age pensions.

Mr. CREAGH: Well, it may be said that members who supported the idea of old age pensions should not vote against this Bill, but, if it is to be pressed in its present form, I would not have the slightest hesitation in voting against it. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because I believe in the principle of old age pensions, and I hope that when it comes up in Committee it will be made what it is intended to be—a real Old Age Pensions Bill, and not what it is now. There is a great deal to be said in what the leader of the Labour party said the other night about sons and daughters providing for their aged parents; but where the sons and daughters will not provide for their parents, it is not a right thing to ask the old people to go into the courthouse to make their claims, and have them proved before the police magistrate. A lot was said recently in connection with the Poor Prisoners' Defence Bill in this Chamber about providing counsel for poor prisoners, yet under this Bill a person who has been labouring in the State for years and years will get no consideration at all unless he goes into open court and satisfies the presiding chairman, or magistrate, or commissioner, or whoever it is, that he is entitled to claim it. That is not the intention of an Old Age Pensions Bill. I sincerely trust that the Government will revise the Bill, and I hope to see the Home Secretary insert amendments in Committee which will make it more presentable than it is to-night. I am sure that now these things have been pointed out to the Home Secretary, he will have the necessary amendments inserted in Committee. If we go back to a few years ago, when the members of the Opposition occupied the Treasury benches, what would have been said if they introduced a Bill of this kind? The members on the Opposition side at that time would have said: "That is exactly what we could expect of them. It was only introduced for the purpose of having it thrown out, and having the onus for doing so put on to the Opposition." Members like the Hon. W. H. Browne, late leader of the Labour party, the present leader of the Labour party, the hon. members for Leichhardt, Clermont, and others would have all spoken against the Bill in that way, and there would have been such an uproar throughout the country that it would have been memorable in the history of Queensland politics for many years to come.

Mr. JENKINSON: They would have stonewalled it for weeks.

Mr. CREAGH: I am surprised at the attitude of the Secretary for Railways. He has advocated the principle of old age pensions, and he is now a member of the Cabinet, and yet he acquiesces in such a Bill as this. I do not think there is any intention to pass this Bill through the Assembly. I listened to the discussion on it, and I have also read a lot in the public Press in connection with this particular question of old age pensions. The position take up by the Opposition members and the Labour members in this House is fully borne out by such papers as the *Worker*; in fact, the whole of the Labour papers throughout Queensland are against this Bill. They all say that there is nothing sincere about the Bill, and they are unanimous that there was never any intention on the part of the Government to pass it.

Mr. LESINA: The Labour papers do not know everything.

Mr. CREAGH: The editors engaged on those papers are engaged for their ability and for their principles, and I think they know as much as the next man, and can use as much common sense as the next man from their own point of view. I will read one or two clauses, because I think it is worth while having them placed on record. This is the great democratic measure. This is the Old Age Pensions Bill which we have been crying out for for years, and it now comes in the form of a little political fireworks. Clause 8 reads as follows:—

> No person shall receive a pension unless he fulfils all the following requirements, namely:—
>
> (i.) He is residing in Queensland on the date when he makes his claim to the pension;
>
> (ii.) On such date he has so resided, whether continuously or not, for at least twenty-five years.

I think that is ridiculous. We have had a great cry about our Commonwealth group, and about our white Australian business, and all that sort of thing; and yet we find here that men who have laboured in this Commonwealth for forty or fifty years, but who may not have stopped for twenty-five years in one State, are not entitled to the pension. Take the case of the junior member for Fortitude Valley. He claims to have been in this State for over forty years. Suppose that he had resided twenty years in New South Wales and twenty-four years in Queensland, and then became incapacitated so that he could not do any work—he could not apply under the provisions of this Bill for an old age pension.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; a case like that is provided for in this Bill.

Mr. CREAGH: I am reviewing the Bill as it appears to me, and I do not see anything like that in the Bill.

Mr. MANN: The Bill provides for reciprocity with the other States.

Mr. CREAGH: I am quite satisfied that the hon. member for Cairns could not get anything intelligible from any Bill, except his hotel bill, if he reads that at all. (Laughter.) Then these subclauses go on as follows:—

> (iii.) He has not been absent from Queensland, whether continuously or not, for more than five years during the time from which the said twenty-five years began to run;
>
> (iv.) He has resided in Queensland continuously for not less than five years immediately preceding such date;
>
> (v.) During the two years immediately preceding such date he has not been convicted three times or upwards in respect of drunkenness.

I referred to that before, and I will not take up time by referring to it again. Then subclause (vi.) says—

> (vi.) During the five years immediately preceding such date he has not for any offence or offences been imprisoned for any period or periods amounting in the whole to six months or upwards.

A man may be convicted to-day of crime. It may be a crime with the greatest possible penalty, with the exception, perhaps, of imprisonment for life or hanging; but he may be convicted for ten or twelve years. As soon as his time is up he can come out and stand for any constituency as a member of Parliament. He may be elected as a member; he may become a Minister, and hold a dual portfolio, and he may also travel all over the country.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: In a motor car.

Mr. CREAGH: Yes, in a motor car, or even in special trains, for that matter. (Laughter.) He has all the privileges that he can get as a Minister of the Crown, and at the end of his time he may have saved £2,000 or £3,000, or perhaps accumulated a small fortune. Yet, on the other hand, under this Bill a person who happens to be convicted of a small crime cannot get an old age pension. But the man I referred to as having become a member of Parliament and a Minister might be able to retire on a pension of £800 a year; but if a man is convicted of a small crime in his old age he is not allowed to receive an old age pension under this Bill. In connection with the financial tables, we have several items concerning this matter. We have, under the heading of "Retiring Allowances," the following:—Henry C. Stanley, late Chief Engineer of Railways, £800; Edward Deshon, late Auditor-General, £667; William Townley, late Chairman Public Service Board, £638; and so on down to items as low as £52 a year. These people are entitled to all these privileges, and rightly so too, as I think anyone who has served his country legitimately as a servant of the Government, or in any other way, is entitled to a pension. But it is not fair that a poor man who has not a chance to help himself, who is engaged in hard toil every day, should be debarred under the provisions of this Bill. There is a little pathos attached to the next two subclauses of clause 8. They read as follows:—

> (vii.) During the twenty-five years immediately preceding such date he has not for any offence or offences been imprisoned for any period or periods amounting in the whole to three years or upwards with or without hard labour;
>
> (viii.) If a husband, during the five years immediately preceding such date, he has not for twelve months or upwards, without just cause, deserted his wife, or without just cause failed to provide her with adequate means of maintenance, or neglected to maintain such of his children as were under the age of fourteen years; or if a wife, during the five years immediately preceding such date she has not for twelve months or upwards, without just cause, deserted her husband or deserted such of her children as were under the age of fourteen years.

Just imagine the case of a wife who deserted he husband! She will not be entitled to receive a pension under this Bill. (Laughter.)

Mr. JENKINSON: She will get a pension under this Bill.

Mr. CREAGH: No; I disagree with you. I would like to refer again to the clause about making a claim in open court. A man is not entitled to a pension until he becomes sixty-five years of age. Just imagine a tottering old man coming along with a stick and stooping ——

Mr. LESINA: Perhaps suffering from sciatica.

Mr. CREAGH: Perhaps the hon. member for Clermont would be the presiding justice who will hear the case. The man will make the claim for the old age pension. The presiding justice will ask him what has been his occupation, and if the man says he has been a Minister for Lands, he will disqualify him straight away. (Laughter.) If a man, after sixty-five years' hard work, manages to save £10, he cannot receive a pension under this Bill. This is the wishy-washy Bill that is brought down to this House that members are asked to support. I will vote for the Bill, if it is only for its inutility, simply because it is brought forward for the purpose of its being thrown out this session. Although the money is provided on the Estimates, I believe the Government do not think that it will pass through the Assembly this session. I should like to see the second reading passed, and the Minister introduce in Committee the amendments that have been suggested.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is that the position after the caucus meeting? (Laughter.)

Mr. CREAGH: So far as the caucus of this party is concerned, I have nobody to seek information from if I get into a hole. I have to act for myself; and I never hold caucuses round the lobbies or in this Chamber or in other places.

Mr. PAGET: Your party is perfectly loyal to its leader.

Mr. CREAGH: My party is perfectly loyal. They know I do what I think right. I am not answerable to the Home Secretary or to any member of this Chamber. I am
[10 p.m.] answerable to my constituents when the time comes. If I do what they think wrong I shall be thrown out, but I do not think they will throw me out. I sincerely trust that, after hearing the opinion of every member on every side, the Home Secretary will see his way clear to introduce some reasonable amendments to make the Bill one that will redound to his credit and not bring disgrace to the aged poor of Queensland, as the Bill will do if passed in its present form.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY AND SCAFFOLDING BILL.

SECOND READING.

* The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This is the third measure which has been introduced this session by the Government for the purpose of improving industrial conditions. Last year the Factories and Shops Amendment Bill contained amendments to the Factories and Shops Act; it also contained provisions for the establishment of wages boards; and, in addition, it contained certain amendments to the boiler provisions of the Factories and Shops Act. The Bill now before the House includes the provisions contained in the Bill of last year; but it goes much further, and includes the inspection of other machinery besides boilers. It also deals with the inspection of machinery in connection with factories and mines. The Bill is introduced for the purpose of minimising as far as possible the risks which persons must undergo whose occupation is connected with machinery, especially machinery driven by steam or other motive power. The original idea of the Government was to include the whole system of boiler and machinery inspection—marine, railway, mines, and factories. We found, however, on going into the matter, that it was not practicable to include marine and railway boilers and machinery; and we found that in the other States the same course had been taken. A little examination shows why that is so. Take the system of inspection of marine boilers and machinery. I had an interview on this subject with the Engineer Surveyor to the Marine Board. He pointed out that certain regulations as to the survey of the hull, equipment, and machinery of steamships were issued by the Board of Trade in London in 1905, under the British Merchant Shipping Act, and that the qualification for a marine surveyor was that he had to be an engineer holding a first-class marine engineer's certificate from the Board of Trade. I may say, in passing, that the equivalent of that certificate may be obtained in Queensland, and that it is not necessary to go to London to get it. A little consideration will show hon. members that a land engineer has not got the special training which is necessary for a marine surveyor. Leaving

out of the question altogether the engines and boilers, there is the hull of the ship; there is the iron skin of the ship, the scantling, the girders, floors, propeller, rudder, and other parts of the marine machinery. That being so, we followed the example of the other States. We recognised that the system which is in force under the British Shipping Act, and the regulations framed under it, is quite sufficient to ensure the proper and efficient inspection of marine boilers and machinery. In addition to that, we could not give the status to an engineer which is given by the certificate of the Board of Trade. In connection with railway boilers and machinery, I had an interview with Mr. Horniblow, the Locomotive Engineer. I find that no statutory provision exists for the inspection of railway boilers and machinery; but the need of inspection was felt very much in the department, and as far back as 1900 Mr. McCallum was brought from Melbourne, where he had been a boiler-maker for some years.

Mr. DENHAM: And a very good man he is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He is a very capable man. Under the supervision of Mr. Nisbit, who was then in charge, certain regulations were drawn up, and the inspection of boilers in the Railway Department has been carried out ever since by Mr. McCallum, in pursuance of those regulations. From inquiries made from the locomotive engineer, and in other quarters, it seems to me that the system is efficient. Although we had a desire to bring the whole system of boiler inspection under one department, it was thought inadvisable to interfere with the system which had the approval of the railway officials, and was working satisfactorily, and which is likely to continue to work satisfactorily. The practice is the same in Queenslaad as in the other States and in Great Britain. Then we came to the inspection of mining boilers and machinery; and I am happy to say we have been able to bring mining boilers and machinery under the same Bill as that which deals with the inspection of factory boilers and machinery. At the present time there are two systems of boiler inspection in Queensland. On getting the reports of some of the boiler inspectors I have been struck with the absurdity of the situation. A boiler iuspector goes to inspect a boiler in connection with a factory. It may be a small boiler, not badly in need of inspection, whereas just across the road, in connection with a mine, there may be a very much larger boiler much more in need of inspection, but the inspector has not got the power to inspect it, although he may have information that there is something wrong with it.

Mr. PAULL: There has been inspection for years, and very satisfactory inspection, too. There has never been an accident.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Opinions differ as to the satisfactory nature of the inspection.

Mr. DENHAM: There has always been a see-saw in the Mines Department in connection with boiler inspection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; the hon. member knows that. The inspection of boilers in factories is very satisfactory as compared with the inspection by the Mines Department. The factory inspector, who must be a man of high qualifications, goes into the boiler himself and examines it. He gives a certificate that he has examined it, and that inspection must take place every year. The provision in the Mining Act for the inspection of boilers and machinery will be found in subsection 25 of section 215, which provides—

> Once in every twelve months every such boiler or vessel shall be subjected to hydraulic test, and the date and full description of every such test shall be entered in a book kept by the mining manager or other person in charge of the mine or machinery, and the entries in such book shall, on demand, be open to the perusal of an inspector under this Act. Seven days' previous notice in writing, shall be given by the owner to the nearest warden or inspector of the day and hour any boiler or vessel is to be tested under this Act.

I am informed by experts that the hydraulic test is not a very satisfactory test.

Mr. PAGET: Who tests a boiler under a high pressure of steam?

Mr. WOODS: It was done in some cases. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The best test is to go in and examine the boiler. The hydraulic test is not the best test, because I am informed a scale may form inside the boiler sometimes half an inch thick, and in such a case the hydraulic test is absolutely no good.

Mr. PAGET: The hydraulic test does not inspect the boiler, it only tests it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The responsibility for the testing of this boiler is put on to the mining manager. No doubt the mining manager sees that the engine-driver does it. The driver is responsible to the manager, and the manager to the inspector, and the inspeetor need not be an engineer at all. That is the mining system.

Mr. WHITE: And the boiler inspector need not be a boiler-maker.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He must be an engineer. A mining inspector is not necessarily an engineer at all. Then the further scheme of the Mining Act may be found by referring to subsection 28 of the same section, which throws on the mining manager the obligation once in each week to carefully examine plant and machinery used in the erection of the mine. Section 217 of the Mining Act casts the duty on any employee going to work in a mine to satisfy himself that the tackle is right, and if there is anything wrong it is his duty to report the danger, so that the whole of the mining system seems to throw responsibility on employees in the mine instead of having an outside mining inspector, who is not responsible to any person connected with the mine at all. Now, in addition to what seems to me the absurdity of having two different methods of inspection in mines and factories, there are two different methods of examination for mining engineers laid down in the Mining Act, sections 222, 223, and 224. Section 222 provides for the Government appointing a board to examine engineers, and it provides for two classes of certificates—namely, ordinary and first-class certificates. Section 223 provides that no uncertificated driver shall be employed, and also that engine-drivers shall obtain a first-class certificate before driving a winding engine; and section 224 provides that the certificates may be cancelled or suspended in certain cases. We propose to repeal those three clauses of the Mining Act, and to re-enact clauses on those lines, applicable both to mines and factories, so as to bring in uniformity. So much for the mining system of examination. Then we come to the method of examination under the Factories Act, which is laid down in regulation 30 of the factory regulations, and which provides that the chief inspector shall, from time to time, cause examinations to be held of candidates who may desire to qualify themselves as engine-drivers, and here follows a set of regulations something on the lines of those sections in the Mining Act which I have just read out. The factory certificates there are of three classes—first-class engine-

driver's certificate, second-class engine-driver's certificate, and third-class engine-driver's certificate, and then there are other provisions as to no uncertificated engine-drivers to be employed, and similar provisions to those which I have quoted in the Mining Act. Now, to heighten what seems to me the absurdity of the present position, neither of these two boards of examiners recognise each other at all. A man may get a mining certificate of the highest degree, and he will not be allowed to drive an engine or attend to a boiler in a factory; and, to reverse the case, a man may get the highest certificate under the factory Acts, and that would not be recognised in the mines. The object of the Bill is to put an end to all that. The hon. member for Oxley, who was my predecessor in the Works Department, knows that the two departments have been trying to arrange some kind of settlement for years, and when I went into the office as Minister one of the first things brought under my notice was a large pile of correspondence. The hon. member for Oxley, when Minister, was trying to arrange with the Mines Department to come to some common understanding that the certificates of the two departments should be interchangeable. Difficulties were raised by the Mines Department, and the thing was never carried out. I continued the correspondence for some time, but we did not arrive at a solution of the difficulties. This Bill has been brought about as the result of a conference between the Chief Inspector of Boilers under the Factories Act, the Chief Inspector of Mines, and the Parliamentary Draftsman. Between them they have evolved a scheme, which has been brought into the present Bill, which places boilers and mining machinery under one department, under an inspector. It provides for a joint board of examiners, under which the Mines Department as well as the Factory Board is represented. It s necessary to have the Mines Department represented, because factories have not been able to get anything which could be recognised as a winding engine-driver's certificate. Hon. members know that the driver of a winding engine requires special qualifications and special practice in that particular work, and it is work where the possession of nerve is just as important a qualification as the possession of engineering knowledge. This joint board of examiners will enable us to obtain reciprocity with engineers from the other States. If hon. members will turn to schedule 3, clause 4 of the Bill, they will see a provision for reciprocity between this State and others. Up to the present an engineer from the South, no matter how good his testimonials were, or how satisfied the board here was that he was quite competent to do any work of the nature of engine-driving, had to submit to an examination. The certificate he brought from the South was not recognised, and he could not be allowed to take charge of an engine and boiler unless he got his certificate from the only tribunal here which could give it. There was a recent conference down South of factory and mining engineers, and they passed resolutions in favour of reciprocity, and the regulations which I have mentioned are based on the resolutions which those gentlemen passed. We have arranged now that, instead of having two classes of certificates, as at present, under the Mining Act, or three under the Factories Act, to have five classes of certificates, one being a winding certificate to which I shall refer more in detail later on. Then, to come to the present Bill. As I have stated, the Bill contains provisions which exist in the present Act as to boiler inspection, with certain amendments incorporated in those provisions which we introduced in our measure last year. The object of repealing these provisions and re-enacting them is to have all the boiler provisions in one Act. The measure is, to some extent, a re-enactment of the existing law, with an extension to mining and machinery, and also to scaffolding, and, in addition to that, it is a codification of the whole law on the subject of boiler and machinery inspection.

Mr. WHITE: Does this supersede the other Act?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; in regard to boiler inspection. The present Act does not contain any provision for machinery inspection at all; it only contains a provision for boiler inspection. We are repealing the provisions as to boiler inspection in the present Act, and re-enacting them with certain amendments which I introduced last year in our Factories and Shops Bill. It applies to the whole State, as a matter of fact. Now scaffolding is included in this Bill also. My attention was drawn to the fact that there is an Act in New South Wales dealing with inspection of scaffolding, and also to the fact that machinery and boilers which have to be inspected themselves are very often placed on scaffolding. It is very little use inspecting boilers and machinery, and saying they are all right, if the structure on which they are placed is dangerous in itself, so that it is a convenient place here to give machinery inspectors power to inspect scaffolding at the same time. To deal with the Bill itself, there are some clauses to which I would like to draw the attention of the House. First of all, the interpretation clause—clause 4. The definition of "Boiler" is slightly different to what it is in the original Act; it is extended a little. The definition of "Place" is new. Hon. members will notice that it includes a mine. "Scaffolding" is taken from the New South Wales Act of 1902, section 3. Hon. members will notice that the definition of "scaffolding" applies to a "structure which is built up and fixed to a height exceeding 8 feet from the horizontal base, for erecting, demolishing, altering, repairing, cleaning or painting buildings or structures," etc. Some hon. members asked me before the second reading came on whether it applied to timbering in mines. I think it is quite clear that it does not apply to timbering in mines. A definition of "serious bodily injury" is put in, because an accident involving serious bodily injury has to be reported, and under certain conditions an inquiry has to be held. Clause 5 is important. Hon. members will see that, under subclause 1, any railway or tramway vested in the Commissioner for Railways is not included in this Bill, but workshops are included; neither does it apply to any railway or tramway belonging to any person, if it is an electric tramway, but it does apply to power stations and workshops. To refer to a local case, it would not include, for instance, the Brisbane tramway, but it would include the workshops. It does not apply to a railway or tramway worked by steam power, other than the locomotive engines and any machinery used or employed in any constructional or repairing workshops thereof; in other words, it applies to private locomotive engines whether they are inside a factory district or not. Then it does not apply to the propelling machinery of a punt or raft. Hon. members will see that that does not touch hoisting machinery; winches will come under the Bill, but propelling machinery of a raft does not, because that comes under the marine regulations, which also apply to a ship or boat. It is not to apply to a motor-car which does not ply for hire, or to boilers or machinery used exclusively for domestic purposes. Then clause 6 refers to the second schedule, which includes the several kinds of machinery to which this Bill applies. Hon.

members will notice that it does not apply to all machinery, it only applies to machinery in the schedule. That list may be added to or subtracted from by the Governor in Council as the circumstances require it. Part II. of the Bill deals with administration, and includes clauses 8 to 15. This part of the Bill is to a great extent a re-enactment of the existing law, but I might call the attention of hon. members to clause 10, which [10.30 p.m.] provides for public inspectors of machinery in distant localities. The idea of that clause is practically to allow private practice to persons where there is not much machinery to be inspected. The ordinary inspector gets a salary, and the fee that is charged for inspection goes to the Government. It is considered advisable to introduce the principle which is recognised in the Health Act of 1901, under which the public analyst may take fees for samples analysed by him. All the other provisions in this part of the Bill are in the existing law, but some amendments are included which were agreed to last year. Part III. deals with precautions against accidents. There are restrictions with regard to the employment of males and females in certain cases. For instance, a person under eighteen years of age is not to be employed—

in working at or attending to any machinery or class of machinery operated by gas, steam, water, or other mechanical power.

There are certain other restrictions with regard to male persons under the age of eighteen years.

Mr. WHITE: Can't a person employ a lad under the age of eighteen years of age to attend an engine?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not without the permission of the inspector.

Mr. WHITE: That is too stringent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This is to a large extent a Committee Bill, and if the hon. member will draw my attention to any defects in it I shall be glad. Apprentices will get permission from the inspector.

Hon. R. PHILP: Who is the inspector?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The present inspector is Mr. J. H. Howitt. The other provisions of this part of the Bill deal with the fencing of machinery. A notice requiring machinery to be fenced must be given by the inspector; and, if the owner is not satisfied with the action of the inspector, he can appeal to the nearest police magistrate, whose decision will be final. The inspector is empowered to give certain orders with regard to defective machinery. Then we come to the subject of scaffolding. Clause 24 provides that all scaffolding and engines, and all gear used in connection therewith, shall be of the description described by regulation. In New South Wales a good many of the provisions with regard to scaffolding are contained in the Act, but it has been thought in drafting this Bill that it would be better not to incorporate those provisions in the Bill, but to incorporate them in the regulations which will be framed later on. The provisions as to scaffolding are very simple. Upon the inspector is imposed the duty of inspecting scaffolding as well as inspecting machinery, and if it appears to him that any scaffolding or gear is dangerous, or not in compliance with the regulations, he can, by notice in writing, give directions to the owners to take such action as will prevent accidents, and the owner must forthwith carry out those directions. There is an appeal from the decision of the inspector to the nearest police magistrate, and his decision is final. Part IV. deals with the inspection of machinery. The provisions in this section are to a large extent contained in the present law. It is required that all boilers shall be inspected at least once a year, and provision is made with regard to the first and subsequent inspections. Clause 38 provides that no owner shall use any machinery unless he has a certificate. The provisions in regard to that matter are to some extent on the same lines as those relating to the inspection and the use of boilers without a certificate. Then we come to Part V., which deals with the duties and liabilities of owners. This provision also is to a great extent based on the existing law. Penalties are provided for using machinery which is not in conformity to the law, but although those penalties may be inflicted, yet no prosecution is allowed without the authority of the Minister or the chief inspector. There are provisions as to who may be proceeded against for offences, the exemption of owner or occupier from fine on conviction of the actual offender, and proceedings against the actual offender. Part VI. deals with inquiries as to accident. Clause 49 provides that this part of the Bill shall not apply to any mines subject to the Mining Act of 1898. A word of explanation as to why that provision is inserted may be acceptable. Under the Mining Act of 1898, section 209, an inquiry into an accident is to be held before the warden and four miners. It is not considered advisable to interfere with that provision, which is working very well. The other provisions as to inquiries into accidents are to a great extent a re-enactment of the existing law, and no detailed reference to them is necessary at the present stage. Part VII. deals with the examination and certificates of engine-drivers. This is to a great extent new, except in the sense that it is a combination of the provisions contained in the Mining Act of 1898 and in the Factories and Shops Act. By clause 52, power is given to the Governor in Council to appoint an examining board, and that board is to include the Chief Inspector of Machinery and the Chief Inspector of Mines. Clause 53 defines five classes of drivers to whom such certificates may be issued. Class 1 is "Extra first-class engine-driver's certificate;" class 2, "Winding engine-driver's certificate;" class 3, "First-class engine-driver's certificate;" class 4, "Second-class engine-driver's certificate;" and class 5, "Third-class engine-driver's certificate." The extra first-class engine-driver's certificate, being a higher certificate than that given to a driver in class 2, will entitle the holder to drive a winding-engine or any other kind of engine. The only difference between the first and second class certificates seems to be that a man who has a winding-engine-driver's certificate for a certain time may then obtain the higher certificates. The difference is really in rank rather than in power. The man who holds the higher certificate must have been an apprentice for five years under the regulations.

Mr. WHITE: In one part of the Bill it is stated that no person under eighteen years of age shall be engaged in connection with machinery and motion. How then can he acquire the necessary experience?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member is in error. There is nothing in the Bill to say that he cannot go into a machine shop if he is under eighteen years of age, but he cannot at that age attend to machinery in motion unless he gets permission to do so from the inspector. Part VIII. contains miscellaneous provisions. Clause 58, which is a new provision, is inserted to enable the inspector to follow a portable engine, if necessary, outside the factory district. I understand that formerly persons who had committed a breach of the law

could remove their boiler or machinery outside the factory district, and nothing could be done in the way of proceeding against them. Clause 63 provides for a penalty of £20 for a breach of the provisions of the Bill where no other penalty is specified. Clause 64 is the provision relating to regulations. The only new power is that referred to in sub-clause (viii.), which deals with scaffolding. Clause 65 will prevent owners of machinery or scaffolding contracting themselves out of the Bill. Clauses 66 and 67 require all owners to cause an abstract of the Act to be posted up in such places as the inspector directs and to keep proper registers. Penalties are provided for making false entries. Clause 68 deals with proceedings before justices, and makes provision in regard to the burden of proof and other legal matters. It is practically a re-enactment of the section of the present Factories and Shops Act. Schedule I. is merely a schedule of repealed sections in the Mining Act and the Factories and Shops Act. Schedule II. enumerates the machinery subject to the Bill, and does not call for any special mention. Schedule III. contains the rules relating to engine-drivers' certificates of competency. These rules have been approved of by the Under Secretary for Mines, the Chief Inspector of Mines, and by Mr. Howitt, the Chief Inspector of Boilers. I think I have given the House a pretty general idea of the objects which it is sought to obtain by this measure, and of the benefits which will result from it to persons engaged in work in connection with boilers and machinery. Summing up, the measure is a re-enactment of certain boiler provisions with certain amendments, it is an extension of the present law with regard to the inspection of machinery to other machinery, including scaffolding, and it is practically a codification of the whole law in regard to machinery and boiler inspection. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. R. PHILP: There should be an adjournment now.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*): I regret that I cannot agree with the hon. geutleman. We have still a great deal of work to do, and I ask hon. members to finish the second reading of this Bill to-night. It is not strictly speaking a second reading Bill at all. The principle of the Bill is agreed to by the whole House, by everybody.

Mr. WHITE: No.

The PREMIER: There may be details to be discussed in Committee that may legitimately be cause for disagreement, but the general principle of having a measure dealing with the inspection of boilers is agreed to. That is a desirable thing. When we go into Committee, that will be the time for hon. members to state their views on the details.

HON. R. PHILP: I regret that the Premier cannot see his way to give a little time to discuss this Bill. It is a very important Bill, much more important than the Premier thinks it is. It has entirely changed the mode of inspection in mining. I think that mining machinery should be inspected only by mining people. What is the use of putting mining machinery to be inspected by an inspector under the Factories and Shops Act? Mining inspectors are very much more competent than a shops and factories inspector to do this work. We are now going to bring the whole of Queensland under this Bill. Every man with a little cream separator will be brought under it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It does not apply to him.

HON. R. PHILP: It says every boiler.

Mr. MAXWELL: Are you going to bring the farmers into this?

HON. R. PHILP: There are a great many little boilers in the State. Up at Hampden there are sub-artesian bores driven by steam, and these will have to be inspected, and we will have to get special inspectors to go out there. It is a wise thing to inspect all mining machinery, and by competent people; but if you have a factories and shops inspector coming in to take charge of mining machinery, you will make a mess of it. Mining inspectors are more competent for that work.

Mr. MAXWELL: The work has been well done, so far.

HON. R. PHILP: I believe that the records show that more people are injured driving horses and drays than are injured by driving mining machinery in Queensland.

Mr. PAGET: That is extremely probable.

HON. R. PHILP: You do not expect a man driving a horse and dray to have a certificate, although he has a license sometimes. An inspector under the Factories and Shops Act is inclined to magnify the work out of all proportion. It ought to be left to the Mines Department. They have done it well in the past, and they can do it just as well as the factories and shops inspector.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Mines Department are in favour of this Bill.

HON. R. PHILP: It would be more competent to have mining inspectors to inspect this machinery. As a matter of fact, there are very few of the boiler inspectors under the Factories and Shops Act who are boiler-makers at all.

Mr. WHITE: Not one.

HON. R. PHILP: I believe to inspect boilers properly we ought to have a boiler-maker to make the inspection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There are no boiler-makers in the Mines Department.

HON. R. PHILP: The mining inspectors have done their work very well in the past, and they ought to be left alone. Increase the work as much as you like, and take in all the machinery; but you must have a competent inspector. If you have an inspection of boilers every year it will cost a great deal of money. You cannot get men with certificates to drive all the engines and boilers in Queensland. I think the Government are making a mistake in trying to magnify the department, and bringing factories and shops inspectors under the Mining Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is the law in other places.

HON. R. PHILP: So far in Queensland mining men have looked after their own machinery, and you have men in this House who will be able to tell you that mining machinery is better looked after than any other machinery. It is not fair to ask us to discuss this important measure at this late hour. I shall not keep the House any longer. There are men in the House who are more competent than the Minister or myself to say something about this measure, and they would like to say something about it if there is time enough. It is not fair to rush through legislation of this sort. Afterwards we quarrel with the other House because they took time to revise it, and insert necessary amendments.

Mr. PAULL (*Charters Towers*): I am very sorry indeed that the Premier has declined to allow us to go on with this debate to-morrow, as there are a great many things I would have liked to have said that it is impossible for me to

say to-night. This is an Act for the general inspection of boilers throughout the State. Up to the present, as has been explained by the Minister in charge of the Bill, the Mining Act applies to machinery and boilers, and the Factories and Shops Act inspections apply to the districts proclaimed under the Act. The Minister, in speaking about the inspectors of the Mines Department and the inspectors under the Factories and Shops Act, said that they could not make their certificates interchangeable. It is no wonder, because there are a great many men who have not got certificates under the Factories and Shops Act. We pay a higher wage to the men we employ at the mill because they make a specialty of that machinery, but the Minister gives a lower certificate to men on mining fields who drive those engines. Speaking on the Bill generally, I have no doubt it is needed in many parts of the State which are not under the Factories and Shops Act at present. I have seen men working engines, and they were able to turn the steam on and off, but knew nothing about the machinery itself. They would not be considered capable of working an engine in some civilised parts of the State. I have seen boilers and engines that should have been thrown in the rubbish as old iron, and therefore I agree with the Minister that many of the outside districts should come under the Bill and have their machinery inspected from time to time. As a representative of a mining field, I naturally look on the Bill from a mining point of view, and I am bound to say that there are many things in it which will be of considerable hindrance to us if they are insisted upon. The first is taking away the inspection from the mining inspector. I agree with what the leader of the Opposition said in this matter. Undoubtedly there has never been a single accident of any sort in connection with mining machinery after they have been inspected by our present mining inspectors. I think that those inspectors have carried out their duties very satisfactorily in that respect. I contradict the statement made by the Minister when he said that the inspection was largely left to the engine-driver. I know of no instance where such is the case. In every case the mining inspector comes and examines the machinery, in accordance with the Mining Act. He has to test it, and give a certificate and records in the book provided for the purpose, what is the pressure, and what the boiler is able to do in the incoming twelve months. Once a year regularly this is done. It is totally unfair for the Minister to say that the mining inspection has not been carried out properly by the Mines Department. The inspection carried out by that department has been very good indeed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He may not be a mining engineer.

Mr. PAULL: This has been going on for fifteen to twenty years, and I do not know of any single accident, nor can the Minister tell me of anything that has gone wrong after a boiler has been examined by a mining inspector. Nothing has taken place in the form of accidents, which shows that the inspection was very good. In spite of the inspection, accidents might have happened. Anyone who knows anything about machinery will know that there might be a little flaw in the boiler, and though the rest of the boiler may appear to be sound, and in every respect a good one, an accident might occur through that flaw. I know several instances where an explosion has occurred through non-inspection. I might mention that it is a mistaken idea which some people have that new boilers never meet with accidents. I have known of explosions in the old country in new boilers. I have never seen an explosion in Australia, and

[11 p.m.] I have been here for thirty-five years. In the old country I remember an explosion taking place in a boiler which got up steam for the first time one day, and the next day it exploded. In the other cases the explosions occurred in comparatively new boilers. In the case of an inferior boiler, it commences to leak, the water runs out, and no danger occurs. Usually it is a good boiler that explodes. If power is going to be taken from mining inspectors, it will be necessary to repeal a good many more sections of the Mining Act than are mentioned in this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Look at the last paragraph in clause 3.

Mr. PAULL: A mining inspector will have power to inspect boilers yet, then?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes.

Mr. PAULL: Subsection 4 of section 194 of the Mining Act provides for the examination into and inquiry by a mining inspector respecting the state and condition of any boiler or other machinery, and, if advisable, he may have it tested in his presence in any manner prescribed by the Act. Subsection 7 of section 195 gives him power—

to exercise such other powers as are necessary for carrying this part of this Act into effect.

As a matter of fact, there will be two inspectors who will have the power to deal with these things as they think fit. Then section 196 provides that every person who wilfully obstructs an inspector in the execution of his duty under the Act, and every owner, agent, or manager who refuses or neglects to furnish to the inspector the means necessary for making an entry inspection, examination, or inquiry in relation to the mine or machinery under the Act shall be guilty of an offence. Then subsections 24 and 25 of section 214 also give powers to mining inspectors.

Mr. MAXWELL: The only thing repealed is the provision in connection with the examination of mining engineers.

Mr. PAULL: It is desirable that both a boiler and a mining inspector shall have power to examine a boiler at any time they please? One of them may do so this week and the other may go in and do it next week. I notice that the definition of "boiler" includes a gold retort. That is a small vessel kept for retorting the mercury out of the gold. It is not closely confined, because there is a pipe that runs through the retort through which the mercury runs into the cold water. There is practically no danger, because there is no pressure.

Mr. MAXWELL: There is some pressure, or the mercury would not run through.

Mr. PAULL: Then I would like to ask the Minister what he means by the definition of "machinery." It includes, among other things—

any contrivance or appliance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Read on!

Mr. PAULL:

or the parts of any of these—

That is smaller still—

constructed of any material and worked or designed to be worked by any power, of such kinds as by this Act are declared to be or as may be hereafter declared to be subject to this Act.

I would like to know what is meant by a "contrivance or appliance." If you turn up a dictionary you find some peculiar meanings, which do not seem applicable to this definition. I

certainly think the first thing required is a definition of those terms. Then the definitions of "occupier" and "owner" are likely to give rise to considerable confusion. "Occupier" includes—

an agent, manager, foreman, or other person acting, or apparently acting, in the general management or control of any place.

And "owner" includes—

any engineer, overseer, foreman, or driver.

So that wherever the word "owner" comes in any one of those persons is liable. It seems to me that these definitions should be narrowed down considerably and put in proper phraseology. When I first read the definition of "Place," I thought how far-seeing the draftsman was. It says—

any structure or area, enclosed or otherwise, and whether above or below ground.

I began to wonder whether it alluded to Mother Shipton's prophecy regarding the airships that were to be in use early in this century when I read the words, "above or below ground." But when I came a little lower down, I found that it included—

A mine, also any road or street, also any house or building, and also any punt or raft; but does not include any other ship or boat.

It includes mines, but apparently does not include airships. The hon. gentleman referred to the definition of "scaffolding." In doing so, he said he did not think it referred to mines. But if it should go before a court, it will not be what the hon. gentleman thinks the Act means, but what the judge or the magistrate thinks it means. Just about this time last year there was a case in England under the Education Act which caused a good deal of confusion. The judge who tried the case gave a verdict which was exactly the opposite of what the members of Parliament and the Minister had said was the meaning when the Bill was before the House. When this was pointed out to the judge he said that it was not what they thought the Act meant, but he had to give his verdict in accordance with what the Act actually did mean. It seems to me that there may be some confusion under this. It reads—

"Scaffolding"—Any structure built up and fixed to a height exceeding eight feet from the horizontal base on which it is built up and fixed for erecting, demolishing altering, repairing.

and it includes—

any swinging stage intended to be used for any of the aforesaid purposes.

Now, we have swinging stages used in our mines for the purpose of repairing timber, and they might be included. In spite of what the hon. gentleman says, many magistrates would take that view, and I hope, therefore, that an alteration may be made in that matter. I think that definition should be made so clear that there is no possibility of misinterpretation. Another matter I wish to point out is that the regulations are to provide that notice of any alteration in the structure in the mine is to be given to the inspector. That, as it stands, may prove very detrimental, especially in cases where repairs have to be carried out in order to secure the safety of the miners. In regard to clause 5, I had a memorandum to ask why there should not be power of inspection over the railways of the State as well as over private railways, but the Minister has given a reason for that which I accept as fair and reasonable. Under clause 10 it is suggested that there should be a class of inspector who should be allowed to charge fees. Now, I do not think that is a desirable feature of the Bill at all, because many men in the outside places would be inclined to harass employers in order that they might inspect the machinery and boilers very frequently, and charge fees for so doing. I would point out, also, that there seems to be confusion between clauses 12 and 27. Clause 12 provides that the inspector may at any time, day or night, enter any place where he has reason to believe there is machinery, while clause 27 says that inspection of machinery may be made at any time between the hours of 6 o'clock in the morning and 6 in the evening.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will make a note of that.

Mr. PAULL: Then, in subclause 5 of clause 14, it is provided that any person who fails to produce any certificate of registration or inspection shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £20. I think that is rather harsh, and that we should insert there the words, "without sufficient explanation."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: These are matters which could be suggested in Committee.

Mr. PAULL: I admit that that is so, but I call attention to them now, so that the hon. gentleman may not lose sight of them. We do not know when the Committee stage of the Bill will come on, and for all we know it may be intended to take it to-night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No; not to-night.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that he is going into a great many details. The second reading of a measure is generally confined to the discussion of principles. I have not the least objection to allowing the hon. member a reasonable amount of latitude, but small details of the Bill should not be entered into on a second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PAULL: I quite understand that, and will endeavour to confine myself to the principles of the measure. There are other matters which will require attention when we get into Committee. For instance, there is the power given to the chief inspector to give instructions to his subordinates to make such inspections as he thinks fit. That, I submit, is putting very extreme power in the hands of one man. I admit the clause says, "not inconsistent with this Act," but still I do not think he should be allowed to give such instructions as he thinks fit. The regulations provide for the manner in which the inspectors are to carry out their work, and a matter of that sort should be put in perfectly clear and straightforward language. If such a provision as that is allowed to stand, then mineowners will never know what the regulations are. Now, the principle involved in clause 32 is a very important one as far as mining properties are concerned, and it reverses the Mining Act altogether. Under this an inspector who intends to inspect a boiler has to give the owner at least fourteen days' notice. The practice in the past has been that the owner gave notice of not less than seven days to the inspector that he intended to have his boiler ready for inspection. The difficulty is this: In most cases the small mines in the North have only one boiler, and the owners make their arrangements to have the inspection carried out once a year, at a time when it will not be inconvenient, and will not throw the men out of employment. For instance, Christmas time is chosen in many cases, because the men are having a week's holiday; and on Charters Towers, where there is a carnival and pastoral society's show in one week, some of the mines choose that time for the inspection of their boilers. Some of the men work on and do this work, and notice is then given to the inspector, who

arranges the matter. The inspectors have not demanded the full seven days as long as they are not engaged at the time they are requested to come, and can make arrangement to come. I was going to suggest last year that it should be seven days' notice, or by consent, the inspector to have seven days' notice if he wished. It would take some days beforehand to cool and clean the boiler, and it would seriously inconvenience mines and throw men out of work if the inspector had power to send up fourteen days' notice any day without consulting the convenience of the mineowners. Many of the smaller mines do not require as much time as that. The custom is to do it either on Sunday morning or Monday morning. They throw the boiler idle on Friday night; the men just lose one day, and go to work on Monday morning, so that they do not lose much time. But as this is now arranged, it is going to be a great inconvenience, and will upset altogether the arrangements of mines. I hope the Minister will consent to some alteration in Committee. In clauses 35 and 36 there is an apparent confusion. It apparently provides for the same thing twice over, but one provision is really in case of a boiler and the other in case of machinery, and I will suggest in clause 36 the addition of the words "in cases of machinery." There are a few practical matters which the hon. gentleman has not made reference to, and in connection with which there are several small amendments which I will suggest in Committee. One or two are suggestions of the Engineers and Engine-drivers' Association in Charters Towers for protecting gauge glasses and so on. I would like to ask the Minister whether he has considered it—clause 21. It reads that if the owner effects any repairs to boilers, has he to give notice to the inspector before and after doing it. It is very bad as it now stands. A new nut and bolt may be wanted, but as it now reads it is necessary to give notice for these small things. I think it should be altered to read "in case of serious repairs." One of the features about this Bill which I dislike is the tremendous number of duties imposed. Last year there were so many duties proposed to be imposed on managers in connection with mining Acts that if they had to carry them all out they would not be able to perform their work at all as mining managers. In clause 43 of this Bill the very same principle applies when the owner sells or absolutely disposes of any machinery. I pointed out that any machinery means appliance or parts of any appliance. That applies to the same thing—a bolt or a screw. A man who has an ironmongery shop or a sawmill may have a boiler and comes under the Act. In strict accordance with this Bill he would not be allowed to sell a pound of screws or a pound of bolts without giving notice to the chief inspector that he is going to do it. That is rather absurd, and I trust that some alteration will be made in this respect. Now we come to the question of the certificates, which is a very important matter for mining fields. This has been brought up more in connection with the Factories and Shops Act than in connection with the Mining Act. I have already pointed out that engine-drivers under the Factories and Shops Act are very inferior to the engine-drivers under the Mining Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There are special certificates arranged for in this Bill.

Mr. PAULL: The trouble comes in here, that no man can get a certificate under the Mining Act for winding machinery unless he has been so many years under the Factories and Shops Act. A man must have been twelve months in charge of a boiler. Where is he going to get the experience? In the North, in places like Croydon, there is not a single foreman or greaser in the place; every man looks after his own engine. In Charters Towers all they do is to take the firewood to the boilers, and they have nothing to do with the boilers. If that regulation is continued, all engine-drivers will be stopped in the North. Then, as to the second-class and third-class engine-drivers. A man has to be employed twelve months as a driver or greaser; then for twelve months hold a third-class engine-driver's certificate, and for twelve months hold a second-class engine-driver's certificate, before he can get the requisite certificate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why do not you move amendments in these things in Committee?

Mr. PAULL: I am pointing out the necessity for it, and I will move amendments in Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Circulate them in time.

Mr. PAULL held as much as anyone that engine-drivers should pass certain examinations and have a fair experience, but it is possible to go to extremes in connection with that matter. Then there is the question of the regulations. This is a question to which, since I have been in the House, I have referred more than once. My objection to this matter is this: Practically, a great deal of legislation which should be in the Mining Bills themselves has simply been given effect to by regulations. A man who may not know the matter thoroughly makes the regulations, and the mining and other industries are bound by them. We ought to have them introduced into the House, so that we could criticise them, and try to improve them. In connection with this matter, I have a letter from the Engine-drivers' Association at Chartres Towers. These matters were included in the Mining Bill introduced last year, but they wrote to me again, and said that they would hold good if the suggestions were contained in this Bill. The association, from whom I have received that letter, suggest that the examination for engine-drivers should be practical
[11.30 p.m.] and verbal, as well as theoretical. They also suggest that every boiler should be provided with a proper steam-gauge and water-gauge, such water-gauge to be fitted with a proper protector approved by the inspector of mines. They state that accidents whereby men have lost their eyesight have been caused by glasses breaking, and that glasses without a protector are not safe. They also suggest that a provision should be inserted in the regulations prohibiting any person speaking to a driver while an engine is in motion, and prohibiting any two persons holding a conversation behind the engine-driver when an engine is in motion, as such conversation is apt to distract the attention of the driver from his work. They further desire that no one should be allowed to enter a boiler-shed or to interefere with a boiler in any shed. If the regulations were before this House, we might give effect to those suggestions in the Bill, but as there are no regulations in the Bill is is impossible to deal with them. Many regulations which were previously in the Mining Act are struck out, and power is given by this Bill for the Governor in Council to deal with them. The Governor in Council may frame regulations, and this House will have no voice in the matter. Last year I asked the Government to have all regulations under Acts

of Parliament bound up in one book and placed where members could get at them, but nothing of that kind has been done, and it is most difficult for members to get regulations which they may require.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If they were bound up in one book, you would not be able to find what you wanted.

Mr. PAULL: Oh, yes, I would, with a proper index. One principle contained in this Bill I object to, and that is the principle that a defendant is to be treated as guilty until he proves his innocence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That has been the law for many years.

Mr. PAULL: Whether it has been the law or not, it is an unfair thing, and it should not be continued. I can only add that I am very sorry to keep the House at this late hour, but this measure is one of great importance to mining members. Yesterday we had a good deal of talk about the importance of the farming industry. The mining industry is more important than the farming industry.

Mr. WHITE: Oh, no!

Mr. PAULL: There are more men employed in connection with mining matters than there are employed in connection with farming, and yet we are called upon at this late hour to discuss a matter of great importance to the mining industry. It is not fair that everything in connection with the mining industry should be considered at a late hour of the night, and I hope the Minister will give us an opportunity of making several amendments in this Bill, some of them small amendments, but one or two amendments of some importance.

Mr. PAGET (*Mackay*): I rather regret that a Bill of this importance to the mining industry should come on for discussion at this hour, and that the Premier should insist upon the second reading being passed before the House adjourns. The hon. member who has just sat down has made a great number of objections to the provisions relating to the inspection of boilers. Boilers have for some time past been inspected under the Factories and Shops Act, and have been inspected exceedingly well, and I believe that inspection has been a great benefit not only to the owners of boilers, but also to those who have to work in and around boilers. The hon. member for Charters Towers stated that boilers and machinery at mines have been kept in such good order during the past fifteen or twenty years that very few accidents have happened. I agree with the Minister that the inspection of all boilers and machinery should be under one department, and I am glad to see that the Mines Department, who formerly objected to that course, have now fallen in with the idea. They now think that it will be very much better in the interests of all concerned that the inspection shall be carried out under one head. With respect to the Bill, I think it will be found, when it comes to be put into operation, that this is an exceedingly big State in which to carry out the inspection of boilers and machinery. It practically means from the East to the West and from the North to the South. As one who has persistently, for five or six sessions in this House, advocated the inspection of land boilers, where practicable, it is a most excellent thing, but the Minister will find that there are places in the State where it will be extremely difficult to have the boilers inspected. I notice one clause in this Bill which carries out a suggestion that I made myself when sitting behind the Government five sessions ago, and that is where it is not possible for inspectors to be appointed to carry out the necessary inspections, that a good local man, in the shape of an engineer, should be made local inspector to carry out these inspections. On that occasion the then Home Secretary fell rather foul of me for making such a suggestion, and he said he was afraid that a local man would not carry out the work satisfactorily. I did not agree with him. I agree with this provision in the Bill that in certain localities it will be advisable for the Minister to appoint local inspectors, not only because these men will be competent, but because such a system will be economical. We cannot expect to send inspectors out to Boulia or Urandangie, if some stations there happened to have steam-pumping plants.

Mr. NEVITT: Where will you get your local inspector?

Mr. PAGET: From the nearest foundry where an engineer is employed. I just gave those names as an illustration, but there are some good men in Croydon. I do not know whether the boilers in Croydon, apart from those in the mines, are inspected or not.

Mr. NEVITT: I do not think they are.

Mr. PAGET: It is not a district that has been proclaimed under the Factories and Shops Act. There are a number of competent engineers in Croydon, and they could inspect boilers and machinery within a radius of 150 miles. It is one of the disabilities in bringing in a Bill of this kind that there is no provision for the Governor in Council proclaiming special districts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, there is.

Mr. PAGET: He took it that the Bill applied to the whole State. He knew under clause 6 that the Governor in Council could declare that any kinds of machinery shall cease to be machinery within the meaning of this Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Look at clause 9.

Mr. PAGET: He may assign a district to an inspector under that clause. Although I believe it is an admirable thing that the whole State should be brought under one department, and that we should have a Bill apart from other Acts dealing with this specific matter, still I would bring under the notice of the Minister that there are a great number of boilers in the State that are not now inspected. These boilers should certainly be brought under inspection. In this Bill we are going rather in the way of legislating for the future. We are making a big bound ahead in saying that we shall cover the whole State at once. We have been going ahead very fairly in the last five years, when boiler inspection first became the practice. There are not many boilers that are not under inspection within reasonable distance of the coast or in any towns on the railway lines where boilers are used. Taking the Bill as it stands, I am certainly in favour of it, with certain exceptions, which, to my mind, are absurdities. Clause 55 says—

> No person shall be employed or act in the capacity of engine-driver in charge of any steam engine or boiler to which this Act applies, unless he is the holder of a certificate of competency under this Act of the grade prescribed for the engine or boiler in question.

Mr. WOODS: Quite right, too.

Mr. PAGET: It is absolutely right, but I want the Minister to say if this will apply to every person who is running a little boiler and

engine of his own. I would like to refer to the farming industry, because there are a large number of turbine separators on the dairy farms, and nowadays there are a large number of irrigation plants on the farms. These men are not certificated engine-drivers. Then, again, it is not certain that the schedule will not apply to oil engines. There are hundreds of these engines in use throughout the State. A farmer may employ one of them in connection with a dozen different operations on his farm and in driving a dozen different kinds of machines during the course of an hour or so, but it is absurd to ask him to employ a certificated engine-driver to work an oil-engine of 3 or 4 horse power. A turbine separator requires a steam boiler, but it is a little bit of a thing that you could almost lift in your arms. It is an absurdity that it should require a certificated engine-driver. Then the definition of "Boiler" includes "pipes under steam." Clarifiers in a sugar-mill are "pipes under steam." They are attended by a special attendant, but he is not a boiler attendant, and the steam is generated in the boiler by the boiler attendant and let into the pipes by the clarifier attendant.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What makes it necessary that the attendant should be a certificated engine-driver?

Mr. PAGET: Clause 55, which says that "no person shall be employed or act in the capacity of engine-driver in charge of any steam engine or boiler to which this Act applies unless he is the holder of a certificate of competency," and the definition of "Boiler" includes "pipes under steam." Then a vacuum-pan will also come under this provision. A vacuum-pan is attended to by a highly-paid expert and sugar-boiler, but he is not a man with an engine-driver's certificate.

Mr. SUMNER: I think that if you have one trained man that is sufficient.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is so.

Mr. PAGET: You may have an inspector or a Minister who is not reasonable. Then, again, "Boiler" includes "montyjus digesters," which are simply vessels used to raise sugar liquors to a higher level by the application of steam pressure. There are some things in the Bill of which I approve, and others of which I disapprove, and I hope that in Committee the Minister will allow reasonable amendments. I am pleased that the Bill has been introduced, because the inspection of boilers and machinery is a necessity to public safety.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): I enter an emphatic protest against the second reading being rushed through at this hour of the night. I believe the administra-
[12 p.m.] tion of this measure will cost the country £10,000 a year. I had expected that the Minister would have given us some information as to the necessity for including the inspection of machinery, for in my opinion there is absolutely no necessity. No fool-proof machinery has yet been invented, and the accidents with machinery have generally arisen through the carelessness or foolishness of the employees. I must protest against machinery being included in the Bill, because under the Workers' Compensation Act owners are now particularly careful in having their machinery properly protected.

Mr. WOODS (*Woothakata*): In regard to what the hon. member for Musgrave has said, I am well aware from experience that there is necessity both for the inspection of boilers and machinery. I know of a certain boiler in the Beenleigh district, recently inspected, which had not been stripped for eighteen years. Only the other day a boiler purchased by a company at Mount Shamrock from the Railway Department exploded, and that boiler was condemned twenty years ago by the locomotive superintendent. Again, in the Maryborough district, some years ago, at a certain flourmill, fourteen fire-bars were put on top of the steam valve to get extra pressure, and I know of a case in which not only a fire-bar was used, but the valve was chained down with a bullock chain. The Government are fully justified in introducing the Bill, which I shall cordially support.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the day.

The House adjourned at eleven minutes past 12 o'clock.