

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 1919

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THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 1919.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

QUESTIONS.

HOOKEWORM DISEASE—STEPS TO COMBAT SPREAD.

Mr. SMITH (*Mackay*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. What steps are being taken by the Health Department to combat the spread of the hookworm disease in this State?

"2. How many cases of hookworm were reported during the financial year ended June, 1919?

"3. How many deaths occurred during the same period?

"4. What expenditure is the Government committed to for dealing with the disease during the present financial year?

"5. What proportion is being incurred by the Commonwealth Government?

"6. What grant has been made by the Rockefeller Institute, and what arrangements have been made with this body?

"7. What is the number of the medical staff engaged in coping with this disease?

"8. Has the co-operation of the local authorities been secured to the fullest possible extent in preventing the spread of this disease by the adoption of up-to-date methods of sanitation?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"1. Working in conjunction with the Rockefeller Foundation, as represented by Dr. Waite, and later Dr. Lambert. Also for years past have issued a departmental pamphlet 'Warning to Parents.'

"2. Notified under the Health Acts—Metropolitan area, 1 (Toombul); outside areas, 50; total, 51. (Mackay, 8; Kilcoy, 5; Mirani, 3; Maryborough, 3; Landsborough, 2; Miriam Vale, 2; Sarina, 2; Caboolture, 1; Johnstone, 1; Pioneer, 1; Toowoomba, 1; Winton, 1). Dr. Lambert and Dr. Waite reported for nine months ending 31st July, 1919, as result of microscopical examination having found 4,478 whites and 666 aboriginals, or a total of 5,144 infected, from Townsville to Cooktown.

"3. One.

"4. £6,000.

"5. £6,000.

"6. £8,000 for first year, and for a five years' campaign £30,000. The Rockefeller Foundation is providing medical experts to conduct the campaign, subject to an advisory committee, consisting of Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Moore (chairman); Commonwealth Quarantine Officer, Dr. Elkington; Director Institute of Tropical Diseases, Dr. Brien; and the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sawyer, of the Rockefeller Foundation.

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"7. In the first campaign, which will cease on the 30th of this month, and be superseded by the larger campaign, one medical expert from the Rockefeller Foundation. There will be four medical men attached to the new campaign, under the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sawyer.

"8. Doctors Waite and Lambert reported that local authorities gave every possible assistance by adopting the latest up-to-date methods of sanitation, as required by the Health Department."

BEDS AVAILABLE AT THE GENERAL HOSPITAL, BRISBANE.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*), in the absence of Mr. Whitford, asked the Home Secretary—

"1. What number of beds are available at the General Hospital, Brisbane, for males and females for venereal diseases, not including the women's special ward?

"2. If there are none available, will he see that they are made available forthwith?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1. None at present.

"2. The matter will receive consideration."

SEAT OF MEMBER FOR MARANOVA.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) asked the Premier—

"1. Is it true that the honourable member for Maranoa is resigning his seat in the Legislative Assembly?

"2. If so, when will the by-election to fill the vacancy be held?"

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*) replied—

"1 and 2. The information sought in these questions will be disclosed at the proper time."

IMPENDING RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR LEICHHARDT.

Mr. BEBBINGTON asked the Premier—

"When does he propose to hold the by-election to fill the vacancy in the House caused by the resignation or impending resignation of the honourable member for Leichhardt?"

The PREMIER replied—

"See my answer to previous question of the honourable member."

WOLSTON POULTRY FARMS AND STATE ABATTOIRS.

Mr. BEBBINGTON asked the Minister for Repatriation or the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Is the area of 100 acres at Wolston listed for soldiers' settlement as poultry farms the same land that was purchased by the Denham Government for public abattoirs or State meatworks to freeze on owners' account?

"2. If so, do the Government intend purchasing any other land near Brisbane to erect public abattoirs or State meatworks, or will they dress and freeze

meat on owners' account to make them independent of meatworks in good seasons?"

The PREMIER replied—

- "1. No.
- "2. See No. 1."

PROCEEDS OF TIMBER SALES AND LOANS FROM SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Treasurer—

"1. Is it a fact that the Savings Bank Commissioner is demanding a portion of proceeds for sale of timber from selectors who have borrowed from the bank?"

"2. If so, what amount is claimed, and when was this new departure introduced?"

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"1. Yes, in certain cases where the Commissioner considers it desirable for the protection of the bank's interests, the amount being credited to the borrower's account.

"2. The amount claimed is determined in relation to the circumstances of the particular case, and the practice has been followed since the early years of the late Agricultural Bank."

MINISTERS' TRAVELLING EXPENSES.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Premier—

"What travelling expenses per day were allowed Ministers when travelling away from Brisbane during the year ended 30th June, 1919?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The practice is that Ministers draw either at the rate of £2 2s. per day or their actual expenses."

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF INDIVIDUAL MINISTERS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Premier—

"1. The amount paid or incurred by the State in respect of the travelling expenses of each individual member of the Ministry for the year ended 30th June, 1919?"

"2. The amount paid or incurred by the State in respect of the travelling expenses of each member of the Ministry during the year ended 30th June, 1915?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 and 2. There is already a notice of motion on the business-paper asking for this information. In the meantime, such information is being collected, and will be furnished in conjunction with amounts of expenditure incurred by Ministers in previous Administrations at other times, in addition to those mentioned in the question."

AGENT-GENERAL—APPOINTMENT AND SALARY OF HON. J. M. HUNTER.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Premier—

"Upon what terms as regards—(a) period of appointment, (b) salary, (c)

travelling allowances, has Mr. J. M. Hunter been appointed Agent-General for Queensland in London?"

The PREMIER replied—

"Mr. Hunter has not yet been appointed."

BLOCK No. 184, PIKEDALE RETURNED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"To whom has block No. 184, Pikedale Returned Soldiers' Settlement, been allotted?"

The PREMIER replied—

"Portion 184, on the Pikedale Soldiers' Settlement, was allotted on the 16th June, 1919, to Douglas Heaton Brown, an honourably discharged soldier, who is registered with and approved by the Land Settlement Committee of the Queensland War Council."

ROCKHAMPTON MAIL TRAIN—DELAY IN ARRIVAL AT BRISBANE.

Mr. CORSER asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Did the mail train from Rockhampton to Brisbane, leaving Rockhampton yesterday, the 9th instant, run to time-table time to Brisbane?"

"2. If late, how much was this train late at Brisbane?"

"3. If late, to what cause was the delay attributed?"

"4. Were any repairs booked against the engine taken off this train at Maryborough?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

"1. No.

"2. It was two hours twelve minutes late arriving at Brisbane.

"3. Defective engines.

"4. Yes."

MOTOR-CARS AND TRAFFIC REGULATIONS.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*), in the absence of Mr. Elphinstone, asked the Home Secretary—

"With a view to increasing the safety of pedestrians and reducing accidents occasioned by motor vehicles, will he consider the advisability of so amending the traffic regulations as to render it necessary for every person who desires to drive a car to pass a test, and if found capable a license to be issued, such license to be subject to endorsement or cancellation upon conviction for any offence against traffic regulations?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"The matter will be considered."

TABLING OF ESTIMATES.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), in the absence of Mr. Sizer, asked the Treasurer—

"When may the Estimates for the year 1919-20 be expected to be tabled?"

The TREASURER replied—

"I am not in a position, at present, to indicate a definite date."

APPOINTMENT OF MR. VALENTINE J. CROWLEY
AS CONSULTING HYDRO-ELECTRICAL ENGINEER.

Mr. FRY, in the absence of Mr. Sizer, asked the Treasurer—

"1. Seeing that Valentine J. Crowley, who was recently appointed consulting hydro-electrical engineer to the Government, was convicted and fined in Victoria for disloyal utterances, is he a fit person to receive such appointment?"

"2. Will he take immediate steps to terminate his appointment?"

"3. Could not a competent returned soldier or local engineer be procured to carry out this work?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. I have no knowledge of the statement made by the hon. member concerning Mr. Crowley.

"2 and 3. See answer to No. 1."

RAILWAY SERVANTS—REFUSAL TO CARRY
POLICE.

Mr. FRY, in the absence of Mr. Sizer, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Have those railway servants who were recently punished for refusing to carry police from Charters Towers to Townsville, and for other offences incidental thereto, been pardoned by the Railway Commissioner in connection with the peace celebrations remissions made to railway employees a few days ago?"

"2. Upon what date was the offence of refusing to carry police mentioned above committed?"

"3. Upon what date were the offenders sentenced by the department?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. 3rd July, 1919.

"3. After usual preliminary inquiries and explanations, they were suspended on 9th July. No officer was sentenced."

STATE MARKETS—ELECTIVE BOARD OF ADVICE.

Mr. JAMES (*Logan*) asked the Minister in charge of State Enterprises—

"Will he provide for the election by suppliers to and purchasers from the State markets, when resident in the State of Queensland, of a board of directors to advise the manager of the State markets on their conduct and management, in order to combine the personal interest of co-operative control with the stability of State finance?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The suggestion of the hon. member will receive my consideration."

PAPER.

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

Rule of Court as of Monday, the 25th day of August, 1919.

ERADICATION AND PREVENTION OF
THE SPREAD OF PRICKLY-PEAR.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): This prickly-pear question is a very serious question indeed, and a very old one, and I am afraid that it will be many years before we get rid of this menace. Some few sessions ago, it was mentioned in the Governor's Speech that the Government were starting a State arsenic mine as one method of dealing with the prickly-pear. If we had arsenic given to us for nothing we would not be much further ahead than we are at the present time. It is not the cost of the poison that you inject into the pear, but the cost of the labour you use to put the arsenic there which is the most serious item. I am sorry to say that since the Labour Government has come into power, the pear has increased at a greater rate than it did before. Of course, I know that the war may be blamed, to a certain extent, for the want of labour; the men have been away at the other end of the world, and could not, of course, be engaged in prickly-pear eradication, but, at the same time, one reason why the pear menace is not dealt with in many cases as it should be is because of the war. Previous to the war prickly-pear clearing was one of the employments which men were often glad to take up between one seasonal occupation and another, when they were unemployed. It was quite a common thing to form a pear gang, and provide tents and everything connected with the eradication of prickly-pear. Of course, the wages were not up to the maximum, because it was looked upon as a sort of relief work. Many of the old men who were not able to do a full day's work were glad to get into these camps and put in the slack time of the year, and in that way many a farm was cleared of prickly-pear, and grazing farms and pastoral leases were also cleared. Then the McCawley award was made, which fixed the rate for prickly-pear cutting at, I think, £2 18s. a week, and the employer had to find the men with implements and one thing and another. I know that prickly-pear cutting is not nice work, but it is one of those occupations that the person who is clearing the pear gets nothing out of. In fact, if anybody gets anything out of it at all, it is the State, and I think it is one of those occupations which could well have been left out of the Arbitration award.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN: Men who were out of a job looked forward to being able to get prickly-pear cutting, but when the rates were increased to those given to station hands, or even more, the consequence was that the cost of eradicating prickly-pear increased out of all reason.

Mr. COLLINS: The price of wool has risen out of all reason.

Mr. GUNN: Yes, and the income tax has risen out of all reason. You take 10s. in the £1 now from the person who grows wool. The fact remains that there are none of those prickly-pear gangs on now. The men who were glad to take that job are now walking the roads, and the prickly-pear is growing apace. In parts of my electorate, the owners of the land, under various tenures, cleared the pear some years ago, but the Government have reserves and roads on which the prickly-pear is growing. The birds

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spread the seeds over the land, and the cost of the pear destruction which has to be done every year amounts to far more than the rent which is paid to the Government. The least the Government could do would be to subscribe to some fund to assist the local authorities to keep the pear off roads and reserves. It is very hard, when a man has spent all his money in clearing his land of pear, that the Government should allow the pear to grow alongside him. In my opinion, there is only one method that is going to eradicate the prickly-pear; that is, by means of some other pest, either a fungus or an insect. No matter how effective the poisons you may use may be, you have to get labour to apply those poisons, and the consequence is that on account of the heavy cost involved, it would pay you better never to clear the land at all. It would pay you better to leave Australia altogether than to clear prickly-pear land at a cost of £10 or £20 an acre. I know that we have a Bureau of Science appointed by the Federal Government, but it is very slow in working. We had a Prickly-pear Commission appointed in the time of the Denham Government. It was called a roving commission, as they went round the world. That Commission did some good, and reported on quite a number of insects which live on prickly-pear plants. Over twenty different varieties were reported upon, but there was only one that was introduced in Queensland, and I think that was introduced more by accident than anything else. We can quite understand that the Federal Government, or any other Government, are very chary about introducing any foreign insect into Queensland, because we do not know what it will do when it gets here. It may also eat lucerne or vegetables, and do great damage to crops. But one insect got through somehow or other, and that is the wild cochineal. This wild cochineal insect was sent to Charters Towers, because that is the only locality in Queensland where the particular variety of pear on which that wild cochineal feeds is to be found. The pear in that district has been exterminated. I do not know why it is, but the wild cochineal will eat nothing else but that one variety of pear, and when that pear dies the insect becomes extinct. That is an extraordinary thing. In other parts of the world prickly-pear is not a menace such as it is in Queensland, because in those countries where the pear is found there is always some natural enemy of the pear. Of course, the pear is not exterminated, and in South America, and other parts of the world, you find patches of prickly-pear, but it does not spread as it does in Queensland. The only thing we can do in Queensland to deal with the pest is to introduce some of these foreign insects or fungi, but in the meantime our Governments apparently are neglectful of their duty in this regard. We hardly conceive that it is the menace it really is. It is said that the pest is only found in the southern portion of Queensland, but it is spreading over the best part of Queensland. It is taking the best land, and it will be no time before the whole of Queensland will be covered with prickly-pear if some pest is not introduced to destroy it. I know it is a hard thing for any Government to deal with, but the Government have introduced an Unemployed Bill, and they take on all sorts of things. Now, the Government have a State farm of nearly one-third of Queensland which is

covered with prickly-pear, and there is any amount of work on that State farm for the unemployed. It is only a question of how you can make the clearing of pear pay. I would be very glad if the Government could clear the prickly-pear and get the cost of clearing it from any settler. That is the great difficulty. I hope that some method will be devised by which we can get rid of the pear at a reasonable cost, but as far as I can see, there is only one method, and that is to introduce one or more insects or fungi that will destroy the pear. The Denham Government instituted an experiment station at Dulacca, presided over by Dr. Jean White. A good deal of research work was done there, and it is a pity that the experiment station was discontinued at the time it was. If it had been allowed to continue, very likely by this time we would have got a lot nearer a solution of the difficulty than we have at the present time. There is one bright thing with reference to prickly-pear. I do not know whether anyone has ever noticed it, but land that is grossly infected with pear, when the pear is eradicated, the land seems to be more fertile than land that has never been covered with pear. The reason for that is that the prickly-pear absorbs potash from the atmosphere, and when it dies it leaves that potash in the soil. This is a very serious question, and I hope the House in its wisdom will carry the motion.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I wish to have a few words on this motion, not that the pear is any great menace in my electorate, but I have been struck with the fact that after all the continual discussion that takes place about prickly-pear eradication and the dealing with prickly-pear no really practical suggestion is offered with all the suggestions put forward from time to time. It is said you want poison; you want to clear it, and all that sort of thing, and yet everybody knows that in nine cases out of ten it would cost eight or nine times the value of the land to clear the prickly-pear. When that is so, there is only one way to deal with the matter, and that is to find a method by which you will get a return from the pear commensurate with the cost of clearing it. Nearly all our prickly-pear land, even if it had no pear on it at all, could be bought for £1 an acre, or even less. There is no doubt that the clearing of pear is a big problem. I looked over the speech of the hon. member for Murilla, and I think that he is to be complimented on the energy and industry and research he displayed in collecting those figures. I have not the slightest doubt, from my own personal experience in travelling round the country, that those figures are a long way under the mark. He has not overdrawn them. The problem is a very big one. It would be too costly a thing for the Government to take up and merely eradicate the pear for the value of the land, because the land value is not there in comparison to the cost of clearing the pear. It has been suggested that the pear should be used for feeding cattle. That idea falls short, for the simple reason that, according to the bulletin of the Bureau of Science and Industry, if you fed all the cattle in Queensland on pear—if that were possible—you could only cope with the annual rate of increase of the pear. So that knocks that proposition on the head. To use it for its commercial products also falls short, because the value of the commercial products is insufficient. Decimal five of the weight of

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the green pear only is the quantity of alcohol spirit that could be used as a power spirit. So it comes to this: that you have to find some method of combining all these things while clearing the land of pear, and I am satisfied that that can be done, but there must be a big incentive to men who are prepared to go into the question and study out how it can be done. Sometime back, Mr. Stopford asked my assistance with him on behalf of a friend of his who had invented a machine to deal with pear. I notice that the Bureau of Science and Industry says that no machine has ever been invented or constructed that will clear the pear. I beg to differ from that. I say such a machine has been constructed, and I say that the Government ought to take up any proposition, no matter how wild it may appear to them, and give assistance to anyone with a similar idea, because, generally speaking, the clerks in the department are not judges. They may be very good clerks, and may know a good deal about land settlement, and that sort of thing, but they are not judges as to what may be a mechanical or manufacturing possibility, and, therefore, they are not capable of condemning any proposition that may be brought forward for dealing with this question. I agree with a suggestion of the hon. member for Normanby for a board to deal with the pear question. I think a board should be created with a manufacturers' representative, an engineering representative, and possibly also an expert in land cultivation, to consider any proposal brought forward for the eradication of prickly-pear. If that had been done, I am satisfied there

would have been a machine on [4 p.m.] the market in Queensland at the present time that would have gone 90 per cent. of the way towards dealing with the prickly-pear question. In relation to the machine I am speaking of (though I never saw it in actual work), from reports and plans and description I am satisfied, as a practical engineer, it will do the work. It is driven by a 30 horse-power motor engine, and would cut a 4-foot swathe into the pear, take the pear into itself, grind it up small, something after the style of sawdust, and pass it out at the back. The machine was given a trial at Dulacca, and, although it was not regarded as perfect, Mr. Temple Clerk said that it gave very good results, and that, with some minor improvements, and if strengthened in certain places, he had no doubt it would eradicate the pear in ordinary infested country; and I have no doubt that that is so. The maker, a practical engineer, claimed that it could clear 7 acres of heavily infested pear in a day. When he was asked what he considered heavily infested country he said, "Well, not under 100 tons of pear to the acre"; but I think there is a lot of much heavier-infested country than that in Queensland. That would reduce the cost of clearing the pear to a very low figure for a start; but something more is necessary in the way of saving by-products. The engineer admitted that he could improve the machine so that all the liquid from the ground green leaves could have been conserved in tanks. That would yield .5 per cent. of alcohol for power spirit. Then the residuum could be used for various purposes. Mixed with other better feed, it could be used as a cattle fodder, or it might be used for a commercial product to take the place of light timber. Another man who was interested in the question approached

me about the same time, and, after discussion, I said to him, "If I wanted to deal with the prickly-pear, I would try to make it into some useful article that could be sold at a profit. Why don't you experiment on the lines of compressing the residuum into light boards for partitioning or roofing purposes?" He went away, and some time after he came back and showed me a piece of millboard made out of prickly-pear fibre. According to the Bureau of Science and Industry, 100 tons of green prickly-pear is capable of producing 1 ton of fibre, so that, on the average, 1 ton of fibre capable of being supplied for the manufacture of the coarser classes of paper or millboard could be produced to the acre of pear. This man had a board about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick and some 6 inches square. That is only one product of the pear. Any engineer knows that from the waste products of various manufactures you can manufacture compressed fibre which can be used for skids, brake blocks, and gearing wheels; and it is quite possible that from the prickly-pear fibre we could make compressed blocks and wheels for machinery purposes equal to the fibrite or ironite that we get from America. I would suggest to the Government and to the mover of the motion it is worth while offering a big reward for ideas of machines like these. It is no good with a question of this sort. Every year the pear is spreading very fast. Big areas of country that fourteen or fifteen years ago were absolutely clear of pear are now badly infested. The big agencies of infestation are the creeks and rivers, and what is worse, the sea.

Mr. PETERSON: The crow.

Mr. HARTLEY: The crow is responsible to a certain extent, but it does not do one-half as much in spreading the pest as water. In a recent trip along the coast I landed at several places, and was surprised to find the pear growing in most barren and inaccessible places, and the only way in which it could have got there, in my opinion, was by being washed up by the sea. I have seen it growing at high-water mark in the sand. Unless the problem is grappled with soon, it will not be worth grappling with at all, because it will be too big and too expensive to grapple with. In view of the seriousness of the menace, it is worth while paying to get something efficient, effective, and speedy to cope with the pest, and we must be prepared to pay men for the use of their brains and their industry. The inventor of the machine to which I have referred informed me that he has had nothing but discouragement ever since he started. He is a working engineer, and he had a blacksmith for a mate and his son. He had experienced nothing but discouragement, both from the New South Wales Government and from this Government. Seeing the real danger there is from the pear, it is absolutely surprising that our department are so much asleep as to have allowed this man to go without some assistance and encouragement. Lethargic departmental methods are not suited for dealing with the ideas of men 50 per cent. smarter than the departmental officers. A board consisting of commercial, manufacturing, and mechanical experts should be appointed to deal with all suggestions for the eradication or the utilisation of prickly-pear. The engineer I have mentioned informed the department that he had a larger machine in New South Wales, and he afterwards went

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down to that State and improved that machine. He wanted to get it up here, and the best that our State department could offer him was a pass for himself and his mate, and an offer to pay the freight on the machine from Wallangarra to Dulacca. That was not enough. The man was broke. I suppose, like every other engineer with an invention, he was fairly married to it, and had put all his money into it. So the machine is down in New South Wales—a big machine capable of clearing 7 acres of pear per day, and at the same time drawing a set of disc ploughs behind it to plough in the residue of the crushed pear if it is wanted for manure, and the man is away in the North of Queensland working to try to get a few more "bob" to get his experiment on the market. If the Government will not take it up, it is my opinion that it is a good proposition for a syndicate who will get together and see if they cannot make a deal with the man to perfect his machine, put it on the market, and send it round the country. I am satisfied that there is a good thing in it. I want to recommend the Government to take the matter up. I think that they should offer a reward of £5,000 to any man who could invent a machine, or bring forward a perfected machine or method of clearing pear from land so as to bring the cost of clearing down to somewhere near the value of the land. And they should not only offer a reward for the perfected machine, but a smaller amount to any man who brought forward a suggestion that would go some way towards solving the problem and to assist him to build his machine or experiment with his method. I am satisfied that if any Government will take up the question on these lines, they will find there is in Queensland brains and ability sufficient to bring forward some method or machine that will very soon place in their hands a way of dealing with this great menace to the agricultural and pastoral land of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): There is no doubt that in the prickly-pear question we are up against as big a problem as has ever confronted any people. I am very glad indeed that the hon. member for Murilla went to so much trouble in bringing this question before the public and the House again. (Hear, hear!) I am glad to know, too, that some members of the opposite side seem ready to deal with this matter in a fairly practical way. (Hear, hear!) The thing that does trouble one is that whilst we are discussing a matter of such moment not one member of the Cabinet is present to help it forward. Many things have been said and many suggestions made with regard to the means of eradication, but still we are apparently entirely in the dark, we are still groping, still trying to find a way to deal with this greatest of menaces.

At fifteen minutes past 4 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I call your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I have been in the House for about ten or eleven years, and from that day to this every year has witnessed some effort in the direction of bringing this matter before the Chamber and the country. But we are still in the same position as we were then: in fact, we have gone from bad to worse. I think it is to be lamented that when a matter of such

moment is being discussed hon. members, and members of the Cabinet, too, absent themselves from the Chamber. It is a real live matter and it is for every man who has the wellbeing of his country at heart to consider means and offer suggestions, to ventilate the question with the object of ascertaining what can be done. I believe that the hon. member for Fitzroy has made a suggestion which should be acted upon immediately. I believe the whole country will meet with any Government who are ready to spend money in investigating this matter. The hon. member made the suggestion that some £5,000 might be expended.

Mr. HARTLEY: You did not get that quite right. I suggested a reward of £5,000 to a man who brings forward a successful invention.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Well, I will call it a reward for the introduction of machinery which will prove successful in dealing with the pear menace. We might spend £5,000 in that direction, not that it by any means would meet the case. The great trouble with pear is that the very worst of it is growing in densely timbered areas, and until the timber is cut down it will be next to impossible to cope with the pear. We require not only machinery; there is room for scientific investigation into the matter. Unfortunately, the man who has attempted to clear pear land finds that after he has cleared it he is pretty well as far off a solution of the difficulty as when he commenced. We all remember that during the trying time of 1902 or 1903, when unemployment was rife, a great many men were put on the land to clear pear. Land was cleared in my district at anything from £5 per acre upwards, and I know that according to the returns which were published subsequently land somewhere near Dalby cost as much as £22 an acre to clear, and that land is just about as bad to-day as it was then. We have not done with it when we have cleared it once, and nothing but following it up with occupation, the utilisation of the land under the plough, is going to be effective. The hon. member for Murilla will bear me out when I say that I have had land cleared not less than half a dozen times, and yet the pear is still a menace. Until you can get the plough into the land and bring about close settlement the matter of dealing with pear is a forlorn hope. The case is so serious that it is right for every man to demand that the Administration of the day should take it in hand. I believe that if you were to say, "double your national debt and clear your country of pear" you could not do it for the amount. If you did clear it for that amount, in another five years it would be as bad again. This is a matter which is open for the keenest scientific investigation and the country is calling for it rapidly. Unless earnest representations like those of the hon. member for Murilla and the hon. member for Fitzroy are listened to, our country in time will be entirely overrun. This is not a party matter; it is a great national matter, and it calls for the earnest attention of every man who has the wellbeing of his country at heart. I believe that, as we clear the pear, we must people the land. We have to inspire confidence and induce people to come from abroad and settle upon the land so that, once the land is clear, they will put forward their best efforts in the direction of keeping it clear. A good deal

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has been said from time to time, and efforts were made by Mr. Roberts at Dulacca in the direction of testing the value of the pear commercially. He seemed to prove to the entire satisfaction of the people of Queensland that there was in it a valuable asset in the way of potash. We have gone no further forward in that direction. What is in the way of developing that I do not know, but doubtless the department are in touch with that matter. That there is an asset of some value by burning the pear is undoubted, and if we could introduce means for dealing with it in that direction, we would be doing a double service, because we would be finding an article which is in demand the world over. I hope that what has been said will not fall on deaf ears, but that the Government will give earnest attention to the matter, and when the Treasurer comes down this year with his Estimates provision will be made in some direction for dealing with this, the most important matter which to-day confronts us so far as concerns the question of our landed estate.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): The prickly-pear pest, to my mind, is a national danger. (Hear, hear!) I have no hesitation in saying that the amount which has been lost in the value of Crown land, and the amount of money spent in clearing the pest would be greater than the whole of the war burden incurred by the Commonwealth of Australia in connection with the great war through which we have just passed.

MR. BEBBINGTON: Quite right.

HON. J. G. APPEL: There is no question about it, but we do not seem to recognise the danger that exists and is increasing. This matter has been brought up from time to time in this House. It has never been treated as a party question. Members on both sides of the House have drawn attention to this great danger, and yet the prickly-pear grows; the country is being covered and rendered practically valueless. The motion of the hon. member for Murilla does not altogether suggest that the State should undertake the whole of the destruction of the pear. I take it that it can be approached from two phases—the duty of the State so far as the State asset is concerned, and the duty of private owners so far as their properties are concerned. To my mind, it is absolutely criminal—I go so far as to say that—to allow private owners to permit their land to become and be infested with prickly-pear.

MR. G. P. BARNES: Or even leaseholders.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, leaseholders, too.

MR. BERTRAM: Why did not the Government of which you were a member do something on those lines?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am going to mention that. I placed legislation on the statute-book dealing with it so far as compulsion in regard to private land, both freehold and leasehold, was concerned.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Only £5,000 a year.

HON. J. G. APPEL: As I stated from the Treasury bench, as much as was necessary would be provided to subsidise the local authorities for the purpose of carrying out the necessary expenditure to cope with the pear so far as they were concerned. Legislation exists so far as private owners are concerned. We all, more or less, have had the opportunity of seeing fertile grass land

absolutely clear of pear a few years ago. A year, or possibly two, thereafter, an isolated clump appears. A year or two later it is thicker, and a year or two after that it is covered and practically useless. Personally, I cannot understand the owners of private lands permitting their lands to become infested. It is a marvel to me that it is so.

MR. PETERSON: They leave it grow even on small areas.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is so. There is one paddock most of us have seen lying on the left-hand side of the line between Warwick and Wallangarra. A few years ago there was not a pear in that beautiful grazing country. I remember when isolated clumps appeared. Now they are thicker, and I dare say in a year or two the land will be absolutely valueless. Yet there is the machinery to compel owners of private lands to clear the land and keep it clear.

MR. PETERSON: But how can you force them, when the Government do not do their part?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am dealing with one phase, the duty of private owners. All the powers and authorities are vested in the Home Department for that purpose. The worst feature, to my mind, is that there are private owners who keep their land clear, and yet, owing to the negligence of adjoining owners, the menace is always with them, and they are compelled from month to month and year to year to expend money in connection with its eradication from their land which they desire to keep clean. The Executive can put into force the powers they possess to compel private owners to keep their land clear, and to insist upon local authorities keeping the roads clear, assisting them by means of subsidies. We will then, to a small extent, cope with this menace which exists everywhere. Even in municipalities in the immediate neighbourhood of Brisbane it is being permitted to grow.

MR. PETERSON: You can see it growing up on Dornoch terrace.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You can see it growing in the town of Hamilton on some of the finest locations. To my mind, it is not alone an absolute discredit to the local authorities, but it is not a credit to the Home Department, which should insist upon seeing that the legislation that has been provided is carried into effect. The hon. member for Fitzroy spoke about islands which he had visited recently where pear is growing. I will mention one beautiful island which I hope at some future date will become one of the national pleasure grounds for the people of Queensland. That is Peel Island. Four years ago there was not a sign of prickly-pear on Peel Island. To-day in a bay known as the Horseshoe Bay, where there is one of the most beautiful beaches to be seen on any island in Morston Bay or elsewhere, and where there is beautiful water, just above high-water mark, pear has firmly established itself, and is growing all round. It has floated there from other islands, also the property of the State, and above this beautiful fringe of beach it is flourishing. The pest is gradually increasing there, and is spreading to the high lands of the island.

MR. MORGAN: St. Helena is almost covered with it, except just round the prison.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If that is so, that must have happened recently. The pear was there, but it was dealt with. I venture to

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say that if some steps are not taken to check the spread of the prickly-pear, Peel Island will become infested to such an extent that it will cost a large sum of money to eradicate the pear. There is also pear on Stradbroke Island. On that island there are persons who hold occupation licenses, and a condition of their lease is that no pear or other pest shall be allowed to grow on the [4.30 p.m.] land. But no action is taken to enforce that condition. The pear is growing and spreading, and if cattle break the pear, as they do sometimes, it floats to other places.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would it be fair to put the burden of eradicating prickly-pear on private landowners when we cannot keep our Crown lands clean?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am coming to that presently. The pear can be dealt with in its earlier stages, but, unfortunately, the local authorities are taking no action to compel landowners to deal with the pear. All around Brisbane we can see prickly-pear growing. Should that be allowed? Should not the local authorities insist upon the eradication of that pear, and, failing action on the part of the local authorities, should not the department which has the control of local authorities, and which has the power in its hands, force the local authorities to carry out the work of eradication? At the present moment the pear is growing in small patches in several localities, as it was in the Western and Central districts some years ago. Prickly-pear grows everywhere; it will grow in soil in which practically nothing else will flourish; it grows on rocks, and everywhere, and the trouble is that our fauna are active distributors of the seed of the pest. The menace has now reached such proportions that I realise it would be impossible for the State at the present moment to eradicate it from those areas which are absolutely infested. But action should be taken to quarantine, so to speak, those areas—to fence them in.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Cultivate a ring round them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is so. Fence them in from the rest of the country, and see that the Crown lands outside that ring are kept clean, and that the owners of land and leaseholders in the neighbourhood are compelled to keep their properties clean. The matter is one which will have to be attacked. There are a lot of suggested methods for destroying the pear, but the theories, when put into effect, have, unfortunately, proved valueless. The hon. member for Fitzroy has mentioned a machine which, to a certain extent, deals with the plant as it grows, but that machine can only be used in certain country.

Mr. HARTLEY: No; it can be used in mountainous and rough country.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am referring to the coastal districts, which are becoming infested—districts such as that between the electorate of Albert and the electorate of Fassifern. The land in some places has become so thickly infested that you cannot pass through it; the pear has been allowed to increase until it has become a serious danger. People see the pear, they recognise the danger, and yet nothing is done to check the pest from spreading.

Mr. HARTLEY: The wind carries the seed.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, and the seed is also washed down from the higher lands to the lowlands. I cannot understand the

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carelessness of the owners of land in permitting the pest to start on their properties, because they must realise that ultimately their properties will be absolutely destroyed. It should be the duty of the State to prevent the spread of the pest, even if it cannot at the present moment tackle the problem of clearing country which is absolutely infested. The hon. member for Warwick has mentioned one cure for the evil, and that is closer settlement.

Mr. PETERSON: If a man takes up 20 acres of infested land, do you believe in giving him the full right to that land?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, I believe that a man who tackles a prickly-pear selection should not alone get the land, but should also get a bonus. I have seen prickly-pear selections, and I can only say that the man who takes up such a selection has the heart of a lion. I know cases in which applications have been made to the Lands Department for an extension of a period of the lease, the applicants indicating their preparedness to undertake the eradication of the prickly-pear; but the department have refused to extend the period, and the land has simply been thrown up.

Mr. PETERSON: Don't you think that giving those people the right to the land would be one method of dealing with the pest?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Undoubtedly. If the State can get its land cleared by giving an extension of the lease of prickly-pear selections, it should give that extension. I would allow a man to have such land without paying any rent at all. I think that is one method that should be adopted for dealing with the pest. This, surely, is not a party question. When we are dealing with a national danger, we cannot approach it from a party standpoint. Every Government has been negligent in this matter.

Mr. PETERSON: We have not tried the cheapest way—giving the settler the land that he clears.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I can only say that if any member of the community is prepared to tackle the problem of eradicating prickly-pear from Crown lands, every latitude and every inducement should be given him for that purpose, for every clearing of a piece of land, however small its area may be, confers a national benefit. The area that is infested is a breeding-ground for the spread of the pear over land that is not infested. As suggested by the hon. member for Normanby, the cheapest method should be adopted; but let us try every method, and let us pursue the object in view with an earnest desire to cope with the danger.

Mr. PETERSON: The time for talking is over.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Absolutely. What I would impress on the Government is that they should deal with their own property—with valuable reserves which are beginning to be infested. As mentioned by the hon. member for Fitzroy, the prickly-pear drifts from one island to the other along our coast. We have some beautiful islands along our coast which are becoming infested.

Mr. HARTLEY: And the coast is getting badly infested.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I came across islands a few years ago which were beauty spots and valuable for grazing and other purposes, but to-day they are covered with prickly-pear and are of no value. The State should

insist upon those who hold occupation licenses carrying out the conditions for the eradication of the pear. If they are prepared to cope with the pest, they should be given extended periods of occupation as a return for the cost of eradication. I may be blamed and abused for saying so, but I think the local authorities should be compelled to carry out the law on our statute-books, and the Home Department, which has the administration of the Local Authorities Act, should insist on the local authorities doing so. The subsidies which were given to local authorities for clearing roads and reserves should be resumed, and every attempt should be made to check the menace, which is a national danger, and one which will cost the State vast sums of money in connection with Crown lands. The subject can only be dealt with in one way, and that is by the closer settlement of the country. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): It has been said of the prickly-pear that it is like a tin of fish—you no sooner get rid of it than it starts to come up again. I think that is why it is such a terrible pest. It is not the first clearing only. The hon. member for Murilla will bear me out in the statement that the people who cleared land about twelve years ago have to go on clearing it again. It is an ever-present evil. The first duty of any Government is to circumvent the curse—to get on the outside of it. If we look at the map on the wall, which I suppose is about twenty years old, we shall see that it gives a very inadequate conception of the position to-day. The prickly-pear extends over hundreds of miles at a stretch. It is a plague that we cannot attempt under present conditions to stamp out, but we can get on the outside of it and prevent it from spreading. I hold, from the result of experimenting with the pest, that the ordinary methods in vogue at the present time are not adequate to deal with it. Several hundreds of tons of prickly-pear grow to the acre, and under present rates of wages, or even under any scale of wages, the pear could not be handled. The value of the prickly-pear land would, I suppose, be about £2 per acre.

Mr. MORGAN: Less.

Mr. WARREN: The good pear land I would estimate at about £2 per acre. It is useless tackling the inferior land; it could not be tackled commercially. The question is a national one. The better land under prickly-pear could be tackled under certain conditions. I maintain that it is the duty of the Government to put some of the methods suggested into operation. I was struck by what the hon. member for Fitzroy said with regard to the machine for taking the wet out of the pear and reducing it to a pulp, and I do not see why that could not be done successfully. I do not see why, under proper conditions, the wood pulp could not be used for fruit cases. We in the fruit areas are badly in need of fruit cases. This is a method which is well worthy of the consideration of the suggested board. After all, the trouble of past Governments has been that they have been ruling this matter themselves, and have been ruling it out every time. It does not matter what Government has been in power, they have always been afraid to spend a few pounds in any legitimate attempt. We have the method of rolling the pear for agricul-

tural purposes, which we all know is more or less successful. There is a man on the Moonie River, near Chinchilla, who is growing good crops on land that he has rolled. He has got a roller, with a side-draught, and he draws it with bullocks. This cannot be done in timber country, but the timber can be taken off and the land made into good agricultural land. I do not know that this prickly-pear land will grow wheat. Any country with the amount of potash in it that this land would have, and the same rainfall, would grow wheat. It would, undoubtedly, grow wheat for the first few years, but whether it would be a good commercial undertaking I do not profess to know. The board can make experiments in this respect, and we can be guided by the results. If a common-sense business board of this description is brought into being, there will be some definite attempt made to combat the pest. There are many boards to-day that we could well get rid of without any loss, but a board of this description would be worth its weight in gold. There has been a lot said about private owners keeping their land clear, but if you have a stock road or a reserve alongside, or a neighbour who has no desire to keep his land clear, it is almost impossible through good and bad years to keep the pear down. It is asking too much from a man to do it. I think the Government in the past has been pursuing a very foolish policy in putting men on pear country. There are places around Chinchilla where men have been put into dense pear country, not knowing anything of the nature of the curse, and they have worked months and months in trying to eradicate the pear from their little blocks. They have lost the little money they had and have become broken-hearted and pretty nearly insane, and have then left. Any man who knows anything about this awful pest can quite understand a man who is battling with the pear becoming broken-hearted, because bad seasons, bush fires, or any of the other troubles that visit the selector, are not half as bad as this ever-present prickly-pear. I am very pleased that hon. members on both sides of the House, almost without exception, are approaching this matter from a national standpoint. I consider that it is a national matter and one for the Federal Government to undertake, but at the same time if the Federal Government do not do their duty in the matter it is up to the State Government to do something.

Mr. PAYNE: How much would it cost to clear all the pear?

Mr. WARREN: That question is absolutely outside what we are considering this day. Anybody who would answer that question would be fit for the lunatic asylum. It would cost millions to clear the land of prickly-pear, but because we cannot clear all the land of prickly-pear that does not say we should sit down and do nothing. If the Government of Queensland will undertake to do something and give those who have been battling for years a helping hand, I am sure that some good will result. I heard one hon. member speak about giving the land to those men. I say that the man who takes up a prickly-pear block, even on the gift racket, does not know what he is doing. Very few of those who took up prickly-pear land have ever succeeded in clearing the pear. Some of them succeeded in running cattle on the land and in eking out an

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existence, but very rarely. Take the pear-infested areas of Dalby, Chinchilla, and Dulacca. I think there is hardly an instance where the settler has made a success on that per land. Even though a man spends money in eradicating the pear, in a few years the pear comes up so thick that in the end it crushes him, and this crushing process has been going on year after year. I have been out in the West for something like thirteen years and I have seen hundreds and hundreds of men in my time go off the land. Some of those smaller selections around Chinchilla, which were settled with the assistance of the late Hon. J. T. Bell, are now almost covered with prickly-pear, unless it be the small areas that are cultivated. It is high time something was done to stop the spread of this pest.

Mr. FAYNE: What do you suggest?

Mr. WARREN: I would ask the Government to follow out, in one respect at any rate, the suggestion of the hon. member for Fitzroy. I would ask the Government to seriously consider the question of appointing a board, and also offering a reward; not a thousand or two, but £100,000. In America they do things in a different way to what we do them here. Sometimes we do not admire what they do, but when they go in for big things we do admire them, and if any method of destroying prickly-pear was discovered, even if it cost a million of money it would be cheaply bought. I would ask the Government to consider suggestions of the hon. member for Fitzroy, and, if they do that, I am quite sure that good will result.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I would like to compliment the hon. member for Murilla on bringing this matter before the House. This is a question that is of greater interest to the people of Queensland, probably than a great many of the people in the cities think. Twenty years ago I selected a prickly-pear selection of 40 acres in the Warwick district. It was thickly infested with pear, and it cost me up to £10 an acre to clear those 40 acres, and every year since I have had to send my man round to clear the young growth. I would like to explain to the House the encouragement that I and others have had to clear prickly-pear. Immediately the Land Tax Act was passed, a Government valuer from the Land Tax Department valued this particular land. I may tell you that I selected the land at £2 an acre under twenty years' terms, and the Land Tax Commissioner valued it some four years ago at £4 an acre. If any person in Queensland wishes to inspect that particular 40 acres, he is quite at liberty to do so, and I can assure you that there is not one bit of pear growing on that area. The hon. member for Albert mentioned that the local authorities were not doing their duty in connection with the clearing of prickly-pear, but there are some exceptions. I can mention one local authority which has expended £4,000 during the past few years in eradicating pear; that is the Rosenthal Shire Council. Not only have they done that, but for the last two years that council have kept a gang of about six men employed in eradicating pear on private land. The owners of private land receive notice to clear their pear within a certain time, and if they fail to employ men to clear the pear, the Rosenthal Shire Council sends their own gang and clear the pear at the owner's expense. The Glengallan Shire Council are going somewhat

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the same, and they have cleared almost all the prickly-pear within their area. The Allora and Clifton shire councils are also doing the same, and if the Government did their duty it would certainly assist to keep the pear down in the different centres.

Mr. GILDAY: What about the big holdings?

Mr. GRAYSON: Some time ago I travelled with the hon. member for Balonne to Dirranbandi, and it was a crying shame to see the way in which the pastoralists had allowed the prickly-pear to spread on those magnificent lands—the best grazing land in Queensland. I passed through that particular district twenty years previously with a mob of travelling sheep, and at that time there was not a single bit of prickly-pear in that magnificent district. But the pastoral lessees, particularly the Australian Pastoral Company—I mention the Australian Pastoral Company particularly, as that is one of the largest pastoral companies we have in Queensland—have allowed thousands and thousands of acres of the most magnificent land we have in Queensland to become ruined. It is a criminal action on the part of the pastoral lessees to allow that land to go to waste through that means. They take up land, and make no effort to keep the land clear of prickly-pear. The blame for that should be attached to the Lands Department. The law provides that the pastoral lessees must keep their land clear of prickly-pear, and if a pastoral lessee allows his land to become infested with prickly-pear, his lease should be cancelled, the land cut into small areas, and people who will clear the pear allowed to settle on those areas. When there is only a clump of the pear here and there, it is very easily coped with. I have a freehold grazing property of 1,800 acres, on which there were isolated patches of pear. I sent out a couple of men with a dray, [5 p.m.] and in about a fortnight they cleared the whole area, and it is quite clear to-day. Had I not taken that precaution, I am sure the land would now be thickly infested. My own belief is that the only way of dealing with the pest is by closer settlement. I do not blame this Government any more than the last Government. If previous Governments had been prepared to give men their title deeds, provided they kept the land clear for a period, say, of five years, the area under pear would be much less to-day than it is. The matter deserves the serious consideration of the Government. Prickly-pear is like cancer. It is spreading night and day, and I believe it has spread more rapidly within the last two or three years than ever before. While the Liberal Government were in power, they allowed local authorities who cleared the pear in Government reserves that were not required for local purposes to sell those reserves, and to recoup themselves for their outlay from the proceeds. I would like to know if the present Government are prepared to adopt a similar scheme. There are many reserves that are not required for local purposes, and a good deal of clearing could be done in that way. I am quite in favour of the suggestion made by the hon. member for Fitzroy that a commission should be appointed.

Mr. HARTLEY: Not a commission, but a consultative board.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am quite in favour of the appointment of a board of capable men to take evidence in each district and submit

a report to the Government, and then the Government would have something to act upon.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is not what I want. I want a board that will consider all suggestions for dealing with the pear, and that would advance money to enable suggestions to be put into operation.

Mr. GRAYSON: If the Government were to offer a reward even of £5,000, I do not think it would give much relief. If we want to cope with the pear, we must encourage men in prickly-pear country to clear the land; and one means of encouraging them would be to give them their title deeds, provided they cleared the land within a certain time. Then, again, I consider it is the duty of the Government to subsidise the local authorities £1 for £1 for clearing the prickly-pear on public roads and reserves. I trust that the Government will consider the suggestions that have been made during the debate, and I am sure this discussion will do good.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): There is no doubt that previous Governments have handed down a great curse to the present Government in the shape of great areas of prickly-pear infested country. I have taken some interest in the prickly-pear problem. I visited Dulacca on three occasions, and I am quite satisfied that Mr. Roberts's scheme is not going to deal with the prickly-pear. I do not think that a lot of talk, and a lot of suggestions will do any good. The whole trouble is that it will cost five or six times more than most of the prickly-pear land is worth to clear it by any method at present known. Some scheme will have to be devised whereby the pest can be dealt with without overcapitalising the value of the land. The hon. member for Murilla struck the nail on the head the other afternoon when he suggested the introduction of some insect, or some disease, that would destroy the pear, because in no other way are we likely to get rid of the pest, and at the same time make the land available for settlement. Hon. members on the other side talk about closer settlement as a remedy. The Public Works Commission, when inspecting the route for a railway from Juandah to Taroom, which is frightfully heavily infested country, took sworn evidence from settlers in the district that, after the railway was built from Miles to Juandah, the infested land was abandoned by the selectors, so that I do not think that either railways or closer settlement are likely to get rid of the pear.

Mr. MORGAN: Not in heavily-infested country

Mr. PAYNE: We had evidence that in some cases men had spent all the money they had in clearing the pear and then got disgusted with the whole thing, and left the land. You could not get one man in that whole district to say that, if a railway was built from Juandah to Taroom, he would take up 1 acre of land. They all said they would not have it if the Government gave it to them for nothing. Consequently, I do not think that running railways through prickly-pear country, combined with closer settlement, will enable us to cope with the pear. I do not think there is anything in that idea. Some scheme will have to be adopted whereby the land will not be greatly over-capitalised through getting rid of the pear. I have noticed that in districts where the wild cochineal insect has been operating

on the variety known as the tree pear—I do not know the scientific name—that species of pear has been absolutely wiped out. What is wanted is to discover some insect or disease that will deal in a similarly effective manner with the common variety of pear. Previous Governments are responsible for the spread of the pear. I have been told that, when the late Government bought Juandah Station some years ago, the pear on the property could have been cleared for a very small sum. You could not clear it to-day for millions of pounds, and even if you did the property would not be worth one-twentieth of the cost of getting rid of the pear. I think that if hon. members are in earnest, instead of talking about boards and closer settlement, they should devote their attention to the introduction of some pest that would destroy the pear. I am satisfied that closer settlement is not going to get rid of the pear unless in some favoured place close to the city where there is very good land, because you can get nobody to go on to the land to clear it. I am in favour of the Government doing all they can, because I recognise just as much as any hon. member the tremendous curse it is to Queensland, and, unfortunately, every year you allow it to run it is covering thousands and thousands of acres, and in a very short time three-fourths of the State will be infested. If something could be done to discover a means of getting rid of it cheaply, I think the difficulty would be solved.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): As mover of the motion, I am very pleased with the debate that has taken place. Members on both sides have endeavoured to consider it from a non-party point of view, and have endeavoured to suggest some means of dealing with the pest.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Are you replying on the motion?

Mr. MORGAN: I am replying. I am sorry that the Government did not set apart a Minister to devote some attention to the debate. A short time ago, we had the spectacle of not one of the Ministers being in the Chamber. I am very pleased to see the Premier here now, but at one particular time the Ministerial bench was absolutely vacant.

The PREMIER: It is all in "Hansard." I read "Hansard" every morning. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: I am very pleased to know that the Premier reads it all in "Hansard." I would suggest that the members on both sides who are keen upon something being devised should meet together, and after arriving at some conclusion as to the way in which they think the matter should be dealt with from a non-party point of view, then wait as a deputation upon the Premier. From a meeting of men on both sides who are broad-minded enough to recognise the importance of the whole matter I think some good would result. I had the pleasure of witnessing the machine mentioned by the hon. member for Fitzroy when it was being demonstrated at Dulacca, and I came to the conclusion that if the owners had sufficient money to make it stronger and improve it in certain directions, it would certainly be a machine that would be of great benefit to the State on certain lands, in open spaces where it could be put up against the pear as when I saw it, but not on densely timbered country where

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it would be impossible to use it. No doubt, it was capable of doing good work, but it was not powerful enough for general use. In my opinion, if the Government had assisted those men to the extent of some hundreds of pounds, or what was necessary to perfect the machine, much good would have resulted.

Mr. HARTLEY: They have improved it—made it much bigger and heavier.

Mr. MORGAN: I promised those gentlemen that I would do all I could to assist them, but they said that they had members on the Government side here doing their best to get assistance. I am sorry they failed to get consideration from the Government. They are not the only ones. Unfortunately, when a man comes along with an invention, he is generally told, "There is some land up at Dulacca. We will give you a free railway pass. Go up and demonstrate." That is practically all that is done by the Government of to-day, and, similarly, that was done by Governments in the past. So far as a reward is concerned, when the late Mr. Bell was Minister for Lands we had a reward of £10,000 offered for years and years, but it was never claimed.

Mr. HARTLEY: Make it £20,000, then.

Mr. MORGAN: That was for something that would clear pear cheaply and effectively.

Mr. HARTLEY: But while you offer a reward you want to give assistance to the people who invent machines.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly. That is the point I want to make. When men come along and demonstrate that they have something which is most likely to prove successful, they should get assistance from a fund for the purpose. I am with the hon. member for Fitzroy in that matter. The hon. member for Mitchell says that settlement will not clear pear. I admit that, but closer settlement will put people on land that is already clear of pear, and then there is no reason why that land should not be kept free from it. To run a railway into dense pear land will not have the desired effect, because we have pear from Dalby right out to Charleville, you might say, adjoining railways, and roads, and towns, and nobody is prepared to take it up. But if a railway were run from Juandah through the dense pear to the land to the north of Taroom which is capable of closer settlement, that land would be saved from infestation. We have not for one moment expected that the railway would clear the land between Juandah and Taroom, but what we do say, and I think it will be admitted by all, is, that when a railway is run to Taroom, it will save the land to the north.

Mr. PAYNE: The evidence was that they could keep that land clear without a railway.

Mr. MORGAN: Unfortunately, the evidence was to that effect, but results have not proved it to be true, because I can tell the hon. member that it has not been kept clear. It is gradually, year by year, infesting the land more thickly, as land alongside pear is always infested, until it will not be long before you will have a dense mass of pear from Taroom to Springsure. I do not wish to speak longer on this motion. It is evidently recognised by members on both sides that it will be carried unanimously, and

in that event I do not think it would be wrong for members to meet. In fact, I would ask members on both sides who have taken an interest in the pear question to meet for the purpose of arriving at some decision, and then waiting upon the Premier. It is a most important matter. We often discuss matters in this Chamber for days and days and nights and nights, but not one matter that has been brought up during the last ten years is, in my opinion, of such importance as the spread of prickly-pear.

Mr. PAYNE: Certainly not more important.

Mr. MORGAN: The feeding ground of this great seaport, the capital city of Queensland, is being gradually eaten away. Right out as far as Charleville, as the map indicates, there is pear, and it is gradually spreading throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. It is spreading night and day, while we sleep, while we debate, while we talk of unemployment, and numerous other matters. Nobody knows that more than the members of the Public Works Commission. I feel sure the members of that Commission recognise, as I do, that the pear is something which should immediately be tackled. It is no use saying it is such a great question. It is admittedly the greatest of questions we have to face, and that any Government will have to face. That it has been neglected in the past is no reason why, now that we have our eyes opened, there should be neglect in the future. We should first of all establish a buffer area, and prevent the pear from encroaching upon land outside that area. We should next get rid of the pear from the comparatively clean areas, then tackle the lightly infested country, and eventually get on to the heavily infested country. By that time, some disease or insect may come to our assistance. Simply because we have not now a disease or an insect is no reason why we should not do anything. The Land Act requires to be amended. At present a man may take up a 1,200 acre block, and be able to clear only 500 acres. His time expires, and he is brought before the Land Court, and told that if he does not clear the balance within a certain time he will have to forfeit. He allows the pear to grow on the 500 acres he has cleared. He says "I will take all I can get out of the land. I cannot fulfil the conditions, and I will allow the pear to grow on the portion I have already cleared." That is what is being done day after day. What I would suggest, is that if that man held what is known as a prickly-pear selection, giving him the right to the freehold over the land in forty years if he keeps it clear, the Government should allow the Act to apply to the 500 acres he has cleared, and is going to keep clear. Let the area he has cleared be free of rental for fifty years. Do something, and do it before the termination of this session, to prevent those men leaving the land, so that that vast area which in the aggregate would amount to perhaps millions of acres, where the pear has been cleared, would be kept clear—as it would if the man had a more secure tenure. That is something we can meet together and debate, something that can be done this session. The ex-Minister for Lands (Mr. Hunter) promised that something of that sort would be done. Unfortunately, it has not been done. This session, we want an amendment of the Land Act, so as to give those people a security over the land they have already cleared, to encourage

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them, and keep them on the land, not allow them to forfeit it, as it is being forfeited to the extent of millions of acres, and eventually taking it up under occupation license which does not provide for the clearing of pests of any description. I hope this motion will now be put, and that it will be carried unanimously by this House.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*): I am sorry that the mover of the motion got up so quickly to reply, because I wanted to have a few words on the question of prickly-pear. That question is not new to the House. Having the honour of being on the Public Works Commission, I had the opportunity of seeing the biggest part of Queensland, and I realise the fact that the prickly-pear pest is going to be a great menace to Queensland if something is not done. From my observation, I find that the extent of the menace is due to the laxity of previous Governments many years ago in allowing large pastoralists to take big areas of country; and immediately the pear started to push them back, of course the Government of the day was good enough to give them other clean lands. Of course the pear kept following them out. No regard was paid to the prickly-pear question. When I was in opposition for three years, I did not find the members of the then Government getting up and saying that they were going to deal effectively with the pear. I admit that during the last six or eight years several attempts have been made to cope with the pear. I also remember that the Denham Government gave something like 200,000 acres to an American company to clear. During the debate on that question several hon. members suggested that it was too much land to give anybody, in order to cope effectively with the pear. I am quite satisfied it is an impossibility for any man to take up a large area and clear the pear.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The area does not matter. It lies there all the same.

Mr. GILDAY: The area does matter. If he takes up a large area he has very little hope of clearing it. Another man who gets 100 acres will have more hope of clearing it. We realise the fact that the pear is there, and the question is how to eradicate it. Mr. Roberts's idea of using arsenic, I think, has been one of the most effective things that we have found in Queensland, using the atomiser or the vaporiser. Unfortunately, arsenic got so dear that it was practically impossible to utilise it during the war. I notice that when the Government are attempting to produce arsenic they are ridiculed by hon. members opposite. I think this Government is doing everything possible to deal with the menace. When they are doing something in that regard they should get encouragement from hon. members opposite.

There is another matter I think we should refer to. I think the hon. member for Cunningham stated that some of these big pastoralists allowed the pear to grow, contrary to the agreement they had entered into. I think that where there is a violation by an individual of an agreement entered into between him and the Government, and it comes under the notice of any member representing that constituency, it is his duty to bring it under the notice of the Government, to see whether something could not be done.

Mr. LAND: They do not take any notice. I have been at them continuously about it for fifteen years.

Mr. GILDAY: They should take notice. If we are going to allow it to go on in that direction, I am afraid that in another twenty or thirty years we will find Queensland thickly infested with prickly-pear. I know that during the last three or four years, at any rate, every attempt has been made to bring about the eradication of the pear. I think hon. members will realise the difficulties which have to be faced owing to the cost of arsenic. On one occasion I saw a gentleman at Dulacca using a very heavy roller made of cement, and it was most effective. He rolled the pear down, ploughed it in, and produced a good crop of wheat on that occasion. That is one way. Of course, that would be all right in countries [5.30 p.m.] where there is not much timber; but there would be a difficulty in using a roller where the timber is in any way heavy. Some of our best lands are infested with prickly-pear, and that is a shame. We have to face the menace, and we should do so in a practical way. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, and I shall conclude by moving an amendment, which is—

“That all the words after the words ‘prickly-pear’ be omitted, with the view of inserting the words ‘and expresses its appreciation at the action of the present Government in taking steps with a view to providing the means for bringing that about.’”

Mr. MORGAN: It is to be regretted that a member should get up and spoil what I think will be admitted has been a useful debate carried on in a non-party spirit. When moving the motion, I particularly claimed that it was not brought forward in any party spirit, and I was congratulated by the Government on the fact that I did not deal with the matter from a party point of view. Now we have an amendment which seeks to make the matter a party one to some extent. The hon. member who has moved the amendment evidently thinks that there is no necessity for legislation to be introduced to provide for the eradication of prickly-pear. Every member on both sides of the House who has spoken has admitted that there is need for such legislation, and we are now asked to carry an amendment thanking the Government for something they have done which is likely to bring about the extermination of the pest. Can any honest man say that anything has been done by the present Government more than has been done by any other Government in connection with this matter? I have already stated that one Government has been just as much to blame as any other Government for their failure to deal with the prickly-pear problem. I stated that every Liberal Government during the last fifty years had failed in its duty in connection with this matter just as the present Government have failed in their duty up to the present time. The hon. member for Ithaca has drawn attention to the fact that the Government have started an arsenic mine. Up to the present moment we have had no result from that enterprise; but even if the enterprise were successful, and the Government gave the people arsenic for nothing, we could not destroy the prickly-pear by that means. Free arsenic will not bring about the destruction of the prickly-pear. We know that from past experience.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You must admit that the cost of arsenic had a lot to do with the experiments which were made.

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Mr. MORGAN: The cost of arsenic had really nothing to do with the matter. When I first came here and took up a prickly-pear selection, arsenic was obtainable at £13 10s. per ton, and at that price it was too dear for the purpose. Can the Government produce arsenic at the State mine for £13 10s. per ton? I am sure they cannot. The Minister for Mines has stated that he thinks they will be able to sell arsenic at £72 per ton, which is £3 less than the current price at present. Arsenic is largely used in making ammunition, and during the war the Federal Government took the control of the whole of the arsenic obtainable in Australia. As I have said, before the war the price of arsenic was £13 10s. per ton, and even if the Government succeed in manufacturing the poison at a cost of £72 per ton, it will still be too expensive to be used in clearing land of prickly-pear. I admit that you can clear land which is lightly infested, and may be cleared at a cost of 2s. or 3s. an acre, but you cannot clear large tracts of pear land by the use of arsenical preparations at present prices. If you could kill the pear by spraying it with water carried from the nearest water-hole to your property, the land so cleared would not be worth the amount of money you would have to spend on the cartage of the water. I admit that past Governments are to blame for the spread of the prickly-pear, owing to the fact that they did not recognise the danger of the menace. But we have the pear to-day, and it is necessary that the Government should face the problem. I do not know whether the Premier has seen the amendment.

The PREMIER: What is the amendment?

Mr. MORGAN: I feel sure that if the hon. gentleman has followed the debate, he will admit that it has been kept free from party politics. The Opposition have not endeavoured to score off the Government, and Government members have not attempted to score off the Opposition. I am quite prepared to allow the motion to go to a vote if the Premier will allow his party to vote according to their consciences. Will the hon. gentleman allow the members of his party to vote in accordance with their wishes if they desire to do so?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not satisfied with that reply. I think the Premier ought to be serious.

The PREMIER: But I am serious. I would not venture to attempt to influence any member sitting on this side. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: I am very serious in connection with this matter.

The PREMIER: Well, I say this: It is not a party question. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MORGAN: I am very pleased to hear that; but, joking apart, we know there are questions which are treated as party questions.

The PREMIER: What is your objection to the amendment?

Mr. MORGAN: There is a lot of objection. Is it not paltry and narrow to try and get political kudos from a motion of this sort? This motion was not moved for the purpose of humiliating the Government. The Premier will agree that it was not brought forward to score off the Government, but to assist the Government in trying to bring about the destruction of this

pest. If the Government succeeds during the next eighteen months in introducing and passing legislation which will stop the spread of the pear and bring about its destruction, it will get more political support by such action than by anything else. I am out to assist the Government in this matter, even if the Government get political support through it, because I recognise that this menace is beyond party politics. I would suggest that members from both sides meet the Premier on this matter as a non-party deputation some time next week or the week after. I know so much from experience about this pest that I shall be only too pleased to help the Government in any way I can. I do not want to score off the Government in any form in connection with the prickly-pear question. I hope that the hon. member for Ithaca will withdraw his amendment, and allow the motion to go through on the voices. If he does that, it will be the ending of a very good debate in connection with this important matter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I very much regret that the hon. member for Ithaca has moved his amendment, because it will compel a party division to be taken on a question which was not brought in as party politics. It only shows that the hon. members who proposed and seconded this amendment do not understand the seriousness of the prickly-pear menace. I regret that members should attempt to shelve this question by trying to prevent legislation which is absolutely necessary to deal with the pest. As the hon. member for Murilla pointed out, there are perhaps hundreds of men who have cleared a portion of their land, and these men have a right to the protection which such legislation can give them.

The PREMIER: But there is no objection to the words in the amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The objection is that it is an attempt to make political capital. I, for one, will vote against the amendment, or against anything tacked on to the motion, which brings it within party politics.

The PREMIER: There is an implication in the motion that the Government has not been doing its duty.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no! Not at all.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not more than any other Government has neglected its duty. All Governments have neglected their duty in this matter.

The PREMIER: Not this Government. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. The hon. member for Albert pointed out that some of the most beautiful islands in the Bay have become infested with prickly-pear since this Government came into power, and that is only in addition to what other Governments have done. The Government cannot have done its duty when these lovely islands are becoming infested with pear. If the Government had done its duty these things would not have occurred. If the hon. member for Ithaca had not moved his amendment, the question would have been agreed to in a friendly non-party spirit, and the blame would not have rested on one Government more than another; but when it is sought to make political capital, and to infer that this Government has done its duty while no other Government has done so, we are compelled to vote against the amendment.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I want to say a few words before the question comes to a vote. I have listened with a good deal of interest to the debate which has taken place, and it is not the first time that I have listened to a debate on the question of prickly-pear since I came to this House. If the passing of resolutions or even the passage of legislation, would do away with prickly-pear, there would be no prickly-pear in Queensland at the present time. Resolution after resolution has been passed, and each time, according to the testimony of the hon. member for Murilla, it was going to prove effective and do great things; yet if there is one thing which would discourage anybody from believing that prickly-pear is likely to be eradicated it was the speech which the hon. member made when he introduced this motion and the speech he made this afternoon in support of it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Why! Members on your side complimented him.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I do not say that he stated anything but facts; facts are stubborn things, and the prickly-pear is a stubborn thing also. On the hon. member for Murilla's own showing, and he has repeated it on other occasions, if you could clear the pear off the land by simply carrying water from a waterhole and watering the pear with it, the land would not be worth clearing even at that cost.

Mr. MORGAN: Is not that correct?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It may be correct—I am accepting the hon. member's statement—and, if so, is it not also a fact that there is not much hope of passing legislation, or even of getting a Government to spend money, to clear prickly-pear?

Mr. MORGAN: You believe in doing nothing?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If the land on which the prickly-pear is growing was worth anything there might be some incentive to spend money in clearing it. Of course, there is land in Queensland which would cost £10 or £15 an acre to clear, but when it is cleared it is worth something; but if this prickly-pear land, on an average, is anything like as poor as what the hon. member has led the House to believe it is, there is not the slightest hope of ever clearing prickly-pear by direct means.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You have to deal with the lightly-infested land on the edge of the thick pear.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The proposition which has been made this afternoon, metaphorically speaking, to put a ring fence round it and isolate it, and then clear the lightly-infested areas, is the proposition that was made years ago by the hon. member for Balonne, when sitting on the other side of the House, and when hon. members opposite were sitting on this side. There can be no question that Governments in days gone by have been to blame, and have been to blame very seriously, for years ago it would have been a much easier proposition to clear the pear in a direct or indirect way, than it is at the present time. Anybody who has been over the country that is infested with pear, as most hon. members have been, knows what it is like, and knows the difficulties that have to be contended with, must know that it is not a simple task. There is not a solitary idea set forth by the hon. member for Murilla that would tend

to encourage even the Government or the individual to have anything at all to do with prickly-pear in the shape of clearing it, not even if the land is only slightly infested. The only speech this afternoon that has given any indication as to how the pear might be dealt with is that of the hon. member for Fitzroy. He certainly got on to an entirely different line to anything I have listened to this afternoon or during the previous debate that took place on this subject. I certainly think that the ideas that he put forward are well worthy of consideration, and I have no hesitation in saying that I am quite satisfied that the Government would be prepared to consider those ideas, whether put forward by that hon. member or by any other individual. I am sure the Government are quite willing to investigate and see whether something cannot be done in that particular direction. If there was any inducement to lead the House to believe that a commercial use could be made of the pear, there might be some encouragement in that direction.

Mr. MORGAN: My speech contained a scheme for making a commercial use of the pear.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes, but the trouble is that such a scheme would cost infinitely more than what could be made out of it. Even to use it in the way suggested or to distil anything from it in the shape of spirits, would cost more than the product is worth. There is room for further investigation being made to see if some mechanical means cannot be discovered to destroy the pear.

Mr. MORGAN: Let us have a vote on the amendment.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: We want a full discussion.

Mr. MORGAN: Private members' day will be abolished after to-day.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It is much easier to give advice than to take it, and the hon. member for Murilla often gives advice, but very seldom takes it. The hon. member for Carnarvon pointed out that some effect had been produced on a certain variety of pear by the cochineal insect. The last time I was in Charters Towers I saw one place where the cochineal insect had destroyed the pear, and if another insect can be introduced that will destroy other varieties of pear, and one that will have the same effect that the cochineal insect has had on this variety of pear, it would solve the problem and solve it more cheaply, more effectively, and much more quickly than anything else possibly could. After all, what is the legislation that the hon. member anticipates, or that he has in his mind when he asks the Government to introduce legislation? I gathered from one point, at any rate, that one idea in his mind is that he is not particularly anxious to deal with prickly-pear, but that he is anxious to secure a point. Although this is a non-party matter, it is quite evident that he wants to get some concession for some of his constituents who, at the present time, reside on prickly-pear selections.

At five minutes to 6 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. CORSER: I move that the question be now put. (Government laughter.) It has been fully debated.

The SPEAKER: The amendment has not been debated for more than half an hour, at the outside.

Hon. W. Lennon.]

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I doubt very much whether the hon. member for Burnett knows what the question is, or knows what the amendment is.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Are you afraid of taking a vote on your own amendment?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Let the hon. member keep his hair on. Do not let him get excited, or we will have to take him out and put a wet towel round his head. Even allowing that the hon. member for Burnett did know what the amendment is, it is evident he does not know much about the Standing Orders, if he thinks he can get this question put and get it carried at the present time. The point I wanted to make is this: That the hon. member for Murilla is, after all, not so much concerned about the prickly-pear as he is about scoring a point somewhere else.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The proposition that he did make was that the prickly-pear selectors in his own electorate should get easier conditions.

Mr. MORGAN: Not in my electorate. Why don't you be fair? There is prickly-pear all over Queensland.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes, but the hon. member holds a special brief for those in his own electorate, and what the hon. member is looking for in this particular legislation is that the conditions under which he and a number of others have taken up those selections should be made easier.

Mr. MORGAN: They need to be made easier.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The conditions have been eased on more than one occasion, and each time it has been in the same direction. There can be no question about the fact that that is the sum and substance of his speech this afternoon.

Mr. CORSER: They are harder than ever now. The selector could get the freehold at one time.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They are easier than ever. Each piece of legislation that has been placed on the statute-book has been in the direction of making the conditions easier for those selectors. What the hon. member wants is that where they have cleared a small area—perhaps one-half or one-quarter of their holding—for them to be able to get rid of the balance, and get a freehold for what they have already cleared.

Mr. MORGAN: Are you against that?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I have been here too long to answer questions of that nature. I am just as sympathetic, and just as much interested in the destruction of prickly-pear in Queensland, and in giving these selectors easy conditions as the hon. member is, but I am satisfied that what the hon. member is seeking to do now is not in the interests of prickly-pear destruction. If the passing of a Bill through this House would help to clear prickly-pear, as I have already said, it would have been cleared long ago. What is wanted is something tangible—something on the lines laid down by the hon. member for Fitzroy. I certainly think that in that direction more than in any other way lies the solution of the trouble, and for that reason the Government are quite prepared to listen to any proposal on those lines.

[*Mr. Winstanley.*]

(At 7 o'clock p.m., the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.)

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I have listened with more than ordinary interest to the debate that has taken place on the Bill, for the simple reason that this is a Bill quite out of the ordinary, and one the like of which has never come before this Chamber on any previous occasion. Whatever may be said or thought about the Bill, or whatever the ultimate result of its passage may be, I think it will be frankly admitted that it is an honest and earnest attempt to deal with a very difficult social and industrial problem; and for that reason it is entitled to receive more than ordinary consideration at the hands of hon. members. I have listened to every speech that has been made on the second reading, and, amongst others, I listened to that of the hon. member for Oxley. The hon. member made a very interesting but, to my mind, somewhat illogical speech. He took a comprehensive view of the subject and tried to see, not merely one side of the question, but both sides. Of course, a man cannot be said ever to master any subject until he has seen not only his own point of view but that of his opponent. The hon. member, however, seemed to me to contradict in one part of his speech what he said in another part. For instance, in dealing with what may, perhaps, be regarded as one of the principles of the Bill, although in another sense it is only a detail—I refer to the levy to be made upon employers—the hon. member pointed out how burdensome this levy would be, and how it was going to injure industry. He said that employers would be unable to bear the levy, which was only one of many grievous burdens placed upon their shoulders, not only so far as the actual financial levy itself was concerned, but also from the point of view of the returns that would have to be furnished and other details. In another part of the hon. member's speech, however, he frankly admitted that in the majority of instances the employers would pass this burden, as he described it, on to someone else. In that case the employers would not be the real payers of the levy, although they might be the nominal payers. The hon. member evidently believes that the employers in this instance will be in the same position as they are in regard to many other demands that are made upon them, which they pass on to the consumers. In this instance, in all probability, they will pass it on to those who work for them. In that case the burden will really become a levy on the industry, and not upon the employers in that industry. Quite a number of other inconsistencies could be cited in the hon. member's speech. I think, too, that some of the causes assigned for unemployment were very small and insignificant in comparison with the real and fundamental causes. One of the things that have been trotted out as the causes of unemployment is the antagonism of the employees to the employing class; another is direct taxation. It is a pity that there should be any antagonism between employers and employees; but it is a sad mistake to put the blame for that antagonism on the employee. There is ample evidence that, in

many instances, the antagonism is the fault of the employer rather than of the employee. Then, so far from direct taxation being a cause of unemployment, in many instances the reverse is the case. Regarded from the abstract point of view, direct taxation is more equitable and more easily traced than indirect taxation. We know who pays a direct tax, whereas in the case of indirect taxation it is difficult to find out who ultimately pays it, and also how much benefit is derived by the State from that form of taxation. In every instance, I think, direct taxation is preferable to indirect taxation, and that, instead of preventing employment, in many cases direct taxation is the means of providing more employment. If there were anything in the contention that direct taxation is responsible for unemployment, then in countries where they have little or no direct taxation one would expect to find no unemployment, and that, where the workers are servile, where they do not go on strike or kick over the traces, and where there is no antagonism between them and the employers, there would be little or no unemployment. Yet everyone knows that that is not so, but that in practically every country in the world there is unemployment. It has been stated that unemployment in this country is largely due to the fact that to a very large extent the people are engaged in primary production. If there is anything in that argument, then in countries where the people are chiefly engaged in secondary production there ought to be less unemployment than in a country dependent on primary production. We know that that is not so, but that unemployment exists the wide world over. The poor, we are told, we have always with us; so is it with unemployment. These so-called causes of unemployment are very small indeed in comparison with the real causes. In quite a number of debates that have taken place in this Chamber during the present session the question of increased production has been raised, and we have listened to discourses upon the necessity for increasing our production. Almost every morning when we take up our papers we see someone or other pointing out the need for increased production, and denouncing the "go-slow" system. I have failed to see, so far, any tangible evidence produced in this Chamber to show that there has been anything like a reduction in our production, or anything to show that there is a "go-slow" movement at work in this country. The question very naturally arises in my mind who is going to derive the benefit of increased production. Some hon. members seem to think that increased production can be brought about by taking the last ounce of energy from the employees in the shape of work. In a great many instances there is a great deal of room for better organisation, for better machinery, and in all probability for more machinery. By the adoption of these and other methods production may be increased. But the question I want to ask is, assuming that production is increased by one-fourth, or by one-half, who is going to get the benefit of that increased production? Invariably we find that, when production is increased, whether by reason of inventions, by the adoption of labour-saving appliances, or by any other means, the workers very rarely get any benefit at all from the increased production.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We offered you a co-operative system, and you turned it down.

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Mr. WINSTANLEY: Hon. members did nothing of the kind. The point I wish to make is that those people who are talking so much about increased production want to increase production in the interests of one section of the community only. They do not think the workers should get any greater increase, but they think that the capitalists and landlords ought to get the benefit of that increased production. I am satisfied that while there is room—and I think necessity—for increased production in quite a number of directions, one of the benefits that should come to the individual himself—to the worker—should be a real increase, and not a nominal increase in the share which the worker gets from production. Because, if one thing has been demonstrated in recent times, it is that the worker may get an increase in wages, a few more shillings or pounds at the end of the fortnight, or the month, as the case may be, but he is no better off, because it does not purchase any more clothing, any more food, any more fuel, or any more shelter. It certainly does not give him any more of the good things of life, to say nothing of the luxuries, that he is asking for and expecting. Something has been said in reference to the unemployed, and some rather scathing references have been made by some speakers as to the people who are unemployed, as if it were invariably the fault of the individual himself.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: When were they made?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: When the hon. member for Bulimba's attention was taken elsewhere last night.

Mr. VOWLES: I was here, and they were not made.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I do not mention any names, and I am not going to do so.

Mr. VOWLES: Because you cannot.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Oh, yes; I can name them. If the hon. member wants to find out their names, if he was not listening to the speeches, let him turn up "Hansard," and he will find them there. Practically every member expressed his interest in the working man, and made much of the desire he has to see his condition improved, but, as one member on this side interjected very pertinently, the interest they have in him is nothing in comparison with the interest they take out of him. Hon. members opposite have contended that this Bill is not likely to help the worker, and they have also made some reflections, which were not too creditable to them, on working men generally, but whether they know it or not things are changing, and the bulk of the sentiments that have been expressed on the opposite side, and the platitudes to which we have listened as long as we can remember, are sentiments and platitudes that are entirely out of date.

Mr. VOWLES: Tell us some of those scathing remarks.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I will tell the hon. member just as much as suits me, just as when he gets up on his feet he says just as much as suits himself. I am not going to undergo a cross-examination by interjections. When I get into the witness-box, and the hon. member is cross-examining me, I shall be quite prepared to answer his questions. My contention is that in practically every country where men live and work

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under the system under which we live and work there are genuine unemployed—men who will come and say, "I am one of the unemployed. I want work. I am able to work. I am willing to work, and I cannot get work." And whether hon. members know, or whether they do not, there are in Queensland practically all the year round, —and whether trade is regarded as being good or bad, and apart altogether from the question of whether a Labour Government or some other Government is in power—numbers of men who are genuinely unemployed. The hon. member for Bulimba had just about as much experience as other Treasurers and Ministers of unemployment deputations, and he had to admit that he could not settle the question.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He did a great deal more than has been done since.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He did nothing of the kind. The hon. member's leader said on one occasion that God Almighty could not settle the unemployed question, and if he can settle it, then he is much cleverer than his leader. There is no doubt that there is a number of unemployed as part and parcel of the present system, and when that is not the case steps are taken to make it the case. As evidence of that, I would like to quote from a current paper—"Land and Liberty"—that came into my hands only yesterday, in which an instance is given of a case where there was not a surplus of labour. It was brought up in the House of Commons, but it had reference to Trinidad, where they import a good deal of labour from other countries, and where the conditions are, perhaps, just a little better than the slave trade in reality. Those workers, when they have served the three years of their indenture, have been in the habit of refusing to re-engage, and have been able to get on the land and work for themselves. This is what is said—

"It appears that in Trinidad there has been a scarcity of labour, or at least a scarcity of labour at rates of wages which the estate owners were willing to pay. The reason of this and how it is being overcome, is partly revealed in the report of a special committee appointed by the Legislative Council of Trinidad, which was published in March, 1918 (Council Paper No. 36 of 1918). This committee reported that—

During the last few years there has been a sufficient supply of labour in the colony, owing partly to the closure of the sale of Crown lands, and partly to the increase in the price of foodstuffs caused by the war. The closure of the sale of Crown lands has removed the principal incentive to the dispersal of time-expired immigrants (i.e., indentured labourers.—Ed., L. and L.) from the estates; while the increase in the price of foodstuffs has notably reduced the number of lost days by inculcating on labourers of all classes the desirability of steady work throughout the week.

"And, again, summing up their conclusions, the committee say—

(A) We have already emphasised our opinion that the prime condition of success is the continuance of a very conservative policy as regards the opening up of Crown lands.

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(B) Scarcely less important is the speedy passage into law of a stringent Vagrancy Act."

Those are the conditions in a place where there is not as much labour as the people employing labour require, and what they did practically was to close up the avenue which those individuals had of working for themselves—making it impossible for them to get on to Crown lands—and then if they did not go to work for a boss bring into operation the Vagrancy Act, and throw the onus on them of showing that they had been working four hours a day in each of three days in the preceding seven, and to provide that if they could not do so they should get a "month's hard without the option." It goes to show that it does not matter where the country is—the underlying system is practically the same in each and every country. In a great many countries the employers have not got that difficulty because they have other methods, and where there is a job to be had there are usually two or three men looking for it. It has been laid down in several written constitutions, particularly in that of France, that a man has a right to life and liberty, and the present happiness, and if that is admitted I think a man has also a right to work, and can honestly and fairly claim that where he is in a country as a citizen of that country, and is able and willing to work, it is obligatory on some person or Government to find him work. It is a well known fact that the employer does not regard it as obligatory on him to find work if he does not want to do so. If he wants them, he thinks it is the duty of the Government to provide him with the labour. But if there is a scarcity of labour in this or any other State—or an apparent scarcity—employers appeal to the Government for immigration, or something else, to provide them with labour. They never, on any occasion I have heard or read of, recognise the fact that they are under any obligation whatever to find employment for men if they do not need them, and cannot make a profit out of their labour. When a man cannot find anyone who is prepared to employ him—and in times gone by if he did not like the rate of wages offered he was not taken on—he has to walk the streets until he can find somebody who is prepared to accept his services.

A good deal has been said in reference to the successful man. The idea has been that if a man is not successful—in the ordinary sense in which success is regarded by members who sit opposite—it is his own fault; he is idle, inefficient, or careless; he has not got the energy, or something else. It is never put on anybody else's shoulders. It is not an uncommon thing for some men to say "Look at what I was when I came to the country, and look at what I am now. If I have succeeded, why cannot everybody else?" If a man has amassed wealth, and has built up a big banking account, whatever else he may lack, he is regarded as a successful man. I dissent from a definition of that description, because some of the best men who have ever lived in this world, and some of the greatest social reformers, would be outside that category altogether, because it was not their aim and object to make money. They had in mind other things much better than the making of money, and the consequence was they did

not make money. They never grew rich, they lived poor, and died poor. The consequence would be that they would be regarded by the ordinary average employer as unsuccessful men, and also by a good many of the hon. members who sit opposite. In a great many instances he who is regarded as a successful man is nothing more than a successful robber. He is shrewd enough, and knows sufficient about the laws of the country, to be able to rob people legally. He is the man who says "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." He is a successful man in many instances because he has always his foot on somebody else's neck, and treading people down in his endeavour to succeed.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They are on that side of the House.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No, they are not on this side of the House. As a matter of fact, how many instances are there, without going far afield, where they who are regarded as successful men owe their success, not to their enterprise or their ability, but to the fact that some of their predecessors have bought land in a big city which, as time goes on, has increased in value, and has provided them practically with a competence without any effort at all on their part. In a book in which this idea is set forth, some of the principles are exceptionally good. It is admitted that with a six-hour day a man can produce sufficient to provide for his own wants, and make great profits for his employers. It points out as conspicuous examples of successful men, Rockefeller and Carnegie, and one or two others of a similar character. With those men, success was largely due to their cunning, and the fact that they got hold of the natural sources of wealth. The fact that Carnegie was able to give away £70,000,000 was due to his having got hold of some huge iron-ore deposits which he had no more right to than any other citizen in the American States, and also natural gases and coal and lime deposits. He was a good organiser, and when he got going he had any amount of capital available. But his success as a manufacturer and merchant was due to the fact that he got hold of things he never made, and which his predecessors did not make—the great natural sources of wealth. The consequence is that however clever and able a man might be he has no possible chance of becoming clever in the same direction as this particular individual. Rockefeller's is a similar case. He got hold of something he did not produce. He was, no doubt, a good organiser. He managed to crush out of existence a number of small competitors, and build up a huge monopoly, and he benefited by it. According to my idea, of success, I do not regard those people as being successful. They certainly are successful if success is to be regarded simply from the standpoint of making money. This Bill is intended to provide work for the genuine unemployed individual, the man who is able and willing to work. It may provide for some others, but that is the primary object of the Bill. In so far as it does that, I say it is an exceptionally good thing. In a well ordered community, which, no doubt, we will have by and by, there will not be an unemployed man, for the community will recognise that it is not only a loss to the individual, but it is also a loss to the community, for men to be walking

about doing nothing and producing nothing. One of the unfortunate things about men being unemployed is that they are not only losing their wages, but that when they have lost a day's, a week's, or a month's work it is gone for ever, and there is no making it up by any other means. The capitalist or landlord may lose to some extent, but he has quite a number of ways in which he can make up his loss.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Oh, has he!

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The working man's time, when once it is gone, is gone for ever, so that financial loss is a very serious one to him. Anybody who knows anything about the conditions of the workers knows that often times men are out of work through no fault of their own, by reason of circumstances over which they have no control. When they are out of work for a month, six weeks, or two months, their accounts run up and sometimes it is years before they get on the level, and have a fair start again. I think anything which obviates or minimises that kind of thing will be exceptionally good, not only for the individual but for the community. If that were the only loss it would not be a very serious one; but, in my opinion, a more serious loss is that an individual who is out of work, and day after day walks from one place to another looking for work and meets with disappointment and discouragement, soon begins to deteriorate. If he has to suffer that kind of thing very long it is not surprising that it leads to despair imperceptibly at first, then more gradually, not only physically and mentally, but morally. So it is detrimental, not only to the individual, but to the community as a whole, to have people out of work, walking about the place practically begging for somebody to give them work. A good deal has been said in connection with co-operation and co-partnership and a better understanding between employers and employees. I am inclined to think that sometimes when you get face to face with men and discuss matters with them, you see points you have never seen before, and probably something will be done in that direction. I want to point out that those individuals who at the present time are making a pretty big howl all through the State about being levied to the extent of £2 per year for the men they have in their employ over the number of five, towards providing for employment—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: £2 per head.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes, £2 per head per year for all employees over five. If they have ten for half the year, they will not be levied for ten for the whole year, but will be levied for only five. While [7.30 p.m.] hon. members opposite may take exception to this measure, and say that it is a burdensome thing to place the proposed tax upon employers, they take no exception to the attempts which are made by employers to defeat their employees. The Employers' Federation have distinctly laid themselves out to build up a fund to try, not to reconcile employees with the employers, or to see that the employees are not interfered with by the employers making big profits out of them, but to do the reverse—to try to defeat any legislation this House may attempt to pass in order to ameliorate the condition of the workers.

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They are also going as far as they possibly can in the direction of doing what they have been everlastingly condemning, that is, to use the boycott; and anybody who does anything which is antagonistic to those people they are going to the utmost extent of their power to try to destroy. There is no co-operation or copartnership in that kind of thing, and that spirit is prevalent, not only among employers in this State, but also among employers throughout the Commonwealth, and far beyond the bounds of the Commonwealth. They should endeavour to do something better than that. If those persons are sincere, and if hon. members opposite are really sincere when they talk about co-operation and copartnership, they ought to display a very different spirit.

I wish now to say one or two words with regard to the proposal in this Bill to provide for people who are oftentimes termed unemployable. It is unfortunate that there should be some people who are below the standard required by employers and are unemployed, because some are degenerate and some are not mentally strong. But those people have to be looked after; they have to be kept now; they have to be supported by the community. They have a right to live as long as nature keeps them alive, and they have to be supported now in Queensland. It would be infinitely wiser to make some effort to improve the condition of those people, and put them in the way of earning a living for themselves, than to continue the present method of dealing with such unfortunates. We should try to improve their condition, to help them day by day to make some improvement in their condition, so that they may contribute something towards the cost of their keep. One of the prime things in connection with unemployment is the land question, even in a young country like Queensland. The land question, and the manner in which we deal with it, is the bedrock in connection with unemployment, and in connection with every other industrial subject that is discussed in this House. In Queensland, although it is a young country, and a new country, we find that there are some 26,000,000 acres of land which have been alienated from the Crown, and that not one-fourth of that land is put under cultivation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How much per cent. is there?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It is only 4 per cent., but it does not matter what the percentage is. There are not more than 2,000,000 acres under cultivation, and £50,000,000 have been spent by the State on works which have improved the value of land from one end of the State to the other. We find that in some places in Queensland a quarter-acre allotment, with neither a stick nor a stone upon it, is worth £15,000. The landowner gets that money, and the people have to pay the interest on the money which has been spent in increasing the value of the land. The hon. member for Drayton, if he has proved one thing more than another during the present session in his speeches on the land question, it is that the farmer on the Darling Downs, and in other places, is labouring under some difficulties. If the farmers are suffering from one thing more than another, it is not the fact that there is a Labour Government in power, nor the fact that a land

tax is imposed on them. It is the fact that the capital he has required to obtain his land has been heaped up by the high prices charged for the land, and by his having to go to the bank and obtain a loan on mortgage. This burden he has to carry on his back. The farmer's difficulty is that he has to raise capital and pay 6 per cent. or 7 per cent. for the money he borrows, which is more than three or four times the amount he has to pay in land tax. Some time ago a number of persons visited the State looking for cheap land, and they reported that there was any amount of land which was worth from £20 to £30 per acre, but that they wanted cheap land which would be available to men who came to this country and wished to start farming. The Premier (Mr. Denham) admitted that if they wanted to get hold of suitable land within easy distance of a road or a railway, there was none available. They found that if people are willing to take up land 20 or 30 miles from a railway, they could be provided with the land they required. At the present time, in order to provide land for the men who have been to the front and fought the Empire's battles, the Government have to buy land from private individuals, at fancy prices, and cut up that land into farms or allotments. I am satisfied in my own mind that this land difficulty is one of the difficulties that have to be overcome before we can do away with unemployment to any great extent. Whatever may be said by hon. members opposite about the Bill, it is an honest attempt to deal with a very difficult and very intricate problem, and I hope we shall get an opportunity of seeing what can be done under its provisions, and show the people that an honest and earnest endeavour is being made to help those persons who at the present time are unable to help themselves. If the Bill enables us to do that, the men who have framed and introduced it will deserve well, both of the present and future generations in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN: I think we all recognise that unemployment is a very serious thing. A man out of a job is to be pitied above all others. For a man who is willing to work in order to keep his wife and family, it is a terrible thing for him not to be able to get work. Everybody can paint a very pathetic picture of the unemployed man. We all agree upon that, but the question is as to whether this Bill is going to meet the situation. Is it going to give employment to the unemployed? I am afraid not. When the Bill comes into force, the unemployed will be with us all the same. They have been with us ever since the world began, and they will be with us to the end of time. I am afraid that this Bill will frighten capital away from Queensland, and that it will accentuate the unemployed question. If it drives capital out of the State, population will follow the capital. Population always follows the man with the money. You may confiscate his property, and try to persecute him, but he gets away to some other State. Although you abuse the man with capital, you follow him about wherever you can, and are only too glad to share his wealth with him. I want to point out that, so far, Labour Governments have bred unemployment. The following table from "Knibbs,"

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page 20, July, 1919, with regard to unemployment for 1918 enables us to compare Queensland with the other States:—

NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED.

	1st Qtr. per cent.	2nd Qtr. per cent.	3rd Qtr. per cent.	4th Qtr. per cent.
Queensland ...	8.0	10.4	7.0	11.6
Victoria ...	6.1	7.3	6.4	6.2
N. S. Wales ...	5.0	4.9	6.5	3.6
W. Australia ...	5.0	5.4	5.3	4.2
Tasmania ...	3.4	2.0	2.6	1.7
S. Australia ...	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.2

None of the other States has got a Labour Government so entrenched as we have in Queensland, yet the number of unemployed is greater in Queensland than in any other State.

Mr. MULLAN: Don't you know the reason for that? We are providing for the unemployed from the other States as well as our own.

Mr. GUNN: It is not an extraordinary thing that we are providing employment for the unemployed who are flocking here from other States. We know that the unemployed are like water, which always fills up gaps and finds its own level. If there are unemployed in Queensland they go to the other States, and vice versa. Perhaps it is just as well to see what Labour papers say about this Bill. This is the Rockhampton "Record" of 3rd September, in which the controlling interest, I believe, is held by the Premier of this State, and heretofore that has been a Labour paper. I suppose this is the Premier's opinion. It is an extraordinary thing that the Premier in his paper condemns the Bill, and his Treasurer brings it in in the House—he condemns it on the one hand and praises it on the other. This is what the article says—

"In nine cases out of ten this paper sees eye to eye with the State Government, but the tenth case has arisen in the Unemployed Workers Bill. The motives behind this Bill may be the best, but there is a detachment from the teachings of experience and a departure from the tenets of fair play underlying the provisions of the Bill which foredoom it to failure. It can scarcely be described as a vote-catching measure, because no Government could hope to live long on any votes such a measure would catch. It is too deeply tinged with the odium of alms-giving to make any deep appeal to any considerable body of the men and women of Queensland. It can, therefore, be described as a misguided attempt on the part of its author to obtain the unobtainable."

That is adverse criticism from friends of the Government. This Bill reminds me of a parable which I will quote—I am accustomed to using parables in this House. When I was a youngster fifty years ago, in the Warwick district, there was an auctioneer there whose name was Billy Balls. He was in the habit of holding horse sales. On one occasion there was a very fine-looking horse sent into the sale yards. It was one of those noble animals, with a fine coat and a bold eye, and you could not see a blemish in him. Someone in the crowd said, "Mr. Balls, what is the matter with that horse? Surely no owner of a horse like that would want to sell it at auction unless there was a

fault in it." Mr. Balls said, "It has only two faults, and those two faults I am not allowed to tell you until the auction is over. The owner did not like to sell it privately, and I am selling him here with only two faults." The sale was completed, and the horse brought more than was expected, because he was a fine-looking animal. When the purchaser asked Mr. Balls what faults the horse had, he said, "The first fault is that he is very hard to catch, and the second fault is that when he is caught he is no 'adjective' good." (Loud laughter.) This Bill is a most difficult Bill to draft. I pity the man who has had to draft it. No doubt, it is a good Bill as far as its appearance is concerned, but it has got the one great fault, that when it is drafted it is no good—it will not effect the purpose for which it is intended. Bearing on that, I would like to mention that a friend of mine this evening handed me a letter from a man at Townsville, a man I knew well, and who is a strong unionist. When I was first standing for Parliament he opposed me, like many good unionists and honest men did, in an open way. I think he was the secretary of one of the Workers' Political Organisations, and he eventually got up to Townsville. Wherever you go you could not meet a better class of working man, and one more loyal to his union than he was.

This is an extract from his letter, dated 7th September—

"Townsville is in a terrible state of starvation, and some of the most disgraceful class of people or rather men in Australia are at present in Townsville, and no man willing to work has a chance among them."

How is this Bill going to improve that sort of thing? Many of the men in Townsville are out of work through no fault of their own: perhaps, owing to the strike of meat employees or somebody else, and I do not see how you are going to benefit them by this Bill. The men went on strike. Did not the men at Cloncurry draw the fires and then went away and left the matte in the furnaces and it all went wrong. As I said at the beginning, I am very sympathetic towards the unemployed. I would like to see every man get a job. It is hateful to me to see a man without a job, but this Bill will not improve matters. There are methods by which we could come to the assistance of the unemployed, and one method is by insurance. I believe that every man ought to insure himself against unemployment, and the man who is in the habit of being in constant work has a better right to receive remuneration under an insurance scheme than the man who is habitually unemployed. There are men who are unemployable, and it is very difficult to deal with them. The man who is in the habit of taking employment whenever he gets the chance should, with the assistance of the Government, and the assistance of the employer, and with his own assistance, insure himself against unemployment, and then when he is out of a job he would have the right to receive a certain amount of money to see him over a bad time. The hon. member who introduced this Bill always gives a good exposition of any Bill he introduces. He always makes one believe that his Bill is perfect. I remember when he introduced the Arbitration Bill into this House he took up a good deal of time and explained it in a most methodical

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manner; a manner, in fact, which was very taking, and I was almost persuaded that that Bill was perfect, that we would see no more unemployment and no more strikes when the Bill was passed. He told us that former Governments could not deal with strikes because they were not sympathetic to the worker, but the Government of which he was a member was sympathetic to the worker, and that the judge of the Arbitration Court would be a temperamentally fitted judge. Everybody would be brought into line, and the worker would have no more cause for complaint when that Bill got on to the statute-book: in fact, that the occupation of the union delegates would be gone. That Act has now been in force two or three years, and yet we see more unemployment, more strikes, and more dissatisfaction than ever before. I am fearful that the same thing will take place when this Bill is put into force: that it will accentuate the unemployment question instead of ameliorating it. All Governments, when there is a bad time, have a right to try and find work for the unemployed. The Government are in a better position to do that than anybody else, and heretofore when unemployment was prevalent the Government started railways or relief works. That is quite a legitimate thing for any Government to do; in fact, I go so far as to say that railway construction and a great many other Government works should not be gone on with when employment is plentiful. When the producers are short-handed, the Government could very well stay their hands until there was unemployment, and then go on with their works. The Secretary for Public Works, when speaking on this Bill, said it would principally apply to seasonal occupations; that there was unemployment through seasonal occupations. He referred to the shearers, and said that certain men were employed during the shearing season and were idle for the rest of the year. He said further that the shearers only worked three months in the year. All my life I have been connected with the grazing industry and I know the conditions in that industry. As a matter of fact, there are two classes of shearers and shedhands. There is the man who has a little bit of a selection or shop and he goes to the nearest shed and puts in a few weeks at shearing, and the rest of the time he spends in his business or on his farm. Then there is the professional rouseabout who follows the profession all the year round.

Mr. HARTLEY: Can he shear all the year round?

Mr. GUNN: He can shear all the year round.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, he can't.

Mr. GUNN: He can start in May and June at Barcaldine; during July and August he can be shearing right down to Roma and that district; September, he can be shearing in the border districts; October, November, he can be shearing in the New England districts, and, in fact, up to December: January and February are not good months to shear in; but in March he can do the March lamb shearing. A good many people shear in March, April, and May, and then he is into June again. I can assure hon. members that a man can be shearing for nine months in the year.

Mr. POLLOCK: I challenge you to find ten shearers in Queensland who shear all the year round.

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Mr. GUNN: Do you ever see an unemployed shearer?

Mr. POLLOCK: Yes; there are hundreds of them in West Queensland now.

Mr. GUNN: I know that in my district we can never fill our sheds. Shearing is a trade, and the men do not put on too many apprentices, with the result that there is a shortage of shearers on many occasions, and there are no shearers who are unemployed. Then, again, it is very hard work and very honourable work. I have nothing to say against the shearer. I have seen some of the finest men on the face of the earth who are shearers, and those men are not asking the Government to find relief work or anything else. That is not the class of men who are asking for this Bill.

Mr. POLLOCK: What about the rouseabout? Is he employed all the year round?

Mr. GUNN: He can be; he can follow the shearer round if he likes. If the men who employ over five men have to pay £2 a head towards this fund, why on earth do not the Government contribute the same amount? The Government have entered into different enterprises, and are large employers of labour.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The largest.

Mr. GUNN: The largest, but, strange to say, the occupations the Government have entered into are not occupations that employ a large amount of labour. Take the cattle stations. That is where all the money is going, and it is said that about two white men and a blackfellow can run a cattle station. I remember that squatters used to be blamed for not employing labour, and it was stated that all they cared about was legislation for sheep and cattle, and that they cared nothing about human beings. Yet we have the Government spending all their money in cattle stations instead of in occupations that employ labour. This £2 a head contribution will not matter very much to the grazier, as he does not employ very much labour, and we must look to our secondary industries to give employment to our population. For the sake of illustration, let me take a factory like

[8 p.m.] Morrow's biscuit factory. I do not know how many hands they employ, but let us suppose the number is 300. That means that they will have to pay £600 per annum under this Bill, at the rate of £2 per head. That factory has to compete with the biscuit factories in the other States. Would it not be better for Morrow's, Limited, if they have this tax imposed upon them, to shift their factory and machinery down to Newcastle, where they would be nearer the flour, where the flour would be cheaper, where coal would be cheaper and more convenient, and where labour would be just as easy to get as here, and by so doing save the £600 a year? I am afraid that this Bill, if passed, will drive secondary industries away from this State. The secondary industries are the ones we should encourage, but they are the ones that will suffer principally under this legislation. This kind of thing will not encourage capital to come here. Under clause 7, if an inspector, or some other officer of the department, enters your premises, he may tell you that they need painting; and you will have to paint them. You will have no appeal. He may tell you that you need new windows. Again, no appeal! Is it likely that the factory owner will stop in this country if we have

Acts of Parliament like this on the statute-book? Then, again, clause 8 provides that, if you are making a profit of more than 15 per cent., the surplus may be taken away from you for unemployment purposes, or you may be made to invest it in debentures. I do not know anyone who makes an average profit of 15 per cent. Of course, I know you are allowed an exemption of £5,000; but this is the way it will work out: Plenty of graziers may breed up their flocks and herds for three or four years, and at the end of that time their stock may be numerous. In one year they may make over 15 per cent.; but the next year they may lose all they possess. I certainly think that, if an individual is to be penalised for making over 15 per cent., it should not be confined to one year's operations, but the average for a number of years should be taken. I have some Federal income tax figures here which show the difference that the seasons make in the grazing industry on a man's income. For the year 1915-1916, this man paid £2; for 1916-1917, he paid £236; for 1917-1918, he paid £1,743. At that rate, you would think he was making a fortune very fast; but for the year 1918-1919 he only paid £300. His returns for this year are not in yet, but he will be on the wrong side of the ledger altogether owing to the drought. Now, supposing that that man was to be taxed on the figures for the year when his income tax was £1,743, assuming that he made a profit that year of over 15 per cent., he would have to pay a great deal more than if he was assessed on his income over a series of years.

Again, under the Bill the local authorities will be compelled to borrow money, if the Treasurer thinks fit to order them to do so, without taking a poll of the ratepayers. They are not to be allowed to consult the ratepayers at all. It may happen that Tom, Dick, Harry, and Bill—none of them resident in the shire or with any interests in it—may be building a railway in the locality, or there may be a lot of casual hands employed on some relief work in the district. To find work for those men, the Treasurer may compel the local authority to borrow money and spend it on all sorts of absurd things, and the landowners will have to foot the Bill. Everything comes back to the man on the land. Surely to goodness someone else ought to be asked to pay something besides the man who owns a bit of land. If he happens to have more than £5,000 worth of land, he has to pay the Federal land tax. Everyone who owns land of a greater value than £300 has to pay the State land tax. Every landowner has to pay the shire council rates for all sorts of purposes. If influenza should break out, he is rated to pay the cost of coping with the disease. That is another land tax. Under this Bill the landowner will have to pay this unemployment tax. Then we are told that the Government intend to bring in a Main Roads Bill; and I will guarantee that it will be found, when the Bill is introduced, that the unfortunate landowner will be taxed to make and maintain the main roads, although I think that everyone who uses the roads ought to be made to pay something towards their upkeep. I would far sooner see a toll bar on the roads than compel the unfortunate farmer, who has to go out and fight the seasons, to pay for their maintenance. This Bill will be no good to the farmer who happens to be out of work. I do not suppose

he will even be given a free pass to go from one farm to another along the railway. Yet the farmer out of work is just as pathetic a figure as the wharf lumber or the shearer who is out of work. I am sorry to say that many farmers on the Darling Downs at the present time, although they may not be out of work, are not getting any remuneration for their work. They have been planting their wheat year after year, and have got nothing for it. Neither this Bill nor any of the rest of the legislation introduced by this Government comes to the relief of the farmer. The only men who are to obtain any relief under the Bill are those who happen to be congregated in the big cities. There is nothing to prevent the men in the cities who are out of work going out into the country and taking up a farm, and working it on the co-operative principle. There is nothing to prevent a number of shearers and rouseabouts from taking up a grazing selection or a run in the Gulf country, putting cattle on to it, working it on the communistic principle, and taking the whole of the profits for themselves.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Didn't some of them go to Paraguay and try something of that kind?

Mr. GUNN: I know that a number of men from Queensland did go to Paraguay, and they made a great failure of it. The first thing they did when they got to Paraguay was to raise the flag of independence—I do not know whether it was the red flag or not—but they raised the flag of independence and they cheered it. (Laughter.) The natives gathered round it too, and they all cheered it. Those men said they were glad to be free—glad that they were no longer subject to the Union Jack. After a time there was no one to do anything in the settlement. For instance, if a man grew water melons, his neighbours would come in and rob him of his melons. (Laughter.) One thrifty individual grew a crop of potatoes, and his neighbours used to come in and "bandicoot" his potatoes. (Renewed laughter.) Socialism soon broke down under those conditions, and they went to the Government of the country, and asked to be sent back to Australia. When one section were going down the La Plata River to the port of embarkation, they saw the Union Jack flying on an old punt, and they took off their caps, and they cheered the Union Jack once more, they were so glad to set their eyes on it again. (Renewed laughter.) That is what happened in Paraguay.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the Bill?

Mr. GUNN: I was attempting to show that this out-of-work Bill and the socialistic system are not going to achieve the object which the hon. member who introduced the Bill expects. I welcome any Bill that would give employment to the people of Queensland, welcome it with both hands, but this Bill I am afraid will not give work to the people of Queensland, because it will drive the capital that we need in Queensland away from it. A Labour Government have been in power only three or four years in Queensland, and unemployment has got greater every year because the people who have got money are not investing it in this State. They are investing it in debentures.

Mr. WEIR: And war bonds.

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Mr. GUNN: And war bonds, and are not going in for production. The other day in Stanthorpe a friend of mine, a good old pioneer, too, who had made a considerable amount of money, was talking to some of his friends, who said to him, "Here is a chance for you, Scotty. You can invest some money in building houses here. There is a great demand for houses by people who want to come here on account of the climate." And one of them, a banker, said, "I can guarantee 15 per cent. on your money." "That is no good to me," was the reply. "If I make 15 per cent. the State and Federal income taxes come to 10s. in the pound, and 7½ per cent. is all I would get out of it. And then look at the worry and distress I would be put to. Not only that, there are all sorts of socialistic Bills coming along. I do not know what is in front of me, but I know that I am not going to work as I have in the past developing this fair State of Queensland until I see a more stable Government than is in power at the present time. I have invested my money in debentures and war bonds, and I can sit down and see the other fellow being taxed and worried with filling in return after return."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is correct.

Mr. GUNN: That is quite correct. I am not speaking for the sake of wasting time. I rose because I thought I had something to say of value. If I thought this Bill was going to be any benefit to the unemployed of Queensland I would vote for it at once, but I do not think it is going to do what the member who introduced it thinks it is going to do. I hope that some better method may soon be devised. I think that an insurance scheme under which every man puts some of his earnings into an insurance fund, and the employer pays something, and the Government pays something, is the only method by which you can relieve unemployment.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): Before this measure goes through I wish to address the House on some of the salient features of it. I am pleased to have the assurance of the hon. member for Carnarvon that he is serious in his denunciation of this measure, and is not speaking for the sake of wasting time, because it is quite obvious from the utterances of other hon. members opposite that they are not serious in their remarks on this vital question. It is patent to all of us that they have no interest in the workers, that they are speaking on behalf of the capitalistic employers of this State, and not for those persons who really make the wealth of the State. The Secretary for Public Works is deserving of great praise for the very educative address he delivered in introducing this measure. He spoke in a statesman-like manner, and gave the House all the information desired, and I say it will be a great reflection upon this Chamber if there is a division on the question. It should be passed unanimously. We are giving a lead to other parts of Australia in passing a measure of this kind. It is an experiment: it is the first of its kind attempted in Australia, but although it is really an experiment, I think it will do great good. It will go a long way towards ameliorating the distress and misery of those unfortunate workers who periodically find themselves out of employment. Frequently able-bodied men, with wives and families, wait on members of Parliament—particularly members on

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this side of the House, because they know they will get sympathetic treatment—they come to us with their grievances, they tell us that they have been out of employment for six months or seven months, or some of them even up to twelve months, and that they are ready to take any kind of employment that may be available. If hon. members opposite only met those men, and talked with them, and saw the state of mind in which they were, they would do everything possible to assist them, they would vote for this measure to-night. I find that hon. members opposite this evening, as upon other occasions, when humanitarian measures are introduced into this Chamber, wrongly interpret the intentions of the Government. They say that we will compel the householder to repair his windows and paint his house, that we will do all sorts of ridiculous things. Under other Acts of Parliament the Government can do ridiculous things and extraordinary things, but those ridiculous things are never attempted. The employment council can be allowed to use its own discretion, and I feel sure the right thing will be done, and no harm will come to this country if the measure is passed. I was reading recently a work by Mr. Henry George, entitled "Social Problems," in which he truly said—

"How contempt of human rights is the essential element in building up the great fortunes whose growth is such a marked feature of our development, we have already seen. And just as clearly may we see that from the same cause sprang poverty and pauperism. The tramp is the complement of the millionaire."

The Bill before the House will establish the right of the workers of Queensland to work. The claim is undeniable and irrefutable; it is one that should meet with the approval of every member of this House; it is certainly one that meets with the approval of the great majority of people outside. We presuppose, logically and ethically, that every man has a right to work and live, and yet we deny him that right. Hon. members opposite say they have great sympathy with the unemployed worker, but they are not prepared to assist him in any way to obtain employment. This is an unfair anomaly. To-day there is no real right to work, and it behoves this Government, a humanitarian Government, to see that that right is established. One of the objects of the Bill is to remove that anomaly, and give to the poor and destitute that opportunity. It brings to my mind those words uttered by Jefferson, at the declaration of American Independence. He said—

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

These are unassailable claims, and should be enjoyed by every worker in Australia. Yet they are denied to a great many workers in this State and in Australia. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are laudable. Why should we deny them to any man, however humble he might be? To many, such rights are beautiful fictions. They are not legal claims; and it is not within the reach of a great many people in this State to realise them. We should make those ideals facts and realities, and this Bill

sets out to do that. It is impossible for the unemployed to enjoy life. Hon. members opposite probably are all affluent. The majority of them do not fear unemployment or destitution. But hon. members on this side of the House are not in such a position. Their sympathies are with those who are in need—with the oppressed, with the people of this State who are struggling for an existence. Those of us who have mingled with the unemployed and meet them daily know the great strain and anxiety through which they are passing. We know how demoralising unemployment is. Men who are waiting about the streets day in and day out looking for employment, going to the Labour Bureau, the Railway Department, or some other department, asking for positions, get into a most depraved and demoralised state. It is a crime to steal, but when a man's wife and children are short of food there is a great temptation for him to steal; and he ultimately finds himself in St. Helena or some other such penitentiary. We should remove the causes of such crime. It is the duty of this Government to see that every man and woman gets a fair chance in this State. If they cannot be given employment, they should be given sustenance. This measure provides for that. Another work I was reading is Thomas Carlyle's "Past and Present." I find that that great master-mind, that great philosopher, had this to say with regard to the unemployed question—

"Why, the four-footed worker has already got what this two-handed one is clamouring for! How often must I remind you? There is not a horse in England able and willing to work but has his due food and lodging, and goes about sleek-coated, satisfied in heart. And you say it is impossible, brother. I answer, if for you it is impossible, what is to become of you? Is it possible for us to believe it to be impossible? The human brain, looking at these sleek English horses provided with work and food, refuses to believe in the impossibility of affording the human being the right to work and live."

It does seem impossible that in this enlightened age a great many people are denied the right to work, the right to get an honest living. This Government intends to give them that right. No one knows better than the Secretary for Public Works what it means when a great number of men are out of work and are clamouring for the means of getting a livelihood. It is then that there is a great temptation to riot and steal and to commit atrocious crimes. We want to obviate that. These words by Carlyle are a sharp indictment against those hon. members opposite who show no practical sympathy for the unemployed. They are an indictment against those who oppose the right to work, who offer shallow expressions of sympathy to those who are out of employment, but will not support a measure calculated to bring great benefits to the majority of the people of this State. What is afforded to horses is denied to human beings in Queensland and in most parts of the world. While the animals of the wealthy are well-fed and well-groomed, and always look healthy, a great many of their employees are not properly paid, and through intermittent occupation are not properly fed. Their wives and children, in many cases, are destitute, and the result is crime and an influx of prisoners to our prisons. It has been very amusing to me

to listen to the futile criticism of this humane measure uttered by the hon. member for Oxley and other hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Oxley said that the present Government was not encouraging the development of our resources, but was driving capital out of this State. I contend that this Government is doing more to encourage primary production and new industries in this State than any previous Government in the history of Queensland. When we introduced the Iron and Steel Works Bill we were told that iron and steel works would not be beneficial to Queensland, if run by the present Administration. The Government appointed a general manager for the works, and I am hopeful that a decision will be made immediately regarding the site for their establishment, and that the work will be pushed ahead without delay. The result will be that thousands of men will be engaged in those works. Had it not been for the enterprise and initiative shown by the present Government, no such move would have been made. Then the Government, recognising that it was an anomaly for the State to be paying thousands of pounds per annum to the private coalowners, established State coalmines in Queensland. I had the pleasure of accompanying the Secretary for Mines to one of those coalmines at the Styx River. It promises to be a great success, and I think, in the near future, we will have hundreds of men employed there. The Bowen coalfields are also very good, and will be the means of absorbing hundreds of our unemployed.

Mr. VOWLES: The Warra mine, too.

Mr. FORDE: The Warra mine, probably, like the hon. member, is a failure. Up in the Central district the State mines are a success. They are only in the experimental stage, but they show great promise. If one mine is not a success, why condemn all. The State arsenic mine has been established at Stanthorpe. It has given work to a good many men, and it will be of great benefit to the farmers of Queensland. Then the Secretary for Public Works has been successful in taking over the Chillagoe Railway and mines. I am hopeful that that portion of Queensland will consequently benefit materially; that thousands of workers will be employed in Chillagoe and the surrounding districts, and the northern portion of Queensland will increase its population greatly within the next few years. It is a great mistake to encourage the influx of population to all the large coastal towns. We must see that Queensland is populated proportionately all over. I think the action of the Government in taking over the Chillagoe mines and railway is commendable, and is one which meets with the approval of the majority of the people of Queensland. The old bogey is frequently used that we are driving capital out of this State. Judging by the exorbitant profits made by the manufacturing companies, and by practically all business houses in Brisbane and other parts of Queensland during the last few years, the present Government is encouraging industry instead of driving it away. On the other hand, those companies have made greater profits than they made over a similar period of years under a Liberal Government. I find that commercial banks have increased their profits, and the Government Savings Bank has materially increased its deposits. Commercial firms and banks are in a better position to-day than they have been for

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many years. Since the present Government came into power, a great deal has been done to assist the unemployed in the Central district. Approximately £170,000 has been spent in Rockhampton on public works, and the people of Rockhampton are very grateful for that. The Government put 2,500 men on railway construction work in connection with new lines during the last six months, and in that way absorbed a considerable number of the unemployed. If the present Government had adopted the tactics pursued by previous Governments in times of stress, by dismissing all temporary hands and curtailing expenditure on public works, this State would now be in a terrible condition. The Government has done more than its share in placing the unemployed.

[8.30 p.m.] We are told by members opposite that if this measure becomes law the Government will be exempted from responsibility in the matter of finding work for the unemployed. The Government has not shirked its responsibility in that direction in the past, and will not do so in the future. I find that the labour exchange at Rockhampton placed 129 men in positions during the month of January, and that out of that number sixty-three were sent to railway works. The total number of additional men employed on Government works in a temporary capacity in January was 983. In Brisbane 174 were employed, and in Mackay 163. In February, 911 men were started on Government works. During the month of March 732 men were employed; during April, 649; during May, 725; and during June, 676. From those figures it will be seen that the Government has done more than its share in placing the unemployed on reproductive works, and it cannot truthfully be said that the Government intends to shirk its responsibility in this regard in the future. In addition to assisting the unemployed by finding work for them, the Government has been generous in providing food for those who cannot get work, and it has been more liberal in that regard than previous Administrations; and rightly so, because, if a man is destitute, and his wife and family are starving, he should not be humiliated on applying for relief by being put through an exacting examination as to his position. In 1914-15 the Denham Government spent £5,700 on Government relief, and in 1918-19 the present Government spent £11,219. The ration scale has been considerably increased. Furthermore, the mothers of children, widows, and orphans of the workers have been treated very generously by the Labour Government. The allowance to mothers in respect of orphan children has been doubled. I mention these facts to show that the Government is sympathetic towards those who are in need.

Mr. MORGAN: The cost of living has nearly doubled, too.

Mr. FORDE: That is due to the remorseless profiteer, so ably represented in this Chamber by hon. members opposite. The Government has also cared for miners who are suffering from phthisis, and for their little children. Not only has the Government been generous to the unemployed, who, through no fault of their own, have been thrown out of employment, but they have also been generous to those who have been thrown out of employment by sickness. Past Governments were very callous in that regard. But though the Government has been particularly generous in the treatment

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of the unemployed, there is still something wanting, and that is "the right to work." It is a right thing to give to the worker who has been a fortnight out of employment, as is proposed in this Bill, a sustenance allowance sufficient to keep him alive. I believe that the good in man is greater than the evil, and that the good should be encouraged and developed. Whether this is done or not depends greatly upon a man's environment and his condition of living, and upon those things also depends the question as to how he is going to develop and what his children are going to be. In reading this Bill I notice that the private employers will only be called upon to assist in alleviating the unemployed when the Government cannot find employment and when the possibilities of the local authorities finding employment are exhausted. But anyone hearing hon. members opposite talk would think that the Government intend to go to the poorest employer, the man who can least afford it, and ask him to put on twenty or thirty men in his particular industry.

Mr. VOWLES: That is not correct; the Bill does not say that.

Mr. FORDE: The Bill does say that, and the interjection of the hon. member is characteristic of his lack of knowledge. If the hon. member has not read the Bill he should do so, for it is evident that he does not know what he is talking about. Hon. members opposite have said that the Government will be penalising small employers, but I find that the employer who engages five men and under will be exempt from the provisions of this measure. The small traders will benefit materially if this Bill is placed on the statute-book, because instead of there being hundreds of unemployed, all workers, or practically all, will be engaged on reproductive work, and the money they earn will go into circulation. In many cases local authorities are prevented from going straight ahead with work because of the provisions of the Local Authorities Act under which certain delays are necessary owing to formalities in regard to advertising and the taking of a poll for a loan having to be complied with. If this measure is passed, the Government will have the power to waive the necessity for taking a poll of the ratepayers and to grant a loan to enable the local authorities to go on with necessary works. In Rockhampton we want an up-to-date water scheme. That water scheme has been asked for several times by the City Council, but until the present Government came into power no practical sympathy was shown to the Council's requests. But representatives of the council met the present Treasurer and laid their request before him. The hon. gentleman received the deputation very sympathetically, and told the council that as a fresh and good supply of water was a vital matter he would make available the necessary loan to provide for an up-to-date water scheme. The council was elected at the beginning of this year, but there is no sign of the water scheme yet. We also want an electric light scheme in Rockhampton. A report on the matter has been obtained from an expert, but so far nothing has materialised in that direction. I feel sure that the Treasurer, in order to alleviate the position of the unemployed, would grant loans to the council for those two works.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not do so in Dalby.

Mr. FORDE: If the deputy leader of the Opposition cannot make effective representations to the Treasurer on such a matter, he is not a good representative of Dalby. I find that when the members for Rockhampton and surrounding electorates go to the Treasurer in a courteous manner, they always get sympathetic treatment. It is time the electors of Dalby thought of electing someone else instead of the deputy leader of the Opposition. He is evidently lacking in his advocacy of utilities for Dalby.

Mr. VOWLES: He has more sense than you have got.

Mr. FORDE: It is pretty bad when the hon. member has to say himself that he has got common sense. I am glad to hear his assurance, because I did not think he had.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. FORDE: We also want an irrigation scheme on the Fitzroy River, and we discussed that matter with the Treasurer. That would involve a large expenditure, and make work for hundreds of men in the Central district, and I hope we will be able to get a favourable reply from the Treasurer.

Mr. VOWLES: If you had a sensible member you would get those things.

Mr. FORDE: All our requests are sensible, and not like those made by the hon. member for Dalby. The Treasurer has promised Central members that he will send an hydro-electric expert to Rockhampton, to report on the question of utilising the waters of the Fitzroy River for hydro-electric power. When we are so generously and sympathetically treated as that, we feel sure that when this Bill goes through, and we have the power to put aside the difficulties with which the council is confronted, we shall be able to go on with the work immediately, and absorb hundreds of decent, respectable men who are looking for work in the Central district. Another important phase of the Bill is the granting to men out of work free passes, to enable them to travel to centres where there is employment. I would welcome that. In the past I have often guaranteed men their fares, and in some cases they have not been able to pay, owing to their straitened circumstances. They have had wives and children depending on them. But when this Bill is passed, railway passes will be granted to these men, and they will have no need to go to the nearest member of Parliament and ask him to guarantee their railway pass to where they can get employment. You can imagine the state of anxiety a man is in when he knows that 500 miles away a good job is waiting for him, but he has no hope of getting there, because he cannot pay his fare. This Bill provides that free passes shall be granted. It is a wonder that hon. members opposite oppose the Bill at all. We have the testimony of Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Auckland Geddes that the unrestrained capitalistic industry of Great Britain rendered over a million people more or less physically unfit at the outbreak of war. That is due to the bad conditions of work, to lack of nourishment and proper food, and to the demoralising effect of unemployment, and we are out to remove those sordid conditions under which the masses to-day have to live.

I think that all will admit that if every man and woman had healthy employment and proper nourishment, we would have a more virile and intellectual community. I recognise that the measure before the House is purely experimental, and after the Treasurer has had some experience of the working of the measure, he will be able to point out many phases of it that can be amended. If the House gives the Treasurer that opportunity, a great blessing will be bestowed upon the workers of this State. If the measure is passed, something will be done; it is a step in the right direction. Nothing serious has been attempted in any part of the world to cope so effectively with the great unemployment problem as has been attempted by the Treasurer, and I appeal to hon. members opposite to be reasonable, and vote for the measure, as they will thereby be materially assisting the people of Queensland.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I would like to say a few words on this question before it goes through; but, first of all, I hope you will permit me to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the very high position to which you have been translated. I like to see the North coming to the front.

Mr. KIRWAN: They are well to the front in this Government.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member for Brisbane need not talk. There is no doubt that the Bill before us relates to a very important question. I do not think there is any more pitiable object than an industrious, sober man with a family without a job and unable to find one.

Mr. RIORDAN: Why don't you keep your mines working?

Mr. SWAYNE: I have done a great deal more for the worker than ever the hon. member did. It is a pity we cannot discuss an important subject like this without indulging in personalities. While I am on the subject, I think we have a right to resent the constant accusation of want of sympathy that is levelled against members on this side. I notice that the last speaker dragged that topic in. I venture to say that, if you asked the average man in the street to whom he would go for help and sympathy, he would say that he would sooner go to hon. members on this side than on the other. I am sorry I have had to mention the subject, but hon. members opposite bring it on themselves. Regarding the measure before us, everything depends as to whether it is going to be of permanent benefit, or a dangerous palliative, upon the provisions embodied in it. The principles on which it is based are wrong, unfair, and unjust. We have heard a great deal of the demoralising effect of unemployment. I do not think there can be anything more demoralising than training young people up to lean on somebody else—teaching them by the laws you make that there is no need for them to exercise any foresight, or make any provision for the future, and that somebody else will do it for them. In Queensland every citizen enjoys great privileges, and it is not for their good that they should be taught that these great privileges and rights of citizenship carry no responsibility. I think it is a sound doctrine in any democratic country that the rights of citizenship carry responsibility. We should take that as an axiom, but I defy anyone to show

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that such a principle is embodied in the Bill. The fund out of which all expenses of providing work are to be paid comes from one section of the community, and that the most thrifty, industrious, and farseeing section of all. What is going to be the result of throwing every burden and tax upon those people? If you discourage them, and they find it is no use exercising those qualities, it will mean that they will cease to exercise them. We know that the disuse of any faculty, either mental or physical, that we possess, means that nature steps in and takes it away from us, and that is what legislation of this kind is going to do.

With regard to the fund itself, as I said before, it is to come from one section only; and yet in every other part of the world where such legislation as this has been enacted the principle has been recognised that the money should come from all sections equally. That is so in the British law, and in the Swiss law, and I have here a work by one of the leading socialists of Great Britain, Ramsay Macdonald—I don't think hon. members opposite will dispute his opinion on such a subject—who also advocates that principle. The book is called "The Socialist Movement," and on page 167 it says—

"The subsistence provision can be secured in one or two ways. It may be provided on the communist plan of allowing the unemployed man to share in the national wealth by giving him grants during his period of unemployment, but that is not socialism, and the socialist will not willingly adopt that proposal. It may also be provided by a scheme of insurance, the premiums of which are provided by the State, the trade, and the body of workmen."

It lays it down as an essential principle that the workmen themselves should contribute, and I think it is only a fair thing that they should do so. The writer further says—

"That is much nearer to the general principles of socialism, and in that form this part of the right to work plan is now being advocated and enforced by the socialist parties of the world."

That is a sound axiom to adopt in regard to such legislation as this. While I am speaking on this subject of socialism v. private enterprise, I have to thank the hon. member for Rockhampton for a thought which he put into my mind. The hon. member spoke about what an iron and steel works might do for Queensland. We all realise what might be done for Queensland if we had a large works of that nature to treat our raw material, but if hon. members want to see a splendid example of that sort of thing, and one that has been of great benefit to Australia, they should go down to Newcastle in New South Wales, and see the Broken Hills works established by private enterprise. They should see what they have done while hon. members opposite have been talking about what they would do. The Upper House offered to provide £150,000 to start the iron and steel works, and while the Government have taken years to discover where they are going to establish the works that company in New South Wales have got to work, and have spent £3,000,000, and are now spending £15,000 a week in wages. That is what private enterprise is doing to

overcome the unemployed difficulty. It is a disgrace to the present Government that after four and a-half years of their regime, we are confronted with a measure which the Minister for Public Works admits is drastic. The hon. gentleman admits by the use of that word that the conditions are bad. It shows that when they took office after the reign of the Liberal Government that things must have been pretty good. Under the Liberal Government nothing of the kind apparently was required, because they themselves when they took office did not find such a measure necessary. It is most necessary and most desirable that employment should be provided for the honest worker who cannot find a job, but in such a young country as Queensland—I am not talking about the old country where opportunity is limited, and where people are bound by their environment—in a young country like Queensland with its vast natural resources awaiting development, and thousands of acres awaiting the plough, it seems strange that it is necessary to introduce what has been admitted by those responsible for it to be a very drastic measure. I further say that the unfair principles that are embodied in this Bill are going to bring about its defeat, and instead of creating employment it is going to bring about unemployment. The whole thing is a discouragement to the class which hitherto has provided employment. After all, we must remember that as far as Queensland goes, the man able to give a job to another man is the man who has worked his way up, who has worked a bit harder, who has thought a bit deeper, and who has saved and put by what others have spent on pleasure. That is the man who has been the backbone of the country, and that is the man who, in connection with the war we have just gone through, and who, when drought comes along, has to finance the State. That is the man who has to find the sinews of war, and this sort of legislation which we have so much of, is discouraging that class of people. I find that reference is made in the Bill to Government workshops. That is a thing that I suppose is desirable. I know it is desirable as a last resource; that in order to relieve unemployment we require some provision of the kind, but in a young country such as this, in the case of single men at any rate, I do not think we can find a better form of employment than that of clearing the national estate, of which they are part owners. If that work is done properly, it should be reproductive, and should find all the employment necessary for single men. I say single men advisedly, because it would mean in some instances going some distance to the job, and in the case of married men, it is not fair to ask them to go a long distance from their homes. Then again, a method was introduced in Queensland by the Liberals to minimise, as far as possible, in the case of families, unemployment in the country, and that method has not been developed in any way by the present Government. I am speaking now of the workers' homes. We know very well that in various agricultural districts where labour is required which is seasonable in its incidence, blocks of 5 to 10 acres have been cut up, and opened to these families, and in many instances they have settled on such blocks, and always have work at hand. They never need go short of food, as they can always produce sufficient from their own land to keep the wolf

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from the door. But since this Government has been in office, not a single step has been taken in that direction, and further, I can bring to mind where the very greatest discouragement was given to the people of whom I am speaking. Nearly every other class in Queensland under the legislation initiated by the Liberal Government is able to borrow money from the State to build a home, but through some oversight that provision was not extended to the class I speak of. That oversight afterwards came to light, and time after time I have asked hon. gentlemen sitting on the front Treasury bench to amend the Act so that money could be advanced to those people, who, I take it are amongst our best workers. I have asked over and over again during the last four years for something to be done to enable money to be advanced to enable those people to build homes the same as is done for the town workers, but the result has been nil. That is where a great deal of assistance could be given to some of the very best of our working people who to avoid risk of unemployment, go away from the towns to provide themselves with decent homes. We know that over and over again workshops have been established, and that often they have resulted in failure. I

[9 p.m.] happened to read the other day the result of an endeavour of the kind that was made in France during the time of the Second Empire. There is a reference to it in the history of France in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which says—

“By the decree of the 24th of February the provisional Government had solemnly accepted the principle of the ‘right to work,’ and decided to establish ‘national workshops’ for the unemployed; at the same time a sort of industrial Parliament was established at the Luxembourg, under the presidency of Louis Blanc, with the object of preparing a scheme for the organisation of labour.”

It goes on to say—

“On the 15th of May an armed mob, headed by Raspail, Blanqui, and Barbes, and assisted by the proletariat guard, attempted to overwhelm the Assembly. They were defeated by the bourgeois battalions of the National Guard; but the situation, none the less, remained highly critical. The national workshops were producing the results that might have been foreseen. It was impossible to provide remunerative work even for the genuine unemployed, and of the thousands who applied the greater number were employed in perfectly useless digging and refilling; soon even this expedient failed, and those for whom work could not be invented were given a half wage of one franc a day. Even this pitiful dole, with no obligation to work, proved attractive, and all over France workmen threw up their jobs and streamed to Paris, where they swelled the ranks of the army under the red flag. It was soon clear that the continuance of this experiment would mean financial ruin; it had been proved by the emute of the 15th of May that it constituted a perpetual menace to the State; and the Government decided to end it.”

That was the result of one experiment in this direction, and it shows how careful we have to be in handling these matters, other-

wise our last state may be worse than our first. I take leave to say that already we have sufficient evidence since the present Government took office to justify us in entertaining very grave doubts as to their ability to handle this sort of thing. We know what has happened in connection with the State railways. We know that not many years back the net earnings of the railways were over £100 per annum per employee: now the earning capacity has fallen to £17 per annum per employee. And, judging by the utterances of one of the gentlemen recently appointed by the Government to the Upper House, it seems to be laid down as a dictum by the party opposite that there is no need for the railways or for any other form of State enterprise to pay. I find that, when the regulations under the Fish Supply Act were being discussed in the other Chamber the other day, the Hon. T. L. Jones said—

“In his opinion, the State Fish Department, if properly conducted, never would show a profit on its operations as a whole. If the State enterprise was able to give the fishermen an assured market for their fish, and also to make a good supply available to the public at a reasonable price, it was fully justifying its existence.”

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member convey to me in what way he can connect the State fish shops with this Bill?

Mr. SWAYNE: I was referring to the danger of carrying on State enterprises on a still larger scale than at present—a proposition involved by the passage of this Bill—if entrusted to hon. gentlemen opposite.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has already argued with respect to the necessity for having State workshops.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am voicing my objection to the proposals contained in this Bill.

The SPEAKER: I should be glad if the hon. gentleman would confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think I am justified in showing the results which have already attended their efforts in this regard. I have no wish to dispute your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I contend that I am entitled to justify any statement I have made, and I have already said that I do not think hon. gentlemen opposite are competent to run enterprises of this sort, seeing they have made such a bungle of those already started, and we now find ourselves confronted with this new doctrine that none of these enterprises should be expected to pay. Another question to be considered is the effect that such legislation will have upon capitalists outside the State. It is in the interests of the working man that we should attract men to Queensland who will become large employers of labour, but the provisions of this Bill are likely to scare such men away. Just take the composition of the proposed unemployment council. It is to be presided over by a Minister, and it is quite possible that that Minister might be the hon. member for Flinders, who only the other day was authorised by this House to issue a statement to the effect that employers were thieving pick-pockets. It is a nice thing to ask people to come to a country whose rulers regard them in that light and use opprobrious terms of

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that description to them. Yet the hon. member who used such language with regard to employers might be the president of this council. Then the comptroller of labour will be a nominee of the Government party, and the representative of the employees will also be a member of that party. I think we are justified in reposing every confidence in the judges of all our courts; but he and the employers' representative will be in a minority in a council of five. The knowledge of that fact will deter people investing their money in this State. Then it will be very unjust to the local authorities if we allow such an interference in their affairs as is proposed by the Bill. I quite admit that it is desirable that, whenever possible, their work should be done during the slack season; but that object could be attained without this domineering interference and dictation. I might suggest to the Treasurer that, in granting loans to local authorities, a higher rate of interest should be charged if the money is not to be expended on work undertaken during the slack season, or preferably a lower rate when it is. That would be preferable to going the length proposed in this Bill. Linked up with this proposed interference with the local authorities is the proposal to grant the franchise to young people of eighteen years of age on the basis of the parliamentary franchise. With such a franchise, what will be the position of the property-owner? The whole thing is grotesquely unfair. I was struck by some remarks made by the hon. member for Mackay. Of course, we all know his intense antipathy to capital, so that it was not altogether surprising to hear him blame the capitalistic system for unemployment in Queensland. If the hon. member had been with me when I was in Mackay a few weeks ago, and had seen several hundred of unemployed there, I think he would have realised that their unemployment was not attributable to private capitalists, but to the shipping strike—a strike that was being handled by a Government. There were hundreds of unemployed in the hon. member's electorate entirely from that cause, and right throughout Queensland at the present time there is a considerable amount of unemployment from the same cause—strikes, sometimes in State enterprises, sometimes in privately-owned enterprises, and all quite unjustifiable. Again I say that that state of affairs is largely owing to the attitude of the Government themselves. Only last session I obtained from the Treasurer the admission that the industrial law had been broken over and over again by the employees, and I say that the strikes we have in Queensland are the direct result of their policy in condoning breaches of the Act. These are the causes that bring about unemployment, and this Bill is not going to rectify the state of things. I have already stated that I think it is quite a fair thing that the employer, the employee, and the State should all contribute to the insurance funds, as has been laid down in other countries and has been approved by such a leader of the Labour party as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald.

At fifteen minutes past 9 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Bertram) took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think that the ability to contribute and to stand a short period of unemployment is fairly well shown by some

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remarks of Mr. Justice McCawley in the Arbitration Court the other day. Speaking with reference to cane-cutters he said—

“In this award I have inserted a similar direction as to severely damaged crops. Twenty-five shillings per day is a substantial wage, enabling the cutter in a good season to make in the neighbourhood of £200 for six months' work.”

In the case of an employee who can earn £200 in six months I do not think it is unreasonable that he should contribute to the fund, if such a fund is necessary. If the ordinary means of employment are so weakened by Government policy, by bad seasons, by industrial trouble, or anything else, and such a fund is necessary, I think it is only a fair thing to ask that all parties should contribute to it. I am simply quoting the words of a judge who is generally admitted to be fully qualified for the job, and I think his remarks show that we on this side are justified in the contention we have raised on that point. This Bill contains many invidious attempts to advance the interests of the party opposite, quite apart from the subject of unemployment. I think the hon. member for Carnarvon covered some very useful ground on that point, and showed how it would be possible to gerrymander electorates; how, when it was intended to win a particular election, a large number of workers could be rushed into it under cover of this Act, if it comes to that. I hope that it will not pass in its present form, although I would be very pleased to see something useful—something that could be fairly described as a law to cope with unemployment. Although the Minister, in introducing the Bill, loudly proclaimed the right of every man to work, still we find that he must belong to one particular brand. The Bill carefully provides that, although a man has conscientious scruples against joining a political union, he must, nevertheless, join it and be forced to subscribe, perhaps, to papers in which he does not believe and to contribute towards the election expenses of candidates against his political creed before he is allowed to set up the plea of unemployment under this Bill; before he is allowed to share in the fund contributed, not by the State, but by the employer, he must sell his political principles. When the hon. member embodies such a principle as that in the Bill, and at the same time loudly talks about the right of everyone to work, then we can only come to the conclusion that he is hypocritical. Altogether, I think that the Bill falls far short of what we have a right to hope for, and that it is not going to achieve the purpose for which it is designed, but in all probability will have the very contrary effect. Legislation such as this is going to sap our moral fibre instead of making us a virile race. Unless it is considerably altered in Committee, it is going to have a bad effect instead of a good effect, and I trust that when it gets to the third reading it will be a very different measure from what it is at present.

At eighteen minutes past 9 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. MORGAN: I beg to call attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: So far as any principle of insurance against unemployment goes, I am certainly in favour of securing

for the worker—that is, to the genuine worker—the right to work, and the right also to have the full return of his labour when he does work. I am very anxious about that, but I think the title of this Bill should be somewhat altered and instead of being an Unemployed Workers Bill, it should be called “A Bill for Creating Unemployment.” It is going on the principle of discouraging employment and keeping capital away from Queensland. I am one of those who believe that the best way to keep up an average employment—the best way to keep up wages—is to employ capital and make labour scarce, so that the employer will have to give more than the Arbitration Court award in order to get the labour. Let us for a moment see whether the standard of the worker has been improved since the present party came into power. I have always been one of those who have advocated the use of machinery as far as possible. I do not see any reason why you should employ a man at exceptionally hard work if there is a possibility of getting it done by machinery more easily, and paying the man for it. You should relieve the man of the hardest labour and put it on to the machine. We have only to look outside Parliament House to see the condition of affairs. One very highly respected member on the Government side is on the city council, and notwithstanding the fact that all the power necessary can be obtained to relieve men of hard work, we see men hoisting up metal by electric power, tumbling it on the ground, and other men coming along by and by, taking off their coats, and putting it into a cart. A man is being paid £1,000 a year to keep that kind of thing going. A man can either be lifted up to the level of God, or he can be brought down to the level of the devil to crawl on his belly in the dust. What do we see in the streets of Brisbane under a Labour Government? To-day I saw five men harnessed to a roller by a rope. What would have been said if a farmer had harnessed five men to his plough? There is available electric power, steam power, and the power of oil machinery, yet nothing is brought forward to relieve these men, and we see five men, like five donkeys, harnessed by a rope to a roller in the streets of Brisbane.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. I say the worker is being degraded every day. I was surprised to see what I did to-day.

Mr. FORDE: On what work?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Work for the council of the city of Brisbane.

Mr. FORDE: Yes, an undemocratic body.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Never mind, it is under a Labour Government and under Labour laws. Is there not all the power a mighty corporation can bring to bear? Yet, you have gone back to the days of Adam, when you harness your men to rollers and treat them like animals. I presume those men who were drawing that roller had a vote. I presume it was done for the purpose of making the work last as long as possible without any idea of the return which was being given. There was no question whatever of the cost of the labour. One

thing to which I object is the constitution of this unemployment council. It is not fair. When our fellow colonists in America threw the tea overboard and refused to serve a Government who did not give them a vote, and refused to pay rates unless they had a voice in spending them, they were cheered on all sides. Yet here we have a council composed of five members, and only one out of the five has to find the money.

Mr. TAYLOR: Taxation without representation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, taxation without representation. Another thing is that the same clause makes the Minister a law unto himself. There is no representation whatever in this matter. The Minister practically takes away all the rights of shire councils, of employers, and of every citizen except himself. Then we come to the Order in Council. They can order the shire council to do certain work. The Treasurer finds them the money, and orders them to do the work and find employment. One thing is in doubt, and I ask the Treasurer whether the liability of shire councils is limited to the unemployed within their own area?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Their liability is limited to works which may be proclaimed within their area.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That won't do. What I want to know is, are the shire councils limited to finding employment for the unemployed residing within their own areas?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think that question will have to be elucidated.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is a question the hon. gentleman knows perfectly well, but wants to avoid. It is a thing I want definitely answered, because it definitely affects our people. We have drought-stricken farmers at the present time who, for six or nine months, will not get a single shilling income. The Minister can bring along his unemployed, who have been earning £6, £9, or £10 a week for some months, put them into the shires, and compel the drought-stricken farmers to employ them. He will also give them a vote in the shire. We don't want that sort of thing. It is a most important matter, and it should be decided. I want to know from the Minister whether that is going to happen. Will their liability to find employment for the unemployed be limited to the unemployed within their own shire?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The answer to that is that when the local authority is called upon to start any works, they will only be started and carried on within their own area. They will get a loan from the Treasury, repaying the Treasury at the rates stipulated. The work is carried on, but it will only be the work in respect of which they have applied for a loan. I hope I have given a full explanation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, there is not an end to the liability. The Minister, upon his own terms, can compel any shire council to take up a very large amount of loan money and spend it, and he can bring the unemployed to that district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: When they carry on works under that clause, they employ their own labour. I will not bring the labour from anywhere.

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Mr. BEBBINGTON: But you will compel them to employ men. The Treasurer does not answer my question. The hon. gentleman will not say that the liability of the city councils or shire councils to find employment for the unemployed will be limited to the unemployed within their [9.30 p.m.] own areas. We shall have to get an amendment inserted making that quite clear, before the Bill passes this Chamber. With regard to the contributions which have to be made by employers, I presume the amounts they contribute will be passed on and that they will not really be paid by the employer. When the Treasurer brought in his land tax he wanted to raise £140,000 or £160,000 by that land tax. Last year instead of £140,000 he wanted over half a million, and he took it from the people. Exactly the same kind of thing will happen in this case. The Treasurer comes along and throws out a bait in order to get this Bill through the House, and the bait he throws out is that he is only going to tax the employer to the extent of £2 a year for each person he employs. But the Bill fixes no limit to the taxation of the employer, and the employers can be compelled to keep the unemployed from other States, and they will flock here in thousands. The Government are imposing a lot of taxes—the land tax, the income tax, and the unemployed tax—and all these taxes are placed on the shoulders of employers. The Treasurer knows that there is only a certain narrow margin of profit in many businesses, he knows that if the employer pays his land tax and all other taxes and expenses there will be nothing left for him, and he knows perfectly well that the employer is bound to put these costs on the goods he sells, which means that the cost of living will go up. That is one of the things that the Bill covers up, as the Premier said at the Interstate Conference, his axiom is, "Cover it up, don't let the people see it." The people are persuaded now that they will not have to pay this tax, but I say that such a tax will only increase unemployment and prevent people in other States from investing their money in Queensland. With such a measure as this in force, it will pay a man better to put his money into the war loan than to put it into industry. If the Bill does not shut up some of the industries we already have here, it will prevent people from opening up other industries.

Now I come to the labour farm proposal contained in the Bill. It would be a good thing if we could gather up all those who to-day are a burden on the community—those who will not work—and put them on a farm and make them earn their own living. But I am sorry to say that the Treasurer is providing these farms, not for people of that kind, but for the ordinary and general workers. Is the hon. gentleman going to pick up all the rag tag and bobtail in the streets of the city and put them on this labour farm, and will he then take the respectable workers who would not be seen in the company of such men and put them on the farm to work alongside the "won't works"? Is the hon. gentleman going to put respectable workers alongside all those scoundrels who won't work? You have not to go very far to find them, as they are to be found in this city as well as in other countries. Then what is the hon. gentleman

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going to do with the women? The Bill does not say anything about finding work for women, so that it is incomplete in that respect. The Bill should be called "A Bill to create unemployment," instead of the "Unemployed Workers Bill." The Treasurer admits that he has made no provision for women. The farms are only for men. You cannot bundle a lot of women on to a farm. Then what is the hon. gentleman going to do with the women? I believe the Treasurer had some hope that this Bill might be a success, but I am afraid there is little hope of its being a success. What is the good of a measure which will tend to impoverish employers? There are hundreds of people who are employing workers to-day, and they are working on a very narrow margin. There may be profiteers in the State, but, at the same time, there are any number of employers who are working on a narrow margin. In nine cases out of ten the people engaged in primary production are working on a very narrow margin. If people are going to work on these narrow margins, and you are going to place them in this position, do you think they are going to work for the State? I saw a man the other day who had a considerable amount of money, and he went to Victoria, where he came from. It is the land tax that is driving the sons away to the cities while the father has to stop on the farm. Now we come down to bedrock—what is the cause of unemployment in Queensland to-day? This is an extract taken from the Bundaberg report in "The Militant," of 1st September—

"Except in the railways, work here is very slack: so much so, that a unionists' distress fund had to be started to enable principally a roof to be kept over their families' heads. It says very little that such a condition of affairs should exist in a democratic country run by a Labour Government."

I am going to give my own reason for unemployment. You never see anything brought forward to increase production, but everything which is done to seize the means of production and the wealth that someone else has produced. The Government can deny that the socialistic system to-day is the planning or creating of more wealth and dividing it up if they like. We had a debate last Thursday, when this side of the House showed that its policy was a policy of co-operative production, in which the worker would be assisted by the State in the same way that the farmer is assisted to own his own factories—that the worker should own his own factory and get the whole of the produce of his labour. Hon. members opposite turned it down in favour of stealing the wealth produced by other people under the name of "socialism." With all these things hanging over the community, can you wonder that no one comes here to start industries? Can you wonder that no one will put their money into industries? Can you wonder that some of our war loans were a success? People put their money into the war loans, because there was less trouble than in putting it into industry. When I saw some of the war loans being floated, I said, "Thank God; it is a success." But we know what human nature is, and I dare say hon. members opposite did the same, because they could not trust their own party. (Government laughter.) The Premier says he puts

a little in, and I believe he put it in from the very same motives that I did. (Renewed Government laughter.) It is quite evident, from the position the Rockhampton "Record," the Premier's own paper, has taken up, that he cannot trust his own party, and neither can any other hon. member opposite. Let me give a little incident. Some few years ago I happened to be in Sydney, and there was a socialistic Government in power. I was speaking to one of the leading bankers. I said, "How is it that these men who are talking about the destruction of wealth are all wealthy men?" He said, "I am a banker, and I have the means, if anyone has, of knowing where people have accounts, and there is not a Minister in New South Wales who has a banking account in his own country." I said, "What do they do with it?" and he said, "There is a certain gentleman passing between here and America. He is supposed to be a commercial agent, but my opinion is that his principal business is investing money for politicians in America, and when the climax comes they can pick up their swag and go where the money is." (Loud Government laughter.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill. (Hear, hear!)

MR. BEBBINGTON: I am showing that under this Bill, and under socialist legislation, there can be no confidence—that capitalists will not come here to spend their money and start industries—and that is the reason why we should give this Bill a great deal of consideration. It possibly may account for some people here saying that they have no banking accounts. Is it possible that some of the people who profess to have no banking accounts have got their money invested, so that they can go over to it when things smash here? They preach revolution, but we have no evidence that they are not investing their money in safer countries.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

MR. BEBBINGTON: I am only showing what can happen under socialism.

THE PREMIER: That bank manager must have seen you coming. (Laughter.)

MR. BEBBINGTON: Perhaps he did, but I got his word. Perhaps the Premier knows more about these things than I do. (Laughter.) I am quite sure that the Premier has too much brains to be caught in a socialistic storm, and have his money where he cannot get it. (Opposition laughter.) You do not catch him twice. I am very sorry that this Bill does not come up to our expectations. If it would relieve unemployment instead of creating it, then I, for one, would readily give it all the assistance I could. If we can make it a good Bill in Committee, I shall be delighted to assist in doing so; but, if we cannot, I shall have to vote for it being put off for a few months for further consideration.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I certainly think that, as far as the contents of the Bill are concerned, the Treasurer gave us a very lucid explanation. As to whether it is possible for the Bill to work out in the way which the Secretary for Public Works has in his mind, I, with many others, have considerable doubts. That unemployment

exists everyone in this Chamber knows. Statements have been made by hon. members on the opposite side that this side has no sympathy whatever with the worker or with the unemployed. That statement has been made, not only once, but on quite a number of occasions during this debate. I contend that the legislation which has been passed, not only in Queensland, but throughout the whole of Australia during the last twenty or twenty-five years, gives the lie to that statement. We have not to go very far afield to find where legislation of a humanitarian character has been carried out by the various Governments of Queensland, and of the other States, in order to so far as possible ameliorate and better the condition of the workers, and, as evidence of that, I will mention a few Acts that have been passed. We have passed in the State of Queensland a Workers' Compensation Act, an Act which has been of a most beneficial character to the worker who has been injured, and to the dependents of any worker who has lost his life. Provision is made by that Act so that if a worker is killed, some provision will be made for his wife and family.

MR. KIRWAN: That is not so. I will give you a concrete case.

MR. TAYLOR: Give us a concrete case.

MR. KIRWAN: A man was killed opposite the Roma street railway gates by a tram, and the widow could get no compensation.

MR. TAYLOR: That is probably the only case where compensation could not be obtained. If it can be shown that by some contributory act of negligence an accident has taken place, then it is not a very easy matter for any person to establish a claim.

MR. KIRWAN: That was not so in this case.

MR. TAYLOR: I do not remember the case to which the hon. member refers, but even suppose that such a case did happen, it does not affect the truth of what I have said one iota, and if that is the only case out of scores and hundreds that have taken place since that Act has been in operation, it does not say very much against the Act. Then, in order to better the condition of the worker again, we have passed the Workers' Dwellings Act, another Act which has been availed of by the worker, and as a consequence, probably hundreds and thousands of homes have been erected throughout Queensland for the workers, which are gradually being paid for in the way of a very low rental.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And the Bill was opposed by many on the other side.

MR. WINSTANLEY: That is not correct.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is correct.

MR. TAYLOR: Then, again, we have the allowances that are paid to the widows and the dependent children when the wage-earner has been taken away. These have all been introduced in order to benefit the worker, and then, finally, we have the old-age pensions.

MR. KIRWAN: Your party fought it for ten years on the floor of this House.

MR. TAYLOR: I am not discussing who imposed it or who did not impose it. I may tell the hon. member that the first man to speak of old-age pensions in the whole of Australia, and who worked day and night till it was introduced, was Mr. J. W. Kirkland, in the Legislative Assembly

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of Victoria, about thirty-five years ago. I challenge any hon. member in this Chamber to dispute that statement. Of course, to a very great extent these measures have removed the spectre of unemployment, and it is a spectre at all times. To a married man with a family who has only got his daily wage to live on, the fact that he may be out of employment to-morrow is certainly a spectre, and if we can, by any legislation we can introduce, remove that spectre, then we will be doing something that will be to the benefit of the State and to the benefit of the worker. I think I have as much sympathy for the worker, and for the unemployed, as any member of this Chamber, and I contend that this Bill is not going to work out in the direction that the Secretary for Public Works hopes and thinks it will work out.

Mr. FOLEY: How would you deal with the question?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is for the Government who have charge of the business of this country at the present time to promulgate a scheme that will deal with the evils of unemployment, and deal with the question in an equitable and fair manner. I contend that the principle of this Bill is inequitable. In all conscience, why should the men who to-day are providing employment in their various businesses be the ones who have to pay the whole tax, when everyone knows that there are hundreds, and probably thousands, of wealthy men who have capital at their command, and who are not employing a single person, and who are to go scot free. Under this Bill the men who do not employ any workers, and do not provide a single penny to provide employment, but have their money locked up in investments, are not called upon to pay a single copper. Is it a fair thing that these men should be allowed to go scot free? I contend that it is not fair at all. However unpalatable it may be, we all know this unemployment exists. We all know it always has existed; that it always will exist, we hope, will not be the case. There is no doubt, as the Secretary for Public Works said, in every State, and in every country, there is an unemployable class. I suppose that we shall always have that class. We always have had them, and it is a very difficult class to deal with, and to know how to properly put them to some kind of employment which will be to their benefit, and to the benefit of the country. It is a great pity to think that here in Queensland, with an undeveloped State such as we have, with its hundreds of thousands of acres, that there should be any necessity at all to bring in such a Bill as this. My contention is, and has been in connection with this Bill, that there is an abundance of work in Queensland at the present time, if the people would only get to work and develop this country as it has a right to be developed.

At five minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR (continuing): But the development of this country has been hindered, to a great extent, first by industrial troubles, and then, again, by the strikes that have taken place in connection with those troubles. We all know how strikes create unemployment. Take the late shipping strike. We know that, quite apart

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from the men who were engaged in that strike, there were thousands of workers unemployed throughout the whole of Australia, and that is what is going to happen, probably, in connection with a Bill such as this. Under this Bill, of course, there is no liability to pay compensation while men are on strike, and for a certain period afterwards, but that is not the only length to which the Bill goes. Say a coal strike takes place, or a seamen's strike takes place. Through the action of those men going on strike we may have several thousands of men out of employment, and how is this fund going to be financed in a case of that kind, which might arise, and which, had this Bill been in operation, would have arisen at the present time?

With all due respect to the Treasurer, and to his desire to bring unemployment to an end, my honest conviction is that, instead of reducing the amount of unemployment in

the State, he is going to increase [10 p.m.] it. It is not only the employees who have a dread of unemployment. At the present time the employees of labour right throughout Australia are in constant dread of trouble arising in connection with the various industries of the country. Throughout the Commonwealth there are men who wish to throw aside all the constitutional methods of settling labour disputes which have been provided for them, and of resorting to direct action. Time and time again awards of the Industrial Arbitration Courts have been flouted, and all kinds of annoyance caused to employers. While that state of things exists, is it likely that men are going to invest their money in our industries? If the State chooses to embark on this undertaking, it will find itself in exactly the same position as private employers.

The matter of secondary industries was mentioned by one hon. member to-night. We know how necessary secondary industries are to the community; and we all know how painfully few there are of such industries in this State. Take the boot manufacturing industry, for example. I suppose there is not a single ship that comes into the port of Brisbane from the Southern States that does not bring large quantities of boots manufactured in Sydney and Melbourne from hides grown in Queensland. Our boot manufacturers have already quite enough taxation to bear if they are to compete with their rivals in the South without this added impost. Instead of having to import a very large proportion of our boots from New South Wales and Victoria, we should be large exporters of boots to those States.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The boot manufacturers make a profit of 35 per cent.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know what profits the boot manufacturers of Queensland make, but it is quite evident that the Southern manufacturers must be making considerably larger profits, judging by the large quantities of boots they are able to sell here. The biscuit industry has also been mentioned. It is well known that we import large quantities of biscuits from Victoria and New South Wales, and we are now going to penalise our biscuit manufacturers still further. The same remarks apply to confectionery. We manufacture the sugar in Queensland, and yet we send our sugar down to Sydney and Melbourne, and get a considerable quantity of it back again in the

shape of confectionery. The system which allows such a state of things to exist is radically wrong; and I contend that such a Bill as this is going to reduce rather than increase the number of our secondary industries by adding to the costs and taxes of our manufacturers.

I do not know that I have much to say by way of objection to the unemployment council. Personally, I would prefer if it was not to be presided over by a Minister, because, I do not care who the Minister may be, it will be a very difficult matter for him to act in such a capacity in an unbiassed way. It is right and proper to have a judge there, and also to have the Director of Labour and representatives of the two parties interested; but the scope of the work will be very extensive, and, as the Treasurer intimated, it may be of a very drastic nature if the council choose to make it so. The Treasurer said that the charge on the employer the first year will be £2 per employee. That is what the Bill states. But the employer has no guarantee regarding the amount he will have to pay in the second or the third year. If there should be a large amount of unemployment, and there happens to have been a deficit the first year, from my reading of the Bill, the council will have power to make the assessment anything they choose. It may be £5, or it may be £20, or £30; they can fix it at any amount they choose in order to finance the scheme. I do not think that is a fair thing. The limit should be specifically defined in the Bill, and not be left to be fixed at the sweet will of the council, no matter how competent that council may be. It is also mentioned in the Bill that a rebate may be given to employers. I do not know what may be the experience of other hon. members, but I have never known any rebate given in connection with any such legislation. The general experience is that, when any Government scheme comes to be put into operation, the contributions from private individuals are increased rather than decreased, owing to the exigencies of the case. The Treasurer quoted certain figures as to the number of unemployed. I am sorry that he did not give some estimate of the cost of the scheme. His figures showed, however, that the greatest amount of unemployment exists in the months of January, February, and March, and the average is something like 2,200 constantly unemployed in the State. Working out those figures, it seems to me that the expenditure would be anything from £150,000 to £200,000 a year. We have got to ask ourselves whether we cannot adopt some effective scheme at very much less cost. Personally, I think it can be done, and I think the Government should see whether it is not possible by some other means to reduce what is likely to be the probable cost.

Reference has been made to the relief farms. We do not, of course, expect those to pay, when we consider the class of men whom the Government propose to put on them. As a general rule, we know that they do not pay in any direction, and I think that in any unemployment scheme where the intention largely is to put on them men who are unemployable, we cannot expect them to pay. But, as the speaker pointed out, it may have the effect, by getting those men into active work, of redeeming them

and making them good workers in the future. We all realise that it is a difficult question to deal with, and I feel sure that if it can be shown that the scheme will be workable, the Government will get all the assistance possible from this side of the House.

In connection with the contributions which are to be made, there probably may be some fairly cogent and sufficient reasons why the State as a whole should be exempted, but I do not think that exemption is fair or just so far as State enterprises are concerned. I think that where a State is entering into enterprises which have been carried out in the past by private individuals, it should pay pro rata in connection with its trading ventures as well as the private employers. Why it claims exemption I cannot understand, and I shall certainly oppose that provision in every way.

Then, again, we are told by members on the Government side that the Government are opposed to big monopolies and big businesses, and yet under this Bill they propose to increase their size. If certain profits are made by a company, such as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, they say, "You must put on more employees; you must enlarge the scope of your operations; you must increase the size of your monopoly." Here is a Bill which is going to further monopolies, and do all that it possibly can to increase their activities. A good deal has been said about the control of industries and production. Any man who chooses to think for only a few moments cannot come to any other conclusion than that if the workers of Australia had been prepared to make the same sacrifice as they have just done—because they have made some sacrifice of wages—they could have provided sufficient money to control probably a dozen industries in Queensland and Australia to-day instead of whining at what the capitalist and the profiteer are doing. They have been content to lay down their tools of trade and lose probably two or three months' work, in many cases at £3 or £4 a week—which has all gone to the winds—and then go back to their work with slightly better conditions and perhaps not. If they had been only level-headed enough to put that money into some co-operative affair, they could have owned the ships of Australia, they could probably have owned the Brisbane tramways, and could have owned coalmines from one end of Australia to the other.

Mr. CARTER interjected.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is what they could have done if they had directed their minds wisely and well, but, like the hon. member who has interjected, they could not direct their minds wisely and well.

Mention has been made of the absence of provision for female workers who may be unemployed. They cannot be put on to the farms, and in what department of industry we are going to utilise their labour it is hard to say. In fact, there is any amount of labour associated with an Unemployment Bill which will be quite unsuitable for any farm or any of the other suggested relief works. However, I have no intention to take up any more time of the House. I say that any honest, deserving scheme that will provide for unemployment has the sympathy of every member on this side of the House,

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notwithstanding what members on the other side may say to the contrary, and I say that the Government should bring forward a scheme which will be workable and practicable and not one which will create unemployment and result in financial loss and probably financial ruin to many people who will come within the scope of this Bill.

Mr. ROBERTS: I want to say at the outset that it seems passing strange to me that in what is called the Queen State of the Commonwealth, after a period of four years of Labour Government, it is necessary for the Legislature to consider a Bill called an Unemployed Workers Bill. When we remember the criticism that used to be made when the Labour party were in opposition, one would assume that when they got on to the Treasury benches a state of unemployment could not exist. I venture to say, however, that the legislative enactments of this Government have been such as have made unemployment more possible from day to day. It does not matter what sphere of influence they have entered—it has been a matter of plums for the few and a reduction of employment for the many. I think it is generally admitted by this side of the House that there is no objection to a reasonable allowance for unemployment. The great objection is because in other countries where similar measures have been passed payment has been sought from all parties concerned. It must be admitted that the framers of this Bill have had the advantages of those Acts, and indeed some of their clauses are contained in this Bill. Just the one clause necessary to make it financial, I regret to say, has been left out of the Bill. As has been shown by the hon. member for Windsor, the only people who are called upon to contribute are the people who are making employment to-day. The people who are keeping their workers continuously employed certainly have the privilege—if the Minister makes up his mind to exercise it—of getting some concession. But there is that word “may,” and I assume that the amount of money that will be sought from employers of five persons or more will be such that that provision will not be used.

As far as the unemployment question is concerned, I would like to point out it is an economic one, and any attempt to deal with it requires careful thought. I cannot but think that very little thought has been given to the compilation of this Bill. The Government have come along and said, “Well, we promised an Unemployed Workers Bill. We know that it is quite impossible, but we will introduce a measure, and we will introduce such a one that, as far as the workers are concerned, we will be able to say we did not ask them for any payment thereto.” We know that, as far as the trade union principle is concerned, for years in the old country there has been unemployed insurance. The workers have provided for it, and also have insisted that the employee has to go where he is required by the trade union to look for work. The employment fee is payable only on his carrying out that obligation. The Government propose to compel those who are employing labour to bear the cost of this scheme. I think that, in itself, is most unreasonable and unfair. When we get into the clauses of the Bill we find many things which require consideration. In clause 3—

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The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with the clauses of the Bill on this motion.

Mr. ROBERTS: I only want to deal with the principle of the Bill. In clause 13 it says—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the hon. member again that he is not allowed to discuss the clauses of the Bill at this stage.

Mr. ROBERTS: I only want to say that this clause provides—

“The overseer may establish and manage any trade or industry in a labour farm and dispose of the proceeds thereof.”

Several members, speaking on the second reading, seemed to think the labour farms were to be used for agricultural purposes. I am showing, from that reference, that there is contemplated an engaging in secondary industries. I note further on that the question of the wages to be paid is one not for the Arbitration Court. The Minister himself will set out the wages which are to be paid. Then there is another provision, which seems to be a remarkable one, coming from a Labour Government, and it gives me the opinion that full consideration has not been given to the Bill. There is a provision that, if there is a difference of opinion between one of the men on the farm and the manager of the farm, the man can be dismissed. It is an astonishing fact that, notwithstanding some moneys may be due to him, if he is dismissed, those moneys are not to be paid. That does not seem to be what you might expect from men who are supposed to look after the interests of the worker. I propose to move an amendment, and I think there is every reason for so doing, and the Government should decide to accept it. It is—

“That all the words after ‘now’ be omitted, with a view of inserting the words ‘withdrawn to permit of introducing a new Bill to make provision for an equitable scheme of insurance against unemployment by a fund contributed to by the employers, the workers, and the State, and providing labour farms or other suitable work for the unemployed.’”

If this suggestion is adopted, I think there is every possibility that a Bill can speedily be introduced and passed, and become effective. The present Bill does not seem to be giving general satisfaction outside. We know that the employers of labour are considerably concerned about it. They seem to fear there will be more taxation placed upon them. In various centres the industrialists themselves are not satisfied with it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who are the industrialists?

Mr. ROBERTS: One member on the Government side is anxious to know who they are. I am content to know they are workers—men who evidently anticipate that, if this Bill becomes operative, they will be concerned in it. That is sufficient for me. I have considerable satisfaction in moving the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I rise to second the amendment. I want to say at the outset

that, as I have not availed myself of the opportunity of speaking on the Bill, I shall be quite in order in speaking to the amendment and the Bill also. I think it will be at once admitted that the amendment which has been moved by the hon. member for East Toowoomba is one which must commend itself to every member of this House. (Loud Government laughter.) It is an amendment which brings into practical form what, I venture to say, is intended in connection with this particular Bill. I am perfectly certain that anyone who reads the Bill must come to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the clear and explicit way in which the Secretary for Works dealt with the Bill, it has been hurriedly prepared. It seems to me that the object, very largely, is to have some kind of political fireworks; and they seem to have misfired, judging by some of the reports, if true, because, apparently, there is even trouble in the dovecot of the Premier. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: Why do you say that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am asked why do I say that. There is a paper which is known as the Rockhampton "Record," and it is said that the Premier has something to do with that paper. I find that, somehow or other, although it agrees with the Premier and his party in nine cases out of ten, on this particular occasion it does not agree with him. It will be readily understood, when such is the case, how very much disturbed they must be about this particular Bill. (Government laughter.) They must feel that a very grave mistake has been made in bringing the Bill down to the House. I am perfectly certain that that is the judgment of the community generally. I want to make myself perfectly clear in connection with this particular Bill. Every member in this House, when he speaks of unemployment, must admit at once that there can be nothing more terrible than for a man to find himself out of work. Though some members may doubt the statement, I may say that I have been in that position myself—a position in which one is ashamed to meet his fellows because he is [10.30 p.m.] doing nothing. In my younger days I knew something of what it is to have nothing to do, and I know that the position is terrible. But is this measure one which will remedy that evil? My own judgment is that it will rather undermine the very foundations of society. It will take away from the worker that which is necessary in the life of every one—namely, the desire to do the very best for himself. There is no one who will regard this proposal with more objection than the worker. The aim of every man should be to make provision for himself in such a way that when the evening of life comes he will be able to feel independent of other people. Reference has been made by some speakers to the fact that workers will probably come from other States in order to avail themselves of the provisions of this Bill. I know that the Bill provides that help shall only be given to those who have resided for a certain period in the State. But seeing that we are part of a great Commonwealth, I hold that any movement along these lines should be made by the Commonwealth, and not by an individual State. If there are unemployed in Queensland—and I shall be able to show later that we have the biggest percentage of

unemployed—there is also unemployment elsewhere, and if we are to do anything to deal with that unemployment it should be done by the Commonwealth. This Bill opens the door to all kinds of abuse. The men who will have to be watched the most are not the honest workers who are out of employment, but the men who have no desire to get employment, and there are a few such in every community. Another point upon which I should like some information is whether this measure is not another means of trying to raise revenue to help the Treasury. Some time ago it was arranged by the Government that no cattle should be allowed to go out of the country unless so much per head on those cattle were paid to the Treasury, and the books show that some £35,000 was obtained by the Treasurer by that means. This Bill practically says, "Here is a pistol, and if you do not do certain things the Treasurer can come along and commandeer funds for the Government." In other words, the measure contains a provision which says that under certain circumstances a person will have to invest money in Treasury bonds, or something of that kind. It may be that the Government will need money to buy more cattle stations, or to make up losses in connection with State enterprises that have already been undertaken. Apparently, the Treasurer is trying to make good under the guise of helping the worker. He has got away from the poor widow and orphan, and is coming now to the unemployed in the community.

The PREMIER: You are contradicting all that members on your own side have said.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am only responsible for my own opinions.

The PREMIER: I am delighted to see the difference of opinion on that side.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I wish to show the House what is happening elsewhere in connection with a similar measure, but one which is much more liberal and much more equitable. I have here a copy of a clipping from the London "Times," of the 24th June, 1919, which says—

"At Tower Bridge Police Court yesterday, Mr. Bingley said that he had read in the report of a Government committee that there had been no abuse with regard to unemployment pay. If evidence had been taken from magistrates the report would have been different. He had had before him railway luggage thieves and pickpockets who had been drawing out-of-work pay."

That is the practical experience of a gentleman in the old country who had control of a similar business.

Mr. MULLAN: You would exclude the honest worker because some men do that kind of thing?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. I say that the honest man who is out of employment should receive every help we can give him.

The PREMIER: Your argument is that the workers are pickpockets.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. That is more of the Premier's bluff. It used to be said by members opposite, that if a Labour Government got into power we should have a paradise in Queensland. Referring to an article

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which appeared in the "Daily Mail" quite recently, I find that "Knibbs" shows that in the first quarter of the year 1918, Queensland had a certain increase in unemployment. I notice that the rise in Queensland in the last quarter of 1918 was 11.6 per cent., in Victoria, 6.2 per cent.; in New South Wales, 3.6 per cent.; in Western Australia, 4.2 per cent.; in Tasmania, 1.7 per cent.; and South Australia, 2.2 per cent. We had an increase five times greater than it was in South Australia. It will be admitted that the increase has been very great. Then I will quote from another paper which never makes any mistake—the "Daily Standard." I notice that a writer, in communicating with the "Daily Standard" in connection with this Bill, says—

"Re the Unemployment Bill to be placed before Parliament in the interests of the public, who undoubtedly will be heavily taxed to meet expenses, and of the employer. I would like to suggest that every man who does not work for at least six months out of a year, and cannot produce medical evidence to show that he is unfit to work, shall be imprisoned for one year. The scheme would deter many loafers from other parts coming here, and would go some way to help along honest workers who are not on the lookout for 'something for nothing.' Then, again, will not such a Bill tend to keep capital out of the country, and will Mr. Theodore explain any method by which the capitalist can be compelled to come here to help develop our great State, if the only inducement is by offering 'A Loafers Paradise.'"

Mr. MULLAN: What is the date of that paper?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: 2nd September. I want to point out that this Bill is going to add to the number of returns which have to be sent in by people to-day. If there is one thing more than another which it is going to do, it is going to make billets. Very soon in Queensland every man will be a Government servant. Everything is going in that direction, and that will mean, according to opinions of many in this House, a new heaven and a new earth. Then there is the other matter of £2 per head. It does not follow that it is going to stop there; that is only for the first year. The Treasurer may find himself in need, and naturally, under the machinery of the Bill, he may come along and say, "I am going to have another cut in at those whom I have the power to tax," and it may mount up, if the caucus says the Treasurer has to do it; and if another power says he has to do it, it will then have to be done.

Then there is an extraordinary provision—employers are compelled to find employment. It is an easy thing to tell a man that he must find "John Brown" a billet, but I want to know how he is going to manage it. You can drive a horse to the trough, but you cannot make him drink. If you pass legislation by which you can put money into a man's pocket and enable him to do certain things, if he can get an advance from the Government—although I do not think they can advance much—and run into debt in that way in order to fall in with the

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suggestions of the powers that be, you may do it. Then the Minister has the power to state what the penalty in some directions is to be. If there should not happen to be such a careful and cautious man as the present Treasurer in office, what might happen? Suppose the Minister for Railways wished to take a trip somewhere for the public good, what might happen?

Then we have power in the Bill to compel a local authority to do certain things. Is that a fair proposition? The representatives on the local authorities, in the majority of cases, apart from the chairmen, do their work in an honorary way, and they are going to have a pistol placed at their heads, and told to do this, that, and the other. I want to know what men, with anything like self-respect, are going to place themselves in that position? There is no power to find out what is the wish of the people who are concerned. It may be some work which is altogether unsuitable to the district. There is only one thing that is certain in connection with the Bill—they have to pay up, and do what the council says they have to do. How is the council composed? I want to point out that there is a dominating power in the hands of the Government in regard to the constitution of the council. If local authorities are going to be held responsible for this kind of thing, they should have some representation on the council. I want to draw attention to the fact that the local authorities are going to be held responsible for the money without a poll being taken. We have seen in the attempts made to control local authorities, where men have been put on local authorities, not by reason of their fitness, but because they have had the political brand which the Government wanted.

Then there is another part of the Bill which deals with labour farms. I can only hope those farms will be a great success. I believe in getting men out on the land, and there is nothing so necessary in Queensland to-day as to make provision for getting people on the land, and to see that that phase of our national life is improved upon. If there is one danger in Queensland that we are up against more than another, it is the drift, and possible drift, from the country to the cities, and anything we can do to encourage people to go on the land should be done. I notice, too, that there are penalties. It says that objection to join a union which enjoys preference shall not constitute a reasonable excuse, and there are other penalties. A man who fails to carry out the Act is liable to a penalty of £100. The whole thing savours, not of what you might call Liberal administration in carrying out the laws of the country, but it savours of a Labour Government who have lost their heads as proved by the inequalities of the Bill which they have brought in. Let me draw attention to some of the inequalities in connection with this Bill. First of all, the Crown is very careful to contract themselves out of the Bill. It says to the employers, you shall be responsible for paying £2 or more for each employee, and we are going to take the responsibility of doing certain things, but we are not going to contribute ourselves one brass farthing towards it. Very properly, the other day attention was drawn to some of the State trading concerns which are practically going

to get the advantages which this Bill will give them, and at the same time they are competing with other people in business to-day, and they are competing in many lines which are exceedingly advantageous to them, and yet the hon. gentleman comes down and says they shall not have to contribute towards the expenses under this Bill. I ask: Is it a fair thing? I feel, Mr. Speaker, that you yourself will consider that it is not a fair proposal. If there is to be a proposal to deal with unemployment, the Government themselves should accept their share of responsibility in connection with their trading institutions, otherwise, is it not manifestly unfair that anything should be done to block the employer in that direction, and to put him in a position he ought not to be put in? A great deal has been done in this Bill to try and widen the breach between the parties. I hold that this should be a Bill which should have for its object, not the widening of the breach between the employer and the employee, but to bring them together. We have listened to the comments of hon. members on the other side—it may be for electioneering purposes; it may be for the election which we are told is very close at hand.

Mr. KIRWAN: Which is that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Brisbane will be able to tell us, he being in the secrets of the caucus. It is perfectly certain that the object of the Bill is an exceedingly unfair object. Might I draw attention to the fact that the Minister is practically to be the judge of the Industrial Court. He takes the chair. Usually the judge gets that position when he is appointed to any board, but in this case the Minister is to be the one who is to practically control the thing, and say that certain things shall be done, and we know what that may mean sometimes. This Bill, no matter how necessary it may be—I do not say that we should not attempt to attack, more particularly through the Federal Government, the question of unemployed—still, I say this Bill is absolutely unfair in its foundations. It is unfair, because it puts a penalty on one section of the community and the Government themselves escape. The Minister for Works told us that the Government had to do certain other things. If they have to do certain other things, there is one thing that they do not do, and that is, they do not come into this Bill and take their share of the responsibility, especially the financial responsibility. For that reason I sincerely hope that the amendment will be carried. It certainly is an amendment which seeks to place an equality upon all those who are in the community. That is a fair proposal. Whatever we do, let us be just to the community.

Question stated.

Mr. VOWLES: I think it has been admitted by the Minister himself that the Bill, as presented to this Chamber, is not a workable Bill, and that it has to be amended from the very start in order to make it understandable. After the whole of the discussion that has taken place, it appears now that it is unintelligible, and that is admitted by the Minister himself.

The PREMIER: It is rather late in the debate to suggest that the Bill be withdrawn.

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier ought to know that that is a provision in the Standing Orders.

The PREMIER: It looks like stonewalling.

Mr. VOWLES: If we like to play the fool we could ask for it to be postponed three months or six months, but we put forward a *bonâ fide* amendment. On the showing of the Minister himself, this Bill is not the sort of measure that ought to be brought before this House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How do you mean "on his own showing"?

Mr. VOWLES: On your own showing. In his speech the hon. gentleman said it requires amending at the very start, and that is in regard to the main basis of assessment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You require amending.

Mr. VOWLES: We want to be reasonable about this thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why accuse me of such a thing? Why accuse me of saying the Bill is unintelligible?

Mr. VOWLES: I stated that you said the Bill was unworkable, and that you would have to amend it at the very beginning.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I did not say anything was unworkable.

Mr. VOWLES: I pointed a certain matter out to you, and you said you had an amendment in your pocket.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I did not say it was unworkable.

Mr. VOWLES: If it is necessary for the hon. gentleman to amend his own Bill, then it is not acceptable to this House. We have every desire that a Bill should be introduced containing the principle of insurance against unemployment, but we do not want to have tacked on something that is going to do a lot of things that should not be done. I suggest to the hon. gentleman, if he wants to carry the Bill, to withdraw this measure, and bring in a Bill dealing with insurance.

The PREMIER: The proper procedure is to move amendments in Committee.

Mr. VOWLES: That is so, but there are certain things we stand right against, and certain other things we want to support. This amendment will give the Minister an opportunity of putting this legislation into effect, and, if he will not accept it, we can only say that he is not *bonâ fide*. We have only to read the criticisms levelled at the Bill by newspapers in all

[11 p.m.] quarters. We find it criticised at Charleville; we find it criticised in the Premier's own paper in Rockhampton; we find it criticised in this week's issue of the Sydney "Bulletin." If I read what the "Bulletin" has to say on the subject, the Premier will perhaps realise the opinions held in the South with regard to this piece of legislation—

"It is a million pities that Ryan didn't get hold of Tasmania or Victoria instead of Queensland as a field for his school-kid experiments in political economy. The idea of making all employers subject, without any further reference to Parliament, to unlimited taxation and unlimited liabilities for the

Mr. Vowles.]

support of the unemployed, and that in a State where unemployment is now far above the average, may not damage Australian industry as a whole, but if the scheme becomes law removable industries will tend to shift out of Queensland, and will simply send their goods there free of duty. They will have to move because no one will finance an industry with unknown and unlimited liabilities hanging on to it. And if Queensland suffers by a shifting of population, there will be a loud bellow that the white man is quitting the North, because he can't live there, and that the world's one attempt at growing a purely white race in the tropics has failed. No power on earth will keep the coloured people out of the North if that attempt fails. If Ryan and company would 'holler' in the South and drive money and population North they would do good service. By doing the dancing dervish act in the North and driving them South, they are playing the game of Black Australia."

The SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the hon. gentleman to read that quotation, but I remind him that he has already spoken to the original motion, and he must now confine himself to the amendment.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Stonewalling!

Mr. VOWLES: I desire to give reasons why the Premier should take the amendment into consideration. I have no wish to stonewall, but only to explain our position on this side of the House. When you find a Labour organisation like the one big union criticising the Bill and showing its absurdity; when the Premier's own newspaper in Rockhampton does the same thing; when a democratic paper like the Sydney "Bulletin" takes up the same attitude, it strengthens us in our request that the Bill should be withdrawn and that a measure dealing with insurance against unemployment should be introduced in its place. I can give the Government an equitable scheme straight away, free of cost. When the Bill is going through Committee it is my intention to move amendments on the lines I suggest. I should like to know whether it is intended to go into Committee to-night, because, if that is the intention, the Bill is likely to take some time in getting through. I have a number of amendments in the Government Printer's hands, and they will not be circulated until Monday; so I would like to know whether we are going into Committee.

Question stated.

Mr. MORGAN: The deputy leader of the Opposition has asked the Premier whether it is his intention to go into Committee to-night, or whether he is going to adjourn when the amendment has been disposed of, and I think he is entitled to a reply.

The PREMIER: We will complete this stage to-night and take the Bill in Committee on Tuesday.

Amendment (*Mr. Roberts's*) put and negatived.

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

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.

[*Mr. Vowles.*