

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 1919

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER, 1919.

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

DEATH OF MR. C. P. LENNON.

REPLY TO MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

The SPEAKER: I desire to take this opportunity of expressing my very keen appreciation of the action of the House on Friday last in moving a vote of condolence to myself and my wife and family, and to express to every member of the House our deep appreciation of their very great kindness to us in our bereavement.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PAPERS.

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

Regulations dated 30th October, 1919, under the Electric Light and Power Act.

Additional regulations dated 23rd October, 1919, under the Workers' Compensation Act of 1916.

Order in Council dated 23rd October, 1919, under the Workers' Compensation Act of 1916.

QUESTIONS.

POLICE OFFICERS PERFORMING ELECTORAL WORK.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*), in the absence of Mr. Hodge, asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Were any plain clothes police officers on duty performing electoral work between 1st January, 1918, and 16th March, 1918?"

"2. If so, what were the names of such officers, where were they employed, and upon what duties in each case?"

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

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

ADVERTISEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT.

Mr. GUNN asked the Home Secretary or Minister answerable for undermentioned advertisements—

"1. Whether article headed 'The Sheep and Wool Industry of Queensland, etc.,' 'Resources of the Stanthorpe District,' 'Queensland's Golden Prospects,' and 'Industries of Queensland,' and similar matter, have been published in newspapers and paid for as advertisements by the Government?"

"2. If so, will he state the names of the newspapers so favoured, and the amount paid in each case for the last financial year?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1 and 2. All the information at present available on this subject is given in a return lately tabled."

RAW SUGAR OUTPUT.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Premier—

"1. If, in view of the reported willingness of the Commonwealth Government

to extend the term of agreement with the State Government for the sale of our raw sugar output for another year, he will see that the arrangement leaves room for an increase in the price of raw sugar, if the increase in the cost of production shows that such is necessary?

"2. Also, that he is left free to make such amendments in the regulation of cane prices as recent happenings have shown, in the way of contracting out, are necessary."

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

"1 and 2. The matter will be considered."

PROSERPINE STRIKES.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Treasurer—

"1. Was the canegrowers' board of advice at the Proserpine officially consulted in connection with any of the recent strikes, or asked for any assistance in helping to deal with the situation created by them?"

"2. Did the Canegrowers' Association at the Proserpine wire him supporting, or in any way regarding the action of the Proserpine Mill management in the stand it adopted?"

"3. If so, did he reject the advice of the growers' board by granting the strikers' request for controlling the employment of labour in the mill?"

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

"1. The advisory committee's opinion was obtained.

"2. Yes.

"3. No."

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) asked the Treasurer, without notice—

"When may the House expect to have the Financial Statement delivered? Is it intended to deliver it before the adjournment of the House this side of Christmas?"

The TREASURER replied—

"It is impossible for me to answer the hon. gentleman and give the definite date either for the delivery of the Financial Statement or for the adjournment of the House. The Government have been engaged on the preparation and final settlement of the Estimates lately, but have not yet concluded their task."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That means that we will not have it this side of Christmas.

The TREASURER: You are drawing your own conclusions.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Marree, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make better provision for industrial and provident societies."

Mr. MACARTNEY: Any information?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I gave pretty full information on the previous stage. The Bill is designed to further encourage co-operative trading. It is designed to give a co-operative society which has to be registered under the measure advantages that it cannot secure now by registering under the Companies Act. For instance, exemption from income tax will be allowed to companies which register under this measure. Certain disabilities which exist now, and which prevent co-operative trading societies trading with similar societies which are registered in New South Wales will be removed under this Bill. Co-operative societies in Queensland not registered under a measure like this are not able to trade advantageously with co-operative societies of a similar nature in other States of Australia. Legislation of this nature is in existence in England, New Zealand, and most of the other Australian States. There are other provisions of an advantageous nature which I will be able to mention on the second reading. The measure is one designed to encourage and protect co-operative societies.

Mr. ROBERTS: Do you say that the profits are exempted from income tax?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, exempted from income tax on certain conditions, provided they do not limit the number of shares. They cannot limit the number of shares. There is a limitation to the number of shares which can be taken up by a person in one of these companies. The limitation is to the extent of 100 shares. No member of a society must hold more than 100 shares. The Bill is designed to assist those who have small means, and to give those who are prepared to engage in banking an opportunity of doing so, provided the society has no withdrawable capital. No society under this measure which has withdrawable capital will be permitted to carry on banking. At the same time, banking within the meaning of the Bill is not defined so as to prevent small amounts of 10s. from being received at one time by co-operative societies. That is not defined as banking, and small amounts like that can be taken by societies, something on the lines of our Savings Bank. If a co-operative society desires to engage in banking, it can only do so by having no withdrawable capital. That is a necessary proviso to protect investors.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Will this be extended to co-operative manufacturing factories?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to ask the Minister if there will be a total exemption from income tax with regard to these proposed co-operative societies, or whether there will be a limited exemption.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Total exemption.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the report was adopted.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Hon. J. Larcombe.]

MAIN ROADS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): In rising to move the second reading of this important Bill, I desire, first of all, to tender my sincere thanks to the various State departments of Queensland, and, in fact, of all the States of Australia, my colleagues in general, and the Hon. J. A. Fihelly in particular, for the very valuable information he brought back from America with regard to the great State questions on the other side of the world. I desire also to thank the members of the Main Roads Association for the co-operation they have given me in the matter, and particularly one member of that association; that is the engineer for the Toowong Council, Mr. Huxham, to whom I am indebted for the great assistance he gave me in collecting information which was necessary in order to bring this Bill before the House. This Bill is the result of the careful collection of information in other parts of the world and in the other States, and the careful sifting of that information which took a considerable amount of time and energy on my part. As hon. members are aware, I am somewhat of a road enthusiast, as my speeches in this House will indicate; and, although I was connected with a department which had nothing whatever to do with the main roads, I have given a great deal of attention to the collection of the necessary information in order to protect this State from the pitfalls that have been experienced in the other parts of the world. I might say that I do not regard this Bill as the last word in road legislation. Of course, like all our legislation, it is experimental, but I hope it will lay the foundation of a sound policy for this State. The Victorian Act, about which so much has been said, was passed in 1913, and has been amended six times since it was passed; and we expect, as time goes on, that this Bill will have to be amended and brought up to date. I feel sure that the passing of this Bill—I am quite confident that it will pass—will mark an epoch in the history of Queensland, because it is the first time that any Government in this State has recognised the obligation of the central Government so far as road construction is concerned. A previous Government—if I might turn back to ancient history for a moment—passed the Local Authorities Act forty years ago. That Act has been amended from time to time, but all the time the attitude of the central Government has been that it was the duty of the local people to build their roads. They gave the local authorities a free hand as far as taxation was concerned and said, "There you are, build your roads. If you don't like to build them the people can go without roads." I say that the various Governments in days gone by have not given the local authorities the encouragement or assistance they could have given them. Indeed, I think a department might have been set up to give expert advice to local authorities instead of leaving them to grope in the dark. They were not even compelled to employ qualified engineers as they are in the other States when endowment or loan money was being spent, although that power was taken in 1910 by the Hon. J. G. Appel in the amending Act passed in that year. That hon. gentleman took power to, by regulation, compel the local authorities to employ qualified men, and it must be recognised, in

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this twentieth century, that the building of roads is a science, just the same as the building of railways or any other great work is a science requiring the best engineering skill. The only assistance given to local authorities was the annual conference at which delegates from the local authorities could meet and discuss the various problems, and gave an opportunity to the machinery agents to come along and buttonhole the local authorities' delegates and sell their wares. Had the Government of the day appointed experts to give the local authorities advice, we would not now have the spectacle of seeing discarded machinery, which cost thousands of pounds, lying all over the State. The local authorities, in their honest attempt to instal up-to-date machinery, have not received the assistance and advice they should have received from the central Government. Even if the Government were not prepared to recognise their obligation and find some of the money, they should have encouraged the local authorities in the great work they were doing.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Have you no discarded machinery in the Government departments?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I know that is so, but I know also that the Government were in a better position to give advice to the local authorities in the outlying districts. I know that the last time I visited the Eacham electorate the chairman of the council sought my advice as to the best kind of roadmaking and grading machinery that could be obtained. That advice and assistance should have been given by the central Government, even if they thought it was the duty of the local authorities to find all the money to build all the highways of the State. That has not been done. On the 24th July, 1913, I was so seized with the importance of this question and of the necessity of doing something, that I introduced to Mr. Denham, who was then Premier, one of the largest parliamentary deputations that has ever waited on a Premier, and urged that some financial assistance should be given to the local authorities. Since then, profiting by my experience, and by the experience of Victoria and New South Wales, I have arrived at the conclusion that a subsidy was not the best way to get good roads in this State. The endowment that was paid forty years ago had not been a success; neither was it a success in New South Wales, as was proved by the fact that Mr. Griffith, in 1917, after Mr. Carruthers passed the Local Government Act in 1906, giving a large endowment, found that the main roads were being neglected, and that the by-roads were being built out of the money supplied by the Government, with the idea that the Government must come to the rescue sooner or later and bring the main roads up to date. Mr. Griffith, realising that, attempted to pass a Main Roads Bill in New South Wales, but the local authorities, realising that there was a danger of having their £200,000 annual endowment taken from them and placed under the control of the main roads board, protested strongly, with the result that that Bill was allowed to drop. Since then Mr. Fitzgerald, also a main roads enthusiast, introduced a Local Government Bill, part of which was devoted to a main roads board. The local authorities asked to be represented on that board. That Bill was also dropped. Now, within the last two or three days, I have had placed in my

hands a copy of what is called the Main Roads Bill of New South Wales. We hear a lot about political control, which, of course, means Government control. We find, with all the talk about political control, that the Minister for Local Government in New South Wales has formed himself into a main roads board. The idea of a main roads board has been done away with altogether; the Minister himself is the main roads board, and he has the power to dictate to the local authorities what is to be spent on main roads. He has also the power, under his Bill, to enforce local authorities to strike a rate to make good any amount that might be necessary to bring the main roads of the State up to date.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not much of democracy about that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is a great deal more of democracy in the Bill I am introducing now. Government control is all right so long as it is your own party that is in power, but when it is the other party that is in power it is a very dangerous thing; at least, that is the attitude of the Opposition. I believe in democracy, and I believe in those who are responsible to the electors having the last say in matters of this kind. (Hear, hear!) I have sat in this Chamber and listened to very unfair criticism, I think, by members opposite with regard to one man who is placed beyond political control. In my opinion, some of the criticism levelled against that officer is because he won't allow the savings of the people to be used to buy votes. That is putting it plainly. When a man is placed above political control, we hear men get up in this Chamber and condemn him as a despot, and when, on the other hand, we give the Minister responsible to the people a certain amount of control, we are told that it is political control. I believe in Government control. I say the Government are responsible to the people, and the people have their remedy if the Government do not govern properly. The Local Government Act which was passed forty years ago has been amended several times, but it has failed to give the people trafficable roads. As I have said time and again, this is the only State wherein the central Government have not recognised their responsibilities with regard to the building of main roads. I think the main roads of the State are just as much national, just as much the concern of the people, as are the railways. One great argument in favour of that is, that with regard to main roads you want some continuity of policy. What kind of a position would we be in if the local authorities were allowed to build the railways? We would have all kinds of grades and all kinds of gauges. That is the position with regard to the main roads. Anyone who makes a motor trip from Brisbane to Ipswich, and goes through the areas of half a dozen local authorities, will realise the great importance of continuity of authority—one system of control so far as the main roads are concerned. That is what is aimed at in this Bill, so as to ensure the main roads having no weak links, because if there is one steep grade or one bad spot on the road that determines the load for the whole of that section. The genesis of this Bill might be summed up first of all in Mr. Ryan's policy speech at Baraldine, which indicated that the Labour Government saw the necessity of doing something to make better main roads in the State. That was followed up by a

resolution which was passed by the last State Labour convention. The plank in the Labour platform on the matter says—

“State control and maintenance of all main roads.”

Some time after that convention passed that resolution Mr. Stopford, as chairman of the Public Works Commission, wrote a letter to the Government saying—a very wise suggestion, in my opinion, because I arrived at a similar conclusion when I was chairman of the same Commission previously during my trips through Queensland—that many of the branch lines that were asked for by the people should not be branch railways but branch roads—good solid motor roads as feeders to the lines. I pointed out to Mr. Ryan at the time that the suggestion was a good one. I said, unfortunately this Government, like every other Government, is like a ship without a rudder—it has no road policy. Three Ministers of the Crown were appointed to collect information, and decide, on the information they were able to get and on the experience of other countries, what was the best system of main road construction in Queensland, with the result that we decided to follow largely on the Victorian system, which is copied from the New York system. The first introduction of this system of road control took place in America. That has been followed up by a very laudable piece of legislation by the Federal Government of America, and one which the Federal Government of Australia might well follow. The Federal Government of America passed a Federal Roads Act a couple of years ago, and devoted £15,000,000 to assist the States in building roads, and I will have a few words to say about American legislation later on. The Bill now before this House is based on the experience of the various States in America, followed up by Victoria, and, I think, knowing the requirements of this State, knowing that the great essential which is necessary is finance—after all, it must be borne in mind that if we are going to have good roads the money must be found, and it must ultimately be found by the people. We have many road enthusiasts throughout the State, and many pious resolutions have been passed by local bodies throughout the State that the Government should do this, that they should do that, but it must be borne in mind that, after all, that money for main roads must be found, and must be ultimately found by the people.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is the main thing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the main thing. I remember reading an anecdote by Dean Swift. He was round collecting for a poor woman whose cattle had died. He called on a wealthy squire of the parish, and the squire assured him that he felt from the bottom of his heart. Dean Swift said he wanted him to feel from the bottom of his pocket. That is the position with regard to main roads or anything else worth having—the people must feel from the bottom of their pockets. There are many main road enthusiasts in this State who are quite prepared to have good roads if the Government pay for them, but it must be borne in mind that if the roads are built the people of Queensland will ultimately have to pay for those roads. The Government only represent the people.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They won't have much in their pockets after your party has gone through them.

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course, there are people who want good roads if they can be got without cost to themselves, and I am pointing out that they will have to be paid for whether they are built by the local authorities or by the central Government out of revenue or loans.

I find there are 100,000 miles of [4 p.m.] roads in Queensland. I have received a lot of encouragement from associations who are very enthusiastic about roads. They point out to me what I think is a recognised fact by engineers throughout the world that the best road to-day is the concrete road. When it is considered that we have 100,000 miles of roads in Queensland requiring to be built, and the concrete road will cost anything from £3,000 to £5,000 a mile, those enthusiasts should realise the magnitude of the proposition.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: As a rule, they are not taxpayers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Sometimes they are not. The Good Roads Association of America felt in their pockets to the extent of £60,000 for the building of a road 3,000 miles in length, linking up the two oceans right across the Continent—that is, the "Lincoln Highway."

I want to say one word with regard to the social aspect of this question. The economic aspect may be the most important, but the social aspect also is important. I speak feelingly as one who was born on a selection and lived on one most of his life, thus knowing something of the hardships and difficulties which have to be borne by settlers. We are very fond of talking about railways and roads being built before settlement. We have never been able to do that. If we cannot do it, we should endeavour to follow after settlement and give the first settler the benefit of a decent road as soon as possible, in order that he might get some enjoyment out of it during his lifetime. Talking about the cost of roads, one engineer says—

"The early Roman roads were the precursor of civilisation; if the Romans had been roadbuilders of the Queensland stamp, the whole course of history would have been changed. Good roads make life in the country more attractive. The health, comfort, and prosperity of the people in the backblocks depended on roads."

Anyone who has lived in the bush can realise that the appalling isolation of the bush can be broken up by constructing good roads and thus making it possible for the people who cannot afford motor-cars to drive into town in their sulkies or other vehicles, and at the same time bring their produce in at a lower cost. I cannot imagine anything which will do more to encourage production, and at the same time reduce the cost of living, than a proper system of highways as feeders to our railways. (Hear, hear!) I do not think our railways are placed on a proper basis. I have always held that the building of a railway enhances the value of the land, and some of the value of that Crown land should be credited to the railways. We can assist the railways to pay by building feeders, not by throwing out short lines of railway which cannot be expected to pay. The better plan is to build properly graded, properly formed, solid roads, to enable motorists to drive on those roads, and

bring the people and the produce to the railway. I think that is one of the strong reasons why the Government should do something to carry out this policy.

I just want to say one or two words about the engineering aspect. Of course, times have changed since the days of Telford and Macadam. Telford first instituted the idea of laying down solid blocks of stone, and Macadam instituted the idea of covering those blocks with broken-up stone about 2 inches in diameter. Those great men did great work in their time. With the ever-increasing motor traffic, every country in the world is recognising the importance of the question, and is spending money fast on the building of roads. I would like to point out that, while time and power are money, the steepest grade of a road determines the load for the whole of its length. In America, most of the roads are $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. grades for first class and up to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In New South Wales, no road is subsidised by the central Government which is of a steeper grade than 1 in 15. An engineer in Queensland, who I do not suppose had ever seen any other part of the world except Queensland, told me that 1 in 10 was a good grade for a road. It is a barbarous road, in my opinion. I will quote a few figures to show that it is a wasteful road. It is necessary to, first of all, place our roads in a proper location, lay them out to a proper grade, and have a proper foundation. If we can accomplish that during the next few years, when concrete gets cheaper and we have the iron and steel works turning out cement, we will be able to put a proper surface on those roads. But the first thing to do is to get the roads in a proper location and lay them out to a reasonable grade, in order that any work done will be lasting. I want to quote a few remarks taken from the Victorian Roads Board report to indicate what a wasteful thing a steep grade is. This is what they say—

"The importance of grading. A horse will pull, say, 1 ton on the level, $\frac{1}{2}$ ton on a grade of 1 in 33, and $\frac{1}{4}$ ton on a grade of 1 in 11, or, putting it another way, what one horse will pull on the level will require four horses to pull on a grade of 1 in 11, and if there is only a short length of 1 in 11 on a given length of road, the assistance of four horses is required throughout the journey.

"If one horse would draw a ton on a broken stone level road in good order, it would take five horses to draw a similar load if road formed of earth with ruts and mud. Therefore, one horse on a level road constructed of broken stone in good order would draw as great a load as twenty horses on an earth road with ruts and mud up a grade of 1 in 10."

These figures indicate the great waste on steep grades. Of course, I recognise that when you have not the money to put in side cutting you have to go up one side and down the other. That is what the old cedar-getters had to do. In these days, when time and power are money, we should endeavour to level out these steep grades and place our roads in the proper location and get a solid foundation. The width of formation is another important question. Mr. Davidson and the Hon. Mr. Fihelly assure me that they travelled hundreds of miles in America over properly formed, smooth surfaced roads only 9 feet in width. The same thing applies to a

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railway. When the North Coast Railway was first built to Caboolture the traffic was such that only one set of rails was put down. I make the suggestion that we concentrate on narrow roads when the traffic is not great, but have them of such a character and such a surface that the traffic can go over them at a greater speed and with more comfort than at present. One thing that is important in connection with roadbuilding is proper testing material. The University of Melbourne is used for the purpose of testing material. The same thing will be done in Queensland. It is intended to co-operate with the University in testing and analysing materials, standard methods of sampling, testing, and reporting test results of these materials to be adopted in consultation with the engineering faculty.

With these preliminary remarks I might proceed to give details of the Bill. Briefly, it provides a scheme of co-operation with the local authority. There may be some hostility, as was the case in Victoria, for a time, but as the board goes throughout the State and gets into touch with the local authorities and explains that they are out to co-operate with them, to advise them and to consult with them, it will be found that the working of this Bill can be carried out without any friction. Of course, as is the case with all new legislation, it will not be understood for a time. The principle is to co-operate with the local authorities, the Government in the first place finding the whole of the money to build what will be declared main roads by this board. The board will consist of three expert men, one of whom shall be a qualified engineer both by examination and experience in roadmaking.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What are the other two to be?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The other two, I suppose, will be qualified in other ways. I would like to point out that the Victorian Act did not prescribe any qualification at all, but when the first appointment was made two qualified road engineers were appointed, with one accountant. I do not think it is necessary to prescribe what they should be. In my opinion there is no necessity for one being an accountant because an accountant's work is not what might be called expert work. One of these men should have a good general knowledge of agricultural land, but that is really a matter for the Governor in Council. It is laid down that at least one of these men shall be a fully qualified road engineer. The duty of this board is to co-operate with the local authorities, to make surveys, and to make full investigation as to resources and requirements of the State. Here I might mention also one of their functions—as is the case in Victoria—will be to provide to various local authorities who are unable to purchase it, machinery on loan at a reasonable price. It has been laid down as a principle that as near as possible an equal sum of money will be spent in the Northern, the Central, and the Southern divisions of the State. I do not think exception will be taken to that, although it has been suggested to me that that should be left to the Board. I think it is necessary to lay that down as a principle. I know from my own experience that members of Parliament and Ministers who have not had an opportunity of visiting the Central and Northern portions of the State are not in a position to judge their requirements, and I think it is necessary to lay down

in this Bill that as near as possible an equal sum should be spent in each of the three divisions. Further than that, I might point out that, while the bulk of the population is in Southern Queensland, it should be borne in mind that in the good old endowment days most of the endowment was spent in Southern Queensland, and that is an additional argument why the money provided by the State should be spent as equally as possible in each division of the State. If a local authority strongly objects to a road being a main road—that is, to finding 50 per cent. of the cost of that road—I do not think it will be forced upon them. I feel certain that as time goes on and they see their neighbours enjoying a decent main road they will say, "We will have a main road too." I feel certain the policy will work smoothly and will be embraced by practically all the local authorities. I might mention that the Local Authorities Conference passed a unanimous resolution in favour of this system being adopted by Queensland. The Good Roads Association have passed similar resolutions. The Carriers' Association have endorsed the principles embodied in the Bill, and the automobile people have said they are prepared to pay a reasonable tax so long as the money is spent on the roads. I think it is common sense and good business on their part, because I am satisfied the wear and tear on motor-cars must be enormous, seeing the bad condition of our roads. Generally speaking, I think this measure will be accepted by all the parties interested. The people who will find the money eventually will be the general taxpayers to the extent of 50 per cent. and the local authority or local authorities concerned to the extent of 50 per cent. of the cost. Then there will be a tax on users of the roads in the form of a wheel tax and a motor tax. Those are the three sections—who may happen to be the same people—who will have to find the money for financing this scheme. I think it is fairly equitable.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Will the motor-car pay a tax on the wheels as well as on the power of the machine?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The matter will be dealt with by regulations, as the local authorities have power to do that under the Local Authorities Act. The regulation has not been framed, but I am suggesting that it should be done on the same lines as in New South Wales, where the motor-car is taxed on the horse-power basis as arrived at by the R.A.C. method.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Will they have one license for the whole State?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities have power to impose the wheel tax and the motor tax. They have that power now, but few have enforced it. I think it will be a better scheme for the State to give a man a license to travel all over the State.

Mr. ROBERTS: The police do a lot of that at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The police do the registration at the present time. It is also proposed to encourage the introduction of wide tyres. This has been talked about all over Australia for the last quarter of a century to my knowledge. It has been recognised that a wide tyre makes the road just like the steam-roller does, whereas a narrow tyre destroys the road. In

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Western Australia a measure of this kind was introduced—and I believe it was passed—to encourage the introduction of wide wheels. It is a measure that has to be brought in gradually to allow the old wheels to wear out. The board formed under this Bill will decide what is a main road. They will decide that main roads will connect one producing district with another, or connect a producing district with a seaport or railway town. They will also connect districts with large centres of population. The board will take into consideration those districts which are sufficiently well served with railways at the present time. The object of that is not to compete with the railways. I do not say that people living in large centres of population are not entitled to the choice of traffic. I would not say that the people between here and Ipswich are not entitled to a decent road. (Hear, hear!) But the object of this Bill should be to serve those people who have no railways with roads first. That is one of the reasons for the Bill. In Victoria it is called a Country Roads Act. This is a Main Roads Bill, but when passed it will be essentially a Country Roads Act in order to assist the people in the country, and to enable them to get better means of transit. The board will have power to make watercourses, to deal with motor-cars, and with traffic generally. The Bill provides that the fee-simple of the road shall remain with the Crown, the stone on the surface of the road or any timber growing on the road will be vested in the board, so that they will be able to realise some revenue out of the sale of timber or other material existing on main roads. There has been one thing criticised in connection with this Bill, especially by the "Brisbane Courier," because they do not understand it. That is in connection with the roads to settlements. That principle is one which I father myself. It is contained in clause 19, which relates to the building of roads to new settlements—soldier settlements or otherwise. Why that has been criticised I do not know, because under the Public Estate Improvement Fund in connection with the Lands Department they build roads into areas of Crown lands at the present time, but they do not build roads to connect with railway stations or towns. This clause, which I will explain more particularly in Committee, gives the Governor in Council or the Minister power to authorise the main roads board to build a road to connect with a new settlement or area of Crown land, and the money for that road will be paid, not out of the fund created by this Act, but out of the consolidated revenue. The State will recognise its obligations in connection with the building of such roads. Afterwards the roads will be maintained out of the fund created by this Bill. If it is decided that it is not a main road, but just an ordinary road, then it will be maintained in the ordinary way by the local authorities, just the same as the local authorities maintain the road built under the Public Estate Improvement Fund at the present time. This Bill goes further. Not only will they build a road through the Crown area, but they will connect that road with the nearest town or railway station. That is a very fine thing, and it is a principle which should be embraced by all parties concerned. It is a recognition that when the State opens up an area of Crown land it should do something to connect that area with the nearest

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town or port. The State will find the money to build the road. The liability of maintenance will then be estimated. There might be half a dozen local authorities interested in one road, and their liabilities will be apportioned. The main roads board will not compel each local authority to pay by the mileage of the road built, because it might not be fair. One local authority might perhaps have only 1 mile of road in its area, while another local authority might have 10 miles of road in its area. It might happen that the local authority with only 1 mile of road might benefit to a greater extent than the local authority with 10 miles of road, because it might be the terminal town, where the business people will benefit to a greater extent by the main road than those living along the road. It is therefore necessary to give the board power to apportion, as fairly as possible, the liability of the local authorities concerned, so far as that particular road is concerned. After this is agreed upon the road may be declared a main road. The money for the building of the main road will be advanced by the Treasurer; half of this will take the form of a loan for thirty years to the local authorities. The rate of interest will be the existing rate of interest for ordinary loans to local authorities. The fund will be established as provided for in the Bill. It will be created by the Treasury, and the repayments will be made by the local authorities, as I have already indicated, on long easy terms at a reasonable rate of interest. The Bill provides for the making of regulations. This is a very important matter. It has been declared in Victoria that the main roads board should have more power to control the traffic there. They point out that a main road costs thousands of pounds and a teamster might come along with a heavy load of timber after a thunderstorm and destroy hundreds of pounds worth of road for a load of timber that might only be worth £10. Power is given in this Bill to regulate the traffic and shift it to one side if necessary, or close the road altogether if it is thought necessary to do so at certain times.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: How is the maintenance arranged for?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The maintenance will be on the same basis as the construction. The local authorities will pay their share, 50 per cent., and the balance of the money will be paid out of the fund. The fund will be made up by taxation and votes from the Treasury as I have already indicated—a wheel tax or a motor tax—and money can be raised by the sale of timber and material off the road. In time a pretty considerable fund will be raised. I have been informed that, judging by the number of motor-cars in Queensland at the present time, if they had to pay a tax on the New South Wales basis, the tax would run into something like £20,000 a year. As time goes on that sum will be increased, because the motor-cars will increase in number.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Will they put a tax on every motor-car that runs about the place?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a matter for regulations, but personally I do not think that there should be any exemption at all, because all the cars will use the roads. I think that all those people who use the roads should be called upon to pay a small tax towards the upkeep of the road after it is made for them

as indicated. It need not be a very large sum, although motor-cars are in a position to pay a pretty substantial sum for using the roads. It is generally conceded now that self-propelled vehicles, like motor-cars, destroy the roads. (Hear, hear!) That is admitted by the best authorities in the Commonwealth. That being so, I am satisfied that it is only a fair thing that motor-cars should pay a fair and reasonable amount of taxation.

Mr. ROBERTS: Will the State cars pay?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think so. I do not think there should be any exemption at all. (Hear, hear!) I may mention that so far as New South Wales is concerned that the State cars, doctors' cars, and others are exempt. I do not think they should be exempt at all. There should be no exemption, because they all use the roads, and they should all pay their share, the State cars also. That is my opinion at any rate. That is briefly an outline of the provisions contained in the Bill. I would like to say a few words in regard to the experience in Victoria and other States. The main provisions of the Victorian Act have been followed largely. I find that the Victorian Roads Board in the first year of its operation was only able to complete about 45 miles of road, although it maintained 650 miles of road. It would appear, therefore, that they took certain roads in existence for the purpose of improvement. In 1917-18 the Victorian Roads Board constructed 1,033 miles of road and maintained 10,134 miles of road. In the first year the roads board was engaged in making surveys and carrying out investigation, and is, therefore, not able to do much construction work. The board lays the foundation, and as time goes on the people get the benefit. I am satisfied that the people of Queensland will appreciate the establishment of a main roads board, especially when they see it leads to getting trafficable roads. In Victoria, the sum of £2,000,000 was named in the first legislation passed. It was proposed to allot £400,000 a year so that the amount would extend over a period of five years. During the first year in Victoria the quota was not spent, as I explained before. I find from "Knibbs" that in Victoria up till June, 1917, the sum of £8,766,192 was spent on main roads. From the same authority I find that in New South Wales during fifty years from 1857 to 1917 the enormous sum of £25,286,664 was spent in building roads. The length of road in that State is given at 97,881 miles. Of these, 18,520 miles are metalled, 12,611 formed, 29,666 cleared, and 37,084 natural surface. I have explained already the nature of the legislation in New South Wales and I need not say anything more about that. I am disappointed that in New South Wales they have gone back on the principle of a main roads board, while I have faith in Mr. Fitzgerald, who is a main roads enthusiast, and he has done a lot of good work in educating the people of Queensland so far as town planning and good roads is concerned. I have confidence in the present Minister in New South Wales, but I am sorry that he has gone back on the principle of a main roads board which could consult with the local authorities and act as a go-between between the Minister and the local authorities. I might now refer briefly to the legislation existing in other States.

In South Australia the main and district

roads are under the control of municipal and district councils, the work being supervised by an engineer of the Local Government Department. The Roads Act of 1884 constituted the Commissioner of Public Works Commissioner of Main Roads. Every seven years a Parliamentary Roads Commission is appointed to revise the schedule of main roads. The expenditure on construction and maintenance of main roads is provided for by an annual parliamentary grant and revenue received by the local authorities. The total loan expenditure on roads to date is £1,743,888. The sum of £150,000 is voted annually for grants in aid of main roads. Up to the 30th June, 1917, mileage is given as 43,736 miles. Ten of these are of woodblock formation, 10,465 of macadam, and 33,261 of other materials. The length of main roads, according to the Local Government Department's annual report of 1917-1918, is given at 4,832 miles.

In Western Australia control is vested in municipalities, and in districts where no municipality exists by a board constituted by the Governor in Council. In the latter case the construction of more important bridges and culverts is carried out by the Government, the work after completion being handed over to the road board for maintenance. The Under Secretary for Public Works and Trading Concerns supervises the work. The main road between Perth and Fremantle (12 miles) and Tourist road from Busselton to Yallingup (20 miles long) are controlled by the Government. This consists of annual grants voted by Parliament and local expenditure by municipalities. The Government grants for the five years ended 1918 amounted to £221,461. Of this, road boards received £172,300, and municipalities £49,200. These sums are for moneys actually paid to local authorities, and do not include sums provided on the Estimates and expended on roads and bridges constructed by the Government itself. According to "Knibbs," district road boards expended between 1912 and 1916 the sum of £928,336, and municipalities £894,647. This expenditure is out of moneys raised by grants, rates, and other sources. Debenture loans for roads for the year ended 30th June, 1917, amounted to £101,261, which money was spent by the local authorities. The mileage up to the 30th June, 1917, is given at £29,941, made up as follows:—
[4.30 p.m.] 19,903 cleared only; 5,679 formed only; 4,358 metalled or otherwise constructed. Many are natural roads owing to the soil being suitable for traffic.

With regard to Tasmania, the Minister for Lands and Works is known as the Commissioner of Main Roads. Thirty-five local authorities out of forty-two carry out all maintenance work on main roads. Work on main roads is under the control of the Works Department engineer. The Main Roads Advisory Board recommends the proclamation of roads to be main roads. All construction work is charged to loans and all maintenance work is charged to revenue. The total amount spent during 1914-18 was £424,431 from loans and £99,300 from revenue. A policy of the Government is to encourage municipal councils to carry out all maintenance work on main roads. The total amount expended on main and branch roads and bridges to 30th June, 1918, was £4,859,897. One thousand and fifty-eight miles of main road are being maintained out of revenue. In New Zealand the roads are

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under the control of the Minister for Public Works, and the following is the total sum voted by the Government of that Dominion for the five years ended 1918-19:—Construction of roads, £1,520,884; maintenance, £219,083; roads to open up Crown lands, £295,057; total, £2,035,024. In Great Britain main roads are properly constructed and paved before handing over to the local authorities; as a general rule, £100,000,000 was spent in ten years prior to the war for improving the highways. A big revenue is raised in England by a tax on motor spirit, which is devoted to road maintenance. To show the importance attached to roads in England, in 1915 a great road congress was arranged, at which over 3,000 road engineers from all parts of the world foregathered to discuss road problems throughout the world. Mr. Lloyd George was at that conference and made a speech in which he set out the importance of roads.

I have not much information about Canada, but I find that in Ontario there is a Highway Commission which co-operates with the States and counties in the construction of roads, and it is important to recognise that there the Province finds only 40 per cent.—I propose to find 50 per cent. in this Bill—and the local authority finds 60 per cent. of the cost of construction; with regard to maintenance, the Province finds 20 per cent., while the balance is found by the local authorities. In Quebec a Department of Roads grants aid to local authorities for maintenance. In France great strides have been made in road construction. Soldiers have told me that the roads there are really an eye-opener. They are built on sound lines by skilled engineers, and since the war is over great strides have been made there in road construction. The Secretary for Railways, in a report on this subject, says that the roads of France are superior to those of England. We know that some of the roads in England were built by the Romans in the earlier days; but it is a fallacy to believe that they are still good roads; they have been improved out of sight by modern roadmaking. America, of all the countries in the world, has done more during late years to deal with the great problem of roadmaking than any other country. I want to read an extract from a report made by the Secretary for Railways. Before he went to America I wrote a letter to him and said that, in my opinion, roads were of equal importance as railways, and I am glad that he admits it in his report, as also does Mr. Davidson, according to his annual report. The Secretary for Railways, in a report to me says—

“In my opinion it is most desirable that the Queensland Government should adopt a roads policy apart entirely from the activities of local bodies. In our country where the area is so large and the population is so scattered and relatively so small, my own view is that roadbuilding should be placed on quite the same level of public importance, and receive from Parliament the same careful consideration, as railway-building.”

Then he goes on to say—

“Where we have production, there, too, we should have roads, if not railways.”

Further he says—

“In the British House of Commons a Bill has been introduced with the object of nationalising all means of transportation.

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The Bill applies to railways, roads, canals, and extends to docks.”

Of course, I have not heard the fate of that Bill, but I gather that it would not pass through the House of Lords. However, this shows us one of the lessons of the war. He goes on to say—

“Actually French roads have the advantage over British roads, while Californian roads—indeed, American roads, generally—are in quite a different class of excellence to either.”

That is important, as showing that, in California, which is more like our country, they are spending huge sums of money on roads.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is California not very closely settled?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe they have the population there, but if we build good roads the population will follow; in fact, our unemployed population could be profitably absorbed in building good highways. The report goes on—

“This State possesses not only the most modern roads policy in the world to-day, but the policy has resulted in the construction of roads which make the old Roman road of tradition look crude and temporary.

“Californian roads are built much as our railways are. The State issues bonds just as we would issue debentures or raise a loan in London. There is this difference: that the bonds are taken up (in the main) by citizens of the State, while our money is borrowed in London. Thus the interest remains in the country to be reinvested in industry and to stimulate production, and, in a small way, the credit system is controlled by the people on much the same lines as operate in our insurance institution.

“The Legislature of 1913, profiting by initial omissions and mistakes, passed California's first comprehensive Act for the registration of motor vehicles and the licensing of operators thereof.”

That indicates that we are on pretty sound lines in dealing with motor traffic and embarking on what I might call an ambitious road policy. I mentioned the Lincoln Highway as being one of the great object lessons of the world. This is the greatest highway in America, and this is what the Secretary for Railways said about it in his report—

“It typifies American roads, and has been a great educative factor in the necessity for national highways from the point of view of defence, transportation, travel, and development. It stretches from the Pacific to the Atlantic, connecting New York and San Francisco.

“Its length is 3,322 miles.

“It has cost the State three millions sterling, and the Lincoln Highway Association £60,000.”

I commend these latter figures to the Good Roads Association, and if they feel sufficiently strong about the question they should endeavour to get a fund and strengthen their membership, so as to enable them to demonstrate their enthusiasm in a practical way.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is not that association mostly composed of motor-car owners?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I could not say, but I think they are men who are imbued with the desire to see good roads. Of course, I know, from time to time,

articles appear in favour of good roads which are inspired by the people who wish to sell motor-cars, but I think that every man, woman, and child in Queensland is interested in this question. Let me just refer briefly to what the present Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Davidson, says on page 47 of his report, under the heading of "Roads"—

"I am not overlooking the fact that good roads may be as costly to construct as light railroads. The latter, however, cannot be built up to every farmer's door, and, even if they could, there are other costs to be considered besides that of the track, viz., stations, sidings, rolling-stock, staff, etc."

That is to say, where you have a good road built you do not require a station-master or signal-box to look after it. It is there to be used night or day, free of charge. He goes on to say—

"The country road motor would be a tremendous help to the farmer, because by giving him a chance to market his products promptly and without inconvenience to him, it would encourage him to produce more. In America, the farmers are the greatest users of the motor trucks. Last year over 78,000 trucks were used in hauling farm products, whereas the manufacturers used only 65,000 and the retailers 64,000.

"It must be remembered, too, that many of our branch lines do not pay even working expenses, so that, in addition to the charge for interest on cost of construction, there is a further loss—this would not occur with roads."

Before the Commissioner went to America I had a conversation with him, and I do not think he was so seized with the importance of good roads or the road question generally, which shows the advantage of travel so far as our public men are concerned.

I think the following will be of interest to Federal members—and I am pleased to see one in the gallery just now. The Federal Government—the American Congress—passed a measure to assist the State authorities, which the Federal Government might very well do here. It has been suggested that the first instalment of our war indemnity—£40,000,000—might very well be invested in the building of highways. The arguments are twofold; firstly, because the Commonwealth have to deliver the rails to all the outposts in the Commonwealth, and, secondly, they have to deal with the questions of defence, and the roads are very important from the point of view of defence, although I hope they will never be required for that purpose in Australia. The cost of delivering the mails throughout Australia is enormous, and the Federal Government might consider that with regard to investing portion of our war indemnity in the construction of roads by assisting the States, who could in turn assist the local authorities to build good roads throughout the Commonwealth. In 1916, when the Federal Road Act was passed, the highways of America were brought under the system of Federal and State control. It is of interest to me to know the Minister for Agriculture in America controls and administers the Federal roads, and it has been so successful that every State Government in the United States has altered its highway laws in order to benefit by the 50 per cent. in the building of main roads, and the grants are proportioned on the

following lines:—One-third in the ratio each State bears to the total area of all the States, one-third in the ratio which the population of each State bears to the total population of all the States, and one-third in the ratio which the mileage of rural postal delivery routes in each State bears to the total mileage of such routes in all the States. The roads on which the Federal grants may be expended—there is no occasion to detail the figures, but the total amount voted by Parliament when the Act was passed in 1916 was 75,000,000 dollars. I have some figures furnished recently to me on the subject of roads in America, which I think I might be permitted to get into "Hansard." They are somewhat startling, but show what the people of America think of the road question. They are taken from the "Catholic Advocate," 30th October, 1919. That are as follow:—

"It is said that in this single year of 1919, approximately 1,000,000,000 dollars (£200,000,000) are available for street and road improvement throughout the United States. Extraordinary as this seems, the figures are at hand. The national appropriation for this year's work is some £36,000,000, which must be duplicated by the States to become available—£72,000,000 for Federal and State construction alone. It is estimated that another £20,000,000 will be available for State, country, and township road construction outside the Federal aid programme, and another £20,000,000 for road maintenance. Add to the £112,000,000 thus accounted for, the vast sums which the larger cities of the nation are prepared to expend on the improvement of streets and alleys, and a billion-dollar programme does not seem altogether improbable. When a single country in a single State like Dallas County, Texas, votes a good-roads bond issue of £1,300,000, a national billion-dollar programme even begins to seem small and inadequate."

Those figures are startling, but they indicate that if we do not do something now we are lagging behind the other countries of the world in this great road problem.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Our population is more scattered than that of any other country of the world.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If the people have not got facilities for settling on the land, and of making a living, they are not going to come to Queensland and settle. If we want the people to develop the land and make the best use of it, we must give them transport facilities. In Queensland we have the soil, and we have the rainfall. One other essential which I regard as of equal importance as that of main roads is the question of water conservation. If we can conserve water and give the people an adequate supply for irrigation—where irrigation can be carried out—and better transport facilities, I can see an era of prosperity in this State which was never dreamed of before. (Hear, hear!) I find that in New York the controlling body, and the functions of its principal officials, are—A Commissioner is appointed by the Government for a term of five years. The State is divided into nine divisions, each under a divisional engineer, who is responsible under the Department of Highways for all construction and maintenance work in his division. The division of the highways into

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four groups. The method of finance is practically the same as that set out in this Bill; that is, the central Government assist in regard to the roads I mentioned, and then the State Government assist the local authorities up to 50 per cent. to build main roads. That is the principle of co-operation, which was the guiding factor in drafting this Bill. Then Pennsylvania, which State is the second most populous in the United States, has a well organised highway department along somewhat similar lines to those of New York. In talking to the local manager of the Standard Oil Company, he told me that in this State of Pennsylvania they had spent over £200,000 on roadmaking machinery, which they loaned out to the local authorities to assist them in carrying out road construction. He also assured me that they had spent over half a million in proper surveys, maps, and plans of the State. The State of Pennsylvania grants aid to the counties and townships upon application and on compliance with certain prescribed conditions equal to 50 per cent. of the construction. Then, with regard to Rhode Island—this State, which is the smallest in the United States, commenced a definite good roads policy in 1892. The State roads system is under the control of a Board of Public Roads which consists of five members, each serving five years. The board has charge of all State highways and bridges. And New Jersey has a State Highway Department, and was the first State in the Union to adopt the system of State aid for the construction and maintenance of roads. The State aids local authorities in both construction and maintenance. An annual grant is also received under the Federal Aid Roads Act of 1916. It was estimated that up to 1917 140,000,000 dollars had been spent on roads in this State. Then South Carolina—in order to benefit under the Federal Aid Roads Act of 1916, a State Highway Department was constituted in 1917. It comprised a board of five Commissioners, and its principal officials include a State highway engineer, acting State highway engineer, assistant State highway engineer, acting assistant State highway engineer, and a secretary. The duties of this department are mainly to co-operate with local road authorities in the counties of the State, advising, when so requested, in the construction, &c., of roads. All fees collected by the Automobile License and Registration Division for licenses to dealers and owners of automobiles, motor cycles, &c., are expended by the State Highway Department on roads and bridges, 80 per cent. being distributed to counties with this object, and 20 per cent. going into the Treasury as an operating fund for the department. California, I find, has a State Highway Department, which consists of an advisory board composed of the Governor (as ex-officio member and chairman), the State Engineer, the General Superintendent of State Hospitals, and the Chairman of the State Board of Harbour Commissioners of San Francisco. The duties of the board are to advise the Commission. Dealing with this subject in his memorandum, Mr. Fihelly mentions that in 1916 the Second Highways Act, providing for a bond issue of 15,000,000 dollars for the purpose of expending on roads in the State, was approved by a majority of the people in every county in California, and by an aggregate vote of nearly four to one. Up to the time Mr. Fihelly compiled his memorandum only 7,884,000 dollars of this

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remained to be sold, pointing to the fact that the policy of good roads has effectively appealed to the people. From the motor vehicle fund created by the Vehicle Act, the State derives all its money for maintenance of the State highways, and it is noteworthy that this revenue is not sufficient to defray the cost of the necessary repairs and improvements. Since this fund became available the following amounts from it have been available for State highway purposes:—1914, 591,228 dollars; 1915, 932,492 dollars; 1916, 964,784 dollars; 1917, 1,247,263 dollars; and for the last six months of 1918, 1,395,817 dollars; total, 5,131,589 dollars. I notice that nearly all the States now are considering the question of making the people who use the roads—that is, the motorists—pay something towards the upkeep of those roads. That principle is adopted in this Bill, and, generally speaking, will be acceptable to users of motors, as it is only fair that those people, who probably do more to destroy the roads, should pay something towards their upkeep and maintenance. Various Acts have been passed in other States dealing with this question. In Western Australia they passed a special Act dealing with the width of tyres and registration of motor vehicles, and from information I have been able to collect from various Governments in the other States I find that the matter is being seriously considered throughout other parts of Australia. So I think that, generally speaking, the policy I have outlined in this Bill will be acceptable; will be popular with the people of Queensland; will do much to overcome the isolation of the bush; will do much to bring land into effective use; will do a great deal to reduce the cost of living; will do something towards preventing a general influx of people from the country to the towns; and will do a great service to the people of Queensland. I do not regard it as an absolutely perfect measure. It is the result of careful investigation on my part, and careful consideration on the part of the Cabinet, and I think it should commend itself to the House. I have much pleasure in moving—That the Bill be now read a second time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I feel that the House is indebted to the Minister for the great amount of trouble he has gone to in bringing this Bill before the Chamber, and also for the tremendous amount of information he has given us as to how the construction and maintenance of main roads has been and is being carried out in the various States of the Commonwealth and in different parts of the world. Anyone who has travelled throughout our own State knows perfectly well that the condition of our roads, speaking by and large, is simply deplorable. We have no main arteries at all which can be designated as main roads in the proper acceptance of the term, and if we are going to provide for the future progress and development of our State, this Bill has not been introduced any too soon. Quite a number of topics in connection with road traffic have been dealt with by the Minister, and the carriage of mails is one subject that he introduced. I am looking forward to the day when the bulk of the mails will go through the air instead of on the roads. I take it that that will be quite possible in the near future. Whether that is so or not I look upon the carriage of mails as being

second in importance to the carriage of the goods of the producers to the nearest railway station and to giving the producer proper access to his home. We know perfectly well that in a number of districts in Queensland, particularly in the North Coast district, that it takes a man probably a day to get a quarter or half a load of produce to the nearest railway station instead of taking only two or three hours. That must be looked upon as a factor in increasing the cost of production; because, while that man is on the road carting probably only a wheelbarrow load of produce to the station, he cannot be producing on his farm. We have been told what has been done in the Southern States, and no doubt a considerable amount has been done. Anyone who knows New South Wales, and has travelled along that mountain road from Katomba to the Caves, cannot but be impressed with the marvellous work carried out on that road. A motor vehicle can negotiate the hill upwards with equal ease to coming down. I suppose you would not find anywhere in the world a better graded and a better made road, and that road has been constructed by the department which has charge of these matters in New South Wales. The idea of a road board being constituted as the Minister has stated, apart from the local authorities, is a very good one. The local authorities have done splendid work in the past, and, no doubt, they will continue to do splendid work, but I am convinced that in the sparsely populated areas their operations are so circumscribed, and the amount of revenue they derive from the taxpayer is of such a limited nature, that it is quite impossible for them to carry out the work which is necessary in any particular year. I venture to say that quite a large amount of revenue—I would not like to say it is wasted—could be spent to better advantage if the work was taken from the local authorities and directed by a road board as is proposed under this Bill. The fact that an engineer is to occupy a seat on the board is one that will commend itself to every hon. member of this Chamber. It is quite a treat to have a Bill introduced into this Chamber that we can discuss from a non-party standpoint. We are so used here to fight each other on every measure, and to throw out the cry that it is for electioneering purposes and one thing and another, that when such a measure as this is introduced it is quite a change. Now, with regard to

[5 p.m.] local authorities and their contributions in order to build and maintain the particular roads which are to be classed as main roads under this Bill, if I understood the Minister aright, whatever the cost in construction and whatever the cost of maintenance of any road which is proclaimed a main road by the board, 50 per cent. of that cost and maintenance has to be found by the particular local authority. The other 50 per cent., if I understood him again correctly, is not to come out of the consolidated revenue, but only a portion of it. Say, for argument's sake, that £100,000 has to be spent in a particular area by the roads board. Out of that £100,000 the local authority will have to find £50,000. The other £50,000 is found partly by the Government and partly by the taxes which are levied.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, not for construction. You are right as far as maintenance is concerned.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is how I understood the Minister just now. Do I understand now that it is only so far as maintenance is concerned, after constructional work has been carried out?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: Then in the maintenance work the local authority has to provide 50 per cent., and the other 50 per cent. is to be provided jointly out of the consolidated revenue and the taxation which is levied?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is right.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think that that provision will operate somewhat harshly so far as quite a number of local authorities are concerned. To some it may mean anything from £3,000 to £5,000. I think a proportion of the taxation which is levied should go to the credit of the local authority so that the balance could be more evenly adjusted. My reason for thinking that would be fair is that the local authorities have to contribute 50 per cent. whether they like it or not, and a major part of the taxation which will be levied will be contributed by persons living in that particular local authority. So that, taking it from whatever point of view you like, the taxation is likely to be somewhat burdensome and rather too heavy for many local authorities to bear. I was pleased to hear the Minister's interpretation of clause 19. His explanation was that this relates particularly to Crown lands that are to be thrown open. In all the other clauses it is the board which has to do certain things. Here the Minister has the power to authorise the construction of this particular road. The board has no say in the matter at all other than to carry out the constructional work after the Minister has authorised it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is reasonable, because the Minister pays for the lot.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is in the first place. Further down, the clause says that if such road is thereafter proclaimed a main road under this Act its maintenance is to be under the control of the board. There is no fault to be found with that. But if the board does not proclaim it a main road, the local authority is charged with the full maintenance of that particular road. That is where the trouble will come in. In connection with the proclamation of other main roads, we find that after the plan of a main road had been drawn out by the board, it has to be submitted to the local authority, and the local authority can make objection if it so chooses. Under this particular clause this road is made without any conference or any submission of any kind as to its general utility to the local authority concerned. The board can decline to accept it as a main road—which they are quite likely to do. They can say, "Why should we take the responsibility of this road, which has been constructed to connect this particular settlement either with a town, a railway, or a seaport?" Immediately they proclaim it a main road they have to provide their proportion of its maintenance. If they say they do not consider it to be a main road, the local authority is saddled with the whole of the responsibility of its maintenance for all time. I think some alteration might be made in that connection. I am only asking it from a local authorities point of view. I feel satisfied that the local authorities in Queensland for many years

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have had a pretty hard row to hoe. I do not think they at all times received from the Home Department the sympathy which they might rightly and properly expect. Why, I do not know. My own experience has been that the unanimity which should exist between the Home Office and the local authorities does not exist, and a considerable amount of antagonism has been shown by the Home Office to proposals or recommendations made by various local authorities. I quite recognise that the initial cost in connection with the making of a road will be borne wholly and solely by the Government from the special fund they will create. The fact of that having been done does not make the position any better for the local authority, more particularly if the board declines to proclaim it a main road. I find there is a very wise provision giving the board authority to acquire land or material and anything which they may think necessary in connection with the construction of these main roads. I think the power to acquire quarries and gravel pits wherever they occur in close proximity to any main road or railway station is a power which any board such as this should have. We know that in quite a number of areas the question of material is one of the most serious with which they have to deal. The price they have to pay and the cost of transport are very heavy items. The material can be distributed at the lowest possible cost to any area to which the board thinks it should be distributed. I take it it will be done under fair conditions. Then, with regard to motor traffic, I am sure we all recognise that the old method of locomotion has to be scrapped in the very near future. Motor traffic will have to be utilised more largely than at the present in order to assist the farmer. We should develop that traffic and see that it becomes a feeder to our railways in moving the produce from the farm or the orchard to the railway station as quickly as possible and in good order and condition. We shall have to see that our roads are constructed so that this motor traffic will not be faced with the difficulties which exist at the present time. I am not pleading for the man who has a motor-car for pleasure, but for the motor traffic of the future, which will be one of the most useful adjuncts our railways can possibly have. Knowing that that is coming about, it is necessary that this road policy should be carried out as promptly as possible. The Minister also said that, so far as it was possible, the idea was to make the expenditure in the various portions of the State equal. I think that is a fair proposition. I have always held the opinion that the people in the country districts and scattered areas have to contribute more largely than they should to the comfort and convenience of the people in the city. I do not think it is fair. I think the people in the country are deserving of every possible consideration which this Government or any other Government can give them. If, by constructing these highways, they can make the conditions of life for the man and woman on the land better than they are at the present time, I think it is their duty to see that the scheme is rapidly pushed ahead. There are quite a number of other features in the Bill which must commend themselves to every hon. member present. The matter of mapping out the whole State and designating what are going to be the highways and the main roads is, of course, one of the most necessary matters in

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connection with this scheme, and, no doubt, will take a considerable time to prepare. That is one of the initial works to be carried out. It will cost a fair amount of money to carry it out, but we cannot have progress in a country like this without the expenditure of money. It is a fallacy which has to be exploded that the people are going to have good highways and better conditions without dipping their hands into their pockets to pay for it. The sooner that fallacy is exploded the better it will be for those people. Money has to be paid for these extra conveniences and comfort. The sooner we get to work and find the money for these matters the better it will be for us. The fact that the repayment of the money, which will be lent to local authorities at current rates of interest, will be extended over a lengthy period will give the local authorities a chance to get their breath. If they had to repay in a short period, covering high rates of interest, they would groan under the burden. The population of Queensland is not what we hope it will be in ten, fifteen, or twenty years' time. Everyone has a love of country deep down in his breast and wishes to see his country developed.

I certainly think that this is going to be a Bill that will better the conditions of the people out back in all directions. It will give them facilities and comfort and conveniences which they have never had, and it is the duty of every one of us to help to get this Bill on the statute-book as soon as we can. There might be a few amendments which we can introduce in Committee. As the Minister stated when introducing the Bill, he does not claim it to be a perfect measure. I do not suppose any Minister claims that the Bill he introduces is without imperfections. It is the duty of every one of us to see if we can improve the Bill when it gets into the Committee stage and make it as perfect as possible. Reference has been made by the Minister to what has been done in other countries in connection with main roads. They have got big populations in those countries, and they have had years of experience. We can benefit by their experience by starting to do something in connection with main roads in Queensland to-day. I express the hope that the Bill will soon be passed. When the local authorities understand it, they will welcome it. There is one thing I would like to see introduced, and that is that the local authorities, who are to control these roads, should also be given a share of the revenue received from taxation.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): The speech of the Minister was both temperate and explanatory, and, no doubt, will materially assist in the passage of this Bill through all its stages. So far as the principle of the Bill is concerned—that of having a controlling body to construct main roads throughout the State—there can be no question about it. I think that every member of the community is at one so far as that principle is concerned. The necessity for good roads exists, as those who have lived in our country districts can testify. People who live in the country and have to use the roads, such as they are, know the necessity for good roads for carrying on their businesses, such as conveying produce to market or bringing supplies home from the railways. They know what it means to have a good road. Regarding the question as to how the road should be built, I have received a copy of a publication entitled

"Main Roads," in which certain suggestions are made. The writers of the different articles speak from local experience in districts more settled, and possibly in some instances not sustaining the difficulties which may be met with in Queensland. I want to impress upon the Minister that in some instances the construction of a road will cost more than the construction of a light line of railway in certain districts. For example, I might mention the Atherton scrub. I have no hesitation in saying that to construct a road through portion of the Atherton scrub, a road which will be trafficable in all states of the weather, and particularly after heavy rainfall, will be a road which will cost considerably more to construct than a light tramline, which could be built cheaper and used more effectively than a main road. I trust that a matter like that will receive the consideration it deserves by those who have charge of the administration of this Bill when it becomes law. The Minister referred to the fact that local authorities have been established in Queensland for forty years. Prior to that time, appropriations were annually made by the State Parliament for the purpose of building roads in the different portions of the State, but influences were used, and log-rolling was resorted to, with the result that the members who had the greatest amount of influence with the Minister were able to obtain grants for the construction of roads in their particular areas.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was before the days of the Labour party.

HON. J. G. APPEL: In answering that interjection, I might say that log-rolling may have been serious at that time, but at this time it is absolutely disgraceful with the Labour party in power.

Mr. SWAYNE: Scandalous.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The object of the Local Government Act was to throw the onus upon the ratepayers within the different areas. The State used to contribute £2 for every £1 raised by the ratepayers. Furthermore, it was felt that the taxpayers themselves would be in the best position to judge as to the roads that are actually necessary, and which would benefit those settled in their areas, and advance the interests of all in that particular locality. We are aware that those subsidies were reduced, and in the end were eventually abolished altogether. But the Governments of those days, supported by Liberal and National majorities, came to the conclusion that the time had arrived when the whole onus of the construction and maintenance of roads which were necessary works in connection with local authorities should be placed upon the shoulders of those who were interested, provided that no burden by way of land tax should be placed upon the shoulders of those finding the necessary funds for the construction of our roads and other works. It was distinctly understood that if the local authorities continued to demand a renewal of the subsidy they must expect a land tax to be placed upon the land, it being obvious that the State, in order to find the necessary funds for granting the subsidy, must find it from somewhere, and there was no other method by which the money could be obtained than by the imposition of a land tax. That was the policy which was pursued up to the advent of the present Labour Administration, so far as local authorities are concerned. You are aware, Mr. Speaker, that with the advent of the

Labour party that compact was not observed with the local authority taxpayers, because the Government introduced a land tax, and to a great extent interfered with and damaged the prospects of the local authority so far as obtaining money from the taxpayers for the purpose of carrying out public works was concerned. It is unquestionable, owing to the advance of settlement, that the roads throughout Queensland practically in every local authority are not what they should be. The amount of money available by local authorities for the purpose of carrying out works of road construction, particularly in our coastal areas, is not sufficient. In our coastal areas, particularly where there is considerable rainfall—unfortunately, the rainfall has not taken place lately—ofttimes heavy and continuous rain has a most damaging effect upon the roads which have been constructed. Likewise, the traffic has a bad effect upon the road, as the Minister points out. The heavy traffic of teamsters and timber-getters and others after a road has been constructed at considerable expense very often has the result of the road being destroyed. We have seen a road on which a considerable amount of money has been spent destroyed to such an extent in that way that it was left in a worse condition than it was in its original state. That simply emphasises the necessity of action being taken under the conditions which I have endeavoured to indicate, whereby, in the first instance, suitable roads are constructed, and in the second instance, those roads are maintained in the interests of those who control the traffic. Therefore, it is to the interests of those who control the traffic to see that the roads are not unduly damaged by the traffic which passes over them. The Minister was in error when he made the statement that no assistance had ever been offered to local authorities in connection with the construction of works in their areas. As a matter of fact, for many years the services of the engineers and officers of those departments which possess such officers, were available for the local authorities. I well remember when the local authorities received assistance in the way of plans and estimates. They were prepared by the Works Department to enable the local authorities to carry out necessary works. Plans and specifications were also provided when the local authorities applied for a loan.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was only to safeguard the Treasury.

HON. J. G. APPEL: To a certain extent it was, but I know that assistance was given to local authorities in that direction. They received assistance from the Works Department and also from the Treasury Department.

Mr. SMITH: There is a permanent officer to inspect the work of local authorities.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, there is now, but I am referring to the time when assistance was given. The Minister said that no assistance was given to local authorities, but I know that they used to get assistance from professional men in the different departments.

With regard to the roadmaking machinery, I do not believe it would be possible to specify the best machinery, because [5.30 p.m.] a roadmaking machine might do excellent work on level country, but would be an absolute failure on mountainous country. Therefore I fear that

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should the Bill become law, there will be considerable trouble in this regard even if the Board has the advantage of the advice of the best experts obtainable. Now, with regard to the control of this Board: the Minister is of opinion that the control of this authority should be absolutely independent of the local authorities. Has the Minister no faith in the local authority? This seems somewhat singular, seeing that an enactment was passed by this House having for its object the controlling of the Brisbane Tramways by the local authorities. The Brisbane Tramways is a utility which will possibly cost the State over £1,000,000 sterling for its acquirement, and will place a very large responsibility on the local authorities. The Minister has indicated that there is something like 100,000 miles of main roads—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not main roads.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I beg the Minister's pardon. Have you any estimate of the probable length of our main roads?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Possibly the construction of main roads will cost considerably more than a £1,000,000 sterling. If the local authorities have the necessary ability to manage a public utility, such as the Brisbane Tramways, then a board consisting of representatives of the local authorities would be the most suitable body for carrying out what is proposed in this measure. Although the board is to consist, I understand, of at least one qualified engineer, it is quite possible that the other two members may have no knowledge, or practical experience, of local authority work or main roads, but I hope it will not be so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government want to make a success of it, you know.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I believe they do want to make a success of these things, but they are not able to do so because their hands are tied and they sometimes are forced, against their will, to place men in positions which bring about disastrous results, where a competent and efficient man would make a success of the thing. Efficiency controlled the actions of the Administration of which I was a member, irrespective of what a man might be. Partisanship was not a qualification in any Administration which heretofore occupied the Treasury benches.

Mr. COLLINS: What nonsense! Nonsense!

HON. J. G. APPEL: But, unfortunately, partisanship is the main qualification of men appointed to these high positions by the present Administration. To my mind, the most efficient body to control the construction of these main roads would be a body constituted from the members of the local authority. I have referred on different occasions to members of the local authorities as the unpaid Parliament of Queensland. In many instances they give the best years of their lives to the service of their fellow taxpayers.

Mr. BRENNAN: And waste their funds.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member is absolutely incorrect. We know there are some local authorities which have not properly carried out the work placed in their hands, but taking them on the whole they are a credit to any State of the Commonwealth,

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and they deserve the best thanks of the community. When the local authorities are present in conference before hon. members on that side, do they not flatter them and endeavour to impress on them that they are the men absolutely suitable for the positions they occupy, and compliment them on the good work they have done and are doing? But when the test comes in a measure such as this, the local authorities are swept on one side and, as in every measure brought before this Chamber, are only regarded as a second controlling body. Therefore the measure is not one which can altogether commend itself to those who recognise what the local authorities are competent to do. We must realise that this body which is to control the making of main roads and to decide which is a main road or not, is absolutely at the discretion of the Minister. No roads can be constructed, even if recommended by the board, without the assent of the Minister. Thus an absolutely competent board may make a recommendation, and yet, for some partisan reasons or purpose, the Minister may refuse to give his assent to a main road which is absolutely necessary.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the system of railway construction?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I think it is an absolute disgrace and discredit to any Administration, both as to cost and length of time occupied in construction. The construction of the North Coast line is an absolute disgrace to any Administration. However, admitting the principle of the Bill to be a good one—as I do—the next object is to make it a success, and that can be secured by having most efficient administration, irrespective of the political opinions of the people in the electorate or local authority where a main road is necessary. Unfortunately, with regard to the present Administration that rule is not observed.

Mr. BRENNAN: That alters your policy.

Mr. APPEL: The hon. member for Toowoomba may be an expert on the construction of silos, but I venture to say that so far as his knowledge—practical, theoretical, or otherwise—of the construction of main roads is concerned, I am afraid he would not earn his salt from any local authority to whom he should apply for a position. The speech of the Minister was temperate and explanatory. He spoke of the Roman roads, but, unfortunately, I am afraid, however expert and however desirous this board may be to construct roads on the principle of the Roman roads, that that will be out of their power. The Roman roads were constructed for military purposes; they were military highways. There was no standard wage paid to the men who constructed those roads, nor was there any eight-hour day.

Mr. COLLINS: That is not correct.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If the hon. member would not read so superficially, but would study the matter thoroughly, he would not make the mistakes which he often does. We know that those roads were constructed for military purposes in the first instance. They were perfectly graded, perfectly drained, and perfectly constructed with a solid foundation, and to-day they exist in many places, which is evidence of the advantage of building roads with a good foundation. We find that even in Queensland roads which were constructed by the old Works Department are

to-day in evidence, owing to the fact that a proper foundation was put in, and they were properly drained. That is evidence once more that if a road is properly constructed, as we hope they will be under this measure if it becomes law—which I hope it will—I have no doubt, with one or two amendments which possibly the Minister will accept, that the Bill will be one which will be for the benefit of the State and for its settlement and improvement. The Minister referred to the system of macadamising. I do not know if his idea was that he would be able to do away with the old system of macadamising, whereby a proper foundation of stone and broken metal was placed to a suitable thickness, and simply go in entirely for concrete roads.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Concrete roads might be quite practicable where a road is level, or only undulating, but a concrete road on a mountainous country would be absolutely impossible. The Minister also mentioned a 9-foot road. A road formed for the width of 9 feet may be suitable on level country, but again it would be impracticable in mountainous country. Take the electorate which I represent. There are areas there having an elevation of over 2,000 feet, and however well a road may be constructed up those ranges, it would be impracticable to construct a road only 9 feet in width. The minimum width of a road constructed in mountainous country should be at least 14 feet, and there should be passways here and there. I am very glad that the question of tyres was mentioned, as it is one with regard to which I took a somewhat keen interest when I was a member of one of the local authorities in my own electorate. In fact, I raised a considerable amount of animus against myself through being instrumental in passing a by-law to the effect that on one of those mountainous roads the tyres had to be not less than 6 inches in width, and the fore axle was to be 12 inches shorter than the after axle, thereby practically giving a roller 12 inches in width on either side, which, instead of doing any damage to the road, would improve it. Unfortunately, a very considerable amount of conservatism exists so far as the width of tyres is concerned. There is no doubt that heavy traffic drawn on a vehicle with a 3-inch tyre is as good as a plough on any road. Reference has been made to motor traffic. There is no class of traffic, especially where it is driven at anything like ordinary speed, which has a more damaging effect upon a road than the present power tractor.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Unless the surface of the road is very smooth.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is so, unless the metal is well rolled. If a motor is driven at any reasonable speed over a road, you see the small metal flying up owing to the speed at which the wheels revolve. Therefore it becomes more and more essential with the increase in motor traffic that the roads should be constructed in such a way as to withstand the wear and tear which they are bound to encounter owing to the increase in that class of traffic—an increase which will, no doubt, be very considerable in the near future. There is one clause in the Bill which, to my mind, is a very dangerous one—apparently, it has not struck the Minister in that way—and that is clause 19.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A very good clause.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It may be a very good clause from a certain point of view, but we are now dealing with the construction of main roads. Under clause 19 the Minister takes power to construct a road which may not be a main road.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Paid for by the Treasurer.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Quite so, but he has the power to declare that it is a main road.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: On the recommendation of the board.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have been endeavouring to impress upon the Minister that it is a power which could be used for partisan purposes. I am not saying that that would be so with the hon. gentleman, but we have other hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches who have not hesitated to make use of their power to effect administrative Acts which were absolutely and essentially effected for a partisan purpose. That is the fear I have, and I do not think that clause 19 should have any place in this measure, which is dealing with main roads, and instead of improving the measure it is one which may cause it to be regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. It is a dangerous power to give to any Administration, whatever Administration it may be, whereby they may be in a position to sway the electors by the promise or otherwise of the construction of a road under that clause which is not a main road. So far as the funds are concerned, and the method by which the roads are to be constructed, it is a liberal measure. I consider it to be a liberal measure because, at the present time, a metal road has only a duration of ten years, and it is proposed that the repayment of loans in connection with these main roads shall be up to thirty years, which is a liberal concession and a proper one to make, because the Bill will involve a considerable amount of liability on the local authorities in addition to the liabilities which still exist, and which, probably, will increase because of the construction of feeder roads. I do not quite understand the method by which the Minister proposes to provide for the maintenance of these roads—that is, if the amount of tax which he levies from the users of the roads is not sufficient—how he proposes the balance is to be paid.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Votes by Parliament.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That will be a satisfactory method. Under these circumstances, I do not propose to add anything further. I again commend the Minister for his temperate speech, and for the explanation which he has afforded us. With some amendment, which I trust the hon. gentleman will give consideration to, I have no doubt that the passage of the Bill will be facilitated by members of the Opposition.

(Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.)

MR. BEBBINGTON (Drayton): I should like to have a few words to say on this Bill before it goes through. I must congratulate the Minister on the way in which he put the Bill before the House and the trouble he has certainly gone to in connection with it. There is no doubt that the principle is a very good one, and in closely settled districts it will be very much availed of. But I am afraid it will not be of much use to districts that are not closely settled. I am afraid it is going to place burdens on a lot of

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producers who will get no benefit from it. I presume when this Bill is passed every farmer will have to pay a license on his vehicle whether he is in a district which is being improved or not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One license for the whole State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Take a farming district in the Warwick area. Immediately this Bill comes into force, notwithstanding the fact that there are no improvements going on in that district—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh, no! that is not so. That is the object of doing it by regulation. The regulations will not be brought in until the work of this board commences and the roads are improved.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Immediately the board commences work, every vehicle in the State will have to be licensed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As soon as the regulations are prepared—perhaps not for twelve months.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It matters little how long it might be. The fact remains that it is going to place a burden upon thousands of farmers who will not receive a halfpenny's worth of benefit from it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh, no!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say it will. The Minister cannot get out of it. Supposing there is a district where the population is so sparse that they are not able to come under this Bill. Every farmer in that district will have to pay a license on every vehicle he owns. If a man has a four-wheeled wagon he will have something like £1 a year to pay as well as 10s. or £1 on every sulky or springcart he has about the place. Many farmers have three or four springcarts, and perhaps two wagons. Sometimes you get a wagon which does not suit you. It may not be large enough or strong enough and you get another. You might have a sulky which does not suit you and you get another. We know perfectly well there is any number of these vehicles lying about farmers' places on which they should not have to pay a license. It is going to inflict perhaps £4 or £5 a year taxation on them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh, no! It is only a matter of a few shillings.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What is the wheel tax?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will not be a hard tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If it is 5s. a wheel that is £1 on a wagon. I think the vehicles of the farmers should be licensed only in shires which are borrowing money from the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That would be unworkable.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it would not be. Immediately the main roads board came to make roads in the shire, that shire would borrow money from the Government. Immediately they charged the interest on the money, the licenses could be imposed in that shire. To go straight away and license every old vehicle a farmer has about the place in Queensland is going to throw a burden on a lot of people which they do not expect.

Mr. W. COOPER: What about the wheelbarrow? (Laughter.)

{Mr. Bebbington.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is the wheelbarrow exempt?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Take the difference between the cities and the country in regard to taxation. The taxation of city business men does not hurt them, because they do not pay it; they simply pass it on through the goods they are selling. They must do it. They could not do anything else. Supposing a business man paid all the taxation imposed upon him, how is he going to live? A business man is compelled to pass the taxation on to the community. Therefore taxation makes little difference to him. But the farmer has to carry all the taxation on his own shoulders. He cannot pass it on. That is my reason for saying that taxation should not be enforced on vehicles which are being used for production, except in those shires that are getting money from the Government. I hope the Minister will see his way to making an alteration in that when the Bill gets into Committee, because it is a very serious thing.

Now we come to the payments. I understand the shire council pays 50 per cent. and the Government 50 per cent. But the Government collect the whole of the taxation from all the vehicles. The Minister admits he expects to get £24,000 per annum out of motor-cars. I do not say it is too much. When they get that £24,000 from the motor-cars and 5s. or 6s. from every wheel the farmer has about his place, it is not going to cost the Government anything. I am not sure they will not have a surplus. For a year or two I believe they will, because they will not be spending large amounts of money for twelve months at any rate—as the Minister admits. I do not say they are always going to be in that position, because, as the expenditure increases, the taxation on the vehicles is not going to increase. I think, with the hon. member for Windsor, that the taxes collected should be divided between the shire councils and the Government. If that were done, and they each then found 50 per cent., I think it would be a fair thing. I think it is very necessary that the board should have a considerable amount of machinery. If they had a little extra in the way of metal-crushing machinery they could lend it to shire councils, and sometimes small town councils. That would be a very good step. I know where there are mountains of stone in many districts. The first cost of the machinery is the only thing that prevents the local shire council making use of a good deal of the material which is at their hand. We speak of the foundations of roads. That is one of the big difficulties in some districts. Where you have a hard, rocky foundation there is no difficulty whatever in making a good road, but I have seen blacksoil districts where a metal road has been put down three times. You put down five or six inches of metal, and in three or four years it disappears into the black soil. You make another road on the top of that, and in a few years it goes down too. The Minister will understand what the difficulty is in some districts in regard to making main roads. Then, again, there is the definition of a main road. As the Minister knows perfectly well, the bulk of this agitation for main roads comes from motor-car owners. Farmers have made very little application, because they know they have to pay for it. Then there is the question of roads leading

from one city to another. Take the road between Warwick and Toowoomba. Within a mile or two of Toowoomba it will probably be very useful to the citizens and perhaps the farmers generally, but when you get out 15 or 20 miles from Toowoomba it is absolutely of no use as far as the farmer is concerned. It leads to no railway station, and to no factory. The farmer wants to get to the factory and the railway station, not to a city 30 or 40 miles away. Therefore, what is a main road in the sense of the mapping of roads leading from one city to another is not a main road as far as the farmer is concerned. Only a few weeks ago I got up a petition containing thirty or forty names, that a certain road be declared a main road so that the money allotted to the soldiers by the Federal Government should be spent on that road. It was a by-road, but there were two cheese factories on it and it led down to the railway station. Although it was a by-road it was a main road to the farmers who would have to pay the tax. Under this Main Roads Bill it will be necessary to declare that by-road a main road.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It would not be compulsory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If money were spent on the other road it would be useless except to motor-car owners. They would be the only people who would get the benefit from it. I think main roads in some districts are something like a high class of living. We need them. They would raise us in our standard of living, no doubt. They would be a very good thing, too. But a man who is earning only £2 a week cannot afford to live up to the standard of the man who is earning £10 a week. So I doubt very much, in many of the districts where our farmers are earning little and settlement is very far apart, whether it is going to pay to make these main roads. In fact, I am sure it will not.

The Minister spoke about California. I understood that California is a closely-settled country and mostly irrigated for the fruit farms which exist there. There are places along the north coast of Queensland where people can make a living on 10 to 15 acres. In those places you have close settlement and a tax would not hurt them at all, but where you have a dairying district, where the farmers have 400 acres each, you have a great many miles of road and very few people to pay the taxes. These dairy farmers cannot afford to pay the taxes to provide for main roads. The Minister must realise that there is a difference in the traffic in different parts of the State. In a dairying district you would not want to construct a road to carry a heavier load than 2 or 3 tons. The bulk of the traffic would be about 1 ton to the load, so it would be useless expenditure to construct a road to carry 3 or 5 tons. That is a question which the roads board would have to consider. In a dairying district, a good road can be constructed for from £500 per mile up to £1,000 per mile at the most. Those roads suit very well, but I notice that Dr. Price, in his little book, talked about a road of 20 miles from Brisbane to Ipswich costing £4,000 to £5,000 a mile. That road would be right alongside the railway and would compete with the railway, and that would not be a wise thing to do. The railway from Brisbane to Ipswich cost £8,000 per mile, so we do not want a road to compete with it. There has been such a large amount of money spent on the

railway from Ipswich to Toowoomba that the cost would be about £24,000 per mile, so that it is for the local authorities to say whether they would be prepared to go in for a main road to compete with that railway.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whose proposal is that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Dr. Price's. Then, again, the interest and redemption on a mile of road would run from £100 to £160. If a road is to cost £2,000 and the Government will find £1,000 of that amount, you will find that at 6 per cent. interest and redemption on a thirty years' loan it will work at about £100 per mile.

Mr. BRENNAN: Get a ready reckoner.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Toowoomba is interjecting. Perhaps he can tell me what it would cost per mile at 6 per cent.

Mr. BRENNAN: Give notice of that question.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I thought the hon. gentleman had the figures at his fingers' end. In a dairying district, the average dairy farm is about 400 to 500 acres. How can the farmer afford to pay interest and redemption amounting to over £100 per mile? This will be an intolerable burden to the men on the land to make them pay for these roads.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They will only pay for main roads.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister must recognise that the whole thing is not worth the expense. Some of our shire councils at the present time, unfortunately, owing to the years of drought and other things, are in arrears with their rates. The Jondaryan Shire Council has £2,000 back rates standing out and they cannot get them in. If we are going to have these roads and tax every vehicle, how are these people on the land going to meet the tax. It is all a question of a higher standard of living, and it is best for us to adopt the standard of living which we can afford. I am afraid of the responsibility and the taxation. I will show how the tax will affect us. The associations which are advocating these main roads are composed mostly of motor-car owners. The farmer will have to pay a tax of 10s. on his sulky, £1 on his wagon, 10s. on his dray, and for his 200 acres of land he will pay double his present taxation, which means £10, or, altogether that farmer will have to pay £12 a year towards the main road. The motor-car owner who is advocating the main road probably owns a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre of land. He will pay £3 for his motor-car and 10s. as rates to the shire council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He will pay more than that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Therefore, the man who owns the motor-car and advocates the road will pay an extra £3 10s. a year, while the dairyman will have to pay £12 a year extra to provide him with a road. So far as traction engines are concerned, in a dry time and when properly used I agree with the Minister that they make the road just the same as the steam roller does, but in wet weather they will cut the road up very much. The system in the past has been for each shire council to put a certain fee on a traction engine. If that traction engine goes from one shire to the other it will have to get a license for each shire. If a traction engine goes from Brisbane into the country it will have to get a license to pass through each shire and the licenses might run into £12

altogether. That is the present system. If it is intended to charge a flat rate on all traction engines so that they can go all over the State, it will be all right as long as the main roads board has the right to stop that traction engine from travelling in wet weather.

Mr. BRENNAN: Has the Bill any redeeming features at all?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Minister would only spend the amount he receives in land tax on the roads, he would receive more than he could spend during the year and it would only be a fair thing to the people in the country. Under past Governments, we asked for assistance for shire councils and we were told by the late Home Secretary—he told me himself after I came back from Victoria and questioned him—that if we wanted assistance for local authorities we would have to put on a land tax to meet it. Unfortunately, the present Government put on a land tax, but they used the money for other purposes, and the farmers are still in the same position as they were before they paid the land tax. I give the Minister credit for introducing the Bill, and I hope he is going to give us something. It looks as if the Minister is going to take all the vehicular taxes. If so he will have a surplus. I think the Minister should divide all the vehicular taxes amongst the different local authorities. Last year the Government collected £578,000 in land tax in Queensland, and it should be spent on the roads in the country.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Some of it came from the cities.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The cities will be interested in the main roads. I maintain that there should be one tax and one tax only.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that a land tax?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. If you are going to have one tax and you decide that it is to be land tax, then you are going to have living far dearer than it is at present because people will not stop on the land. The one tax should be an income tax. If a man pays on the amount of money he earns he has got nothing to complain about.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One of the worst taxes is bad roads.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the roads are bad you have to carry on with them until you get something better. If you tax the people to make roads they cannot afford to pay. Take the case of a cheese factory with fifty suppliers. Why should the Minister come along and tax those men for every vehicle they have got in order to give them roads they do not want?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That won't be a main road.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If there is a main road in any other part of their shire they will have to pay for it. This Bill is too full of impossibilities.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will not be forced on the local people if they do not want it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is a good thing if they are allowed to take it or leave it, and I congratulate the Minister if he says they can do that. I know, to my sorrow, that if the Minister wishes it, he can force a main road on any local authority. He can put any amount of men at work in a district, and we know that that is what will be done.

[Mr. Bebbington.]

Whenever an election is coming on a Minister will shove 100 men into a district, and he will keep them there a month, so that they can get votes. This Bill can be used for anything.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have a very fertile imagination.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Will the hon. gentleman deny that 400 or 500 men are being sent to the Maranoa electorate near Roma just now? If men can be sent into the Maranoa electorate just before an election, they can also be sent to a main road just before an election.

Mr. PETERSON: You used to strike men off the rolls.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is very handy at election time to be able to send a number of men into an electorate. We cannot forget, through one thing and another, there are 6,000 people less on the land in Queensland to-day than there were this time last year. If we are going to force things on to the man on the land when they cannot afford to buy boots for their children, how can we expect them to pay?

Mr. BRENNAN: Blame the profiteers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I blame your land tax profiteers. I will tell the hon. gentleman something he knows nothing about. On Sunday last I saw twenty or thirty cows with nothing to eat. Fodder costs £17 or £18 a ton, and the owners were simply waiting there doing the best for their cows. There

were four or five in the family; [7.30 p.m.] they had £6 or £7 for the last two or three months saved—now, what is the good of forcing taxes upon people like these, or of talking main roads to them? What they want is something to eat, clothes, and a little comfort.

Mr. VOWLES: And half a dozen inches of rain.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Half a dozen inches of rain, as the hon. member for Dalby says. Where are these taxes to come from? I give the Minister every credit for bringing in this Bill, but I want him to be very careful how he uses it, and I do not want him to impose any taxes on vehicles until the shire council borrows money from the Government. It is quite time enough then to tax them. I am quite sure the Minister will accept some amendments in that direction when we go into Committee.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): This Bill has one of those titles that must appeal to us. Everyone recognises, no doubt, what a splendid thing it would be for Queensland to have big main roads running right up our coast and right out West, more especially, for instance, when the time comes that the Minister can get a car here in Brisbane and go straight to his electorate without having any of the risks or disadvantages that at present pertain to such a trip, and we will have tourists making such visits on the best roads or going out West. But one thing I am not quite clear about is what is meant by main roads. Do you mean big trunk roads, as you may call them, such as the road running out past Toowoomba?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If the hon. member looks at the Bill he will see how main roads are defined.

Mr. SWAYNE: There is nothing very explicit in the Bill. With regard to the board, the ratepayers, who, to a great extent,

have to foot the Bill, have no representation, so that there will be power to tax without representation. I would like to ask the Minister would be consider an amendment in Committee providing that one of that board be elected by the local authorities. Seeing how the local authorities are interested in this measure, and to what extent they have to finance it, I think they are entitled to one out of the three members.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no doubt the Government will consider any such suggestion.

Mr. SWAYNE: Thanks. I just mentioned it by the way. Those who have to pay rates out of primary production realise how heavily we are burdened at the present time. We also have a most expensive railway system, which is getting more and more expensive every day. It has been pointed out what splendid roads were made by the Romans, but I would like to remind the House that they had no railways in those days, and our railways, I think I might say, take the place of those roads that stood for hundreds of years. If we can have main roads and the other instruments of access to markets which we require at the same time without unduly burdening the community, I will give it support; but what concerns me more particularly just now is what you may call cross roads—roads leading from the farms to the railway stations where the cream and grain is delivered, to the mills where the cane is crushed, and so on. I think the Minister must realise how very important those roads are. As far as the local ratepayers are concerned, the cross roads are often of greater importance than the big roads into the cities. We will take the road from here to Toowoomba. I think I am safe in saying that to the farmers between it is of more interest to have good access to the railway station where they bring their cream than to have the big road made—no matter how nice it may be. Coming to my own electorate, we have part of the North Coast road which, to put it in order, would cost an immense sum of money, and yet it would not be of very much use to the local people concerned in the primary products there, although it would be used by tourists. When the local people go to town they travel by rail, and it seems to me that in many instances these main roads will run close to the railway. Of course, recent happenings in the industrial world bring home to us one use they may serve—that is, in the event of the railways being held up by strikes, they would be very useful then. Apart from that, I think, if the local people were asked whether they would have a main road or a road to which they market their produce, I think they would say the latter. Regarding the much-debated clause 19: The Minister appeared hurt when it was suggested that what is very often called “gerrymandering” at election time could take place under it. He also referred to the New South Wales measure, and rather took the Minister in charge of the New South Wales Parliament to task for retaining too much control in his hands.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He did away with the board altogether.

Mr. SWAYNE: While the Minister expressed himself so averse to political control, in this clause 19 he takes the whole control into his hands.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Ministerial control.

Mr. SWAYNE: It gives the Minister power to compel the board to start works in any electorate, and, as has been pointed out, perhaps just on the eve of an election.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not in any electorate.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think their past conduct has not been such as to warrant any very great trust in their honesty on these occasions. You will remember the election in 1918 how indecently it was rushed.

Mr. APPEL: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the hon. member that the Bill does not deal with elections.

Mr. SWAYNE: I quite understand that I may appear to be digressing, but I think the past conduct of the Government has not been such as to warrant any great trust in their honesty on these occasions. I am speaking against clause 19, and pointing out the very short notice given on the occasion of the elections of 1918. It was conceived that a quick election would be in favour of seats for their part, and, although the Central districts were pretty well drowned with exceptional floods and the roads were not accessible on account of fallen timber, it was rushed on at the shortest notice. There is the same thing in the legislation with regard to the Unemployment Bill, where gerrymandering at election time might occur, also with regard to the Elections Bill. Can any reasonable man look upon such actions—

The SPEAKER: Order! I must again pull the hon. member up. If I allow him to continue as he is doing, other members may follow his very bad example, and the debate will be interminable.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: I am simply giving my reasons for a certain amount of distrust in connection with this Bill. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, in many of the farming districts the cross roads by which the produce is taken to market are regarded of even greater importance than the big trunk roads. Then there is also the question of non-representation on the board as far as the ratepayers are concerned. Under the circumstances, therefore, although I think everyone on this side is quite in accord with the spirit of the Bill, and there is no intention to oppose the second reading, I hope that full opportunity will be given to amend it in Committee.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*): I have gone very carefully over this Bill, and am not quite taken up with it. I recognise that it is necessary to have better roads in Queensland. I also recognise, as one who has followed local authorities' work during the last thirteen years, that they have done excellent work, and I do not think that anybody could spend the money at their disposal better than they could, because, firstly, they are local men, and we naturally appoint the very best men as councillors; secondly, we know the class of men we employ, and thirdly we know the work which is most urgent in our district. About every three years we have a re-election; the whole matter is in the hands of the ratepayers; it is a purely democratic vote; and I say that no body of men could do better work than the shire councils; and it hurts me to hear the references which have been made to shire councils, knowing also that they have done that work free, and that a great deal of

Mr. Walker.]

their time has been spent in looking after work for the ratepayers. My opinion regarding this road question is that it would be far better if the additional money were given to the various shires and the main roads allocated or tolled off by an engineer appointed by the Government; and with an engineer's services or a body of engineers who could be under the supervision of the Government to instruct the shire councils with regard to the grading of particular roads. That would be a better scheme than the one put forward by the Government for the simple reason that under this Bill it will be Government control to a great extent. We will find the tendency as time goes on for the Government to take the whole of the powers to themselves, and eventually we will find that the work will be directed from the seat of Government and the whole of the men employed in the various districts will be sent from the big cities the same as is being done at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that the result in Victoria?

Mr. WALKER: Victoria has done remarkably well for the simple reason that they have closer settlement there and a greater revenue, and consequently a greater scope than we have here. The revenue that would be necessary to carry out this road scheme is not to be got in Queensland to-day, as the local authorities have taxed the farmers to such an extent that they could not be taxed any further. Take any of the local authorities of the present time. I know that in the Landsborough Shire Council the owner of 160 acres of ordinary dairying land is being taxed to the extent of £30 a year. Is it possible for that farmer to pay any more? That is why I say it will be far better to revert to the old system; classify the various councils in regard to the work they have to do and subsidise them on a differential scale.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Local Authorities' Conference did not say so. They passed a resolution in favour of this scheme.

Mr. WALKER: They passed a resolution in favour of a scheme, thinking it was going to be a generous one, but under this scheme the local authorities have to pay 50 per cent. towards the construction of certain roads in addition to the ordinary rate they are paying at the present time, and then in addition to that it is proposed to tax every vehicle which a farmer owns. Roughly speaking, according to the main roads book issued this morning, the tax will amount to 5s. per wheel. We know perfectly well that an ordinary farmer will have a buggy, a cream wagon, and probably a dray or some other vehicle. That really means that he will have to pay an enormous tax. Take my own case. According to the Bill I will have to pay £8 a year additional taxation for wheel tax alone, providing my road will be brought under this Bill. If the whole shire is included the revenue derived from the wheel tax and other sources under the Bill will more than repay the Government for the 50 per cent. they put in. In other words, it will be a profitable venture as far as the Government are concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The amount of the tax has not been decided yet.

Mr. WALKER: I would not mind if the whole of the vehicles belonging to a farmer were being used at the one time, but we know very well that the farmer only uses

[*Mr. Walker.*

one on the road at a time and on one day in the week. It will be particularly hard on him if he has to pay £1 for his buggy to go to the annual races. I recognise that the Main Roads Board has done good in Victoria, but it must be remembered that Victoria is much more closely settled than Queensland. I also recognise that if good roads are constructed in Queensland they will be of great benefit to the farmer, who will be able to overtake the additional taxation under this scheme. For instance, he will be able to get more for his produce through getting it in quicker and in better condition, more particularly in the case of butter. However, I say again, it will be fairer and better to subsidise the shire councils, as then you would get better results and the farmers would be better satisfied. The administration would be better and we would get a better return from those employed, because, naturally we would know the men put on. This scheme is better than no scheme, but I am not enamoured of it at all as it is going to be a cumbersome affair, with four or five men appointed at high salaries, and the whole of their salaries will be added to the cost of the roads. I would like to see the Government throw this Bill on one side—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You need not waste any breath over that, because they are not going to do it.

Mr. WALKER: It is strange to say that in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, where the Minister comes from, where all the roads were built by the Government, that they have now gone in for the shire council system, which shows distinctly that it is a better system.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. WALKER: It is rather strange that the farmers there look upon it as a better system. I recognise that they have done excellent work in New South Wales, but considering the revenue they receive from a very heavy land tax they should have done good work. That is our trouble to-day. If the local authorities could levy more taxation we would not want a main road system at all. But the councillors are human. They know how much tax a property can stand, and, naturally they do not put on any more.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A lot of money is wasted.

Mr. WALKER: The money is not wasted. The only thing we require is an engineer to lay out the work.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why don't you get those engineers?

Mr. WALKER: For the simple reason that the shires are too small to appoint one. It is a matter for co-operation amongst the farmers or for the Government to appoint two or three to the whole of Queensland or allow them to lay out the work. Under the Bill the Government will control the whole thing and are going to say where the main roads shall be constructed; they are not going to consult anyone at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities will be consulted in every case.

Mr. WALKER: They will be consulted, but the Government have the final power. I would much rather see the shire councils subsidised, because they are constituted by our best men, and they are doing excellent work and not work some hon. members on the other side have alluded to.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I am very pleased to see this Bill introduced, as it is putting another plank of the Labour party's platform on the statute-book. (Hear, hear!) Hon. members on the other side of the House had better be very careful of their utterances as otherwise they might be accused when they go to the hustings of supporting a plank of the Labour party's platform. I have risen in my place to support the Bill, and to let hon. members opposite know that they do not represent Queensland. Members on this side of the House represent Queensland. There hangs on that wall a map of Queensland. If hon. members go and have a look at it they will find that Labour representation commences at Gympie and reaches right up to Cape York right away over to the Northern Territory unto the South Australian border. With the exception of one little black spot in the North, which is represented by the hon. member for Mirani, the whole is represented by Labour members. That one little black spot is all that the Opposition represent in this House. I do not want it to go forth that the Opposition represent Queensland. Why, the hon. member for Cooroora only represents a "pocket-handkerchief electorate" as compared to the electorate of the hon. member for Burke. No fault of his, it is quite true, but the hon. member for Burke and the hon. member for Cook represent countries, as it were, and therefore we on this side are more interested in these main roads than they are. It may be that in these well-populated centres represented by the hon. member for Cooroora and the hon. member for Albert that they are able to build their own roads, but I want to point out that you, Mr. Speaker, represent the wettest part of Queensland, and I have the honour to represent in one part of my electorate the second wettest part of Queensland. Hon. members sitting on the other side of the House know nothing about roads. I have heard them speak of bad roads. Why, their roads are real good as compared to some of the roads in the Innisfail district which I have walked over and also to the roads in the Proserpine district. That is where we want main roads built to open up the country. I rise to support the measure as it is a plank of the Labour party's platform, the only party fit to govern Queensland and fit to govern the Commonwealth. We are launching out to enable the farmers to get their produce to the railways. Hon. members opposite were in office for a number of years and they practically did nothing in this direction, and it is just as well to remind them that we on this side of the House represent Queensland, while they only represent a very small portion of the country districts of Queensland, that is, when you take the whole of Queensland into consideration.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I want to correct the hon. member for Bowen on one or two matters. In the first place, I would like to inform him that the establishment of a main roads board in Queensland has been a plank of our platform for quite a considerable time.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Government laughter.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is rather amusing, but we seem to be deprived of the right to possess a platform. I would like to remind hon. members opposite that our platform is taking a very concrete form, and before very long they will probably find that that

platform is a menace to them. (Government laughter.) It may be true that our representation in numbers is only half of those occupying Government benches, yet we must call attention to this fact once again: that there are only some 20,000 votes in the whole of Queensland dividing the two forces which are represented by these two sides of the House, and the less attention the hon. member calls to that fact the better it will be for their cause. If justice was done to Queensland, there would be some thirty-four representatives on this side of the House as compared with thirty-eight on the other side as against the twenty-four and forty-eight representing the Opposition and Government respectively. I am very pleased indeed that this matter of a main roads board is taking practical shape, and I disagree with some of the remarks of the hon. member for Cooroora. In the first place, I do not think the main roads of Queensland can be efficiently maintained in any other way but in the way proposed under this Bill. Neither do I think that the taxation, which will be entailed by this Bill, will fall as a burden upon the people generally, because I am of opinion that whatever they pay in taxation will certainly be more than saved for them in the matter of upkeep of their vehicles, apart altogether from the saving of time. The Minister was quite correct when he pointed out that the weight which one could carry from a farm to the station is practically controlled by the stiffest pinch on the road, and there may be a road where there is one little pinch on it in a 10-mile journey, and the farmer has to reduce his load by at least half in order to make provision for that one section. I know of one such road myself, whereas with a little science introduced into the making of roads the farmer could very much increase his loads and would save considerable time.

Any man who goes round the roads of Queensland must appreciate the fact that the whole system of road-making in this State is in a very neglected condition indeed. I do not think any particular blame is to be attributed to anyone for that state of affairs, because the mileage in Queensland is something enormous compared with the population, and it is unreasonable to expect that the little handful which occupies Queensland at the present moment can be looked to to put those roads in anything like reasonable repair. It seems to me that this is really the most favourable opportunity which has presented itself for bringing this

[8 p.m.] into practical shape. Queensland is looking for much greater population, and also for outlets for the unemployed. In addition, it is faced with the problem of production. We are continually preaching production here, and saying how necessary it is for the welfare of Queensland. Surely, if we are sincere in that belief, one of the first things we should do is to try and create the means of bringing produce to market, one of the forms of which is in providing reasonable roads for the carriage of that produce! Therefore, I consider this measure is well-timed, and I hope it will soon become law with one or two alterations to which I purpose calling attention at a later stage. Then the question of our railways is occupying the attention of every thoughtful person in Queensland. We must admit that the state of affairs in that department is approaching a climax. I think one of the ways in which we can

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ameliorate that condition is by some means of transit over roads which will act as feeders to the railways. You cannot take railways to every little corner of Queensland or to every little settlement. It is impossible and unreasonable. In other countries roads are utilised as feeders to railways, and there is no reason why we should not have a similar process here. I contend that the local authorities, as at present constituted, are totally unable to maintain a proper system of main road making. Anyone who studies the question must admit that it requires some central authority with a great deal of experience to tackle this question of roadmaking. The first question in determining the making of a road is to study the materials which the engineer has at his command, so as to get the correct combination of those materials to make an efficient and permanent road. The only way in which that can be properly done is to put them through laboratory tests, because there are some materials which will combine and there are others which will not. It is only by ascertaining the ingredients of the materials proposed to be used that the engineer in charge can really ascertain what are and should be the most suitable materials for that particular stretch of road. Again, the foundation of the roads which are put down is really the essence of the whole situation. If roads are merely top-dressed, such as is the practice in Queensland to-day, it is obvious that the improvement will be a very short-lived one. It is only a very short time before the state of the road is even worse than before improvement was attempted. The real secret of roadmaking lies in the foundation put down. It requires an engineer with expert knowledge to know what class of foundation should be used, how it should be put down, and in what way the road should be finished and attended to after it is made. One point I want to call attention to is this: that the Minister might consider whether some amendment cannot be made with regard to the definition of the present shire boundaries. In my electorate is the shire of Sherwood, which is peculiarly placed in regard to main roads. The main road between Brisbane and Ipswich runs for a long distance practically along the extreme boundary of the shire of Sherwood. It has some miles of that main road from which it derives practically no benefit. It gets practically no rates from it. Yet it is an important link between Brisbane and Ipswich. For the shire of Sherwood to have to bear its proportion of the expenditure, as is proposed under this measure, for the building of that road would be unreasonable. They will be required under this Bill to undertake a loan amounting to 50 per cent. of the cost of building that road. There are shires of equal importance and probably of equal size between here and Ipswich that will not pay anything like the same proportion as the shire of Sherwood. That is not an isolated instance. I call attention to it, because it comes within my particular knowledge. The Minister, in introducing this Bill, hints that country roads only will receive attention, and he seems to have foreshadowed that suburban roads under this measure will be more or less neglected. I am rather sorry to hear that. Although I am entirely sympathetic towards the country, yet I must admit that the roads in the immediate vicinity of towns are in just as deplorable a condition, and require equal attention. We hear of the problem of the

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distribution of our commodities in the suburbs of Brisbane. We contend that the cost of living is going up by leaps and bounds. As I have endeavoured to point out on a previous occasion, one of the reasons for the rise in the cost of living is the cost of the distribution of those necessary commodities. One of those costs, undoubtedly, is that of motor carriage, or carriage by carts in distributing those commodities to the outlying suburbs. It is obvious that the better the condition those roads are in, the more quickly can the carter deliver those goods to the consumer; and the worse condition those roads are in, the longer time it takes to deliver those commodities to the consumer and the less loads can be carried. So it is just as big a problem in the immediate vicinity of towns as it is in the country districts. The main question I want to refer to in connection with this Bill is the constitution of this board. We are told it is to consist of three members, one of whom is to be an engineer, and another—according to the Minister's remarks—will probably be a man with a considerable knowledge of agriculture and land problems—which, I think, is very desirable. But I think it is unfortunate that the Minister has thought fit to depart from the procedure which prevails in Victoria, and has made this board subservient to the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, there is practically no difference.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I visited the Roads Board in Victoria a few days after the Minister was there a year ago, and I made special inquiries regarding that. As far as my memory serves me, I was informed that this board was entirely independent of any political control.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Free from political control; not free from Ministerial control.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Of course, that is one and the same thing. The Minister is the mouthpiece of his party, and that is political control. I am sorry it is found necessary to spoil a measure like this—and I say "spoil" advisedly—by making the board subservient to the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is practically on all fours with the Victorian Act.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If that is so, it does not alter my argument as far as the merits of this Bill are concerned. I thought the Victorian Act was different. I think this board would be much better, much freer in its actions, much fairer in its control, if it were entirely free from Ministerial influence in any shape or form. I will endeavour to show what I mean. In the first place the Minister apparently has the selection of all the officers that are to be appointed to this board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not the selection.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Well, he has the appointment of them. It says here he has the appointment of everyone else except casual employees. I do not wish to be harsh in my criticism, but I say it would be much better if that board were left with entire independence of action to select whatever officers they liked, independent of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Have you heard the statements which have been made regarding the Commissioner of the Government Savings Bank?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have, but I have not taken part in them. This is a measure which is being treated in quite a non-party spirit, and I am taking part in the debate in that way. The hon. member for Cooroora has entirely different views to my own in regard to this measure. We are approaching this measure from the point of view that the main roads problem badly needs handling. That is the basis on which I am debating this measure. The board could select its own officers and would be more efficient if it understood and appreciated it would not be subject to the control of the Minister. I do not care who the Minister is; he is only human. When a Minister represents a Government which represents one class of the people—that has been their proclaimed statement—it stands to reason that a board must fear certain interference from that Minister. Another point is that we have recently had introduced into this House a Bill to amend the Officials in Parliament Act, the object being to create a new portfolio because the Ministers are being given too much work to do. If the Ministers were not so greedy in taking to themselves responsibility and control which there is no need for them to take, probably there would be little or no need for the introduction of that measure. Here is an instance where the Minister is taking on his shoulders responsibility which there is no need for him to take, because a properly selected board of competent men could deal with the problem quite well without his interference. I do not mean this personally; I am speaking of it from the general point of view. We also have this situation to face, that recently in the Maranoa electorate it has been found that more men are required to attend to the platelaying of the railway.

Mr. BRENNAN: To relieve the unemployed.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is very strange, but nevertheless it is a fact, that there is an election coming on. It is also a significant fact that the vacancy at Maranoa was not created until those men had been there sufficiently long to qualify for a vote. Of course, we are not blind; we can see what happens, and we know exactly the significance. Here is another opportunity, seeing this board is brought under the control of the Minister, for its being suddenly discovered that a road requires to be made—possibly in the Oxley electorate. "The member for Oxley is getting objectionable. He is becoming a thorn in the side of the Government. Therefore we will remove him by suddenly discovering that the road between Ipswich and Brisbane requires to be made. Consequently we will put 500 men to start on the building of this road."

Mr. CARTER: It would take only one man to beat you. I will beat you at any time.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Right oh! Bring some of your German friends along.

Mr. CARTER: My friends are all good Englishmen.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It gives the Minister power to come to the conclusion that a certain road wants building because that particular electorate either requires bolstering up to return the candidate of their colour or there is an objectionable member there that has got to be removed. That is the objection to bringing this board under the control of a Minister. Because it lays the whole question open to political interference it is undesirable.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is the end of it, if you think it is undesirable.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Another point I would like some information on is: If the local authorities are going to be called upon to make some further contribution in the matter of roadmaking, will the State face its obligations to the local authorities in the matter by paying rates and taxes on Crown land? (Hear, hear!) It is getting into a serious state in Queensland, where the Government occupy large tracts of land in different shires and practically pay no rates or taxes at all. That means a serious obligation is placed upon the local authority, and it is high time the Government faced the situation and paid its share of the taxation. Under the Victorian Act, the sum of £2,000,000 was earmarked for expenditure on main roads. The Minister has not given us any indication as to what his intentions are in that regard. Can the Minister tell us what sum of money is proposed to be earmarked for roadmaking, or is it to be simply left to evolve as time goes on?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will be voted year by year, the same as money for railways.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Can you tell us the amount of money that will be voted? I am not asking out of idle curiosity, but I want to know the extent of the operations under this Bill. Can you give us that information?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, not at the moment.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I would like to know from the Minister if the board has power to levy rates in a local authority which is backward in its obligations. In Victoria the board has power to levy rates if the local authority fails to do so. Is that power contained in this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It seems to me to be a necessary power. A local authority might object to a main roads board taking control under this Bill. Yet the board has no power to force that local authority to take action.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Once the local authorities agree to a main road they have to pay 50 per cent. of the cost of construction.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: A main road may pass through three local authority areas. The local authorities on the north and south might agree to it, but the one occupying the central portion may refuse to allow the road to be made. What happens then?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is for the Minister to finally decide.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the Minister decides against that particular local authority, I presume the Minister has power to levy rates on the council persisting in its objection?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh, yes!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Minister has not given us any figures to show the revenue which will be derived from vehicles and so forth under this measure. I believe he has been making inquiries in that regard. It will help us if he can tell us what estimate of revenue he expects to receive.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is difficult to estimate, but we expect to get about £20,000 in the first year from motor-cars.

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Mr. ELPHINSTONE: In Victoria, all fines levied on motor-cars for breaches of the traffic regulations are also paid into the fund for the maintenance of roads. Is it the intention of the Minister to do something similar under this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All fines under the Act will go into the fund.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I would suggest to the Minister that when he is reviewing the question of licensing motor-cars, he should devise some means for licensing motor-drivers at the same time. Apart from getting additional revenue, which he is desirous of doing, I think it is an important question to see that men who drive motor-cars are able to drive.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is an important question, but it does not come under this Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I think it should come under this Bill, because bad driving brings about a certain amount of disintegration of the road. In the hands of a competent driver the damage to a road is much less than in the hands of an incompetent driver. If a man knows how to drive, he is going to see that brakes are used as little as possible, because every time he uses the brake, and the strength with which he applies them, will create more or less destruction to the tyres, and destruction to the tyres means destruction to the roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you won't allow a man to drive, how is he going to learn to drive?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He can learn the same as he does in Sydney. He takes his car in the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, and has a policeman sitting alongside him, instructing him to go through certain places, and testing his efficiency.

Mr. WHITFORD: Not in the gardens, but in the Domain.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Probably the Domain.

Mr. WHITFORD: Why don't you tell the truth? (Laughter.)

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I hope I never get from the truth in a worse direction than that. The question has been raised about dividing Queensland into three parts and dividing the money to be expended in those areas as equally as possible. The Minister cannot do anything else. He is going to tax all motors in Queensland, and he must of necessity devote the expenditure in Queensland just as he taxes all the vehicles. I do not see how the Minister can do anything else but put into operation what he forecasts. An important point in connection with road-making is in maintenance. You can make the best road, but, if it is not attended to, little holes will develop into cavities. I hope that this Bill means not only construction of roads but maintenance of roads. With these remarks I sincerely hope that this Bill is going to become law. There is only one objection in the Bill. The board should be free from Ministerial control. That is the only severe criticism which can be levelled against the Bill. The Minister has put the case in a reasonable way. I know the Minister has gone to considerable trouble to put forward a measure which will be acceptable and reasonable. I only wish the same kind of reasonableness was shown with every measure brought before this House.

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Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): As a country member I desire to say a few words in supporting this Bill as it stands. The hon. member for Oxley slated the Government all through his speech, and then wound up by congratulating the Government and congratulating the Minister for his connection with the Bill. One of the vital points the hon. member brought forward was that the Minister should not have control of this Act. He assumed that the Government might use the Bill as a means for political ends. I deny this. In the Bill there is no power given to the Minister of the board to effect this purpose at all. It has been stated by the Minister that the council has to be consulted before any main roads are built in its district. That does away with the contention of the hon. member. What did the hon. gentleman's party do in the past? He accused the Government of sending battalions of men into an electorate to defeat the Nationalist candidate. I do not suppose that that is going to be done at all, but I can assure the hon. member for Oxley that when his party was in power they took good care to strike hundreds and thousands of names off the rolls altogether. In the Normanby electorate in 1915, all the navvies who were living in tents on the construction works on the North Coast line were struck off the roll. So, when the hon. member says the Government send men into an electorate and put them on a roll, they are going to adopt that method, then I prefer that method to turning British citizens into aliens such as was done by the Denham Government in my electorate in 1915. The hon. gentleman says the Minister will have political control. At one time I believed in giving control to a Commissioner, but I do not believe in that now, because I find that the member for the district is blamed for the actions of the Commissioner and for the action of the Government in appointing the Commissioner to take charge of the administration. Take the Commissioner of the Savings Bank, for instance. He is above political control, and I have had occasion to complain about him. I have heard hon. members opposite complain about the Commissioner of the Savings Bank.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes, and the Minister who introduced this Bill said it was unreasonable criticism.

Mr. PETERSON: Any criticism I make I will stand up for or go out altogether. The Commissioner of the Savings Bank has taken up an attitude like the Czar, and other institutions are the same. Yet hon. members get up and say that we, the people's representatives, must hand over the control to a Commissioner to enable him to become an autocrat, and be the sole judge of saying what is to be done under that particular Act. Are we to be ruled by Commissioners? Let the Government accept the responsibility for any Act they pass. If you appoint a Commissioner you will have no power over him at all, and members who vote for a Commissioner will be held responsible for all his sins of omission and commission. So long as I am a country member, I will reserve to myself the full rights of a legislator to see that any department is run in the interests of the people as a whole. The Government should be held responsible and not the Commissioner. I am a constant reader of the "Producers' Review." That paper supports hon. gentlemen opposite, but from time to time there are some fine articles advocating

a main roads policy. To-night the hon. member for Oxley said that the main roads plank had been a prominent one in the Liberal platform for some time past. I remember when the Labour party were sitting in opposition looking with longing eyes at the Treasury benches. During the whole of the time when our party were in the wilderness, when the Government could obtain money cheaper, labour cheaper, and material cheaper, and they had the opportunity, did they do it? No. To-day, when money is expensive to borrow, they say "Why don't you do it?"

Not only they as a party, but the whole of their organs, are continually saying "Why don't you do it?" and when we do it, or attempt to do it, they say, "That is the wrong way."

I know that the people of Nor-[3.30 p.m.] manby would welcome an opportunity of getting assistance in the building of roads, but the unfortunate part is that some of the shire councils—I do not say all of them, because some of them are very progressive—which control the larger areas are too conservative in the matter of taxing themselves, and they may not like this measure. (Hear, hear!) Speaking generally for the settlers of my electorate, however, I feel confident that they will welcome the proposal. I think that good roads are just as essential as railways to build up land settlement. We are confronted on all sides with increased taxation, and further taxation is mooted—both Federal and State—and there is no other way, as far as I can see, of increasing our revenue except by increasing land settlement. I believe the time is rapidly approaching when the Government should consider the question of dropping the further extension of the railways—for the time being at least—and conserve its energies on the construction of main roads, and also the question of water conservation and irrigation. We have a great mileage of railways at the present time—huge areas of land opened up by means of railways, but these areas are not put to proper use, because in many places it is impossible for the farmers to get their produce to market on account of the deep creeks they have to cross, and also—in wet weather particularly—the impassable state of the roads to the railway stations. There is no member in this Chamber can gainsay the fact that, if we are to progress and meet our obligations, we must go in for increased production, and one of the factors towards that is to make it easier for the producer to get his produce to market. I think there is going to be a considerable saving effected by the establishment of roads such as proposed in this Bill, because it costs a farmer a great deal more to get his produce to market over a bad than over a good road, and, although it may affect him by means of taxation for the time being, it will be a saving in the long run, because he will save time in getting his stuff to market, and therefore I believe he will support the Bill. I would just like to quote a condensed article by Dr. Price, of Toowoomba. It is taken from the "Producers' Review" of 10th September, 1919, page 15, and there is no question about it that he, like the Minister, has taken a very keen interest in the roads problem. He is giving a few figures which I think the House might very well have. The article says—

"Dr. T. A. Price, of Toowoomba, the

vice-president of the Main Roads Improvement Association of Queensland, recently outlined in 'Local Government' a scheme which appears to be thoroughly sound so far as it goes. Taking the road from Brisbane to Ipswich as a common basis which applies to roads all over Queensland, he argued that the cost of every motor trip (20 miles between the two municipalities) now averaged at a low estimate 21s. per trip, or a little over 1s. a mile. On a concrete road the cost could be reduced to less than 14s. a trip, or a saving of 7s."

If that is worked out accurately, I do not think anyone living in that area and using that particular road with vehicles will object to pay the tax which has been complained of in order to get the benefit.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Don't you see, the farmers in that area would have to pay for those motor-car roads?

Mr. PETERSON: The article goes on—

"Allowing for twenty-five trips a day each way (again a low estimate), the saving would amount to £17 10s. a day for motor alone. In one year, in round figures, the saving on petrol, tyres, and repairs would amount to £6,400. Allowing for the wastage on drays, carts, buggies, and other vehicles, Dr. Price estimates that he is well within the mark in saying that a sum of £10,000 is thrown away each year because of 20 miles of bad road."

In emphasising that argument, I want to say that we are fast approaching the day when horse vehicles will be a thing of the past, just as the timber age, to a large extent, is passing away, and we are coming into the concrete age. The hon. member for Drayton, in dealing with the vehicles of the farmer, must be thinking of the past, because I believe the tendency, not only with the producer but with others who make a living out of the producer, is to get motors and motor tractions wherever possible. Continuing, Dr. Price says—

"Take the cost of a first-class concrete road constructed with modern machinery under a good engineer—"

The trouble about roads, even in Brisbane, is that there does not seem to be that applied science that is necessary in the construction of a good road. In many cases the engineer is called upon to make a road with inadequate financial support, and, as a result, we have roads of inferior quality. Dr. Price continues—

"Such a road could be built for £5,000 a mile or £100,000 for the 20 miles. A sum of 6 per cent. (interest and redemption) would be £6,000 a year, or less than £16 10s. a day, as against a total loss of over £27 a day at present. In thirty-one years the loan would be paid off, the interest and redemption amounting to £180,000, whilst the loss involved on the present basis would amount in the same time to £310,000, or nearly enough to build and pay the interest and redemption on 40 miles of road instead of 20 miles."

Those are the figures of a gentleman who has made a very close study of the problem of roadmaking; and, like many other gentlemen

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connected with local councils, is responsible for a great deal of work in the particular sphere in which he labours. Referring to the discussion upon the value of an Act, similar to this Bill, that has been operating in Victoria, hon. members said the reason it was so successful was on account of the large population—that they did not feel the tax so acutely. I say good roads will make population and will make it possible for the producer to live more comfortably on his land—that is, it will enable him to bring his produce to market without the inevitable delays with which he is confronted at present. In conclusion, I would like to refer to a report which appears in the "Producers' Review" of 10th January, 1919. With regard to the work of the Victorian Country Roads Board, it says—

"A brief extract will suffice to show what is being done in the Southern State in the matter of roads. During the five years of its existence the Victorian Country Roads Board has spent £1,285,021 in what its fifth annual report describes as 'permanent works' and £462,579 in maintenance.' The highest expenditure in any one year was £563,665 in 1915-16. The total expenditure last year was £400,386, including £173,757 for maintenance. The board puts on record in its report that its policy of developmental roads had been greatly 'simplified' by the decision of the Government to provide a further sum of £1,500,000 and the roads policy was to distribute its expenditure so that the maximum number of settlers would receive the benefit. To date, it is stated, 130 roads had been selected affecting thirty-seven municipalities."

Instead of hon. members ridiculing in some measure the action of the Government in trying to deal with a very difficult problem—it is difficult, because, after all, finance will govern the whole thing, and, in order to finance, taxation generally has to be resorted to—when the Bill makes a proposal that the Government will be responsible for 50 per cent. of the money and the Shires in the benefited area will have to find the other 50 per cent., surely it must be patent to hon. members that the whole State will be called upon to pay one-half; that is, the men who use the roads so far as vehicles are concerned will have to contribute their quota.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: But the Government claim all the taxes off the vehicles.

Mr. PETERSON: Assuming that that is correct, tradesmen living in the cities will be called upon, in an indirect way, to pay their quota for a road they do not use. When the hon. member quotes an argument like that, we also quote arguments to show that the people who are not really using the roads with vehicles are called upon, in a measure, to foot the bill to the extent of 50 per cent. I think the Government, and the Minister particularly, are to be congratulated on this honest attempt to try and place on the statute-book a measure for which the State has been crying out; and—despite the factious opposition of hon. members on the other side—I believe when the Bill and its provisions are explained to the country, the people will say that the Government has taken a step in the right direction. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

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Mr. GUNN: I am not so optimistic with regard to this Bill as the Minister, or as some hon. members both on this side and on the other side. I remember when there were no shire councils, when we had a main roads policy in Queensland, and the Government of those days made the main roads—the main road from here to Toowoomba and to Spicer's Gap—and they were excellently made under Government supervision. Politics did not seem to have such a hold in those days as at present. But after a time we found that the main roads were attended to by the Government, and the branch or outside roads were neglected. Sir Arthur Palmer then brought in the Local Authorities Act, and since that Act came into power our main roads, to a great extent, have been neglected. I have been a member of the House for a considerable time, and from time to time this main road question has been brought up.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know you only talked; we are doing something now.

Mr. GUNN: And the discussion was continued on these lines: "It is cheaper to build a railway or a main road?" The engineer's report was that the cost of constructing a proper macadamised road was more than the cost of a railway, and we decided that it was better, in the first instance, to build a railway. That method has been carried on for a long time. Where it was necessary to build a main road, "the iron horse" was put down in order to be done with it. Unfortunately, we are not done with it, and the main roads question is cropping up again. I admit that it would be a fine thing if we had the main road between Brisbane and Toowoomba or between Brisbane and the border in good order. These main roads would be of great advantage to those who want to go travelling about in motor-cars, but to say that this Bill is brought in wholly and solely in the interests of the primary producer, and that he is going to get such a wonderful advantage out of this Bill—well, I am not so sure of it. If you build a better main road between Brisbane and Toowoomba, the small "cocky" taking his cream-cans to the different stations along the railway line will not worry about that main road. He plods along with his old horse or his Ford car to the nearest station and gets rid of his cream. He is not worrying about the main roads.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you ever hear of the North Coast line?

Mr. GUNN: I know a good deal about the West, at all events. These people are quite satisfied with the railway line. They take their produce to the railway and get it carried to the city at a cheap rate, and they do not want a duplication of the main road. But the city people do. The city people want to get the tourists from New South Wales, so that they can sell their goods to them. I admit that a main road is a very good thing, but in a young country like this—the people who instituted the railway policy were quite right to go in for railways first and then, if necessary, build the main roads afterwards. The main roads are only a duplication of the railways. This main roads Bill is not going to be of any advantage to the people in the West. There are vast areas of blacksoil country in the West, which is far distant from any material suitable for roadmaking, and the cost of the material

would be almost prohibitive. These roads in dry weather are excellent roads, but in wet weather they are untrafficable. The people in the district do not use these roads in wet weather; they wait for dry weather. Unfortunately dry weather usually prevails, and it is quite easy for the people to wait for the dry weather. I have seen wool brought to the railway stations in the West by traction engines and motor engines, but this Bill will not be any good to the West. Their main roads will not be improved. The people whose roads will be improved are the people who can do without roads at the present time; that is, the tourists who have motor-cars, and who can do without roads until the primary producers are in a better position than they are at the present time. It would be better if the Government, instead of introducing a Bill like this, were to proclaim certain roads as main roads, and then put aside so much money to be expended on those roads. Let the Government put the roads in order and keep them in order. Under this Bill there will be dual control. The Government and the local authorities will find the money between them to build the roads, and then the local authorities will have to maintain the roads. The local authorities will say the roads were not properly constructed in the first place, and that they cannot maintain them. Then, again, one shire will keep portion of the road in good order and the other shire will neglect their portion. It would be far better for the Government to decide what is to be a main road, and then look after it themselves, independent of the local authority. One of the reasons the Local Authorities Act was passed was to prevent log-rolling. Whenever an election came on there was always somebody who wanted to get somebody else in, just as at present, and that lead to log-rolling. Unfortunately, in connection with the building of railways, we find log-rolling and that kind of thing. It seems that we cannot get it out of the political system, and this Bill will revert to the old log-rolling practices so far as the maintenance of our roads are concerned. I notice that the Government are going to find 50 per cent. of the necessary money and the local authorities are to find another 50 per cent., and then there is the timber tax and the wheel tax. The timber tax and the wheel tax—the way I read the Bill—will go to help the Government to pay their 50 per cent. and the local authorities 50 per cent. is to be returned. It is only a loan. We are putting on to posterity what we ought to do ourselves. Posterity will have enough to bear, and I do not know how they are going to get on. We are just putting off the evil day. It would be far better just to spend what money we can and not leave posterity to pay for it all, as we do in many other cases. A great deal has been said about grades. Some roads will have to have steep grades in places, no matter what you do. It is all very well to quote Victoria and New South Wales, but in those States there are big populations and they can afford to do these things. Then the Minister said the Bill would allow him to fix the width of tyres. There, again, you will have dual control because under the Local Authorities Act many of the shires have a wheel tax and by-laws fixing the width of tyres according to the load. Now, the Government will come along and fix another width for the tyres, and in many cases you will have the shire councils imposing a wheel tax and the

Government imposing a wheel tax. Then, again, this Bill gives power to build roads to new settlements. That is a very good idea, but again it lends itself to the log-rolling principles that existed under the old system. Anyone who wants to curry favour with the district can say, "Oh, well! we will give you a road, and not only will we build you a road, but if the Labour party is in power they can put two or three hundred voters in a district who will be very handy at election time." Somebody said just now that we took better care of the rolls than to put people off the roll. I think it was said by the hon. member for Normanby. I would like to remind that hon. member that at the last election there were 50,000 more names on the rolls than there were adults in Queensland.

The SPEAKER: Order! We have had an Elections Bill under discussion this session, and the hon. member cannot discuss that matter again.

Mr. GUNN: When the roads are worn out, what is going to happen to them? Roads will not last for ever, particularly when one man builds a road and another man looks after it. The man who looks after the road will be pretty careless, and it will be necessary to build that road over again. I do not know how you are going to manage then. I do not see why the Government should not pay rates for their State stations and for their public buildings as well as everybody else. If they want to assist the people of Queensland to have good roads, they ought to pay rates the same as anybody else. The hon. member for Oxley advocated that everyone should be licensed before being allowed to drive a motor-car. That would be very hard on some of the people in the country districts. If a selector or a small man comes to town and buys a Ford motor-car, and likes to take the risk of driving it out West, he should not be prevented. He is not likely to harm anybody, and there is no more danger in him driving a Ford motor-car than there is in a city man driving a horse and cart. You do not ask the city man to take out a license before driving a horse and sulky, and he is just as likely to run into a post as the "cocky" with his Ford motor-car. The principal thing I want to emphasise is that when I was supporting the Government the idea was that it was cheaper to build railways than to build roads, and, therefore, we did build railways rather than roads, and Queensland has got a greater mileage of railway for her population than any country in the world, and the people of Queensland ought to thank the old Liberal party for building so many railways. Some of those railways may not have paid, but they were just as good to the State of Queensland as any road, so far as the producer is concerned. If the city people want to encourage the tourists to visit their city, I sympathise with them, and hope that they will get their main roads, but if they do the Government ought to take over the construction and control of these main roads, and pay for them themselves.

Question put and passed.

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

At five minutes before 9 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. SMITH, one of the temporary chairman, took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gunn.]

GOVERNOR'S SALARY ACT OF 1872
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a second time. I have already explained on two occasions—on the notice of motion and on the initiation of the Bill in Committee—the objects of the Bill. It is of no great importance, and relates to the salary paid to the Lieutenant-Governor. Under the present statute it is necessary to pay the Lieutenant-Governor, who happens already to occupy some other office under the Crown, half the Governor's salary and half the salary of the office which he already occupies. It is now intended to amend the Act so as to entitle the Lieutenant-Governor, if he happens to be an officer of the Crown, to receive the full salary of his office, without any additional emolument for acting as Lieutenant-Governor, except such allowances as may be appropriated by Parliament for that purpose. We have had much advice during this session from the Opposition side of the House with regard to economy.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Have you taken it?

The PREMIER: Such advice as is worth listening to. We are told that we should economise, but it may be said that this is rather a small matter on which to economise. It must be remembered that the present Governor, Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams, will be leaving the State within a few months, as his time has expired, and presumably a Lieutenant-Governor will be appointed to carry on during the interregnum until his successor is appointed. If the person selected as Lieutenant-Governor happens to be an officer of the Crown already—which, no doubt, he will be—and highly remunerated, there is no reason why the extra emolument should be paid. That is practically the whole purport of the Bill.

[9 p.m.]

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I do not know that the Premier explained fully what the position would be if half of the Governor's salary were not received by the officer to whom he refers. It is hardly necessary to ask the question: Is it the salary payable to the Governor under the appropriation, half of which goes to the official who acts in his place?

The PREMIER: Of course, after the term of the present Governor's appointment expired, no salary would be payable to the Governor.

Mr. MACARTNEY: So, I take it, the position would be this: that for the period during which the Lieutenant-Governor would be acting, the Governor would not be receiving salary?

The PREMIER: No, I do not think that would be the position. During the time the Lieutenant-Governor is acting the Governor would be receiving no salary. His term will have expired—unless, of course, he leaves before his term expires.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I take it, under those circumstances the Act does not affect the Governor at all?

The PREMIER: It does not affect the Governor.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is one point we ought to understand. It is not usual, and, of course, we have no desire to discuss the position of the Governor. Nevertheless I

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*

could understand this Bill very much more if it were a Bill to reduce the Governor's salary. Not that I suggest that it should be reduced. I could understand that the principles of the party on the other side might very well tend in that direction. This proposal, however, is one of an entirely different character; and having regard to all the circumstances which exist in Queensland at the present time, and all the feeling of a political character which has been displayed in regard to officers holding a certain status, I think it is regrettable that we have the Bill before us now. I do not blame the Premier in the slightest degree for any effort he may make in the direction of economy. I think economy ought to be our watchword to a great extent. If we could say that this was a measure which was merely designed to bring about reasonable economy, I should not have a word to say about it, but I am rather inclined to think it is a measure which has behind it something in the nature of a class feeling, which I am sorry to find has reappeared at the commencement of the hon. gentleman's new Administration.

The PREMIER: I assure the hon. member there is nothing of that kind in it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman say so. I take it that the position is that in the ordinary course of events His Honour the Chief Justice would be the Lieutenant-Governor. At least, I have never heard it suggested that any other arrangement had been made. The effect of this Bill is to deprive his Honour the Chief Justice of the increased salary which would be his under the law as it stands, when he takes on the greater and more responsible duties of Lieutenant-Governor.

The PREMIER: The Chief Justice gets £2,500.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes, I understand that.

The PREMIER: And he will be entitled to whatever allowances are allowed.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The only effect of the alteration by the Bill is to take that from the gentleman who is marked out for the position of Lieutenant-Governor by reason of the office he now holds. I say it is a personal distinction which is to be regretted.

The PREMIER: There is absolutely no personal consideration whatever.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman may say so. I am glad to think that is not what is in the hon. gentleman's mind. The fact remains it has the appearance of it, and there are a great many people in this State who will put that construction on it, whether the hon. gentleman or myself like it or not. I think it is a matter to be regretted. I do not know that anything is to be gained by saying any more. I would much rather the hon. gentleman withdrew the Bill than proceed with it under the particular circumstances.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Foley, Mundingburra, in the chair.*)

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—“*Amendment of 36 Vic. No. 9, s. 5*”—

Mr. MACARTNEY: Under clause 2 I notice that, not only is the salary affected, but allowances referred to in section 7 are

also extinguished by the amendment, and substituted therefor are allowances to be hereafter appropriated by Parliament. I do not know just what the present position is. I am not quite sure what those allowances amount to, and what the actual necessity for expenditure in connection with them may be. Assuming that there is expenditure in connection with them, it seems to me something more definite in the nature of a provision should be made than that it shall be an amount to be hereafter appropriated by Parliament. Just at the present moment we have not the Financial Statement before us, and we have not the Estimates, consequently the proposed appropriations are not before us. If indications are correct, we may not have those Estimates until the early part of next year, when, in all probability, the first period of the Lieutenant-Governor's period of service may have passed by. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has given any consideration to that matter. I would like to know what the position is.

The PREMIER: Section 7 provides—

“An officer so administering the Government shall be entitled to the full allowances of a Governor if there is money available but he shall only receive so much of the vote as is proportioned to the time he is in office.”

The intention is to allow Parliament to appropriate what is considered a reasonable allowance to the officer officiating as Lieutenant-Governor, if he occupies the establishment or carries it on during the period until a successor to Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams is appointed. The Governor's Salary Act lays down on what basis the furnishings of Government House shall be paid for by the occupant, either by the Governor or the Lieutenant-Governor. The value of the furniture in certain of the rooms is fixed, and £6 per cent. of it is paid by the Governor as a rental for that furniture. The Lieutenant-Governor pays half. I have no doubt that that will apply to whoever occupies the position of Lieutenant-Governor from now onwards. If the establishment has to be kept, an allowance will have to be made. Naturally, one could not expect the officer to defray the cost of running the establishment of Government House out of his ordinary salary. That is perfectly obvious. There is no doubt that provision will have to be made on the Estimates this year to defray the expected cost of that. If it is not provided on the Estimates and the Lieutenant-Governor is called upon to officiate, provision will have to be made by means of an Executive minute charged to unforeseen expenditure and subsequently passed by Parliament. There will be no attempt to bring difficulty into the position, or to reduce the position to one of less dignity or anything of that kind. The person who is occupying the position of Lieutenant-Governor has a right to come to the Government to get sufficient allowance to cover the expense of any functions he has to carry out. The Bill really only affects the salary.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It would appear to me that there must be something very much more behind this matter than is apparent. There is a matter of only £250 at stake. It is not stated what is going to happen if the appointee is not the holder of any other offices.

The PREMIER: The position is not affected then.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is almost inconceivable that the House should be considering the Bill if there is nothing further in it than that.

The PREMIER: What becomes of all your protestations about the necessity for economy?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If the hon. gentleman wants to talk economy he has abundant scope on all sides of him. If the Government are bent upon economy in small ways or big ways, this House will appreciate their efforts. We want evidence of that of a nature which is not before the House in this Bill.

Clause 2 put and passed.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

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

DARAJI RAILWAY BRIDGE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. There is little to add to what has already been said on the matter. The Bill is one of two clauses. It empowers the Railway Commissioner to erect a bridge over the Johnstone River, at about Daraji on the Mooliba to Innisfail section, and to indemnify the Railway Commissioner against any action that may be brought against him by those who use the river for trading purposes. There is only one company at present which uses the river in this neighbourhood—the local sugar-mill—and they are connected already with Mourilyan Harbour by rail. The only inconvenience they will be put to is that they will have to alter the masts and derricks on their vessels, at no great expense. The Commissioner would have to spend anything up to £50,000 in excess of this proposed expenditure, were he to build the bridge at as high a level as to permit the present small trading vessels to navigate. That expenditure is not warranted and not justified. The inconvenience is so slight that the one is easily well set off against the other. I might add that the deputy leader of the Opposition asked me for the Commissioner's report upon the proposed bridge. The Commissioner had not reported at the time. Since then he has furnished me with one, and I have handed it to the deputy leader of the Opposition. It covers the fullest information. There is no information beyond what I have given just now.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I have read the report which the Minister graciously permitted the deputy leader of the Opposition to peruse. I realise from that report that there is a need for something in the nature of the legislation proposed in this Bill. It appears to be necessary in order to indemnify the Commissioner in regard to interfering with the steamer traffic on the river. I take it that in a matter of this sort that the interests that are affected have been considered by the Commissioner. Very often those interests are provided for by understanding or consent is obtained. I take it that if no understanding is come to with the interests affected by the Bill, the Minister should take the House into his confidence and let us know. One would imagine that the Bill might seriously interfere with very important interests.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can assure you that it will not.

Mr. Macartney.]

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the Minister gives us that assurance, then there is no objection to the Bill. That is information which the House is entitled to.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I questioned the Commissioner on the matter, and he said that so far as he knew there is no objection.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the people who are interested have had that matter brought under their notice, and there is no objection, there is nothing more to be said about the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is really a matter of altering the masts.

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

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Foley, Mundingburra, in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. J. MULLAN (*Blinders*): In moving the second reading of this Bill, I might say that it is a small measure which amends section 3 of the principal Act by omitting the word "eight" and inserting the word "nine," and by omitting the word "seven" and inserting the word "eight," in the same section, and by repealing section 4. It amends section 3 by adding the words "That the Governor by proclamation shall declare the offices which the said officers shall respectively hold." I also wish to move a small amendment in Committee to substitute the word "nine" for the word "eight" in section 6. In the preliminary stages of this Bill I pointed out the necessity for an extra Minister, and in case there might be further doubt about the matter, I have made some inquiries as to the additional responsibilities imposed upon Ministers since the Act of 1896 was passed. In 1897 the Agricultural Department were dealing with nine Acts, and since then twenty-four additional Acts have come under the administration of that department. The Home Department had fifty-one Acts, and since then twenty-three more Acts have been added. The Justice Department had twenty-one Acts in 1897, with eighteen Acts added since. The Treasury Department had twenty-six Acts to administer in 1897, and thirty-three have been added since. The Works Department had only one Act to administer in 1897—namely, the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, but since then thirteen others have been added. The Lands Department had ten Acts to administer in 1897, and fourteen more have been added. There were ten Acts to administer in the Chief Secretary's Department in 1897, and six more have been added. In the Department of Public Instruction there were four Acts in 1897, and there have been three additional Acts since then. Double the number of Acts have now to be administered by the Mines Department than was the case in 1897. That will give hon. members a fair idea of the enormous

[*Mr. Macartney.*

increase of administrative duties and the additional responsibility thrown upon Ministers.

Mr. VOWLES: You want less legislation.

HON. J. MULLAN: The hon. gentleman should be the last to complain about that, because, if there is one industry more than another that is profitable to the hon. gentleman, it is legislation. To fortify some of my preliminary remarks on this matter, I point out that since this Government came into power in 1915 we have established a number of State enterprises.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear! May they continue to grow.

HON. J. MULLAN: The Government now administer the State stations, the State butchers' shops, railway refreshment-rooms, State sawmills, State joinery, State cannery, State batteries at Charters Towers and Bamford, State arsenic mine at Stanthorpe, State produce agency, State colmines at Bowen and Styx River and elsewhere, State smelters at Chillagoe, just about to start in a few days, State treatment works at Irvinebank, State Government boring operations and preparatory work to proceed with iron and steel works, State assay works at Cloncurry, and so on.

Mr. ELPINSTONE: What about the State pulveriser?

HON. J. MULLAN: I leave it for the hon. gentleman to add that. At any rate, it will show the enormous expansion that has taken place in State enterprises which increases the responsibilities of every department to which the State activities are attached. Whoever the Minister may be, he has extra responsibility, and his work has increased. In addition to this work, all the administration has increased since these Ministers were appointed. The Brisbane Hospital has been added to the direct administration of the Government under the Home Department. We have had State Government insurance added, and a State Public Curator's Department which is the centre of enormous activity. We have had additional central sugar-mills added to the department since then. In the Public Works Department fifteen years ago we used to spend £78,000 a year, but at the present time we spend £400,000 a year. Then, again, we have introduced a system of day labour. It is the Day Labour Construction Branch which has made for economy on a very large scale.

Mr. VOWLES: Question.

HON. J. MULLAN: It has increased the administrative duties. Our activities in connection with loans to local authorities have been increased. The Main Roads Bill, if passed, will increase the work of Ministers, and so will the Profiteering Prevention Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the "Loafers' Paradise Bill"?

HON. J. MULLAN: In years to come the hon. gentleman will regret terming that measure a "Loafers' Paradise Bill." There was no workers' compensation in 1897, no inspection of machinery and scaffolding, and no arbitration as we have it to-day. We have also Government works of great magnitude, such as the water and sewerage works in Brisbane and the waterworks in Ipswich, both indirectly controlled by the Government. Then there is electric power and supply to

local authorities, which is coming under the administrative functions of the Works Department. Gas control was not thought of in 1897, but we have to attend to it to-day. In the Agricultural Department we have a Director of Fruit Culture, we have to regulate cane prices, and in various ways the operations of the Agricultural Department have been enormously extended. Our educational system has been revolutionised during the last twenty-two years. Dental and medical inspection were unknown then. The primary, secondary, and technical education have been extended to an extent hardly believed, and that has increased the administrative work of the department. We have additional administration by the acquisition of the sugar crop annually, also in connection with the meat supply for Imperial purposes and also under the Land and Income Tax Acts. The Treasurer can tell you that that means enormously increased administrative duties.

Mr. VOWLES: The Commissioner deals with land and income tax.

HON. J. MULLAN: I am glad, for the sake of the country, that the hon. gentleman is not acquainted with the administrative duties of that department. (Laughter.) If he were, he would know that the Treasurer has a great deal of worry in connection with land tax and income tax. I have heard one hon. member of this House worry the Treasurer, and ask him how the poor farmers were going to pay the land tax, and the Treasurer had to go to some trouble to explode his fallacies. Then, look at the activities in connection with the Savings Bank, workers' dwellings, and Agricultural Bank. We must all admit that they have all enormously increased. Then we have the workers' homes coming under that department. In the Home Department there is an increase in the administration in connection with foster mothers, natural mothers, and State children. The Minister has to deal with almost each individual case. Although he has got a director, he has to supervise the work and authorise expenditure. I could go on and point out increased activity everywhere, particularly in connection with harbour improvements, water conservation, Government advertising, aids for prospecting, and soldier settlement. That means increased activity all round. We have established soldier settlements at Beerburum, Pikadale, Tully River, and so on. That all means increased work for the Ministers in those particular departments. Then, the local authorities have enormously increased the administrative work of the Home [9.30 p.m.] Department—there are 200 of them now. The functions of the Department of Public Health have also enormously extended. Then there is the Railway Department, with 5,600 miles of railway and a capital of £42,000,000. I need hardly mention the increased worry and anxiety which must be imposed upon the Minister in charge of that department, particularly in these times of stress and trouble, when hardly a railway in the world is paying, owing to the abnormal conditions created by the war. Then, the Cabinet have taken upon themselves the responsibility at one time exercised by the Public Service Board—they practically are the Public Service Board, which was not the case, I think, in 1897. And I could really go on further—

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Take it as read.

HON. J. MULLAN: If the hon. member is satisfied, I am prepared to take it as read. But remarks made in the preliminary stages of the Bill seemed to indicate that there was an opinion abroad amongst the Opposition that the State activities have not expanded, and I thought it just as well to indicate, in a general way, the enormous increase that has taken place. In the Railway Department alone the employees have increased from 4,791 in 1897 to 15,000 to-day.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Don't publish that.

HON. J. MULLAN: I think the hon. gentleman is hardly capable of assessing the true value of those men's work. Whatever may be his opinion about legislation, I do not think he is a competent judge of railway administration.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Railway Commissioner is not, any way.

HON. J. MULLAN: The Railway Commissioner says nothing to the detriment of the men in his report. However, all legislation embodying new principles involves increased administrative duties, and the development of the State means increased administrative work. In New South Wales, within a few years, they have added three Ministers—a Minister for Public Health, a Minister for Labour and Industry, and, I think, a Minister for Agriculture.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Look at the difference in population!

HON. J. MULLAN: We are not talking about population now.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Are the three Ministers extra in number?

HON. J. MULLAN: Only the other day the South Australian Parliament was considering the question of an increased Ministry. The Commonwealth increased the number of Ministers during the war—of course, we admit their duties increased. While I was in the House the Ministry was increased by one, and since then it has been increased by three or four. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have given sufficient data to justify the Government asking Parliament to authorise the passage of this Bill. I, therefore, have pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Bill is one which I intend to oppose. I think the hon. gentleman was very hard put to make a case in support of the provisions of the Bill. He is the honorary Minister, I understand, in the present Cabinet, and naturally, to some extent, interested in the successful passage of the Bill—

HON. J. MULLAN: No more than any other man in the House.

Mr. MACARTNEY: So that I can quite understand he would be anxious to make as good a case as he could. But I do not think that, in all the speeches I have heard in this House in support of the second reading of a Bill, have I heard such a stressed one, such a laboured one, or one so unconvincing. The hon. gentleman referred to the increase in the number of the Commonwealth Cabinet. It is quite true that one or two new Ministers were added to meet the position when the Prime Minister and Sir Joseph Cook were in the old country; and, at a later period, when the Minister for Defence was in the old country. Those men were filling the places of the men who were absent; so that there is absolutely no parallel

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at all. As a matter of fact, we can point to States in Australia in which the number of Ministers is very much less than in Queensland, and, in some instances, the amount of work is by no means less great. In South Australia the Ministry is much less in number than the Queensland Ministry. Of course, in Tasmania there is a lesser one still, as there are much fewer people and less expenditure. Nevertheless, the same formula has to be gone through, and the volume of work is, perhaps, not so disproportioned as the population or the area of the country would suggest. The hon. gentleman referred to a period of twenty-two years which has passed since the Officials in Parliament Act was passed in 1896, but of that period nineteen years were under Liberal administration. (Hear, hear!) And, to show the difficulty he had in making his case, he pointed to the fact that the Cabinet are carrying out the duties of the Public Service Board. Since 1902 they have been doing that. For a period of thirteen years prior to the present Government coming into power, those duties were carried out by Liberal Ministries, without grumbling or asking for an extra Minister, or for extra pay. The hon. gentleman also referred to State enterprises. It is not so very long ago since we passed an Act through this Chamber appointing a Commissioner for State enterprises, which would practically take the whole of the detail work away from the Minister, so that he need only be referred to when it is matter for Ministerial direction or control. That does not furnish much argument for an increase in the Ministry. The hon. gentleman also referred to State children. Why, an officer specially appointed to carry out the duties of that office has existed for years.

Hon. J. MULLAN: What percentage of the cases has he to refer to the Minister?

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the Minister is going to look after every little detail for the sake of the political kudos he would gain, it is not fair that the country should be asked to pay for it. He also referred to the Commissioner for Railways. The Commissioner is the officer in control, and if he insisted upon his rights he could carry out the duties irrespective of the Minister. But, since the incoming of the present Government the Minister has interfered in the details, and, as a result, loaded himself with a great deal more work than is actually necessary or for the benefit of the State. I think the present Minister for Lands and the present Minister for Railways—if they only told us what they really felt—would tell us that they are probably rather sorry that they dived as deeply into the Railway Department as they have done. There is no case for the increased number of Ministers on that ground. The Commissioner is vested with powers, and I do not think any advantage is to be gained by undue interference by Ministers with the powers of the Commissioner. In the same way, the hon. member in charge of the Bill referred to the increase in the workers' dwellings. A Bill was passed vesting the whole of the power in the Commissioner of the Savings Bank, Mr. Fowles, and he is probably the greatest autocrat in the Government's service. Where does the responsibility of the Minister come in there?

Hon. J. MULLAN: Do you say the Minister has no responsibility?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that furnishes no argument. Again, the hon. gentleman

[*Mr. Macartney.*]

referred to land tax and income tax. The administration of those Acts were supposed to be confidential and secret. Every man employed in the department must, or should, take the oath of secrecy, and I hardly realise that the hon. gentleman would suggest that the Minister interferes in the detailed work of those departments. The figures come along in the Budget and the Estimates, but beyond that, probably very few other things call for the aid of the Minister. The hon. member also referred to soldiers' settlement. It is quite true they have added a lot of work to some departments, and, no doubt, the Minister has had to give assistance in connection with that work. I doubt if any Minister on the Treasury bench would object to the time which that work entails, under all the circumstances; but when we come to remember that that department is aided by a committee which is entirely honorary, and which devotes a good deal of time to helping the department, it hardly appeals to me as a reason for appointing an additional paid Minister. In other directions the hon. gentleman made an appeal on equally weak grounds. Economy was the watchword when we were dealing with a short Bill this evening. It affected a high official of the State, and it pleased the crowd who followed the party. I do not wish to say very much about it, but I can hardly compliment the Government on the desire it had in that case, when just now we have a proposal that is going to load the Treasury funds of the State with an additional £1,000 when the State can ill afford it. The hon. member has referred to State enterprises. I am sorry to say that in many cases they are not showing any signs of justification. They are pressing very heavily on the State, and people are suffering now, but not half what they will suffer, in all probability, in the next two or three years. Hon. gentlemen have no compunction whatever in saddling the expenditure roll of the State with an extra £1,000 for an additional Minister, and will probably want to make it ten before long. It is not so long since hon. members, who preached economy in connection with the proposition referred to to-night, have added to their own salary in a most liberal fashion.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You accepted it, anyhow.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill also went to some considerable pains to show how hard worked Ministers are. I would like to refer to one or two instances which suggest to my mind that Ministers are not so hard worked as they say they are. Last session it will be remembered that it was not impossible for the Premier of the time to leave this House and to proceed to the Perth Conference, leaving this House in session, and the administrative work of the department of which he was head went on just the same. It was not impossible for another Minister to accompany the Premier on that occasion, and it was not impossible for the Speaker on that occasion to absent himself from his duties in this House for the purpose of going to the Perth Conference.

Mr. COLLINS: He was only away three weeks.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I make this statement, which is beyond the shadow of doubt, that never in the history of parliamentary government in Queensland have Ministers been travelling about from one part of

Australia to another as members of the present Administration have. The late Premier found it quite easy to visit England on two occasions for periods extending over six months, quite apart from the travelling about in other parts of Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He rendered good service to Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: He won the "Eastern" case.

Mr. MACARTNEY: When the hon. member makes that statement he does not know what he is talking about. All I can say is that if Mr. Ryan had never left Queensland there were men on the other side who could have done the work as effectively and as well as ever he did. (Dissent by Government members.)

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the High Court case when he was away?

Mr. MACARTNEY: It would not have made the slightest difference. As a matter of fact, I do not put the late Premier, Mr. Ryan, on quite the same legal pedestal as hon. members opposite. Any work he has done and any work he did on the other side could have been equally well and better done by men who were actually associated with him on the other side. At any rate, the point on this occasion is that Ministers say they have no time to do the work which the responsibility which falls on them places upon them. I say they have. If they allowed their permanent officers to do those duties which pertain to their office and limit themselves to the duty which they should carry out, there is ample time, and it is unnecessary to saddle the State with the extra expense which this Bill entails. I do not propose to endeavour to take up unnecessary time. I understand that the Government are anxious to hurry through, but I say this is an unfair addition to the expenditure of the State at the present time. It is a "payment to ourselves," so to speak, and it is not one that we can honestly countenance. For those reasons I oppose the Bill.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 23.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
Mr. Brennan	Mr. McCormack
Mr. Carter	Mr. Mullan
Mr. Collins	Mr. O'Sullivan
Mr. Cooper, W.	Mr. Payne
Mr. Coyne	Mr. Riordan
Mr. Daustan	Mr. Ryan, H. J.
Mr. Foley	Mr. Theodore
Mr. Free	Mr. Wellington
Mr. Gillies	Mr. Whitford
Mr. Huxham	Mr. Winstanley
Mr. Larcombe	

Tellers: Mr. Brennan and Mr. W. Cooper.

NOES, 11.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Petrie
Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Bebbington	Mr. Swayne
Mr. Elphinstone	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Grayson	Mr. Vowles
Mr. Macartney	

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Swayne.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Kirwan. No—Mr. Appel.

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Foley, Mundingburra, in the chair.)

Clause 1—"Short title"—put and passed.

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Clause 2—"Amendment of 60 Vic., No. 3"

HON. J. MULLAN: I beg to move the insertion, after line 18, of the words—

"In section 6 the word 'eight' is repealed and the word 'nine' is inserted in lieu thereof."

That is a consequential amendment, and increases the total amount from £8,300 to £9,300.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—"Application of Act"—put and passed.

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

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

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

FAIR RENTS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Smith, Mackay, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3—"Application of Act"—

Mr. MACARTNEY: I notice subclause (2) provides—

"This Act shall apply within the localities from time to time appointed by the Governor in Council and proclaimed in the 'Gazette.'"

In clause 1 it is provided that the Act comes into force on the 1st January, 1920. I do not know what the reason for the postponement of the operation of the Act is, ordinarily it would come into operation on the assent by the Governor. It appears that even when the Act does come into operation under section 1 that until something is done under section 2 the Act may not even then come into operation. I would like to know what the intention of the clause is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The intention is to allow the Act to come into operation by proclamation in any specified area that the Governor in Council may direct. The Act will be applied, first of all, to certain localities, and those localities will be defined by proclamation. The only reason for the delay is that it is now so near the end of the year, and secondly the Act provides that without the consent of the court, after the Act comes into operation, the rents cannot be raised above what they were on the first day of October of this year.

So tenants are well protected by [10 p.m.] that other clause which has a bearing upon the clause mentioned by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It seems to me that an Act of this sort should be one of general application. I do not understand why the power to declare it only in specific localities should be taken. If this Act is going to be good for anybody who holds a lease or a tenancy, it is going to be good for everybody.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is the intention and the spirit of the Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That may be its intention and spirit. There is power here taken by the Governor in Council to withhold the application of it in certain localities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The idea is to apply it in certain localities as soon as the Act comes into operation, and then to extend it.

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Mr. MACARTNEY: The effect of this is that the Act does not come into operation until the localities are appointed. Do I understand that the Government are not going to apply it to all localities in the State? Is it not to be of general application?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, but not all at the one time.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Well, what is the reason for that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: To get the machinery moving. It will apply to certain specified localities in the first place until the machinery is moving and tested, and then it will be extended.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You said on the second reading there was no machinery.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I said nothing of the kind. I could not have said anything so ridiculous. I said there would be no expensive machinery—an entirely different thing.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It only occurs to me that this provision puts it in the power of the Government either to delay the application of the Act altogether or to withhold its application in certain areas. I do not think that is a power which the Government ought to take. If this Bill is good for one lessee, it ought to be good for everyone, no matter where the place is. I do not see the necessity for any delay. I take it the ordinary courts of the State will be used to deal with the matter wherever a case arises, whether it is at Normanton, in Brisbane, or in the most remote Western town. If the Minister thinks the Act cannot be brought into operation all over the State at the same time, I think it is a fair thing to announce that fact, and show the reasons which will prevent its coming into operation, so that all who run may read and understand what is behind it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no intention to give the Act a limited scope of operation. It is intended to apply it generally. As the policy in connection with our State butchery and other enterprises is to commence them in certain localities and extend them, so it is proposed with this measure to commence in certain localities and extend the measure, just as circumstances render such favourable, to the whole of the State. Certainly there is no intention to delay the operation of the Act after it comes into force. I give the leader of the Opposition a distinct and definite assurance on those two points.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not see why there should be such a principle in the Bill as this.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you aware there exists in the New South Wales Act exactly the same principle?

Mr. VOWLES: If I pointed out something in a New South Wales Act which did not suit the hon. gentleman's book he would say we ought to lead the way. We know that in every district police magistrates and courts are established. If a lessor or a lessee wants to have a fair rental proclaimed in a locality, he should have the power to do it under the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The proclamation might cover the whole State.

Mr. VOWLES: Why should it not? Why not make it of universal application? I

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know of plenty cases where landlords will get considerably more rent than they are getting now. I am one of those. I have suddenly discovered I have been getting too little.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, you cannot increase it without the consent of the court.

Mr. VOWLES: I can, with the consent of the court, because I have the power. A lessor or a lessee has the right to go before the court to have the rent determined. Why should not that be done right away? You would then have established what the rent of a four, five, or six roomed house is in a certain locality, and you would know that that is the rent which is to be charged. I see no object in delaying the operation of this measure in the way which has been suggested.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We will give it the broadest application as quickly as possible.

Mr. VOWLES: The broadest application the hon. gentleman can give it is to make it a universal application, and leave it to the public to decide whether it shall come before the court. It should not be left to the Governor in Council to say it shall be enforced in one district and not in another.

Clause 3 put and passed.

On clause 4—“*Constitution of Courts*”—

Mr. MACARTNEY: Under this clause a special provision appears:

“Each court shall consist of a police magistrate, who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council.

“Such courts shall sit at such times and places as the Governor in Council shall direct.

“The Governor in Council shall appoint a registrar of each court, and such other officers as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Act.”

It appears, from the construction of this clause, that a complete set of new officers is going to be appointed to carry out the objects of this Act. I ask: Is there any necessity for it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman is quite wrong. It is not proposed to appoint a set of new officers.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I only ask the hon. gentleman to look at the wording of his own Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, I have read the wording carefully.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If there were a provision that the ordinary courts of petty sessions, under the provisions of the Justices Act, would carry out all inquiries and proceedings required under the provisions of this measure, I could understand it; it would be quite clear that these things were going to be decided by the courts which already are in existence, and perhaps further officials would not be necessary. But the very language of this and every clause goes to show these appointments are to be new ones. I can realise that a gentleman who already is a police magistrate will be appointed and made a fair rents court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: And a clerk of petty sessions as registrar.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It does not say anything about the clerk of petty sessions. It simply says the Governor in Council shall appoint a registrar of the court. It appears to me that we are multiplying the Public Service of this State to such an extent that the pay roll is getting beyond the means of the Treasury. When we are passing a measure of this sort we ought to understand what is proposed to be done, and it ought to be made clear what the expense is going to be in connection with the administration of the Act. As far as I can see, we have had no intimation on that point. But the language is there, and it is clear that those extra officers can be appointed. If that is not the intention of the Government, I say the wording of the Bill might very well have been different. At any rate, we are entitled to an announcement from the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Bill in this respect follows largely the New South Wales Act. The language of the New South Wales Act, of course, is similar, but some of the principles of the Bill are entirely different. There are important differences, but in the matter of routine work the clauses of this measure are similar to the sections of the New South Wales Act. I have said previously that the expenses connected with the administration of that Act for two and a-half years were only £1,690, and that included the salary of police magistrates, who would have had to be appointed in any case, so that the cost of its administration was comparatively trifling. And so it will be in Queensland. The police magistrates who are already appointed will be appointed under this Act, and the registrar will probably be a clerk of petty sessions. The officers will probably all be men already in the Department. I can assure the leader of the Opposition that it is not the intention of the Government to open up any further positions or go in for unnecessary expense. The administration of the Act will be trifling.

Question put and passed.

Clause 5—"Application to determine rent"—

Mr. MACARTNEY: I notice that the clause makes a provision which, in the light of experience, is not wise. I cannot understand why the Government should make such a provision that the party in the court may be represented by his duly appointed agent, unless it is the desire of the Government to create a new class of agents. The person whose interests are affected has the right to have somebody to represent him if he chooses to pay for it. Some of the smartest business men in the country are at a loss before a police magistrate or in handling witnesses, and surely in their own interests they should have the right to employ a legal man!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: So they can if both parties agree.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think it should be the right of every man. I cannot see any difference between counsel, or a solicitor, and a man who has obtained some reputation as an agent. It is very much the same thing, and the agent has to be paid just the same. I say that it is a retrograde step to put a provision of this sort in a Bill. Not only the lessor's interests are involved, but also those of the man who lent his money, and it does not follow that a man who lends his money on a small house is a big capitalist, although he may be called a capitalist. He

many not even be resident in the town or in the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He can send in a written declaration.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member does not understand the conduct of court cases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know the experience in New South Wales. It has been three years in operation there, and works smoothly. I have got the reports up.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member says he has the reports up, and naturally they conform with the desire of the persons who frame them, but they are no guide to us. The ordinary condition of things suggests to us what may be necessary in the conduct of cases in court. I know that it is not much use talking to the hon. member or those behind him, but I say it is a fair thing to the people involved that they should be allowed to engage legal men.

Mr. VOWLES: I desire to support the remarks of the leader of the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Another interested party. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: I do not speak from the personal point of view, because the Bill makes provisions that no costs shall be allowed, and so the man who employs a solicitor does so at his own expense. A professional man does not depend on going into court on a minor matter such as this, and the chances are that the client is going to get either an honest lawyer or an unscrupulous agent. There seems to be a feeling on the part of hon. members opposite that they are treading on the corns of the legal profession, but this is such a small, insignificant matter that no professional man would look to such a class of case except at the request of a person who particularly required his assistance because he was not competent to do what was necessary himself. Subclause (8) said—

"The practice upon such hearing shall, in respect of the examination and cross-examination of witnesses and the right of addressing the court upon the case in reply or otherwise, be as nearly as possible in accordance with that of the Supreme Court upon the trial of an action at law."

The Minister made reference to the fact that he might supply a declaration, but if the other party required to cross-examine that witness he had to be produced, and that meant that you had to go through the process of cross-examination. When you were determining values for the first time in a new locality a certain amount of experience was required in putting before the court the necessary evidence, both in the interests of the court and the parties. I say that you want legal assistance in these cases. A layman cannot do it.

Mr. WHITFORD: The police magistrate is there to see justice done.

Mr. VOWLES: He is there to decide according to the evidence, and the only way you can place that before the police magistrate is by cross-examination. The person who wants to bolster up his case will come into court with a lot of evidence that wants sifting. That applies to the other side too, and it is only when both are sifted that the magistrate will be able to decide the point. In Dalby they have a police magistrate that

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comes all the way from Toowoomba, and he knows nothing about local conditions. He can only get that by evidence, and unless it is properly put before him he cannot easily arrive at a correct decision.

Mr. WHITFORD: Suppose there is only one solicitor in the district, and one party has to pay £10 or £20 to bring him along.

Mr. VOWLES: There are special cases where people want protection from themselves. I have clients whom you cannot get into the witness-box or a courthouse—nervous persons, old women who are absolutely dependent on their solicitors. If we are not going to use a recognised profession, we are going to create a subbranch which is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring, and, as a rule, they would be disreputable persons who are not depending on the money they get as fees, but who are going to work themselves into the confidence of people with a view to taking them down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is not intended to cast any reflection on the legal profession, and if both parties agree, legal men may be called in. The exclusion of legal men under the Workers' Compensation Act has worked absolutely satisfactorily. We know how in the old days old women were robbed by the legal profession. The hon. member for Dalby himself was one of the men who stood up in this House and pointed out the scandalous instances of robbery which took place.

Mr. VOWLES: I never said anything about robbery.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was improper on the part of the insurance companies forcing people into court when they did not have any money. The Workers' Compensation Act has worked well. The clients now get more than they got previously, and there has been no injustice to the employer. This Bill follows the New South Wales Act, which is administered by an anti-Labour Government. If the desire of the leader of the Opposition and deputy leader were agreed to, then the average worker would be shut out of this Act altogether, because the landlord would engage costly counsel and the worker would be at a great disadvantage.

Clause 5 put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 13, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 14—“Notice of termination of tenancy”—

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to point out that this clause is unreasonable. You cannot clear an undesirable tenant out in less than twenty-eight days. If an undesirable woman gets into a house, she is going to ruin the rental value of that house, because she cannot be removed under twenty-eight days. Under the law as it stands to-day, the landlord can give notice to quit under the Summary Ejectment Act, and the police magistrate has discretionary power in section 2. It is wrong that the landlord should be placed in such a position that he has got no remedy. In Brisbane women of the class I mention get into good localities, and they are there some time before they are known, but the landlord cannot remove them under twenty-eight days.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Undesirable persons can be dealt with under the Health Act.

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Mr. VOWLES: This Bill reads, “Notwithstanding the provisions contained in any other Act.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If we do not give effective protection in this way, then an unscrupulous landlord can victimise his tenant by refusing him the power of prosecuting a claim in the court. You must give the prospective applicants and applicants a reasonable degree of security, otherwise they will not go near the court at all.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It does not seem to me that this Act is framed on lines fair to everybody. The lessor is liable to a considerable penalty, but the lessee is subject to no penalty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You can recover under another Act.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No; it is unfair in that particular. A weekly tenancy is translated into a four-weekly tenancy under this Act. Under this clause the landlord must give four weeks' notice, but the tenant need only give one week's notice if in accord with the agreement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If he does not pay his rent he can be removed.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman said that undesirable persons could be dealt with under the Health Act, but, notwithstanding what the hon. gentleman says, I do not think they can. I take it that the hon. gentleman is opposed to amending the clause in such a way as to protect cases of that sort. The Minister ought to postpone the clause or suggest that the Bill be recommitted later on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no necessity for it.

Clauses 14 to 21, both inclusive, put and passed.

[10.30 p.m.]

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment to the House.

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

POPULAR INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill with amendments.

The consideration of the Council's amendments in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

STOCK FOODS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL, No. 2.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council as follows:—

“Mr. Speaker,—

“The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly, of date 31st October, relative to the Stock Foods Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“Insist on their amendment in clause 3, line 17, because (1) otherwise the clause

is not clear, and (2) it is preferable that the meaning of 'stock food' should be defined by the Act and not be left to the regulations; and

"Do not insist on their other amendments in the Bill to which the Legislative Assembly have disagreed.

"W. HAMILTON,
"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,
"Brisbane, 4th November, 1919."

The consideration in Committee of the Council's message was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL, No. 2.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council as follows:—

"Mr. Speaker,—

"The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly, of date 31st October, relative to the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Insist on the insertion of new clause to follow clause 1 because—(a) The lists published in the 'Gazette' seldom reach the eyes of the very depositors in whose interest they are ostensibly published; (b) the expense, in comparison with the possible advantage to many depositors, would be very small. The methods suggested by the Legislative Council would lead to considerable reduction in the lists, and would therefore soon mean less expense than at present; (c) it is unjust that the Government should refuse to many small depositors in the Government Savings Bank the only opportunity many of them would have of recovering what money is due to them as depositors; (d) the imputing by the Government of general fraud is undeserved by addressees of notices, and is a serious reflection on the ability and discernment of Savings Bank officials; (e) the refusal of the Government to accept the amendment of the Legislative Council in the interests of the small savings of workers who can ill-afford, in these days of unemployment and high cost of living, to be denied the money that is theirs by right; and

"Insist on their amendment to the title.

"W. HAMILTON,
"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,
"Brisbane, 4th November, 1919."

The consideration in Committee of the Council's message was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the Supply Bill, to be followed by the Committee stage of the Fair Rents Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.