

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY 1920

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY, 1920.

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

QUESTIONS.

CHAFF FOR TOWNSVILLE BY S.S. "JUNEE."

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to a letter received at a recent meeting of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce stating that owing to action taken by the State Government in connection with the relief of the s.s. 'Junee,' oaten chaff carried by her cost purchasers £17 per ton instead of a little over £10 10s.?"

"2. If such is the case, is it in accord with the Government's declared policy to keep down, as far as possible, the cost of fodder to stockowners?"

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

"1 and 2. I have seen in a newspaper what purports to be the summary of a letter to the Townsville Chamber of Commerce from Messrs. Samuel Allen and Sons, which contains statements at variance with fact. It has been ascertained that the State Produce Agency sold chaff to all the principal produce merchants in Townsville at prices much below the £17 per ton alleged in the summary in question, the highest amount charged being £15 per ton f.o.b. Brisbane for two consignments. At present, owners of starving stock are being supplied with chaff by the State Produce Agency at cost price—namely, £13 5s. on rail, Brisbane."

VISIT OF GENERAL BIRDWOOD TO MACKAY.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. In connection with the approaching visit of General Birdwood to Queensland, will he use his influence to have Mackay included amongst the coastal towns at which the general will call?"

"2. If so, has his attention been directed to a statement recently appearing in the Press to the effect that a slight alteration in the general's mode of transit from Rockhampton to Mackay would enable the visit to be made without interfering with his subsequent itinerary?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 and 2. The hon. member for Mackay, Mr. W. Forgan Smith, approached me on this matter about a fortnight ago, and was referred by me to the Military Commandant of this State, who, I understand, has undertaken to make representations to the Commonwealth authorities to have Mackay included in General Birdwood's tour."

NORTH QUAY-TOOWONG CREEK SEWERAGE.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Is the sewer to be constructed by his department between the chainages at

North Quay and Toowong Creek a portion of the Brisbane sewerage scheme now being carried out by the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board?"

"2. If not, for what purpose is it necessary; and, if necessary, why was it omitted from the plans of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board?"

"3. From what source will its cost be defrayed?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) replied—

"1 and 2. The sewer referred to is necessary and was included in the plans for the sewerage scheme of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. The construction order for such sewer having been issued, its construction will be undertaken by the board."

"3. From the vote for 'Loans to local bodies.'"

ADVANCES TO METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BOARD.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What is the total amount of loan money advanced by the Treasury to the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board up to 31st December, 1919, for sewerage purposes, excluding capitalised interest?"

"2. What is the average rate of interest charged for such loans?"

"3. What is the amount of interest—(a) due; (b) capitalised up to 31st December last?"

"4. What additional loan money does he estimate will be necessary to finish the work?"

"5. When does he consider that the sewerage system will be revenue-producing?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. £923,165.

"2. £655,024 at 4 per cent. per annum; £273,141 at 5½ per cent. per annum.

"3. (a) Nil; (b) £92,388.

"4. The amount cannot be stated at present.

"5. In about eighteen months."

FEEES PAID TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

ORDER FOR PRINTING RETURN.

HON. J. MULLAN (*Flinders*): I desire to move a motion without notice.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be allowed to move a motion without notice?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. MULLAN: I beg to move—

"That the return of fees paid to barristers and solicitors, laid on the table on the 20th January, be printed."

Question put and passed.

LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I desire to notify the House that at a meeting of the Opposition party—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Opposition caucus!

Mr. VOWLES: At a meeting of the Opposition party held this morning the resignation was received of Mr. Edward Henry Macartney, member for Toowong, as leader; and, on his resignation being accepted, I was appointed leader of the Opposition, and the Hon. Walter Henry Barnes, member for Bulimba, was appointed deputy leader.

The PREMIER: Following on the announcement of the hon. member, it is fitting that I should congratulate him on his appointment, and the hon. member for Bulimba on his elevation to the deputy leadership. I desire to say that I naturally expect that the hon. member will assist in the expeditious discharge of business in the House in the same way as his predecessor has done during the session whilst acting as leader of the Opposition, and I, in turn, assure him of any assistance that I can give him in carrying out the strenuous duties of his office.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—That £4,505 be granted for "Chief Office."

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I think that the figures which have been supplied as the probable requirements of the Home Secretary's Department during the coming year call for a certain amount of comment and consideration. In the first place, a summary of the Estimates shows that the total sum which the Home Secretary calculates will be required amounts to £1,276,000, or an increase on the vote of the previous year of £236,000. That is a very considerable increase indeed, more especially, perhaps, when we come to consider that during last year a very considerable outlay was necessary owing to the outbreak of the influenza epidemic, which we hope will not be required again this year. What I would like to draw attention to is that out of the total there is an aggregate of £744,000 for relief purposes and hospital purposes throughout the State. That is an enormous amount of money in a young country like Queensland to devote to those objects, and I think that if the Home Secretary endeavoured to devise some method by which, whilst taking every precaution and care to see that all cases of distress were efficiently and properly attended to and that the hospitals did not suffer, nevertheless only necessary expenditure was incurred, surely in some directions economies might be effected. We find that during the last twelve months the vote for relief has grown from £8,900 to £41,000, an increase of over £32,000. I do not think that reflects any great credit on our State. I should think that it ought to suggest to the Home Secretary that there is surely some direction in which leakages are occurring and where payments probably are being made that should not be made. I do not say that such is the

case, but I certainly think that the figures before us require careful investigation in order to see if in some direction some of that money may not be saved. Then, again, we find an increase in the vote for aboriginals of £8,000. I do not understand in what direction that increase is required. We are told year after year that the aboriginals are decreasing in number in the State; and, if that is so, I do not altogether see why an extra £8,000 is required. At the same time, I believe that everything possible should be done to see that the aboriginals are in no way imposed upon by anyone, and that everything possible is done for their comfort and preservation.

Then, there is an increase of £6,000 in connection with the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. It is a very serious commentary on the state of affairs which exists in Queensland to-day to think that so much money is put down in these particular directions. It should cause the Home Secretary and his Government to ask themselves the question, "Why is it that, in a State like Queensland, which we claim to be the finest in the Commonwealth, there is such an enormous increase in the number of people who are in indigent circumstances and unable to provide for themselves?" Possibly, to a great extent, a great deal of it has been caused by want of employment, because the legislation which has been passed and that which it is proposed to introduce is having the effect of scaring off those who, in the past, have done their best to find employment to develop the State. I do not intend to go into all the details in connection with this department. There is an increased expenditure in the vote for State children of £30,000 per annum, which is regrettable. While I would not allow the State children, or the poor, to suffer in any way, still, the total increase in the vote, which includes aboriginals, Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, hospitals, Peel Island Lazaret, and other items, of £136,000, is altogether too much. The present Home Secretary has not been in charge of the department very long, and I hope he will go carefully into these Estimates to see if it is not possible, while maintaining their efficiency and carrying out their proper functions, to effect some economies in the department during the coming year.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): Speaking generally to this Estimate, I am quite sure we must be struck by the huge field which the activities of this department cover at the present time. I am quite certain that a large amount of labour and consideration has been given by the Minister and his officers to their duties. The more we study these Estimates, the bigger reason do we find for Mr. Huxham, the late holder of the office of Home Secretary, seeking a transfer to a position in which there are quieter waters. This vote gives us considerable food for reflection, because it is safe to assume that the other departments of the Government, and the administration of the Government generally, might be looked upon as being the cause, and what we see in the department now under review really shows the effect of that legislation and administration. I purpose dealing with six of the items which appear in the Estimates to illustrate my point. At the outset, I might refer to Dunwich as the home of those who have given up the struggle in despair, and we find that that Estimate has been increased by £6,000.

Mr. Elphinstone.]

I suppose we can consider the hospitals as a kind of repair shop for those whose bodily health has been affected by the struggle for existence. We find that the hospital vote is increased by 12½ per cent., or £30,000. Then we pass on to the Insane Asylum, which one can consider as the enforced retreat of those who have become mentally unbalanced through the hopeless struggle. The Insane Asylum vote has increased by £21,000, or 21 per cent. I suppose we might look on the vote for outdoor relief as a kind of barometer of the country's prosperity, and we find that that barometer requires the expenditure of an additional £33,000, or an increase of 360 per cent., on last year's vote. Then we pass on to the police, which, I suppose, is a fair indication of the lawlessness and despair which exist in our midst. This vote has increased by £66,000, or 22 per cent. Then the "State children" vote, which, I suppose, is an indication of how parents are unable to face their responsibilities, is increased by £30,000, or no less than 22 per cent. These six important headings, which show the effect of the administration of this Government and the legislation which it has introduced, give rather depressing food for reflection.

I want to briefly refer to the question of unemployment, and the views which the present Minister and the Premier have expressed in this regard. The present Home Secretary is reported to have made to the unemployed, at a deputation regarding the distribution of relief, the following statement:—

"He accused them of bringing about unemployment by preaching revolutionary doctrines which caused the employers to shut up their purse strings."

That is very true. That is precisely what is happening. There are many employers of labour in Queensland who have shut up their purse strings because of the revolutionary doctrines which are being taught. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman who made use of this utterance who it is that has fanned the flames of revolutionary doctrines? Who has been responsible for the sowing of this seed which is bringing forth the fruit which we see to-day? I am just reading an extract from the "Standard," I am not quite sure of the date, but it is easy to ascertain that, and this is the remark which it uses regarding the Premier. It states—

"Yesterday no more vociferous, louder sounding agitator was rushing pell-mell through the country sowing discontent on all sides."

That was referring to the present occupant of the Premier's position. We know quite well what a very different man he is to-day; what a very much more chastened man he is. We know that responsibility has made him almost like the hon. member for Bowen—a Conservative. (Government laughter.) The point is, that it is these gentlemen, although they have changed their views owing to the responsibility which has been cast upon them, who are to blame for the extreme doctrines and extreme actions which the Home Secretary has occasionally complained of. The Premier, on 10th January, made use of these remarks, if he is correctly reported in the Press. He said—

"Most of those out of work have previously been employed by private enterprise—they had not been Government employees—and yet, because private enterprise was having a slack time, they

expected the Government to find employment for the men who were displaced for the time being."

The question I want to ask is: Who is responsible for private enterprise having a slack time, which I am glad to see the Premier is now prepared to admit? We all know that private enterprise is having a slack time. Who are the unemployed to look to for the relief which they would ordinarily get from the private employer, if it is not to the Government, which has set itself up in trade opposition to private employers? We know that the proclaimed policy of this Government is to compete with private employers, and to cut them out and extinguish them. Not only do they wish to do it by the ordinary means of trade, but they take advantage of all the extraordinary and unfair means, such as evading taxation and evading responsibilities which the private employer has to face, and even go so far as to claim the benefit of the preferential creditor in any solvent estates. These are all matters which are causing private employers to have such a slack time; but it seems to me the Premier should not try to call attention to that fact to the deputations which wait on him for employment, because he and his Ministers are the very persons who have been the cause of this slack time—who have actually created this unemployment amongst those who are looking to the Government for relief; and instead of treating these men in an unsympathetic way, it seems to me, to be consistent, the Premier and his party should do all they possibly can to assist these men. This unemployment is the actual effect of the legislation which has been introduced, and, therefore, I say, in dealing with the Estimates of this department, one can see the result of the administration and legislation which this Government has introduced.

The HOME SECRETARY: In Sydney they are giving away more in relief in one week than we give away in a month.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Two wrongs do not make a right. We are dealing with the conditions in Queensland as we find them; we are dealing with the Home Secretary and his work and showing what has occasioned the state of affairs which we find existing at the present moment. It is, I admit, a matter of some satisfaction to see that these gentlemen who are in charge of affairs to-day are beginning to see that the doctrines preached by them in days gone by—and not so many days ago, either—are beginning to show adversely in the figures of the departments over which they have control. I want to briefly touch on a matter which I have had occasion to ask questions about during the present session. My object in referring to it is not that I want to discourage or disparage in any way the effort which was made by the Co-operative Wicker Factory to establish a business for themselves and become their own employers. In my judgment one of the most promising signs in this country at the present moment is the effort and inclination on the part of employees to endeavour to establish businesses of their own on co-operative and other lines. It is an indication which should receive our thorough support. Some few months ago a section of men engaged in wicker work set out to form amongst themselves a co-operative wicker factory, and, with the intention of exercising a little self-sacrifice at the outset, I understand they were

[Mr. Elphinstone.]

prepared to forego a certain proportion of their wages in order to provide a little working capital with which to conduct their business. A very excellent spirit indeed. But, unfortunately, they set out by making the one mistake which so many people do make when they start out to establish a business, to endeavour to sell their articles at too low a price. Competition was such that they felt they were called upon to make a very big cut off the price of the articles which they set out to manufacture. Well, they had trouble, because they were endeavouring to sell those goods at too low a price, and I believe they got into some little financial trouble, which, apparently, they were able to steer out of, which I am sure we are very glad to see. The next point is this: They went to our Blind Institution and asked to be supplied with raw material to permit of their working their business. There is no reason in the world why the Blind Institution should not supply them with raw material at reasonable prices such as they would supply to anyone else. But the position is this: That the Blind Institution has practically been feeding this co-operative wicker factory without receiving any payment in return, and we find that from January, 1919, until, I suppose, the present moment, according to the last answer I got from the Home Secretary, this Blind Institution has to receive from this co-operative wicker factory no less a sum than £350 for raw material supplied. My point in calling attention to this matter is this: That I very much question if the Blind Institution is correct in supplying raw material without making provision for payment for the materials which they supply, and, secondly, I very much question if it is wise to endeavour to encourage a move of this description to perpetuate what they have already found out to be a mistake, and I think the Home Secretary and his department would be well advised if they pointed out to this co-operative wicker factory that, whereas their principles are quite sound and should be encouraged, yet the methods upon which they are conducting their business are not conducive to their success, nor to the success of the Blind Institution, which has been supplying them with their raw materials. The last answer which I got from the Home Secretary was that the responsibility for the money had been undertaken by the Federal Furnishing Trade Society, Queensland Branch, and that the money—£349 3s. 2d.—was to be paid in February. I have no doubt that the Home Secretary will see that the money is paid, but I do think it would be advantageous to the men themselves, and certainly of benefit to the department, if the Home Secretary took upon himself to advise these men as to the mistakes they have made in the past, so that they could go forward with their enterprise without adopting unbusinesslike lines, as disclosed by the figures before us. Any other comments I have to make I will reserve until later.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I desire to reply to the remarks passed by the hon. member for Oxley with regard to the unemployed. Some time ago the hon. member referred in the House to the fact that this Government had spent millions more than any previous Government and had gone headlong in loan expenditure in order to provide work for men who were not entitled to work, and he comes here to-day and tells us that

the cause of unemployment is that this Government is interfering with the affairs of the country. If he comes to Toowoomba and makes investigation amongst the unemployed there, he will find that some of those men in Toowoomba are men who have been dismissed from stations in the West because the employers refused to pay the increased wages under the new award. We know very well that the increased price of wool which they are receiving does not warrant the dismissal of any employees from stations. At the present time the station-owners are employing old-age pensioners and children to do the work, although these people are making millions out of the profits on wool. While hon. members on the other side know these facts, they do not state them, and for this reason I thought it necessary to mention as one reason a result which is swelling the numbers of the unemployed.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): Reference is made on page 6 of the report to a subject which I think is one that is likely to be overlooked by this Committee, and I might say by this Parliament—that is, the question of venereal disease. I know it is not a very nice subject to discuss in a House like this, and yet it must be admitted that it is a matter of the greatest concern to the State of Queensland, and, I might say, to Australia generally. I quite well remember that not very long ago a statement was made by a responsible person in the Minister's room at a dinner which was given to him and others, to the effect—I speak under correction—that a large number of persons in Australia, I think it was one in eight, were said to be affected with venereal disease.

Mr. KIRWAN: As high a proportion as that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: As high a proportion as that. The fact remains that venereal disease is one of those things which we, as a people, have a right to take in hand and see if we cannot combat. This

particular person, who was a [4 p.m.] member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, made the statement deliberately, and I have no hesitation in repeating it here this afternoon—that there are many people who had been afflicted with this awful disease but who themselves were not in any way responsible for what had taken place. If we know that this cancer is assisting to eat out the very life of Australia in that particular direction, surely it is up to us to take some steps to combat it. I want to ask the Home Secretary if anything is being done in that particular direction in Queensland to combat and meet this terrible evil? I take it it is a matter that is above party; it is a matter that concerns the very life of the community; and the House, as a whole, should not turn a deaf ear to something which is of the utmost importance to the community. I notice by the "Bulletin" the other day exception had been taken in some quarters to the fact that certain legislation which had been introduced and passed in New South Wales had not been put into operation; and Dr. Arthur rose to the occasion and said that he very largely was responsible for the delay in putting that particular law into operation, making the statement that it was of no use to put a law into operation until provision had been made for the large number of patients who

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

were likely to need accommodation. I want to ask the Home Secretary, who is charged with looking after the health of the community in this particular direction, what the State are doing? We are face to face with the fact that there is a growing disease. We know that it can be contracted in so many ways. A person using a towel previously used by an infected person, and who may be perfectly clean himself, may catch the disease. We must not get away from the fact that probably some of the young people in the community are likely, through no fault of their own, to become sufferers of this terrible disease. I am quite certain that the Committee will agree with me that this is the proper time to refer to it. On page 6 of the report to which I have already made reference, dealing with certain people in the North, the statement is made that venereal disease has been reported in the Gulf country, the Peninsula, Torres Strait, and the far West. There is no question that it is one of those things which throughout Australia, and probably throughout the world, is increasing to an alarming extent, and I raise my voice to-day to say that outside party politics it is the duty of the Government to face this matter and see what can be done. Yesterday, I think, the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Weir), by interjection, charged the hon. member for Burnett (Mr. Corsier) with employing half-castes.

Mr. WEIR: I never mentioned it. I did not know he was in the habit of employing half-castes.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I accept the denial of the hon. member; the mistake was mine. It was the hon. member for Burrum who made the statement. First of all, he said coloured people were employed, and then he said half-castes were employed by the hon. member for Burnett. I want to draw attention to the fact that in this very report reference is made to half-castes being employed. As the hon. member interjecting said, a man is not responsible for being a half-caste. It seems to me to be a serious reflection upon us to suggest that a man who happens to be a half-caste should not be entitled to earn his living. I say he is entitled, the same as any other person.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: You are an internationalist, surely.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: On page 7 of this report the following statement is made:—

“The Mosby brothers—a half-caste family—are still working the ‘Yano’ and ‘Nancy’ on the half-share system through a local trading firm, their earnings totaling £1,068 during the year.”

We are told that on the State stations half-castes are employed. Probably they may prove themselves to be very good servants by reason of the fact that they may understand station life. I think it is altogether wrong for any member to get up and cast a reflection on another member—who certainly denied that he had employed half-castes—and to suggest that a person who is practically following station life had committed a crime against the community. It seems to me there is a duty resting upon individuals to see that a man who is willing to work, provided he is paid proper wages—I would draw the line there—is entitled to work. There is another reference in this report in which I am interested, and

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

that is the reference to St. Helena. I can speak only in the highest possible way of what is done for the prisoners at St. Helena. For many years there has been a strong desire on the part of this House to give the man who has made a mistake the opportunity of redeeming himself.

Mr. H. J. RYAN interjected.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knows that the industrial branch was formed long before he ever was heard of or came into this House, or before the present Minister was a member of the House.

Mr. PAYNE: There has been more reform at St. Helena since this Government came into power than ever there was. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It is quite evident that the hon. member is an authority on reform. At any rate, the fact does remain that the initiative in connection with reform was taken not by a Labour Government but by a previous Government. I want to pay testimony to the sympathetic administration of the hon. member for Albert—Hon. J. G. Appel—who at all times was exceedingly sympathetic in his administration as far as St. Helena and Dunwich were concerned. My principal object in mentioning St. Helena this afternoon is to draw attention to the character of the buildings which exist there to-day, and have been existing for some time. It has been pointed out over and over again that the buildings generally are of wooden material, and there is a danger of fire. I want to ask the Home Secretary whether anything is likely to be done in the direction of seeing that a better class of building is erected. I am quite prepared to admit there has been under discussion the question of shifting the prison from St. Helena altogether. I recognise that there are a number of people in the community who say that St. Helena should not be used for the purposes for which it is at present used. I hope that the Home Secretary will take into consideration the criticisms which have been made in this particular direction. Then, I want to speak about one or two other matters. One has probably not so much to do with the Home Secretary as with some other Ministers.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have got a good broad back.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Yes, but the Minister must recognise that this matter may not come under the heading of his department, and, therefore, it may not be wise to discuss it on the present occasion. I wish, however, to speak about the Lazaret. The Lazaret is one of those institutions which have to be provided for an unfortunate section of the community. There are people who realise that they are in the Lazaret for the rest of their lives, and probably very few of the inmates of that institution will come out. I would ask the Home Secretary that every reasonable provision should be made for both white and coloured people who are inmates of the Lazaret. I do not know whether the Home Secretary has visited the Lazaret.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not yet.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Well, I think it is the hon. gentleman's duty to go there. It is not a pleasant duty to perform, but it is one which falls to the lot of the Minister, and I think he should see if adequate provision has been made for people who are particularly anxious to live by themselves. Some

provision has been made for certain people in that direction, but it has not been made for others. I trust that the Minister will see that sympathy is extended to those unfortunate people who are compelled to reside in the Lazaret, and that he will see that every reasonable demand made by them shall be acceded to. I shall be very pleased if the Home Secretary will, in replying to-day, say that he will be prepared himself to go down and look into these things, and that if he finds that complaints of a reasonable nature are made, he will have them rectified.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will do that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am much obliged to the hon. gentleman for that promise.

With regard to outdoor relief, I notice that in 1918-19 the sum of £3,925 was provided, and that the requirements for 1919-20 are £41,580. Those figures point to the fact that there must be a screw loose somewhere. The hon. member for Toowoomba put down the need for Government relief to the dry conditions in the West—or rather what he said was that the increased wages had the effect of driving people from country stations into the cities.

Mr. BRENNAN: And old-age pensioners and boys taking their place.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not think that is the explanation. The real reason why so much has to be provided for outdoor relief is that the Government, by their action, have prevented private enterprise being carried on as it should be, with the result that fewer people are being employed than there were employed formerly. The demands made upon the Government are, therefore, increasing from day to day, and will continue to increase. Members on this side of the House have again and again warned the Government that the policy that they are pursuing is a policy which is going to damage the Government and throw upon them the onus of solving the unemployed problem.

Mr. COLLINS: They might call you a problem.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think the hon. member for Bowen, who is a recent convert, and as some hon. member has said is becoming a Conservative, is setting his sail according to the needs of the far North. However, this is not a matter which the Committee can laugh away. The fact remains that the avenues of employment in Queensland are being closed by reason of the action of the Government. Later on I shall be able to show that the expenditure of the Government has run in the direction, not of building railways and providing employment—I am referring to the expenditure of loan money—but in quite other channels. It has been said by members of the Government that the private individual is not doing his bit to solve the unemployed problem. The fact is that the private individual in the community is hit so hard by the Government that he cannot possibly do his bit, and so the Government are asked to provide relief for the unemployed. I should like to ask the Minister how this outdoor relief is being given now? I can remember that when the present Government came into power the relief at one period was being dispensed through the Trades Hall, and a man who had not the proper brand on him could not get relief. He might have a starving wife and

a number of starving kiddies, but unless he was prepared to go to the Trades Hall, he could not get relief. What is the position to-day with regard to outdoor relief? Is it given through the Trades Hall or through the police in the ordinary channel? When this Government came into office placards were exhibited all round telling the people to vote for so-and-so and that if they did they would get a reduction in prices. But the result of returning the present party to power has been the very opposite. The Auditor-General has drawn attention in his report to the very big expenditure on relief, and again I would ask the Home Secretary, how that relief is dispensed to-day? Has a man to bear a particular brand in order to get relief? Supposing he has not a particular brand on him, does he get relief? Has he got to have his hair parted in a certain direction before he can get relief?

Mr. WEIR: A green ribbon will do. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: If he has curly hair, he does not get anything at all.

HON. W. H. BARNES: With regard to the interjection of the hon. member for Brisbane, I am sure the hon. member will pardon me if I am personal, but I would point out that he has got curly hair, and, judging by his generally good condition, he is not likely to want relief, so I can quite understand his saying that a person with curly hair will not get relief.

Before I sit down, there is another matter to which I wish to make reference, and that is in connection with the steamer "Otter." I can remember the "Otter" under the command of Captain Junner, who was a very popular captain, and I should like to ask whether the "Otter" is likely to be used to carry relief supplies to the North? It will at the same time be interesting if the Minister will give us some information in connection with the unfortunate disaster which befel the "Llewellyn." I would like to know if the "Otter" was in the neighbourhood on the very night that it is supposed the "Llewellyn" foundered. I know that the fate of the "Llewellyn" was the subject-matter of an inquiry, and I would like to say that when the "Llewellyn" was acting as pilot boat at Cape Moreton, she went out to bring in a vessel, when she shipped a heavy sea and nearly foundered. I think there are official papers on that subject to be found in the Treasury Department.

The HOME SECRETARY: Aren't you bringing the matter up on the wrong Estimate?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. The "Llewellyn" was employed by the Home Department when she took that fatal trip, and I am trying to connect that with something that happened while she was in the service of the Treasury Department.

The HOME SECRETARY: She was not employed by the Home Department.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Well, by the Chief Secretary's Department. Can the hon. gentleman inform the Committee whether the "Otter" was not somewhere in the vicinity on the night when the "Llewellyn" is supposed to have foundered, and that she had to seek shelter to avoid the heavy seas which were running? I am perfectly certain that the "Llewellyn" was entirely unfitted for the work she was called upon to undertake.

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

The HOME SECRETARY: I just want to reply to one or two matters that have been raised before the debate goes any further. The first matter I am going to deal with, and probably the most important, because there has been little, if any, criticism of the department—that is criticism that can be sustained—is the matter of the release of prisoners. The leader of the Opposition—he was deputy leader yesterday—made some rambling statements with regard to the release of prisoners, and he accused this Government of catering for thieves, rogues, and scoundrels. In fact, he accused the Executive of being criminals, and the Governor also, who has to sign Executive minutes releasing prisoners. I find on inquiry that the late Government, of whom the hon. gentleman was a supporter, released more prisoners and granted more remissions of sentence in their last four years of office than this Government. I have a summary showing the number of prisoners whose sentences were remitted by the Governor in Council during the years 1909 to 1919. Here are the figures—

Year.	Number of Sentences Remitted.
1909	200
1910	197
1911	318
1912	190
1913	166
1914	163

That is the last year of the Liberal Administration. The figures for the Labour Administration are—

Year.	Number of Sentences Remitted.
1915	177
1916	211
1917	134
1918	109
1919 (up to August) ...	70

The totals for the Liberal Administration in the years mentioned are 1,179, and for the Labour Administration 701.

Mr. VOWLES: There were about 1,200 in that return. There are eight pages.

The HOME SECRETARY: How many years does that cover?

Mr. VOWLES: The whole of your term.

The HOME SECRETARY: These figures are official; the hon. gentleman can verify them if he likes. The late Liberal Administration granted similar remissions of sentence in connection with the coronation to those granted by the present Government in connection with the peace celebrations.

Mr. VOWLES: I challenge those figures as being incorrect, anyhow.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are the figures supplied by the department.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, I guarantee that they are wrong.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is a four years' comparison.

Mr. VOWLES: Five years.

The HOME SECRETARY: A lot has been made with regard to the remissions in connection with the peace celebrations. I just want to say that similar action has been taken for quite a number of years, and that the Labour Government have done nothing different to what has been done by any other Government, and I hope, in the interests

of these unfortunate individuals, that all future Governments will act in precisely the same way. The leader of the Opposition took one page of that return and read out a number of remissions granted by my predecessor, or on his recommendation. I find on inquiry that my predecessor visited St. Helena on a certain day, and, with the Comptroller of Prisons and the Superintendent, heard the different cases, and the result was the remissions that are stated on page 74 of that report. I also find that every previous Home Secretary did likewise. I have not visited St. Helena for that purpose. I have been down there, but just on an inspection visit; but I find on inquiry that the hon. member for Albert, when Home Secretary, acted almost in a similar manner to the late Home Secretary, and so did every previous Home Secretary. So much for the criticism of the hon. gentleman in that connection. I think two months was the longest remission which is mentioned on page 74.

Mr. VOWLES: There is one case in which a man got seven years for "making" a fishing net.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member must remember that almost all those remissions of sentence were made on the advice of the Comptroller of Prisons. The Minister generally acts on the advice of that official where the remission is for one month or two months for extra good conduct or extra labour. This is not a charge against the Government at all. It is really a formal matter. The hon. gentleman yesterday based the whole of his charges on what has been done by practically every Government during the last ten or fifteen years.

Mr. VOWLES: Who recommended the remission in the case of Bodman, who was sentenced at Warwick?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know. Frequently members of the Opposition have approached me with respect to the remission of sentences. Now the member of Parliament who comes to a Minister and urges him to remit one month or two months of a sentence has surely some responsibility as a public man and must accept that [4.30 p.m.] responsibility, just the same as the Minister or the Cabinet. On some occasions I have granted those remissions, and shall continue to do so in spite of the criticism of the Opposition or various members of it.

Now, the hon. member made a point that the Government had allowed men to go free against the judge's report. That is so, and that is true of the previous Government. It has not been done on very many occasions by either Government, but, nevertheless, it is true of all Governments, and there is no real necessity at all of consulting the judge on the matter. The Executive have the power of granting remissions and letting prisoners go free, and the Executive are a body of men who are equally as responsible as any judge of the Supreme Court. Surely men who are elected and have control of the Government of the State are men of responsibility? They are men who are responsible to the people, unlike a man who is appointed for life as a judge and who may unwittingly make mistakes and who does make mistakes. I have received evidence since I have been at the department of an extraordinary mistake with regard to a conviction. Surely the members of the Executive, being responsible

[Hon. W. McCormack.]

to the people, are not answerable to a judge for having remitted the sentence of any person on the grounds of mercy. I hold that we have that power in our Executive and while I am Home Secretary at least, if a sufficiently good case is made for remission and where it would be an act of mercy to make it, I shall have no hesitation in recommending that the act shall be done by the Executive.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: I just want to read here a quotation from "Todd" on "Parliamentary Government," which states that there is no need for the Executive Government to approach the judge for an opinion, and, in fact, such a course is likely to complicate matters and put the judge and the Governor in an awkward position. If the Governor in Council thinks that mercy should be extended, they should take the full responsibility, and there is no need in many cases for an appeal to the judge at all. On page 347, "Todd" says—

"In administering the prerogative of mercy, a Governor in Council does not act as a court of appeal in criminal cases. For though in exercising the Royal prerogative the Governor may remit a sentence, he does not technically reverse it, nor by his action in any way pronounce it wrong. This he could only do after hearing an appeal from the finding of the Court, if there was provision for such an appeal. The act of pardoning a sentenced criminal is one of pure clemency; it is in no respect judicial. . . . But judges should not be required to report beforehand upon every case wherein they have passed sentence, as that would place both the judges and the Governor in an untenable and undesirable position."

I think that proves conclusively that no Executive is going beyond bounds in releasing a prisoner because the judge has reported against the remission or has not been consulted at all.

Since the Labour Government has been in power, I have listened to criticism of the Government's action in regard to prisoners, and I have looked up some cases where Opposition members have been concerned, and whilst it may not be fair to give names—because, for one thing, I do not disagree with what Ministers have done—still it is permissible to give the cases, because the leader of the Opposition has wrongly accused this Government of having acted differently from previous Governments. I have here the papers in connection with the case of a man convicted of arson, a case which I am sure the member for East Toowoomba will remember very well. The judge, Sir Pope Cooper, reported against a remission in this way—

"The maximum penalty for the offence is fourteen years' imprisonment with hard labour. I took as lenient view of the prisoner's position as was consistent with my duty to the community and sentenced him to imprisonment with hard labour for five years. I can see no reason to recommend a remission of any portion of this sentence."

In spite of that report we find the hon. member for Bulimba, as Treasurer, the then Attorney-General (Mr. Blair), and other members of the Cabinet all asking the Home Secretary to remit the sentence. It will be

interesting if I read the letters or some portions of them. This is portion of Mr. Barnes's letter—

"Dear Mr. Appel.—Mrs. ———, of Boundary street, West End, has written me. I thought possibly the better plan would be to enclose her letter herewith.

"I have told her, in replying, that I had again approached you on the subject of her son's release, but further pointed out that I feared very much that it would not be possible for it to be granted just yet, unless the judge who sentenced him made a recommendation."

I want hon. members to note that in view of future developments.

"You will understand that for many reasons I would like to help Mrs. ——— if I could. ———."

He finishes up by saying—

"I trust, as a result of his forced retirement at St. Helena, that he will prove a worthy citizen when he comes out."

All sentiments which I agree with. I find that later on Mr. Blair writes a letter, a very interesting letter, too, in which he says among other things—

"She told me that she had seen you and realises that you are sympathetic; that Tolmie knows her since childhood, and is willing, with Barnes, to assist. She has three children—ten, eight, and four years of age—and has to support them. She understands that Cooper's report is against her; but you are willing to act if the Premier brings the matter up. Could you get Barnes to do so now. She tells me she is some relation by marriage."

Mr. Appel, the Home Secretary, turned down the request, on the judge's recommendation, but later the Cabinet, in spite of the judge's refusal to so recommend, decided to release the man. (Hear, hear!) I am sorry to have to bring that case up. I would not have done so were it not for the attack made by the leader of the Opposition. We must clear ourselves of these loose charges.

Mr. VOWLES: Two wrongs do not make a right.

The HOME SECRETARY: I want to say that I investigated that case, and I believe that the right and proper thing was done. When all the circumstances are taken into consideration, I think the Cabinet were right in disregarding the Chief Justice and letting the man go free. I think he was sufficiently punished. I mention the case to show that the previous Government, of which three members have sat on the Opposition benches during the last week—the hon. member for Bulimba, the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Macartney), and the last Home Secretary (Mr. Appel)—acted similarly to the way in which the present Government have acted in one or two particular cases. And that is not the only case. I have here the papers in connection with a case in which Mr. Thynne made representations to this Government to have a prisoner released, and successful representations, too. I have also a case where the hon. member for Warwick has been interesting himself to get a cattle-stealer released from a sentence in Warwick. It is all very well for hon. members to say they have no responsibility in the matter. Every member who approaches the Minister

Hon. W. McCormack.]

asking for the release of a prisoner must carry a certain amount of responsibility.

Mr. WALKER: They are just as bad as you have been.

The HOME SECRETARY: I can safely say that I have never asked for a prisoner to be released, not that I would not do so. If I did so, I would take the responsibility in this House of saying why I thought that he should be released. I would not come along, if I were in Opposition, and accuse the Government of doing something wrong, and of being a party to a conspiracy of thieves, rogues, and robbers, as was asserted by the deputy leader of the Opposition last night. I am sorry the hon. member for Bulimba was not here when I was dealing with the case he had interested himself in.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What was the remission?

The HOME SECRETARY: The remission of portion of a five years' sentence.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: No. Lay the papers on the table of the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman can see the papers. The remission was made against the judge's recommendation.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not so.

The HOME SECRETARY: I can assure the hon. gentleman that it was. I say that he did right. I say that the members of the Cabinet who persuaded the whole of the Cabinet to grant that remission, even in spite of Sir Pope Cooper's report against the remission, did a fair and reasonable thing; but I am only quoting the case to prove that this Government is not the only Government who has acted against the recommendation of the judge who tried the case. I mentioned the Hon. Mr. Thynne, and the hon. member for Warwick, and there are other members of the Opposition whom I do not care to mention, because they have not criticised the Government on the matter, and are prepared to take the responsibility of having approached the Government for a remission. It just shows that there is nothing in the criticism of the leader of the Opposition. It has been made the subject-matter of criticism every session, and I think it is time that it was shown that we are only acting as previous Governments have acted.

Mr. VOWLES: Why did you not afford that information before?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have only been Home Secretary two or three months, and probably when I have been there longer I will have much more information. I have five or six similar cases, dating back for years, and I am only quoting this particular case because three hon. members now in opposition took identical action in releasing a prisoner against the recommendation of the Chief Justice.

Mr. PAYNE: And did the right thing.

The HOME SECRETARY: And did the right thing. The prisoner mentioned has proved a worthy citizen. I do not think there is any need to go any further with the matter, unless it is brought up again. I hope I have, once for all, cleared away the charges made against my predecessor. The deputy leader of the Opposition last night made some reference to the Home Secretary accepting money for the remission of sentences. I know that he only said that in

reply, probably, to an interjection of mine to get square. All these remissions have taken place during the time of my predecessor, and not during my time.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not make a charge against your predecessor. I did not make any charge against you. I said I would not be surprised.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Murilla referred to the police, and to gambling; and the hon. member for Drayton, in supporting him, said that Queensland was full of thieves and criminals. I am not going to repeat what was said by the hon. member for Bowen last night. He very pertinently answered the hon. member for Drayton immediately the statement had been made by proving that there were less convictions recently than under the Liberal regime. I have frequently, since I have been in the Home Office, instructed the police to see that the section of the community referred to by the hon. member for Murilla as bludgers and gamblers was shifted out of town and kept on the move. The hon. member for Dalby knows, being a lawyer, that there is no power to shift those people out of the lane in Elizabeth street.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not know there was a lane there. (Government laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Murilla stated that the Commissioner of Police said there was no power to shift them. It is on private property, and the courts have decided that "two-up" is a game of skill, and not a game of chance; consequently, it continues.

I want to answer some of the criticisms in connection with "Relief." The hon. member for Oxley set out six votes, and tried to prove that the whole system of Labour Government had failed because there were increases in those votes. He took Dunwich as a case in point. He says that it is the legislation of the present Government that has caused the increase in the cost of administering Dunwich and other institutions. He also mentioned Goodna, and the hospitals. Between 1917-18 the increase in the price of certain commodities, under the head of maintenance, has been remarkable. Of course, according to the hon. member, it was the Labour Government's legislation that caused the increase in, say, meat, of 10 per cent. Between 1917-18 and 1918-19 the increase in groceries was 12.5 per cent. for all our institutions; the increase in the price of drugs was 68 per cent.; and the increase in the price of clothing and drapery 62 per cent. Yet the hon. member, by a curious process of reasoning, satisfied himself that the Labour Government's legislation was responsible for the increase in the cost of running our charitable institutions. Anyone who has to keep a house knows how the cost of living has increased, and the increases in most of our charitable institutions are solely due to the increased cost of living. You will notice that maintenance in every case has jumped proportionately with those prices I have quoted. No Government has any control over it. It applies to Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and to almost every Government in the civilised world, and has nothing whatever to do with Labour legislation. The hon. member for Oxley and other members of the Opposition proved to their own satisfaction that the increase in outdoor relief was due also to Labour legislation. It is a remarkable thing that none

[Hon. W. McCormack.]

of the hon. members opposite were fair enough to admit that during many months of last year a seaman's strike existed in Queensland which dislocated all the industries.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Your Government were very helpful to the strikers.

The HOME SECRETARY: Our Government had no more to do with the seamen's strike than the hon. gentleman, and I do not think he had anything to do with it. But a good deal of the relief paid out was essentially a result of the seamen's strike. The hon. gentleman does not like the facts when they are placed before him. What suits the hon. gentleman is criticism in generalities. In addition to the seamen's strike last year we had one of the worst droughts that Queensland has ever experienced. You have only to take the output from the sugar districts to realise that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: War, strikes, and drought!

The HOME SECRETARY: I am only proving how fallacious was the hon. member's reasoning. I think I have proved it with regard to a large amount of the increased cost of Dunwich and of the asylums, and now I will prove it in regard to relief. Everybody knows that the drought decreased employment, and the Queensland Government were not responsible for the drought. Also, during last year, what happened to the metal markets of the world? The hon. member for Oxley probably does not know that the throwing out of work of some 4,000 or 5,000 metalliferous mine workers would create unemployment. He never heard of it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What about your late leader, who promised to buy up the metals of the State?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member based his criticism on some statements alleged to be facts. The hon. member was quite sure that this unemployment was due to the action of the Labour Government, and I am trying to disprove that, and, I think, successfully.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Didn't you say that unemployment was due to the extreme action on the part of certain men?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member says I said so. Who said I said so?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The "Daily Standard."

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member has to depend for his information as to Minister's utterances on some member of the unemployed who is delivering an oration outside the Labour Bureau; he cares not whether it is accurate or whether I ever made the statement or not. He cares not so long as it suits his argument.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You allowed the statement to go unchallenged.

The HOME SECRETARY: Does the hon. member think it necessary for a Minister to deny every statement made by these unemployed orators? The question of the scarcity of money creating unemployment cannot be sustained, because, as a matter of fact, more money has been coming into Queensland for primary products during

the last few years than ever before, and the statement that this Labour Government has destroyed all the sources of money is not true. The only trouble is this: that in a great many industries the cost of material from overseas is so prohibitive that they cannot do very necessary work. That is one of the reasons why there is a good deal of unemployment. Take our big pastoral industry: prices were never better, and yet those engaged in that industry are prevented from doing necessary work—work that will have to be done even if the Labour Government remains in power for the next ten years—such as fencing and dam making, because of the drought conditions existing out West, and also because wire has been almost at prohibitive prices. All these things go to make unemployment, and the criticisms levelled against this Government have nothing in them. My own opinion is that, given better shipping facilities between the older countries and Australia, a more sane policy in regard to protection to our own industries so that we will not be dependent upon overseas for many of these commodities, and good seasons, Queensland, and Australia generally, will very soon get into a good position and that unemployment will be a thing of the past. At least I hope so.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And good government!

The HOME SECRETARY: And good government by the Labour party. It would be well for Opposition members to make inquiries on the matter of unemployment in other States that are being governed by Nationalist Governments.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This is the only Labour Government in Australia.

The HOME SECRETARY: This Government is faced with the same problems that face the Governments of other States. There is more unemployed in Sydney alone and more relief being paid out in Sydney alone than in the whole of Queensland, and we hear nothing of it from hon. members opposite. I say that the Government has nothing whatever to do with unemployment.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The population of Sydney is greater than the population of Queensland, isn't it?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is so, but under a Nationalist Government unemployment is also greater. I had a deputation recently from the unemployed, and the two first speakers spoke of having walked thousands of miles, and I said, "Where from?" They replied, "The Riverina." If men in the other States come to Queensland we cannot help having unemployed. The relief is given through the Relief Department in Brisbane and through the police throughout the rest of the State.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Through the union secretaries.

The HOME SECRETARY: The union secretaries have nothing whatever to do with it. The police have sole control of the administration of relief in the outside districts, and I am sure no one can complain of the amount that is given. I know that the 10s. per week for single men is a very small amount. It is hard to know how they live on it. And the extra allowance given to married men with

Hon. W. McCormack.]

children, well, it is surprising how they manage to exist on it. It is a pity we cannot afford to give more, but really the settlement of the problem in regard to relief is to find employment. The giving of relief is a bad thing. The persons who receive relief certainly feel that they are receiving some sort of charity, and it would be much better if they were found employment, and I think a system can be devised whereby we should be compelled to find work for the unemployed. We will have to face the problem, and we will have to face it very shortly. The keeping of crowds of men in various centres merely living on relief is a bad thing for the nation generally, and any system of employment upon public works, on local authority works, and on other necessary work in the bigger centres will be better than continuing the present system. The hon. member for Townsville referred to the establishment of an institution in North Queensland to relieve Dunwich. No doubt, there is a good deal in that proposition. I believe it is a bad thing to have everything concentrated here in Brisbane, more especially when you find, on looking through the records of the men who are in Dunwich, that a great many of them drift to Dunwich from North Queensland. Not only would we save the expense

[5 p.m.] of bringing them down here, but a good many of the old people who have been used to a tropical climate in North Queensland suffer as a result of cold during the winter months in South Queensland. I believe it would be advisable to have an institution similar to Dunwich—not so big, of course; we could start in a small way—established in North Queensland. We would not need to interfere with Dunwich at present, but would gradually draft the people from North Queensland out of that institution. The member for Mirani brought up the question of a base hospital at Mackay. During my recent visit to Mackay a deputation waited upon me, asking that Mackay be given a base grant. I believe they had a bad case. It is generally understood that the basis for giving a base hospital grant to a hospital is because it is taking patients who should be properly treated in their own hospital districts which have their own hospitals. In Mackay I found there was only one hospital, and that hospital has a right to collect over the whole of the Mackay district. There is no country hospital and there is no hospital which patients pass to come to the Mackay hospital. In view of the fact that we have refused base grants to hospitals like Toowoomba, Charters Towers, Cairns, and other centres which have more grounds for a base grant than Mackay has, I refused that grant—and, I think, rightly so. The hon. member for Windsor brought up the question of aboriginals and the increased vote. There will probably be some criticism on the question of aboriginals when the vote is being dealt with, and I will leave that matter until then. The hon. member for Bulimba brought up the question of venereal disease, and what the Government were doing in this regard. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman when he says that venereal disease is a serious menace. One only has to read reports in connection with this disease to recognise what a disastrous effect it must be having upon the human race. In Queensland we have recognised that more will have to be done than has been done in the past. Only recently we did away with the practice of a part-

time doctor, and we now have secured the services of a fully-paid doctor, who is in charge of venereal diseases—Dr. Chauncey. We have opened a clinic in South Brisbane, and I understand there is another almost ready at North Quay. I will give hon. members some idea of the prevalence of this disease when I give the figures relating to people who have reported for irrigation since the clinic was opened at South Brisbane.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And I expect many people did not report themselves.

The HOME SECRETARY: It looks as though there are a good many reporting. I will just give the figures in connection with irrigation to show how prevalent the disease is in Brisbane—

VENEREAL CLINIC.

Date.	Number Attended for Irrigation.			Total Number Irrigated.
	7.30 to 9 a.m.	12 noon to 2 p.m.	6.30 p.m.	
8-12-19	...	...	17	17
9-12-19	11	8	25	44
10-12-19	12	10	25	47
11-12-19	12	9	35	56
12-12-19	10	7	55	72
13-12-19	15	26	38	79
14-12-19	...	...	...	38—9 to 11 a.m.
15-12-19	19	16	70	105
16-12-19	19	26	69	114
17-12-19	26	32	73	131
18-12-19	28	32	85	145
19-12-19	26	38	104	168
20-12-19	38	56	118	212
21-12-19	...	...	...	114—9 to 11 a.m.
22-12-19	38	48	115	231
23-12-19	46	58	140	244
24-12-19	48	53	132	233
25-12-19	...	...	...	87—9 to 11 a.m.
26-12-19	54	67	94	215
27-12-19	63	72	112	247
28-12-19	...	...	...	109—9 to 11 a.m.
29-12-19	70	76	134	280
30-12-19	58	78	180	316
31-12-19	60	74	165	219
1-1-20	...	...	...	98—9 to 11 a.m.
2-1-20	72	79	226	376
3-1-20	76	112	188	376
4-1-20	...	...	...	184—9 to 11 a.m.
5-1-20	80	87	136	303
6-1-20	64	78	155	297
7-1-20	74	86	95	255
8-1-20	76	90	221	387
9-1-20	77	88	230	395
10-1-20	76	135	184	395
11-1-20	...	...	...	246—9 to 11 a.m.
12-1-20	77	81	223	381
13-1-20	74	87	178	339
14-1-20	78	75	186	339
15-1-20	76	89	191	356
16-1-20	75	93	188	316
17-1-20	84	176	208	468
18-1-20	...	...	...	204—9 to 11 a.m.
19-1-20	74	88	176	338
20-1-20	76	80	94	230
21-1-20	64	66	97	227
22-1-20	72	86	178	336
23-1-20	78	84	196	353
24-1-20	96	114	236	446
25-1-20	...	...	...	245

They are remarkable figures and only go to show that the hon. member for Bulimba is

[Hon. W. McCormack.]

quite correct when he says the disease is very prevalent. We intend to extend that system and to allow sufferers in North Brisbane to have access to a clinic in North Brisbane. I have already made arrangements to shift the patients who are committed to the Brisbane Hospital—not those who go there to be treated—who are a source of great trouble at the Brisbane Hospital, over to the reception-house in South Brisbane. They can be better looked after there, and they will not have the same opportunity of getting away as they have at the General Hospital.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You will have to enlarge your buildings very materially.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, there is a good lot of room over there—more room than there is at the General Hospital. Some of the patients are very difficult to handle and the nurses have great trouble with them. A whole ward was taken up which now can be opened for the treatment of ordinary venereal cases. I do not want to deal any further with that question at present. I can assure the hon. gentleman that the Health Department have now taken on a definite policy in regard to venereal. We are also extending it to other towns in the State and are having the same inspection of prostitutes as is carried out in Brisbane. It may be some preventive. We are also, as far as possible, going to extend our clinics into the principal towns in the State. It is a matter that the Government could spend more money on, in my opinion. Next year I hope to be able to ask the Government for more money to deal effectively with this dreadful scourge that is in existence throughout our State.

The hon. gentleman also brought up the question of St. Helena. The removal of St. Helena Gaol is a much-discussed question. I spent an interesting half-hour one night going over the papers. It was a question that caused a good deal of comment some years ago. Mr. Welsby, I think, was one of the advocates for the removal; and I think Mr. Appel was the leader of the people who did not want to remove it. After consideration, I can see no advantage in keeping St. Helena. I have investigated the question of prisons in other countries. The reason why we all believe St. Helena is a great prison is because it is an island. A big one in America, I think, is on an island, but most of the prisons are on the mainland. My idea of a prison would be one with a good deal of spare land, where stock could be run and the prisoners could be used for agricultural work. It would, of course, require a good deal of money to build the necessary buildings. With regard to the keeping of prisoners in a gaol on the mainland, I may say that we lose no more prisoners from the Brisbane Gaol or the Stewart's Creek Gaol than we do from St. Helena. One advantage that a prison on the mainland will have is that the cost of upkeep will be much less than it is at St. Helena. Such a prison might be established within a reasonable distance of Brisbane on fair agricultural land, and might be made self-supporting. We might have a small township there, and the employees would have to live in the vicinity of the prison. The cost of upkeep at St. Helena is very great, and we have to give warders one week in every three or four weeks' leave to be away from St. Helena. The advantages gained by having a prison at St. Helena are not that great that we should retain the prison there. My own individual

opinion is that the prison should be shifted from St. Helena, and I believe that if we have to build another prison on the mainland the Government of the day, whoever they may be, will seriously consider the removal. I hope that they will remove the gaol from St. Helena and establish a gaol on good agricultural land within a reasonable distance of Brisbane. With regard to the treatment of prisoners, it seems to me that we will never get any prison reform until we separate the real criminal from the unfortunate young chap who makes a mistake and is sent to prison. I have some idea of doing something in that direction and of making St. Helena the place where the better class of people who are convicted, first offenders, shall be placed. Prisoners of that class should be kept apart, and not herded with hardened criminals. I am not much impressed with the idea that the real hardened criminal can be reformed. When he gets out of gaol he seems to drift back again; it is only a matter of getting caught, and he goes back to prison again. With the young lad who is probably guilty in a weak moment, of taking £10 out of his employer's till, the case is very different, and he should not be forced to live day and night in the company of hardened criminals. I am hopeful that I shall be able to do something in this regard, though at the same time I admit that prison reform is a difficult matter to tackle. The present prison system is a barbarous system. It is a barbarous thing to have men herded together as they are in our prisons even under the best prison system, but it seems to be a part of our civilisation. Society, of course, must protect itself against the person who will not obey the laws and regulations which are necessary to enable us to live in comfort and in peace. We must protect ourselves from those people, but in protecting ourselves the least we can do is to be humane in our treatment of the people we segregate, and until some extraordinary reform is made in our prison system that will not be possible. I believe that if prisoners were allowed to serve a probationary period on a farm during the concluding months of their detention, and were given a certain amount of money as wages for the work they do, that would enable them to get used to the outside system they have been so long away from and would give them a reasonable chance of finding their feet when they come out of gaol. At present we turn them adrift at the gaol gates, with just a few shillings in their pocket. But I am of opinion that if some such system as I have suggested were adopted, prisoners would much easier get a position in industry than they do under our present system. At the present time a man who is released may get a job, and if it is pointed out to the employer a few days afterwards that he has been a prisoner, he gets the sack, and possibly a little later he gets into gaol again. It seems to me that it would be much better to give them employment in the way I suggest and so allow them a chance to become respectable citizens.

The hon. member for Murilla mentioned the overcrowding of picture-shows. That is a matter on which I would refer the hon. member to the local authorities, as the Home Department have nothing to do with it. I would suggest that the hon. member arrange for a deputation to His Worship the Mayor, Alderman McMaster, to discuss the question with him.

Hon. W. McCormack.]

The hon. member for Normanby, Mr. Peterson, spoke in favour of baby clinics being established in country districts. Clinics have been a great success in the city area, and there is no reason why the system should not be extended to country districts. I think the city gets a good deal more attention from the Government than it should do. If Australia is to progress, we must make the country attractive and get the people in the country. I know that in my electorate, which is a very prosperous electorate, the climatic conditions are not of the best, but all the same the people live under fair conditions because the district is a fairly wealthy one. With regard to clinics for children, I think there is a good deal to be said in favour of the hon. member for Normanby's idea. The Government might subsidise such clinics £1 for £1, or assist in some other way in the establishment, not perhaps of clinics, but of a small building in a district where a certificated nurse could be located. I do not think it would be very expensive to do that, and such an institution would be a great boon to the people living in the district where it was established. It is not possible to have doctors in every small community. It is financially impossible to provide for that, but if we have a small cottage with a certificated nurse who can travel around the district and give advice in connection with children and also do midwifery work, I think that will be a very fine thing for a country district. I am prepared to consider a scheme that will give some relief in this direction in country districts. At present, it is illegal, under the Hospitals Act, to grant a subsidy, but I believe it would be a very good thing if the Government did something in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Normanby. I do not think there is anything else that I can reply to at the present moment. I would suggest to hon. members that if any hon. member has a grievance or requires any information, he should state, as briefly as possible, what he desires, and I shall be willing to give him all the information in my power. In that way we shall secure all the information required for Parliament and the country, and we shall get through the Estimates of the department much quicker than we should by entering into a controversy on things which do not matter.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Minister, in dealing with the matter of discharged prisoners, referred to a case in which the names of the hon. member for Albert, the hon. member for Bulimba, and a Mr. Roberts were mentioned, and judging from his remarks I inferred that they were intended to imply that the person named Roberts had some connection with myself.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, there is no connection with you.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am glad to have that assurance.

The HOME SECRETARY: I referred to it because it was a Toowoomba case.

Mr. ROBERTS: The only occasion on which I saw the hon. member for Albert when he was Home Secretary was when I presented a petition in connection with a man who was undergoing a sentence, and who had been offered permanent employment in New South Wales, and had a wife and a number of children. I connected myself in no way with the petition, but I assumed it

to be my duty to make representations to the then Minister in connection with the petition, which had been largely signed in the city of Toowoomba and district. I had to approach the present Minister in a case with which I will deal in a moment, but I have never approached any Minister in connection with getting a man released from prison, and I challenge the hon. gentleman to refute my statement. The only case in which I have approached the hon. gentleman was a case where a man had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment because he had failed to satisfy an order of the court made against him for the maintenance of one of his children. The matter was brought under my notice by the officer in charge of the Salvation Army in Toowoomba. Possibly, about two years ago this man, for the protection of a daughter, who was likely to go astray owing to certain influences with which she was associated, considered that it was best for the child that she should be placed under State control, and he entered into an agreement voluntarily to pay 10s. a week for the maintenance of this child. In the course of events the girl, who was sixteen years of age, and who, in my opinion, should have been contributing to her own support, even if under restraint, was handed over to the control of the Salvation Army. The department still looked to the man for the 10s. a week, but they allowed the amount to accumulate until it reached £48. The man explained that he was only in casual employment. Yet a summons was issued against him, and, when he arrived in Toowoomba to spend Christmas with his wife and the rest of his children, he was arrested under warrant and was sentenced to imprisonment for six months. When the case was placed before me I did what any humane man would have done; I made representations to the authorities. I have nothing whatever to be ashamed of in the matter. The Minister was then enjoying his holidays at Tweed Heads. I tried to get into communication with him for two or three days, and I pointed out to the Home Office that this man was likely to spend his Christmas in Toowoomba lockup—a place that was not at all satisfactory for any man. I tried to get into touch with the Minister at Tweed Heads by telephone. I got him on the telephone and explained the position to him. Unfortunately, he said he could not hear the conversation too distinctly, and that nothing could be done until he came to Brisbane after the holidays.

At twenty minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. KIRWAN, one of the Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. ROBERTS: It stands to the discredit of the Minister that this man had to spend his Christmas in the lockup at Toowoomba. I think that was dastardly. To make sure that something would be done, I determined to try and get into communication with the hon. gentleman by train, and I had to leave Toowoomba by a goods train, arriving here on Saturday morning, when I made representations to the Minister. I pointed out that this man had come to Toowoomba for his holidays, and that he was due to go back to his work on the Monday, and that he had a few months' work, and, if he could not be liberated on the Saturday, he would possibly lose his job, and then not only would his daughter be under State control but we would have his wife and children looking for assistance as well. I understand that the

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*]

hon. gentleman made representations to the Cabinet, and ultimately, I am pleased to say, the man was released and sent back to his work.

The HOME SECRETARY: Had I known at Tweed Heads what the circumstances were, I would have come up.

Mr. ROBERTS: That does not appeal to me at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have a railway pass, and you should have come down to Tweed Heads if you wanted to get the man out.

Mr. ROBERTS: I know the facilities at the disposal of the Minister, and that is no excuse. He could have got the particulars from the Home Office in three minutes.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never got them from you.

Mr. ROBERTS: I told the hon. gentleman over the telephone that the Home Office had all the particulars. I had been to the State Children Department and arranged with them to send the papers to the Home Office so that they could be placed before the hon. gentleman immediately he reached Brisbane. When I first tried to get into touch with the hon. gentleman I did not know where he was. It was just on the eve of Christmas that I discovered he was at Tweed Heads.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you know that it requires an Executive minute, signed by Ministers and the Governor, to get a man out of prison?

Mr. ROBERTS: I grant that.

The HOME SECRETARY: How do you think I could have done that from Tweed Heads, even if I had known the circumstances?

Mr. ROBERTS: I think that some different method could have been adopted. That is the only case in which I have approached a Minister with reference to any man who had been sentenced, and someone is to blame for what happened in that case. Imagine allowing a man who was only a casual labourer to owe £48 for the maintenance of a child who should have been made to earn her own livelihood under restraint!

The HOME SECRETARY: Didn't I take action as soon as you made representations to me?

Mr. ROBERTS: I will say that it took some considerable argument to get the hon. gentleman to agree; that is the best I can say for him. That is all the connection I have had with any remission of sentence by the Government. I say the Government are undoubtedly open to censure for interfering with the administration of justice. One has only to compare the charges on which the men referred to by the Minister were convicted with the charges in the cases read out by the leader of the Opposition last night to see the difference between the action of this and the previous Government. I may say that the hon. member for Warwick was out of the Chamber when the Minister made a charge against him, but I have since made it my business to ascertain the facts.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not make a charge against him. I merely mentioned the matter.

Mr. ROBERTS: The hon. gentleman tried to make a charge against the hon. member for Warwick. He instanced that hon. member as one who had made an application for the remission of a sentence. The hon. member for Warwick did what I did, that is, he presented a petition to the Minister

in charge of the department—a petition signed by the people in the particular district. Before I get away from this subject, I would like to know whether the Minister will see fit to reply to the challenge made by the hon. member for Murilla last night with respect to the man who was convicted of murdering a soldier. Is there not something serious when the Government propose to commute the sentence in such a case as that? Surely hon. members are justified in asking for an explanation. Here is the case of a man convicted of murdering a soldier in cold blood, yet the Minister takes an hour to make an explanation and does not refer to the matter at all.

Mr. BRENNAN: Do you believe in exacting "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"?

Mr. ROBERTS: There is another matter to which I wish to refer, particularly because I have watched the interesting spectacle. I refer to the congregation of hundreds of men in Elizabeth street [5.30 p.m.] on various occasions. I do not know whether the cause is "two up," but I know from observation that there is evidently a gambling den at the spot. On Saturday afternoon you find possibly two policemen and anything from 200 to 300 men trying, I presume, to put money on in connection with the horseracing in another part of the city. Two or three men are standing at the edge of the street, perhaps, and if a policeman walks in that direction they immediately walk to the centre of the street. The policeman walks to the centre of the road and they walk to the footpath. Surely there is some method by which the Government can back up the police and not make them look so foolish? Imagine sending policemen down there to be laughed at by those 200 or 300 men, many of whom are too lazy to work. I say that it is a waste of public money, and it is not fair to the policemen who have to do their duty under trying circumstances. If there is no method by which the Government can assist the police, it should be their desire to take some action which will enable the policemen to deal with the position.

The Minister made one remark with which I agree, namely—that too much attention is certainly paid to the big cities. I assume that he meant Brisbane. As representing a country electorate, I want again to enter my protest against the way in which the Government have dealt with the General Hospital in Brisbane. We know that it is part of their policy to nationalise hospitals, and since they are the Government we must expect them to give effect to it. Unfortunately, they did not do so in respect of the Brisbane Hospital on a proper basis. We find, from the Auditor-General's report, that not only has this State had to bear the ordinary burden of a general hospital, but a considerably larger burden by reason of the reduction in the donations. On page 35 of the Auditor-General's report I find, in a comparative statement of the revenue and expenditure and cost to the State for each of the past five financial years, that the voluntary contributions to this hospital were as follows—

					£	s.	d.
1915	...	...	...	...	4,849	4	11
1916	...	...	...	...	4,619	15	9
1917	...	...	...	...	3,361	15	11
1918	...	...	...	...	1,094	16	9
1919	...	...	...	...	553	13	10

Mr. Roberts.]

So that they have actually fallen to nil, one might say. I say that it is up to men representing electorates outside the metropolitan area to take exception to the continuance of such a position. The Government ask us time and again how we can save them money. Here is an instance where they can save nearly £40,000 a year, because I contend that if the Government desired to nationalise the hospital, they should have gone further and charged the hospital area for the cost. I have no objection to the State paying that proportion of the revenue which is considered necessary as a base hospital grant, and I am not going to discuss the position so far as such a grant to Toowoomba is concerned. The Minister is evidently going to follow his predecessor and tell us that there is going to be no such thing. Then I say that the general body of subscribers to hospitals outside the metropolitan area should take this question up.

The HOME SECRETARY: I intend to take it up, so that each district keeps its own patients.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am very glad to hear that. I have here some information about the Brisbane General Hospital, and I am anxious, in the interests of the people, to know how far they are correct. They are given to me by persons connected to a certain extent with the institution as employees. There seems to be a general complaint of the action of whoever was responsible when the influenza first broke out. I understand that the nursing staff were under no restraint; they were in and around Brisbane for a considerable period. I think that care should have been taken that nurses who in particular were engaged on influenza cases should not have been able to go about the city of Brisbane at their own sweet will.

I understand that girls who are taking up nursing—there is a condition that everyone is twenty-one years of age—receive 7s. 6d. a week for twelve hours a day. When I say twelve hours, I want to qualify that by adding that I understand that one and a-half hours is allowed for a meal and to enable the girls to tidy up their rooms as it is called. Nevertheless, I do not think that those conditions are at all satisfactory; it is poor pay. They also make a complaint that the food is not just as good as they would like, and that is a statement which is rather serious, as it is a hospital that has been nationalised by the Government. Then they get 15s. a week when they have finished their four years' training. That is certainly nothing like what we would expect. Further than that, they are entitled, under ordinary conditions, to three weeks' holiday leave, but I am told that if they have been sick the period during which they were off is deducted from their holidays. At any rate, whatever their length of service has been during the four years, I am told that they do not finish their period until that time on sick leave has been made up. These are matters which seem to me to require some consideration.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why do they not join the union?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am giving the position as far as the hospitals are concerned, and I assume that those who are interested in unionism cannot have overlooked the Brisbane General Hospital. I should hardly imagine that, so close to the Trades Hall, such a recruiting ground for unionism has been

[*Mr. Roberts.*

overlooked. I am pleased to have the assurance of the Minister on this subject, and I hope that we shall not see such a large sum for the Hospital vote on the Estimates next year.

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

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. ROBERTS: Dealing with the matter of clinics, I would like to put in a word for the city of Toowoomba. A number of women come to the city of Toowoomba from the surrounding country districts, and I think that the suggestion made by the Home Secretary, if he is prepared to put it into effect, will give considerable relief to women and children in the direction which has been indicated this afternoon.

There is also the matter of the Brodribb Home in Toowoomba, for which there is a grant of £300 on the Estimates, as has been the case for a number of years. It must be admitted that if there was a justification for £300 in 1912, 1913, and 1914, there must be more justification now for a larger sum of money. I had the pleasure to accompany the late Home Secretary, over the hospital at the Brodribb Home, Toowoomba, when he was more than pleased with what he saw. I shall be glad if the present Minister will visit the institution, which is doing great work for the poor people in the community. So far we have had no place provided in Toowoomba in which men who have borne the burden and heat of the day, as hon. members opposite say, and who are unable to get employment, can find shelter. I have sometimes had at my office in Toowoomba men and, unfortunately, women, too, who have not known where they were going to spend the night, as far as having a roof over their head was concerned, and whenever representations have been made to the matron of the Brodribb Home she has always found accommodation for these people. That is a strong plea for the Home Secretary considering the position when the Estimates are revised.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I was very pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member for East Toowoomba in connection with the hospitals, a question which affects the Toowoomba district very largely. The Brodribb Home is a very worthy institution, and the matron carries out her duties in a very excellent manner, and I would like to see the grant increased. The matron has always been most attentive to the requirements of the people who have gone to the home. It is a pity that the hon. member for East Toowoomba was not joined with me in a deputation to the Home Secretary before now, with a view to getting this vote increased.

Regarding the Toowoomba Hospital, I am pleased to note that the Home Secretary, when at Toowoomba recently, promised at the earliest possible moment to use his efforts to introduce a Bill to compel those who were best able to pay to subscribe towards the upkeep of the hospitals. The Toowoomba Hospital has been in difficulties for many years past. When a new committee was appointed, many people who previously supported the hospital withdrew their support because they differed in politics with the members of the committee. Not only that, but some of the young ladies who previously assisted in the street collections refused to take any part

in the work. The finances of the Toowoomba Hospital are still very low, and the position is causing the committee alarm. The only thing to do is to bring in a Hospitals Bill, in order to compel those who are best able to pay to subscribe to the cost.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Brembr*): I want to say a word or two in connection with the quarantining of a number of Queenslanders at Tenterfield. I had the misfortune twelve months ago to be wandering about in Tenterfield with 300 or 400 other Queenslanders, practically having nowhere to rest our heads. Had an opportunity come to me shortly after the event, possibly my criticism would have been something different from what it is to-day, as the hardships were then in our minds. Perhaps I would have said something about the fact that I was sent to a Government department for blankets to cover homeless people, and a communication was sent to the effect that the application had been forwarded to Melbourne; that another application was sent for blankets to cover shivering Queenslanders, and thirty blankets were sent to cover fifty Queenslanders. We found that there was a quarrel between the Commonwealth and the State as to who should protect the inhabitants of the State. We know that there was great distress throughout the country in the endeavour to get that dread disease out of Queensland, and those of us who suffered know now that perhaps the officials were not altogether to blame. But there are certain aspects of the Tenterfield quarantine that I would like to touch upon, because a large amount of money was spent by this Government in getting the people across the border. Some 300 or 400 people were stranded in Tenterfield when the epidemic was at its height. The people of Tenterfield, without distinction, took those stranded Queenslanders in and accommodated them and did all they possibly could for them. Although other cities refused to admit people who came to their borders, Tenterfield raised no objection and did the best they could for everyone. Standing right in the forefront was the mayor of the town, who left his business for days and went round the various places with me to see where the people could be accommodated. Mr. Reed, president of the Show Society, placed the showgrounds at our disposal.

Mr. GUNN: He is a Tory, too.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He happens to be one of those few humane Tories. He happens, at any rate, to have a heart, and, having a heart, I want to pay this tribute to him. That gentleman did his very best to relieve the distress in every possible way. The postmaster and his officials, and the telephone boys stayed up all night working long shifts, so that telephone messages might be got through for the people stranded there. The committee of the school of arts threw the school of arts open and the billiard tables, reading-rooms and smoking-rooms were all placed at the disposal of those stranded people, and the citizens generally helped in a wonderful way. During the period a man named Clark had the misfortune to lose his wife on the border of New South Wales, and he had to travel 30 or 40 miles for a doctor. He was left with five or six little children, and I want to mention the fact that a gentleman in Brisbane whom I did not know, telegraphed me £5 to put into Clark's hand, and asked that his name be

not mentioned. Generous actions like this need to be mentioned, and I am pleased to be able to mention that, particularly on behalf of the Queenslanders who were stranded in Tenterfield, and I want to thank the Mayor of Tenterfield and all the citizens for the way in which they came to our assistance. The sergeant of police and his officers were particularly good, and the Queenslanders naturally conducted themselves in a way that showed their keen appreciation of the work of the people of Tenterfield. Here and there, of course, there was the odd man who objected. We had one Queensland, a shining light at the bar, who would have his own tent, and it was necessary for some of the men in the enclosure to raid the tents of these high and mighty people and take from them six or eight blankets to give to boys of twelve or thirteen and delicate women who had no covering whatever. Selfish people in a community of 300 or 400 you must have, but I am particularly pleased to say that the selfishness on that occasion was very little, and what there was of it came from the quarter it usually does—from the people who have most. I am to a certain extent disappointed at the reply the Home Secretary made to the hon. member for Oxley with regard to the charges he made. I know when the Home Secretary deals with these things he quotes official figures, and he placed several things on record to account for the increased vote, but I had hoped that one reason for the increased vote for Dunwich was due to the fact that we regard these people with kinder eyes than did the previous Administration. No matter how kindly the eyes of the previous Administration might have been, I honestly believe there is a wider sympathy and a broader sympathy on the part of this Administration for these people who in their old age, when going down the hill, have not those comforts that they ought to have. I believe there is a wider sympathy than has been shown in the past when they believed in that old maxim, not only when a pauper was dead, but when a pauper was living—

“Rattle his bones over the stones
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns.”

That is the policy followed not many years ago, and I had hoped that a little of the increased expenditure on Dunwich has been because of the kindlier view and a better appreciation of those poor old people who are compelled by force of circumstances to spend their days in Dunwich.

I want to protest against the action of certain country hospitals in endeavouring to rob this Government of as much as possible. I have come across cases, I am sorry to say, where people have offered to pay for their sustenance in hospitals, and they have been told not to pay. “Don't pay as a patient. When you are cured and you have been discharged, if you have been in five weeks and you are willing to pay £1 a week give us a donation of £5 and we will get £10 from the Government on that by way of a subsidy.” I cannot say that this is a particularly honest thing to do, and I want to place on record my protest against country hospitals doing that sort of thing. If they want the Government to support them wholly, let them come out and say so, and not go to public meetings and rave against the nationalisation of hospitals and then in this underhand way attempt to rob the Government.

Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

In the matter of asylums, I want to say that the mental hospitals are becoming a big consideration to the Government, and I am quite sure they feel something must be done in connection with the administration of these institutions. I am quite sure that the time has arrived when the administration of the whole of the mental hospitals should be taken into consideration. I think it would be found, if proper investigations were made, that the time has arrived when we should separate the administration of this department from the medical superintendent. If that were done, we would find they would be better administered and the superintendent would be able to give the whole of his time to his medical work. I am sure that too much of the time of the superintendent is taken up in administration to give the proper medical attention that is necessary, and it would be better for the medical superintendent, and better for the administration, if the administration were taken away from the medical superintendent and placed entirely in other hands.

I hope that the Home Secretary will continue the system of relief that he has been following in the immediate past. I trust we will never adopt the system of the other States when the indigent poor will need to go before committees to be examined; perhaps people sent out to their neighbourhood to make investigations, and then come back in a day or two. "He gives twice who gives quickly," and the system whereby the State of Queensland gives immediate relief and then investigates is far better than keeping the people hanging on day after day while investigations are being made. While a mistake may be made in one case out of ten—it may be made in one case out of five in the first instance—it is corrected upon inquiry afterwards, and it is better to do that than cause daily anxiety while inquiries are being made by independent inspectors or by honorary committees, such as is done in the other States. I trust that the State Children Department will not be cut down, as the hon. member for Oxley suggested. The hon. member for Oxley has a habit of dropping buckets into empty wells and drawing nothing up, and I hope the Home Secretary will not listen to him, and that he will not cut down the Dunwich vote, will not cut down the hospital vote, will not cut down the asylum vote, will not cut down the relief vote, that he will not cut down the police vote, and that he will not cut down the State children vote. These are things that have been necessary because of the increased difficulties of the population.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Who said they should be cut down?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: In the opinion of the hon. member for Oxley they are too big, and there is only one natural conclusion; if they are too big, they must be cut down. The hon. member is fond of making rash statements that he cannot prove, and he, of course, is not alone in that respect. I am sure that the constituents of the hon. member for Oxley will agree with me that it is a very humane thing that these things should be kept on. There is a spirit of humanity shown in these votes, and I trust the Home Secretary will continue to administer these votes as the people require.

Question put and passed.

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

[Mr. F. A. Cooper.

RELIEF OF ABORIGINALS.

The HOME SECRETARY: I beg to move—that £37,094 be granted for "Relief of Aborigines." I think the hon. member for Windsor asked for some information with regard to the increase of £7,640. It is made up largely by increases in maintenance. At Taroom the increase has been £1,500; at Palm Island, £500; and at Barambah, £2,000. The grants to missions have also been increased—at Archer River by £200, Cape Bedford and McIvor River £100, Mitchell River £150, Monamona £200, Mornington Island £200, Purga £175, Weipa £200, and Yarrabah £300—making a total of £1,525. There are some other increases. At Barambah there is an increase in salaries of £674, at Palm Island £214, and at Taroom £174. These increases are largely the result of the increased cost of living.

Mr. GUNN: I have always taken a considerable amount of interest in the aborigines ever since I have been a member. I have been all my life in the bush; in fact, I have been a pioneer for the best part of my life. It is only during the latter part of my life that I have been in Parliament and have not been a pioneer. I have come in contact with these people all my life, and I must say I do not think they have been properly treated. Because of anything I say in their favour it cannot be said that I am out electioneering. When the whites came to Australia the aborigines were in possession. We did not ask their permission to land here. We came here, and we have taken their country away from them. I suppose it is one of the laws of nature that they shall pass away and a superior race take their place. But while that is taking place I think we could have treated them better than we have done. We went into the back-blocks. The graziers, or squatters, or whatever they might be called, took up big areas of land according to the laws prevailing at the time, and no provision was made in regard to the aborigines. The aboriginal was interfering with the pastoralists or somebody else's stock, and, more or less, he came in the way of the new settlers. The consequence was he was hunted away from his particular waterhole, where he went to fish or to catch his game, and he had to go back and back to some outside place. After a time he became somewhat civilised, and came in to reside near the head station; and at the head station, after a time, he got occupation mustering stock or doing some other work about the station. That has gone on. Some time ago, when I was in the bush, the Labour organisers never interfered with the aborigines working on the station. They acknowledged that the aboriginal had a right to this country. But latterly there seems to be a new class of Labourites coming along, who seem to think the aboriginal has no right at all to live on the face of the earth, and he should be wiped out. I think they have a right superior to ours to be in this country.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who shot them down?

Mr. GUNN: Their number is decreasing very fast, and in their declining days we should try to make their lot as easy as we can. I am sorry to say we are not doing anything of the sort. I have here a report from which I take this one sentence—

"In fact, his presence in the Labour market has been, and is still, looked

upon by many with hostility, and he is regarded, owing to the cheaper quality of his labour, as a stumbling block to industrial progress."

Now, we should not consider him as a stumbling block to industrial progress. We should acknowledge that he has a right to get work. I quite agree that the managers of the State stations happen to be in partially uncivilised country where there are aboriginals. They are quite right in giving those aboriginals employment. I have often, because I considered the aboriginal had a right to get employment, given him employment when I would far sooner have employed a white man, who is infinitely superior as a workman. I think the least we might do is to give them employment instead of hunting them out of the country as we are doing. A number of people say that, instead of employing aboriginals on the State stations, the Government ought to send some of the unemployed out. What good would the unemployed be on State or any other cattle stations? They would be quite valueless. We are not dispossessing any white man of his employment at all. The Government, under the direction, I suppose, of the Protector of Aboriginals, come along and put all sorts of restrictions with reference to employment on these unfortunate aboriginals. I will read some of the restrictions later on. One of the things the aboriginal complains about more than anything else is the way in which he is paid. In olden times, when he had finished his job, he got his money, and did what he liked with it. Now, a great deal of it has to be paid into the Savings Bank or to the Protector of Aboriginals. In my opinion, there is far too much paid away in that way. I find that the aboriginals of Queensland who are in employment number 3,886, and they have to their credit in the State Savings Bank £107,729. Anyone who knows anything at all about the aboriginal knows that he is a confirmed socialist. The last thing he would do would be to put money into the bank. He likes to divide it amongst the tribe. Here are the Government coming along and making him put money into the bank to become a capitalist.

The aboriginals in employment or in camps have to their credit an average of £23 each, and the aboriginals belonging to the settlements have an average of £6 16s. each. When an aboriginal gets employment, the master has to pay 75 per cent. of his wages to the local police that they may place it to his credit in the bank. It is claimed that some of this money eventually gets back to the aboriginal, but my experience is that it never does. Although the aboriginal nominally gets the same wages as a white man, he really does not get the same wages. Last year the aboriginals had £43,206 in the bank, and out of that fund the Government spent on their account £25,082, so that in one year alone the Government stuck to £18,320. The legislation under which this was done was passed before the present Government came into power, but when this Government came into power they issued a lot of regulations which were very cruel to the aboriginals. When I go home after attending to my duties as a member of Parliament and I see an aboriginal I know. I ask him: "Where is so-and-so?" He generally replies: "He has been taken away to the settlement." I then ask him: "What did he do?" And the

reply I receive is that he did nothing. The result is that the old people are frightened out of their lives lest they should be taken away to an aboriginal settlement. If a policeman asks an aboriginal who is he working for, and the aboriginal says "For nobody," the policeman tells him that unless he gets a signed agreement to work for someone he will be taken to the settlement. Very often the aboriginal gets an agreement signed, and when he does he becomes practically a slave to his master. The aboriginal does not want to sign any agreement at all. He is a nomad and travels from one district to another, and he likes to be as free as air. These restraints and these agreements are all "tommy rot," and are the curse of the aboriginals. These men are taken away from their natural habitats and put in houses where they develop consumption and other diseases, and the result is that they are dying off faster than ever. In the report for last year we have this statement—

"The following natives were removed to the reserves, by order of the Minister, for disciplinary reasons or for their relief and protection:—"

Then follow particulars of the number of men, women, and children removed to the different settlements and missions, the total number being 185. It is idle to say that all these people were removed to their settlements for their protection; too often they are removed in order to get them out of the district. If someone loses a fowl or a sheep, an aboriginal is blamed for the theft, and when the matter is reported, the first thing the police do is to deport the aboriginal from the district. The aboriginal has no court to which he can appeal, and I have known a man to be put in irons and thus deported to the settlement. The very least that they should get in such a case is a fair trial before a police magistrate.

Mr. WHITFORD: They work for nothing; they only get their tobacco.

Mr. GUNN: The hon. member can come up into my district and see what the aboriginals think of me.

Mr. WHITFORD: What do the white people think of you?

Mr. GUNN: I do not care what the white people think of me. The aboriginal vote amounts to £37,094, and the Government have got £107,729 of their money in the bank. The unionists say that the squatters are getting cheap labour by employing aboriginals, but that is a mistake, as the labour of aboriginals is not superior labour. You cannot shoot aboriginals on your run, but must give them employment if you are at all humane. The Government formulated a rate of wages. I have nothing to say against that rate of wages, although in my opinion the rates are far more than the men are worth, and I do not think that the number of aboriginals will be employed under those wages that were employed previously. The aboriginal does not want to be compelled to live in a house; he wants to be left alone, and if I had my way I would have a bit of ground in every district set apart which aboriginals could call their own—of which they could say: "This is my own, my native land." But instead of doing that, the Government send them to a place where they do not want to be. With regard to the deductions made

Mr. Gunn.]

from wages, I have here a "Government Gazette," dated 6th June, 1919. One regulation published in that issue of the "Gazette" says—

"The following deductions from the wages of employees shall be payable as per terms of agreement by the employer to the local protector or some official nominated by him:—

Single men—75 per cent.

Married men and men with families and for other dependents to support—50 per cent. to 33 per cent., according to circumstances.

Boys under eighteen years of age—50 per cent."

It will thus be seen that the aborigines have no money to speak of coming to them. Then, on top of that, there is the following deduction:—

"A deduction of 5 per cent. in the case of single men, and 2½ per cent. in the case of married men, of the total wages earned shall be made by the local protector from the wages collected for all employees, except such as are already contributing to settlement funds, and the amount so deducted shall be remitted to the Chief Protector to be contributed towards a fund for relief of indigent natives."

If you employ an aboriginal you have to get a sort of bankbook for him, and the regulations say—

"A detailed account shall be furnished to the employee before any deductions are made from his pocket-money for purchases from the station or local store."

The regulations then go on to say how the bankbook is to be made up.

Mr. BRENNAN: If you paid him all his wages, what would he do?

Mr. GUNN: If the aboriginal earned his wages, he ought to have them the same as anybody else. Another regulation reads as follows:—

"The employer shall pay, in advance, all expenses of the employee's conveyance from the place of residence to the place of employment, and, on discharge, for his return to the place of residence, and an allowance not exceeding 5s. per day for his maintenance en route."

That is no encouragement to people to employ aborigines, as they may have to send a motor-car in order to take him from one place to another. Then it is provided that the aboriginal shall be supplied with weather-proof quarters. The regulation says—

"The employer shall provide, free of expense to the employee, weather-proof quarters in a dry, healthy position, with separate sleeping and cooking rooms. Such quarters shall be built with floors raised from the ground; if of wood, on stumps at least 2 feet high and with walls not less than 8 feet high, and shall be properly and sufficiently drained."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the hon. member dealing with the Workers' Accommodation Act?

Mr. GUNN: No; I am dealing with aborigines. I will read the notice in the "Gazette." It says—

"His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has, in pursuance of the provisions of the

[Mr. Gunn.

Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts, 1837 to 1901, been pleased to approve of the following regulations:—"

Here is another regulation—

"An earth closet, sheltered and sufficiently private to the satisfaction of the local protector, with pan made fly-proof, shall be provided at each quarters for every six employees, and a weekly cleansing service arranged for. Such privies shall be not less than 100 yards from the quarters' water supply, if underground."

If these conveniences are to be provided for the aborigines, would it not be better for the Government to see that the navvies along our railway lines have better accommodation? This is only another way of making it impossible for anyone to employ an aboriginal. Here is another—

"The employer shall, unless the inspector is satisfied there is not a sufficient water supply, provide baths and an adequate supply of water in a room or enclosure sufficiently private to the satisfaction of the local protector."

Just fancy an aboriginal being expected to bother his head about whether he has his bath in public or not! They go about without any clothes at all, very often. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: Some of us will have to do that soon, if the profiteering goes on.

Mr. GUNN: Then here is another—

"The employer shall provide, to the satisfaction of the local protector, a sufficient quantity of good disinfectant for sanitary purposes and disinfection of quarters."

"The employer shall provide, to the satisfaction of the local protector, proper garbage tins with covers for the use of each quarters, and shall provide facilities for the daily cleansing of them by burning or burying."

(Laughter.) I have lived among aborigines all my life, and I am in a position to say that, if you told them of these things, they would not know what you were talking about. The fact of the matter is that the Government do not like to say they will not allow graziers to employ aborigines, and they adopt this means of making it impossible for them to do so. We have heard it said that the working classes do not like working with aborigines, but I have been on many stations, and every now and again I have seen a hawker come along. He may be a dark man of some description or another—he generally is, though not an aboriginal—and the shearers and rouseabouts flock to his cart and buy from him. In fact, he could not make a living in the bush if it were not for the way the workers buy goods from him. As a matter of fact, they encourage aliens far more than the graziers do aborigines. This country belongs to the aborigines, and it is only right that we should find them employment. I would be quite prepared to supply them with rations without doing any work in return; but, seeing we have to find them in rations, the least we can do, after taking their country away from them, is to find them employment. When the Labour party pretend that it is only the graziers who deal with aborigines or employ them, they are not sincere or consistent, because they are just as great sinners as anyone else in encouraging the

coloured races. They do not encourage the aboriginals nearly enough; but they go to the alien storekeeper even in the city and buy goods from him. In fact, if it were not for unionists, these people could not make a living. On the stations, when the coloured hawker comes along, who flock to his cart to buy whatever he has to sell? Why the shearer and rouseabout every time. The old class of shearer had a great respect for the aboriginal, and he never tried to persecute him off the face of the earth. But I am sorry to say that a new class of humanist has come along who seems to think that the aboriginal has no place on this earth, and by scientific regulation they are trying to get him off the face of the earth. Far better to hang him or shoot him than by scientific persecution to get rid of him.

Mr. SPENCER (*Maranoa*): The Labour party criticise pastoralists to a great extent because they employ aboriginals on cattle stations; and the Opposition party criticise the Government for employing aboriginals on the State stations. For my part, I think the Government are doing quite right in employing aboriginals on their stations in the North. In that part of the country they are the best class of people to employ on cattle stations.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Would you pay them the same wages as white men?

Mr. SPENCER: Most decidedly, if they do the same class of work. The work on cattle stations is very congenial to the black-fellow. He is never happier than when working amongst horses and cattle, and he is a most useful man.

Mr. POLLOCK: He is absolutely unreliable on a station.

Mr. SPENCER: On a cattle station he is not unreliable. There is no better man to be found on a cattle station than the black-fellow. Invariably he is a good horseman, and he loves the work.

Mr. POLLOCK: Did you ever know a black-fellow who could stick at a job?

Mr. SPENCER: Yes. You can send a blackfellow to break in horses, or brand calves, or do any work amongst stock; in fact, for that work he is just as good as a white man. We have to keep these men, and why not let the stations employ them, when it is almost impossible to get white men to work on cattle stations in the Northern climate?

Mr. WHITFORD: They said that about the sugar industry.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is there any comparison between station work and cutting cane?

Mr. SPENCER: That is different altogether.

The HOME SECRETARY: If white men can cut cane, surely they can do station work.

Mr. SPENCER: I do not think black-fellows would be much good at cutting cane; but on horseback they are absolutely at home, and I hope the Government will not stop station managers from employing them at such work. We have to keep them, and there is no reason why we should not get some work out of them. They are very happy on cattle stations. There is a good deal in what the hon. member for Carnarvon said. The aboriginals do not want you to provide them with houses and baths. They prefer to camp in a gonyah, and occasionally to knock off work and walk about the bush.

They will probably work for three months, and then they want to walk about for a month.

Mr. COLLINS: That is quite long enough for the capitalist to exploit them.

Mr. SPENCER: I do not think the capitalist exploits them, and I do not think the State stations exploit them. By employing aboriginals they are really not interfering with white men at all.

Mr. POLLOCK: They are.

Mr. SPENCER: They are natives of this country, and they have a right to be found employment, and the Minister is quite right in instructing his managers to employ them on the State stations. With regard to the State stations, I may be out of order in referring to the matter, but some time ago a Minister went to one State station, and he said, "What a beautiful garden! It is one of the best I have seen on a station." When they told him that it was a Chinaman who was the gardener, of course the Chinaman had to go, and since then there has been no garden there, because you cannot get white men to do the work. I hope the Minister will not be so weak kneed as to refuse to allow aboriginals to be employed on the State stations. The wages are perhaps a little bit high. It is no benefit to an aboriginal to pay him too high wages. Of course, they are not as good at every kind of work as white men; but if they are allowed to be employed at a lower rate of wages, more work would be found for them than at present.

Mr. MORGAN: Of course, hon. members on the other side are most effective on the platform or when addressing a meeting in the Domain, and on such occasions we often hear them talking of "The Brotherhood of Man." They advocate the cause of the Russian, they advocate the cause of the German, they advocate the cause of all who at the present moment are antagonistic to the British nation, and they think that these people ought to be allowed to compete with Australians and to work in Australia; yet, if you endeavour to employ Australian natives, these hon. members are at once opposed to their obtaining a livelihood.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: It is absolutely true. I have heard Ministers and other members on the other side who profess to believe in "the brotherhood of man," and who say that there is no difference whatever between the man with the black skin and the man with the white skin; yet these same individuals say that the aboriginal should not be allowed to find employment in his own country. I think that the aboriginal has a right to preference of employment. If the Labour party are in favour of Russians remaining in employment on our railways while returned soldiers are walking [7.30 p.m.] the streets; if they are in favour of Germans and others doing likewise, then they cannot consistently object to aboriginals doing work on stations, whether State stations or otherwise.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why did you not elect a returned soldier as leader of the Opposition to-day? (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: We hear hon. members inveighing against the wages paid to the aboriginals by private employers, but I find, according to the Estimates, that at Taroom

Mr. Morgan.]

Settlement there are two native police, two stockmen, one carpenter, one house boy, two shepherds, two hospital attendants, two dormitory attendants, and two sanitary men at £18 each per annum. That is what the Government are paying the men in the Taroom district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where are they doing stock work?

Mr. MORGAN: On the Taroom settlement. I suppose the hon. member does not know that they have a number of sheep. It is true that we find later on that native bullock drivers are paid £130 and £104 respectively, but the men employed in and about the station are getting £18.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think we ought to give them more?

Mr. MORGAN: I certainly think that if a man is employed on a State station as stockman at £50 or £60 a year, there is no reason why he should not get the same at Taroom. I understand that the Minister stands for a policy that men employed at the same work should obtain the same rate of pay, and yet we find these conditions, according to their own Estimates.

The HOME SECRETARY: You admit you do not know anything about the station at all.

Mr. MORGAN: I hope the Minister will take the opportunity of visiting that settlement.

The HOME SECRETARY: I shall.

Mr. MORGAN: If he does, he will come to the conclusion, I think, that there is plenty of room for improvement. We have some of the finest land on the Dawson River set apart for that settlement, but instead of its being self-supporting, as it would be under proper businesslike management, it is a burden to the State. Unfortunately, the Government went in for sheep when they should have gone in for cattle. The land, owing to its flooded nature, is not suited for the rearing of sheep, but there is no reason why it should not carry from 500 to 800 head of cattle. Although there is 3,000 or 9,000 acres of land, we find that they have to go outside to purchase sufficient meat to feed the blackfellows. And the amount of meat given to the blackfellow is not sufficient. Something should be done to see that the men, women, and children there get better food and better conditions. We find, too, that the nurse and dispenser at Taroom Settlement, which contains anything from 200 to 250 blacks, is getting £110. We go over a little bit and find that nurses at the Ipswich Mental Hospital get from £150 downwards. I see here in the Estimates there are two charge nurses at £145, one at £135, and so on.

The HOME SECRETARY: Go on. See what the nurses are getting?

Mr. MORGAN: There are two charge nurses at £145, one at £135, one at £134; deputy charge nurses, one at £151, one at £115; nurses, one at £106, two at £96, and twenty-nine at £84. No doubt those twenty-nine at £84 are relieved at certain periods, but at Taroom it is necessary for the nurse to dispense. She must be a qualified woman in every respect. She is there on her own, nursing and dispensing medicine for, on an average, 200 to 250 blacks, from a little child to a grown man.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are not all sick at the one time.

[Mr. Morgan.

Mr. MORGAN: No, but it is necessary for her to be a qualified nurse, and to dispense the medicine as well. If she is capable of doing that work, she is not getting sufficient; and if she is not capable, if it is only the appointment of some one who would not be capable in any other position, she should not be there at all. Then the superintendent, who is supposed to be qualified, temperamentally fitted, to know all about blackfellows and how to manage them, is receiving £170 a year, and the assistant superintendent £140 a year. I honestly think that there are any number of men on the railway construction works who are earning a lot more, and yet those two men are supposed to have special qualifications, because I think it is admitted that not every man is qualified to manage such a station. I feel sure that the Minister must come to the conclusion that the Taroom Settlement is a starved subdepartment and is not getting fair treatment from the Government.

I would suggest to the Government that they should turn the settlement into a small State station, as it were. It would eventually become self-supporting if cattle were sent there, and there is no reason why every farthing spent on the Taroom Settlement should not come out of the land. I hope that when the Minister visits the settlement he will inform me, as member for the district, for I shall be pleased to do my level best to make the conditions of blacks much more comfortable, and, likewise, to make the settlement self-supporting. I feel sure that any man with a bit of business enterprise and knowledge will come to the conclusion that what I say is correct. I do not say that I would not employ blackfellows, but up to the present I have had no reason to employ them, as I have always been able to get plenty of white men to do the work. There are stations in the far Northern districts where the blacks will, on the average, be equally as good, if not better, than any of the white men employed, as otherwise they would not be employed. I understand that the State stations employ about fifty blackfellows, and the Government would be doing wrong to dispense with their services. It is better for the aboriginals to be employed instead of running about doing nothing. A number of blackfellows in the Taroom district, during the opossum season, made cheques of between £300 and £400, the recent opossum season being exceptionally good, and the money is being taken care of by the department. When these men are not engaged in opossum snaring it is far better for them to be working on the stations than to remain idle. I am of opinion that the blackfellow will eventually die out. He has disappeared from Tasmania and Victoria, and he is gradually disappearing from the remaining States of the Commonwealth, but until he dies out, it is our duty to protect him. It is not a just or humane policy to let them remain idle, merely because it may give extra work to a few white men. I hope that whatever Government is in power it will do its level best to see that the blackfellow gets a fair deal.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I have often made reference to the blackfellows, and there is no doubt that if they had been taken better care of in the early days, more of them would have been alive to-day. Unfortunately, when blacks become civilised, and wear clothes like white people, they contract consumption or some other complaint, and

they are fast dying out. We must remember that the blacks in the earlier history of the State rendered great service. In 1848, when the steamer "Sovereign" was wrecked at the South Passage, ten lives were saved by the help of the natives. I have seen those blacks when I was a boy wearing the brass plate which was presented to them for their bravery attached to a chain round their neck, and they were very proud of it. Those blacks were a very fine race, and they have all passed out. I am glad that the Government has increased the vote by something like £8,000, because it is our duty to take all the care we can of the aboriginals, and make them as comfortable as possible in their declining years. I hope that the department will not stint the blackfellows in the supply of blankets. I received a letter some time ago, while I was at Southport, from one of the aborigines at Myora Station. She complained that the department was not giving her her blankets, because they said she had received money from her son, who had paid the supreme sacrifice while at the war. I wrote to the Under Secretary, asking him to bring this matter under the notice of the Protector, and I believe that any little mistake which occurred there has been rectified. I had a visit from this aboriginal the other evening, and she told me that she had only got £50—from the Repatriation Department, I suppose—but she thinks she ought to get a pension like other people who have lost their sons at the front. I am looking into the matter, and I shall do all I possibly can to assist her in this direction. Her name is Rosie Martin. Some hon. members opposite have got a wrong impression of the aboriginals. The aboriginal is a very humorous individual, and at times particularly funny. I have known the aboriginals to do some very funny things. I am not going to tell anything to-night in the shape of an aboriginal story, but if I were to give a little of their language hon. members would not understand it, and I am afraid that "Hansard" would have a difficulty in reporting it. (Laughter.) I think the Government are quite right in employing blacks on the State stations. They are not interfering with the white man, because, in the McCawley award, provision is made for anything of that nature which may arise. As pointed out by the hon. member for Carnarvon, I am afraid that a lot of the regulations are unnecessary, and will be of very little use as far as the blackfellows are concerned. It has often been said that a bath has sometimes killed a blackfellow, but I know of a case where a bath has killed a white man who had never been used to it. When I was up at the by-election for Dalby, after the death of the late Hon. J. T. Bell, I was complaining because I could not get a bath at Chinchilla. An old bushman said, "You do not want a bath; it is not healthy; it takes all the oil out of your skin." (Laughter.) Probably the blackfellow would often like to get a dip, and I think that if reserves had been set aside for them to go about in their own way, it would have resulted in many more of them being preserved. That is what should have been done in the early days, instead of shooting them down, as was done in many cases. I believe that many an innocent blackfellow and black gin were shot down because of one or two guilty blackfellows. A relative of mine lived for years with the blacks in the early

days getting timber. He could always go away without locking up his store, as the aborigines would never touch as much as a spoonful of sugar or tea. Had they been properly handled in the early days, there would have been no need now for the Government to spend such a large amount of money on them, as they are doing. I notice by the Protector's report that the mission stations are very satisfactory. I am glad to hear that, and I do hope that the blacks will get all the assistance they are entitled to, and that wherever necessary, particularly in the cold weather, they will not be stinted in the matter of warm blankets. I might say that I have played with black boys and black girls when I was a boy, and an uncle of mine had thirty blacks who thought so much of him that they had his brand—P in a circle—put on their arms. I am sorry to say that all those blacks have passed out, the last being old King Sandy, and those blacks were as proud of that brand as any member of Parliament might be on getting into the Ministry. I am sure that the Protector and others have every sympathy for the aboriginals, and will do all they can to make their conditions better while they are with us; but I am afraid that in a very short time there will be few aboriginals left in Australia.

Mr. WELLINGTON (*Charters Towers*): Judging by the remarks of the hon. member for Carnarvon, he has been associated with one of the lowest class of squatters in Queensland. He stated that the squatters with whom he was associated did not pay their black boys their money. It is quite different in the North about Charters Towers. I may state that around Charters Towers we have what you call the good employer. I know that the aboriginals employed on the stations come into town twice a year, and the Chief Protector generally asks one member or the other in Charters Towers to come down and see the boys paid and see if they can count their money. The Protector does not give the aboriginals too much money in one day. They usually stay in the town about a fortnight, and they are paid 10s. to-day, and in another two or three days' time they receive a further 10s. Also, the Chief Protector arranges that the money for the purchase of clothes is equally distributed amongst the business people, so that no individual store-keeper receives more than his share. The squatter employs black labour because it is cheap. On the State station near Charters Towers they employ all white men, and another station that employed one nigger was very pleased to get rid of that nigger and employ a white man. Niggers are very often employed because they will do dirty work, such as assisting to steal cleanskins, when a white man won't do it. (Laughter.) As a matter of fact, the squatters steal from each other, as one judge pointed out. He stated that there should be no cattle-stealing cases tried in Charters Towers because each squatter stole from the other. I know of one case where a blackfellow asked for £1, which was refused, and then he said: "All right; I will tell how many cleanskins you got from so-and-so." If there are any cases of ill-treatment, why do not hon. members opposite report them to the authorities, and not wait till the Estimates come on once in twelve months, and then make a complaint in this House and inform the Home Secretary of their little grievances?

Mr. Wellington.]

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*), who was received with "Hear, hears," said: I have listened with a great deal of attention to the remarks of hon. members opposite concerning the conditions under which niggers are employed on pastoral holdings. I have had a good deal of experience amongst niggers on pastoral holdings, and I cannot endorse quite a lot that has been said. In the first place, it is rather significant that one hon. member opposite said it might be all right to employ niggers away in the North or North-west; but we might come closer in. Take Emerald as a centre; take Springsure; right throughout these districts until quite recently aboriginals were coming along by practically every train to work on the various stations, and in my capacity as organiser I came in contact with them and discussed with them the position that they occupied and endeavoured to find out whether they really believed they had a legitimate grievance or no grievance at all. That was before the recent labour regulations were introduced; and without fear of contradiction I say that the niggers found they were up against a very serious proposition in the form of the pastoral employer. The mere fact of white men being dismissed for the purpose of putting on niggers proves that it was cheaper labour, and the result was that the unemployed were added to very considerably in those districts. Further, the aboriginal is a docile employee. When he goes on to the station he is given the most menial tasks; he has to work from early morning till late at night, and should anything be required during the night, it is the aboriginal who has to do it, and the conditions under which he was working were grossly unfair. It has been said that a certain proportion of the earnings of the aboriginals are paid to them on the station and the other portion is paid to the local protector. One portion is certainly paid to the local protector, but in the past it has been very questionable whether the aboriginals received the amounts due to them from the squatters.

Mr. GUNN: Why do not the local protectors pay the aboriginals all they earn?

Mr. BULCOCK: The aboriginals are paid a certain proportion by the station people.

Mr. GUNN: If the nigger dies, he never gets it. If he lives, he does not get it either. (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: As far as the pastoralists are concerned, the niggers are never paid an adequate rate. It is a common practice for niggers to be supplied with chlorodyne, and it is quite impossible to draft regulations that can be given effect to on the stations. Chlorodyne is smuggled through and sold at extortionate rates, and the amount of money the niggers receive is subject to a great many deductions. They probably are charged with things they never bought, and taking it all in all, many of the employers of aboriginal labour are most unscrupulous in their treatment of their aboriginal employees. I heard the question of accommodation raised, and also the question of the brotherhood of mah. I might point out in passing that the Australian Workers' Union enrolls aboriginals and half-castes as members of that organisation, and the idea actuating members of the Australian Workers' Union is to give the aboriginal the same conditions of employment, with the same rate of remuneration, that the white man is receiving. Those who represent squatting interests, and those who are stand-

ing for cheap labour, generally put up a nice appeal, and say the aboriginal is being well treated; they say we ought to consider the position of the aboriginal and let him roam about. I have heard of no more plausible tale and no more shallow one than what was put forward by the hon. member for Carnarvon, who said it would be wise and just to allow the aboriginals to come along and work here for a few weeks and then go on the track—take a walkabout—and take up work again when they felt inclined. Personally, I know of no more pernicious system. It has also been said, under a form of extending kudos to the aboriginal and detracting from the aboriginal

[8 p.m.] administration, that if an aboriginal comes into the town it is inquired of him if he has a job to go to, and he is given to understand that he should have a job to go to. Those who have been associated with the niggers know that it is undesirable that the aboriginal should be allowed to remain in town for any length of time. I think if you got the conscientious opinion of hon. members opposite, they would be quite prepared to admit it was undesirable that he should be allowed to remain there. The aboriginal in the bush is a fine fellow in many respects. He is too fine as far as the squatter goes, because he is a docile fellow who will submit to the conditions under which the squatter requires him to work. A white man will not submit to those conditions, and that is one reason why the aboriginal is receiving priority of employment in the cattle districts. Now, the question of accommodation was raised. I can mention many places where the aboriginal's hut, including the aboriginal's gins, and, in many cases, picaninnies—unfortunately, some of them are half-castes—is almost alongside the stockman's hut. When the question is raised about sanitation and about these various matters in connection with accommodation, I would ask if it is a fair thing that an aboriginal should live alongside a white stockman, the aboriginal pursuing his native customs with all their filth and disgusting practices. I take it the reason for the department introducing this regulation to compel accommodation to be provided was to protect the white stockman on the station as well as the aboriginals themselves. It is all very well to say an aboriginal can camp in a gunyah or under a gidyea tree, or in a swamp or wherever he is asked to camp. Those days have gone by. The day we are striving for is one when we will give the aboriginal the best possible conditions in the declining years of his race. There is absolutely no question of the fact that the aboriginal is going to disappear. He is disappearing rapidly, and he will disappear ever so much more rapidly if the boss—the squatter—is allowed to employ him without any restrictions upon such employment. For many years it was the practice to employ niggers and pay them virtually any old rates at all.

Mr. BRENNAN: Just tobacco.

Mr. BULCOCK: They were charged for the tobacco they never got, and for many other things which they never received. But with these new regulations the conditions are somewhat altered, and it becomes a little more difficult to rob the aboriginal on the job than it has been for many years under the legislation emanating from hon. members on the Opposition benches when they had control of this side of the House. I heard

Mr. Bulcock.]

the hon. member for Carnarvon make rather an interesting remark. He said a thing that appeared to me to be rather humorous. He charged this Government with forcing the nigger to be self-supporting. Now the charge has come from that side of the House that this party, on account of the administration of the Home Department in the granting of outdoor relief and the other activities of the Home Department, are creating a dependent people in the community; they are going to be dependent on the Home Secretary for charity. Yet we have the hon. member for Carnarvon saying that we are trying to make the aboriginals self-supporting. Surely it is a great paradox and one which is very hard to understand. I take it that the aboriginal has not received a fair deal in the past; and in the future he probably will not be treated very much fairer unless there is a distinct legal regulation compelling the employer to recognise a certain standard of comfort, a certain standard of livelihood, and a certain limited working period. The whole trouble at the present time is that the white stockmen are up in opposition to the black stockmen, simply because the black stockmen are selling their labour at a lower rate of pay than are the white stockmen. This will continue until such times as the whole matter is adjusted in favour of the aboriginal, who, as I said previously, must be given an opportunity to live his last few days in reasonable comfort and under reasonable conditions. If the employer does not, and will not, do that, I say emphatically it is the State's function to compel him to do it. I believe that the present Administration are in favour of the protection of the aboriginal. Personally, I am pleased to see that a much larger sum of money is being voted for the aboriginals this year than was voted last year. The essentials of education will be attended to, and I think there will be room for a congratulation that hon. members opposite could not extend to themselves, when we review the year's work in relation to the aboriginal question. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CORSER: It was not my intention to say anything, but after hearing the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, it might be as well to remind him and the Committee that the bogey he draws can easily be adjusted by the Government. The whole matter is in the hands of the Government. He complains that the aboriginal is working too long hours and that his remuneration is too small. Then it is a matter of adjustment for the Government, through their Protector of Aborigines. If the hon. gentleman has anything to suggest or any complaints to make regarding station-owners who are not doing their duty, it is his duty, as a member of Parliament, to try and rectify it through the Government. It is no use his making statements that aboriginals are not getting enough. He knows perfectly well that recently they were compelled to pay the aboriginals a greater amount. If they are not receiving enough now, they should be paid something that is more reasonable. But I am afraid that at the back of the hon. gentleman's mind is the hope that the aboriginal's allowances will be so raised as to block him from securing employment at all. I think that is more prominent in his mind than the question of improving the conditions of the aboriginal. I think it is the only occupation in which it can be said

the aboriginal is useful, and the only occupation which keeps him in a clean state of living; and it is an occupation that he enjoys. If there are pastoral employers who are not doing their duty to aboriginals, it is up to the Government to bring them to task. As to the aboriginals working too long hours, it is a very hard thing to control hours at all in the pastoral industry. As for the aboriginal's hours being too long, anybody knows you cannot bush an aboriginal, and if his hours are long, he is certainly not working a very great number of them in that time. Everyone knows that. (Laughter.)

Mr. WEIR: Some white men are good bushmen, too.

Mr. CORSER: There are good and useful men in the back country. As for taking the place of white men, it is very often the case that many of our station properties could not be mustered at all were it not for the assistance of the aboriginals they are able to employ.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is only a theory.

Mr. CORSER: It must be a practice, because the hon. member's Government are doing it themselves. They are employing sixty-six aboriginals. Yet hon. members kick up a row because private people are employing them.

Mr. COLLINS: There are 2,000 of them.

Mr. CORSER: Two thousand employed by private people, not on pastoral stations.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, cattle and sheep stations.

Mr. CORSER: There are 2,000 employed at the present time. Many of them are old people who have been associated with a pastoral property practically all their lives, and they would die if they left it. Yet the Government, with their few stations, are employing sixty-six. Let hon. members clean up their own house before they complain about the other man's. I hold no brief for a pastoralist who does not do his duty to the black people, but I cannot see that the present Government have done anything to improve the conditions of the aboriginals, or done anything to show that the people should have confidence in their treatment of the aboriginals. When many of our aboriginal settlements were half wiped out by the influenza pest, what did the Government do? They simply compelled them to remain in the settlement. If a number of those niggers had been allowed to take to the bush, and the Government had not kept them locked up as they did, those people would have saved their lives.

Mr. WEIR: At Barambah they went to the bush.

Mr. CORSER: Not until many of them had died from the pest. However, it is not my intention to stonewall this vote. I have no complaint to make in connection with the vote, as there are no aboriginal settlements in my district.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): The hon. member for the Burnett, in the course of his remarks, made reference to the employment of blacks on State stations. I have never been in favour of employing blacks on stations, nor have the Government. That is obvious when one considers that the number of blacks employed on State stations have been reduced from 59 per cent. to a percentage which practically means one

Mr. Pollock.]

blackfellow to every four white men. I am against the employment of blacks on State and all other stations, for the reason that the employer always makes the blackfellow a special object for exploitation. I have heard scores of men talking continually about their regard for the blacks and their desire to treat them with care. I heard the hon. member for Carnarvon saying that he desired to care for the blacks, and he mentioned, incidentally, that as the blacks had no votes he could not be accused of trying to catch votes. But there is another phase of the question. Although a man may not be accused of trying to catch votes, he still may be accused of trying to further his own interests without catching votes. A man may be a politician and a business man at the same time, and when the hon. member for Carnarvon, like many other men, employs blacks on his station, he gets as much out of them as he possibly can.

Mr. CORSE: He pays them union rates.

Mr. POLLOCK: My experience of blacks on stations is that they are very much inferior to white men. I admit that they are better at station work than they are at any other work, but I still say that blackfellows working on stations are most unreliable. The average aboriginal cannot be entrusted for five minutes with a job that you would give to a white man.

Mr. GUNN: And you want them to be paid an equal wage?

Mr. POLLOCK: If the argument which the hon. member for Murilla and his party use—that is, that the black man is as good as a white man—the hon. member should be prepared to pay him an equal wage. But I do not say that aboriginals are as good as white men. The proper place for a blackfellow is where he will be free from exploitation by the white man, and if the Government are moving in that direction, then they are doing something which is highly desirable. Late in 1918, the Premier, the hon. member for Burke, and myself went to the Gulf country from Cloncurry along the Leichhardt River, along the Gregory River, and right out to Camooweal, and we noticed that scores of blacks were being employed on stations, while young Australians were going about with swags and packhorses searching for work. A white man is unable to scratch for himself the same as a blackfellow, and unless he can get a job on a station, he is in a very difficult position; and most of those young men had to leave their station work because of the excessive employment of blacks on the stations. Those who had horses of their own went brumby-running, which is a very precarious existence at its best. There is another matter which has to be considered. Many people who want domestic servants desire to have black girls working for them. This is another form of Christianity which can be very easily exploded. Most of the wealthy families around Brisbane desire to get a black girl in their employment, mainly because they can make her do work that a white girl will not do, and they pay her a smaller wage than they have to pay to a white girl. The desire to care for the blacks quickly disappears if you compel these people to pay the same price for black labour as they have to pay for white labour; and very often a black girl is thrown back on the care of the State with a half-caste child. I hope that if employers are to be allowed to take charge

[Mr. Pollock.

of these girls and work them, they will be held responsible for the maintenance of the children they bring back to the State. That will be a test of their Christianity. One of the organisers of the Australian Workers' Union and I went to the Protector of Aborigines the other day, and had a talk with him about this matter. I had been under the impression for some time that blacks had half their wages paid to the local protector of aborigines, that the other half was given to the blacks to use as pocket-money, and that the half paid to the local protector was not given back to them again, as most of them died and did not receive a penny of that money. I found on inquiry from the Protector that that was not so, and that in spite of the figures quoted by the hon. member for Carnarvon, the payments made to the local protector did not by any very great amount exceed the payments made to the blacks by way of withdrawals. The figures were given to me by the Protector, and I am quite sure that the Minister will bear out my statement that they do not coincide with the figures given by the hon. member for Carnarvon.

Mr. GUNN: I quoted the figures from his own report.

Mr. POLLOCK: With regard to the question of wages, I was told that any black can by application to the local protector get his wages paid to him at any time for the purchase of any ordinary necessity. If a black received six months' wages all at once, and a hawker came along, that hawker might bleed him for the lot, because the average blackfellow has no idea of the value of money.

Mr. GUNN: Does the Protector pay the aboriginal, instead of paying the money into the bank?

Mr. POLLOCK: There is nothing in that point.

Mr. GUNN: The blackfellow does not get the money.

Mr. POLLOCK: How do you mean that he does not get the money?

Mr. GUNN: There is a sum of £107,000 in the bank now.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Protector of Aborigines will pay to the blacks all the money to their credit if they desire to withdraw it. The trouble is that most of the blacks do not understand that, and accordingly they do not ask for the money.

Mr. GUNN: And the Government stick to the money.

Mr. POLLOCK: The question is not so much regarding the money held by the Protector of Aborigines. The question in the past has been how much they have been fleeced by their employers, the squatters. There is an opening here for graft on the part of the local protector of aborigines, who is generally the sergeant of police. The sergeant of police can give a Myall blackfellow 2s. and get him to sign a receipt for a "five." I am sure that has happened before to-day. I believe that a number of policemen have been discharged from the service for adopting those methods, and there is nothing to prevent those methods being adopted to-day. I think that the practice of giving the Protector one-half of the earnings has, in most cases, been a very wise and desirable one from the viewpoint of the blackfellow himself. On the question of exemptions, I am satisfied that there are many half-castes who have been educated at

the ordinary schools in the bush and who are able to look after their own money. Many of them know the value of money. Out beyond Cloncurry there are half-caste boys who can go into the local stores, and whose credit is better than that of some white men. Their word is good for any sum in reason, as they are known to be good payers. Those men should have the whole of their money paid to them by their employers, and I understand that in any reasonable case of that kind the Protector grants exemption. At least, he told me that he would give exemption in any case where the half-caste was sufficiently intelligent to be able to look after his own money. A lot of those boys receive the whole of their money; they earn decent wages, and they are able to look after their money just as well as white men. In cases other than those of half-castes, they work for less than the ruling rates of wages; consequently, it can be seen that they do not understand the value of money. I went to the Protector feeling that the aboriginals had many grievances, but I will do that gentleman the credit of saying that I came away believing that there was nothing that he was not willing to do for the aboriginals if it was right. I believe that he is a very competent and capable man, and certainly one who is in entire sympathy with the blacks of this State, and who, given a reasonable opportunity and a fairly free hand in the matter of looking after the blacks, will render good and valuable service to the State.

Question put and passed.

DUNWICH BENEVOLENT ASYLUM.

The HOME SECRETARY: I beg to move—That £43,041 be granted for the "Dunwich Benevolent Asylum." The increase this year amounts to £5,737, and it is largely due to the increased cost of food and drugs. The increases for those items amount to £5,200, and the balance consists of the usual increases in salary given to the staff.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I take it we are all interested in this vote. I notice that there is an increase in the vote, and I would like to know from the Home Secretary if the inmates are well looked after in regard to their food—whether they get roast beef now and again, or whether they are always tied down to boiled beef. I notice that nine of my constituents are in Dunwich—not a large number, it is true, still I am interested in their welfare. The report of the medical superintendent seems to be cut down this year as compared with what we used to get, therefore we have not got as much information as we were given in the past. Hon. members will remember that last year I had occasion to criticise the doctor who was then in charge. Although I had never visited the institution, subsequent events proved that I had fairly accurately estimated the position from the report that was presented to Parliament by the doctor. I hope that every care is taken of the old people, because there is no doubt that they are old. I notice that the number of inmates between fifty and sixty years of age is 187; the number between sixty and seventy is 374; between seventy and eighty, 390; between eighty and ninety, 170; and over ninety, 19. The total number is 1,271. I cannot speak of the institution from personal observation, because I have never been there. I have seen so much suffering in my time that I am not desirous of seeing any more. I hope that every atten-

tion is bestowed upon these old people. I would like to know from the Home Secretary whether any women who are what we generally term "unfortunates" are sent to Dunwich.

The HOME SECRETARY: What do you mean by "unfortunates"?

Mr. COLLINS: Well, you might call them prostitutes. Are any of them sent to Dunwich?

The HOME SECRETARY: No, none of them are sent to Dunwich because they are prostitutes. If they are old women, they are there.

Mr. COLLINS: I hope they are all well looked after, no matter if they are "unfortunates."

Question put and passed.

HEALTH.

The HOME SECRETARY: I move—That £41,665 be granted for "Health." The increase in the vote is £22,955, and it is largely made up by the cost of the influenza epidemic. There is an increase of £4,800 in connection with the hookworm campaign, as per arrangement with the Rockefeller Institute. There are also some small increases in connection with the salaries. On the second last vote, the hon. member for Murilla referred to some salaries at Taroom. Those officials are now classified under the Story classification and are getting increased allowances. The increases are provided in a lump sum on the Treasury Estimates. One of the principal items in connection with this vote was discussed on the general vote, so there is no occasion for any more detail.

Question put and passed.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

The HOME SECRETARY: I move—That £275,567 be granted for "Hospitals and Charitable Institutions." There is a big increase here of about £30,000. A good deal is caused by the increase in the [8.30 p.m.] cost of running the Brisbane General Hospital, largely due to the state of the hospital when taken over by the Government. As is well known, the old committee had struggled along for quite a number of years under very bad circumstances. The people of Brisbane were not liberal in subscribing, and consequently the conditions of the nurses and other employees were not good. A good many of these matters have been rectified by the Government, and under a hospital employees' award reduced hours and increased wages have been given. That has necessitated an increase in the number of nurses, and, of course, we have increased the payment all round. The increase in the cost of maintenance from £14,000 to £23,750 is due, as in other large institutions, to the increased cost of food and drugs and incidentals. It is impossible to retrench in those matters. Almost every article of diet has increased by 10 per cent. upwards, and drugs and dressings by 60 per cent. to 65 per cent. It seems inevitable that prices will continue to rise, and we must meet them, and the only way to do that is, of course, by increasing the vote. There is also a new item in the vote this year—£5,000 for the Westwood Sanatorium—which has been established, and is now receiving patients. I do not know that there are any other big items that I need refer to. The item of endowment is practically the same. Of course, it fluctuates

Hon. W. McCormack.]

according to the amount collected by the hospital itself in each case. If there is any information I can give, I shall be pleased to afford it to members who ask for it.

Mr. MORGAN: On behalf of the country people of this State, I would like to lodge my protest against the saddling of the whole of the people with the expense of the Brisbane Hospital. In 1918-19 the sum of £28,318 was placed on the Estimates, and this year the sum required is £43,512. Why the people of Queensland should be compelled to pay that amount of money for the benefit of persons within a certain radius of the Brisbane Hospital I cannot for one moment imagine. Although the Government certainly subsidise our country hospitals to the extent of £2 for every £1 subscribed by the people in the different localities, nevertheless they are compelled to raise such an amount of money as will, with the addition of the subsidy, maintain their hospitals in an up-to-date way. In 95 per cent. of the cases the people do their duty in a proper manner. Most country hospitals are not only maintained in an up-to-date manner in every respect, but they also have credit balances in the bank; but in Brisbane, where the people are wealthier, where their conditions are ever so much more advantageous, they sponge on the country people and the rest of Queensland for the maintenance of their sick and diseased. The quicker that stops the better. It is time the Government took some action to compel those who live within a certain radius or who benefit from the existence of the hospital to contribute sufficient to maintain it; it is time they placed it on exactly the same footing as hospitals in other parts of the State. I suppose that the nationalisation of hospitals is still one of the principal planks of the Labour platform, but nothing has been done in that direction except for Brisbane. No wonder there are members on the Government side who say that this is a Queen street Government!

Mr. KIRWAN: It is not a Queen street Government.

Mr. MORGAN: We had the member for Townsville the other night stating that this was a Queen street Government; and we have had other members on the Government side proclaiming the fact that Brisbane is principally benefited by the present Government. I honestly believe that the people generally would not approve of nationalisation. In my own electorate there are four hospitals, all financially strong. The people recognise their responsibilities, and on no consideration or condition would they approve of the Government nationalising them. On the same principle, the Brisbane people have no right to be released from their responsibilities, and the quicker a Bill is brought in to compel them to do their duty the better for all concerned.

Mr. ROBERTS: I want to speak first with regard to the new epileptic home at Willowburn. I understand that some time ago somebody who has taken an interest in this home made application for the supply of a piano. I have visited the place, and whilst I realise that just at the moment there are not very many patients, still I think some form of entertainment might be provided, and I was astonished when I received a copy of a letter from the Home Department stating that the request had been turned down. An application was made in February of last year to the late Home Secretary for the

admission of a child to the institution. I understand that she is three and a-half years old, and there is no question about her being epileptic. The parents are in rather poor circumstances, and the mother, who has two other children, cannot look after this girl. There has been a considerable amount of correspondence between the Home Office and the home, and I am astonished to hear that no provision can be made for her. If there is any need for the establishment of an epileptic home, surely it must be for the sake of the young children in the community! I realised, from conversations with the medical officer when I visited the institution, that, unfortunately, there are some patients in whose cases there is no hope of successful treatment, and who could almost be placed in any institution at present in existence; but they have been brought over by reason of the shortage of patients for whom, I assume, the institution was erected. I want to impress this matter on the Minister. I do not know whether he is aware of the position or not, but I ask that some provision be made for receiving this child. She is the child of a worker, and the mother is almost at death's door through worry in connection with the child. The parents have offered to pay 10s. per week for the maintenance of the child.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where do you want to get the child?

Mr. ROBERTS: In the epileptic home.

The HOME SECRETARY: There should be no difficulty.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am pointing out that an application was made in February, 1919. I have made two applications myself since last November, and even now I am informed that the child cannot be admitted.

Mr. KIRWAN: Did they give you a reason?

Mr. ROBERTS: They said that it wants a special room for the child. If so, I contend that a special room must be built. I take it that epileptic homes are erected to deal particularly with children.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will attend to that case.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am glad to hear the Minister say that. This is a matter which the late Minister had in hand himself, and I think we must blame the Government if nothing comes of it. The Minister now says he will deal with it at once, so that shows there is some reason for the complaint. I know that the matron has refused the application. If, when we have spent such a large sum of money for an epileptic home, we cannot take an epileptic child in, we have failed in our work. I will accept the assurance of the Minister that something will be done in this matter.

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

Mr. POLLOCK, one of the Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. PETERSON: The Westwood Sanatorium is in my electorate, and I would like to ask the Minister as to who is the medical officer appointed there, and when it is proposed that he shall take up his duties.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have not made an appointment, but will do so in a day or two.

Mr. PETERSON: I hope the Minister will appoint one as promptly as possible. I

know he is very busy, and I am glad that the matter has not escaped his attention. This sanatorium has been erected for the purpose of saving life. The hon. member for Mount Morgan and other members, with myself, spent a great deal of time in obtaining the institution, and we had in our mind the cases of men who were in the incipient stages of miners' phthisis, and others suffering from kindred chest complaints. The men who go there do not go there to look for the grave, but to recuperate, and, if possible, take their place in society again. Is it a fair thing to allow these men to mope around the institution without making provision for games, a billiard table, or a good library for them? If the men are going to get benefit from the treatment they get, they need to have recreation and amusement provided. The buildings are of a palatial nature, and no money has been spared to get an up-to-date institution. I trust that the Minister will make provision for amusements and recreation for these unfortunate men, and thus shed some ray of light upon their lives.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The total amount that has been set apart for the Brisbane Hospital this year is £43,000 for salaries and maintenance. Is that the full amount?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, that is the full amount.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The country people at Toowoomba had to keep their hospital going during the drought, and made many sacrifices. We see the large suburban residences around Brisbane, and the evidence of wealth on every hand.

Mr. KIRWAN: I thought the place was ruined.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The bulk of the wealth produced by the people in the country comes into Brisbane. We see the amount of wealth in Brisbane and the care that is taken of the city. The people's food is seized in other parts of the State, and given cheap to the people of Brisbane. Money is taken from drought-stricken people in country districts to the extent of £43,000, and brought down to Brisbane to relieve the people here of the responsibility of caring for their sick. I am not blaming the people so much as I am blaming the Government. No Government has a right to hold office which allows such a state of things to exist. The Government brought in a Hospitals Bill, but under that Bill they presumed to make a man with a family who had an allotment, no matter how hard he was struggling, to contribute to the hospitals; only the man who had land had to contribute. It was a very one-sided measure, which put the whole of the responsibility of the upkeep of the hospitals on to the man who owned land.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who are these wealthy suburban householders you speak of?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If you want their names, take the electoral roll of Brisbane; and if you do not want their names, you need only take a tramcar ride or a motor-car ride. You have no need to go to the expense of paying for a motor-car as I would have to do, because you have a motor-car at your hand, and you can take a tour round Brisbane and see all the evidences of wealth that it is possible to get. When the Government gather taxes in the drought-stricken country districts to relieve the people of Brisbane of the expense of keeping up their hospital, it

is about time they retired and allowed somebody else who will govern fairly to take their place.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All these people you speak of voted for your party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did the breweries vote for our party? And the hon. member knows the cheques he got from them.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is an absolute lie.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You know the cheques you got from them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a deliberate lie.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I would ask the hon. member for Drayton to confine his remarks to the subject under discussion. If the hon. member refuses to obey my call, I will have to take further action.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Drayton referred to the cheques that I or my party obtained from the breweries. That should be withdrawn entirely.

Mr. MORGAN: The cheques should be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I pointed out that the hon. member had failed to obey the Chairman's call to order. I did not quite catch what he was saying. Did the hon. member make the remarks stated by the Minister?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That the party got cheques from the licensed victuallers? Certainly I made those remarks.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Did the hon. member remark that the Minister for Railways got such a cheque?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister's party.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Did the hon. member refer to the Minister for Railways particularly as having received such a cheque?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Absolutely no. There is no personality in politics. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I rise to a point of order again. The hon. member for Drayton is attempting to make it appear that he did not refer to me, but if he made the statement as applying to the party, I object to that also. I say the hon. member is out of order in saying that this party received cheques. It is a lie and a deliberate lie.

Mr. CORSER: Is the hon. member in order in saying it is a deliberate lie?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. CORSER: I rise to a point of order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat?

Mr. CORSER: Last night I was made to withdraw a similar remark.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat?

Mr. MORGAN: Mr. Pollock—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. Pollock.]

Mr. MORGAN: I think I am in order in rising to a point of order. I do not think a chairman has any right to interfere with a man who wishes to raise a point of order. The Standing Orders do not give him that power. The Standing Orders provide that, if a Minister or anyone else states that another hon. member is telling a deliberate lie, he is out of order.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say it is deliberate—

Mr. MORGAN: Notwithstanding the fact that the statement was made by the Minister for Railways, I ask you, Mr. Pollock, to make the Minister for Railways withdraw it. We asked you, as the one in the chair who is supposed to be non-partisan, to ask the Minister for Railways to withdraw the statement he made. He said the hon. member for Drayton told a deliberate lie, and that is not in order.

Mr. CORSER: Last night—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the Minister for Railways that the term "deliberate lie" is entirely out of order, and I would ask him to withdraw it. The hon. member for Drayton has stated that he did not make that remark as applying personally to any member of the party.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I like to conform to the ruling of the Chairman as every member must do that, but if the hon. member for Drayton suggests that this party received money in the way indicated, it may not be deliberate, but, nevertheless, it is a lie. I withdraw accordingly.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will say this: that possibly these rich people who have refused to contribute to their hospitals—some of them may have voted for our party, but it is better to receive votes from those people than to receive money from gambling, which that party over there have been receiving for years, and more than that—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark as to any party receiving money from gambling. The remark is distinctly out of order. Will the hon. member withdraw?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If parliamentary etiquette requires it, I withdraw, but you know perfectly well that they gave permission for gambling. (Disorder.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will obey my ruling, and if the hon. member sticks to the question, there will be no necessity to withdraw anything.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is unreasonable that people who will not support their hospitals can raise so many hundreds of pounds in gambling and gambling under permission given through the Home Office whose Estimates we are discussing now.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Wrong again.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, through the Chief Justice. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: That is an attack on the Chief Justice.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say that these people can raise hundreds of pounds by gambling.

[Mr. Morgan.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! We are at present dealing with the Estimates of the Home Department, and I ask the hon. member to keep to the question.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say these people should support their hospital. When they can raise such huge sums by gambling for political purposes, then they certainly should support their hospital, and if they cannot do that, if I were in the Home Secretary's place, I would make them.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is up with the Toowoomba Hospital?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Toowoomba Hospital has not got the money that the Brisbane Hospital has. The Toowoomba Hospital should be made a base hospital. The Toowoomba Hospital has received nothing like the treatment that the Brisbane Hospital has received.

The HOME SECRETARY: If we gave them £1,000, it would not get them out of their difficulty.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Suppose you did give Toowoomba £1,000, what is it? Here you give Brisbane, without asking any question, £45,000 in one year, and in three years you have given them over £100,000. If we had a Government with any fairness at all, they would put a tax on Brisbane and compel the Brisbane people to pay the same as other people do.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why didn't you vote for the Bill?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because, if a man had an allotment he was compelled to contribute to the hospital under the Bill, and the rich man who had thousands a year income, if he was living in a rented house, contributed nothing at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Wrong.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister knows perfectly well that the tax was levied upon land, and if the rich man lived in a rented house, he paid nothing under that Bill. That is the reason why I voted against it. Every man should be compelled to contribute towards the hospital, no matter whether he owned land or not.

The HOME SECRETARY: You will have a chance of voting on it again.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If you bring in a fair Bill which compels every man to contribute according to his income, then I will support it. At the present time there are thousands of men with big [9 p.m.] incomes who are never asked to pay income tax, and I suppose the same thing will occur in regard to the Hospitals Bill. There are eight institutions mentioned on page 25 of the Estimates which get subsidies from the Government. I would like to ask the Minister if it is necessary to increase one from £1,000 to £2,000, is it not also necessary to increase all the others? And why is one reduced from £74 to £44? If the expenses are very much higher, one should not be increased without the others being increased in comparison. I am not complaining about the one; but do not the others need it just as much?

The HOME SECRETARY: The other hospitals are raised in proportion to the amount of money they collect.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Home Secretary is satisfied that the others do not need any rise, I am satisfied.

Mr. BAYLEY: I should like to refer to the value placed by this Government on the labour of male and female employees respectively. It will be noticed that the female cooks and the housekeeper only receive one-half of the wages paid to the male employees for practically the same work. It seems to me strange that in these days of democracy we should find such a difference made. I do not see why women should not receive equal pay with men when they do equal work. When we find a woman occupying the responsible position of housekeeper receiving only £80, whilst the man engaged in the kitchen receives double that amount, when we find the female cooks receiving less than one-half the amount paid to the male cooks in the same employ, I say it is not right. In these days of democracy I take it it is understood that when women give equal service with men they should receive equal payment. These women probably are keeping families, and they have a perfect right to receive as much money as the male employee in return for the work they do.

Mr. SPENCER: We have in our district what is known as the Muckadilla bore. The water from that bore possesses great curative properties in connection with rheumatism. A large number of patients come from all parts of the world. Experts and medical authorities say that the curative properties of this water are better than those of any other water in Australia. I know one instance of a lady who came from Scotland. She had been to the English waters and the German waters. She came to New Zealand, then went to New South Wales, and then came to Muckadilla. She was almost a cripple. After being there some time, she got great relief, and since has had permanent benefit. The Government have gone to some expense there in supplying a nurse and also in supplying baths; but there is no convenience for the unfortunate people who are unable to pay. I think it is just as necessary for the Government to supply a hospital for the people who suffer from rheumatism as it is for any other disease. There is no doubt this water is a great asset to Australia. There is a private hotel there, but unfortunately there are many people who want to go to that bore who have no money and they cannot get the benefit of it. What I would suggest to the Minister is that he should have some inquiry made with a view to making it a State enterprise or a public hospital. I do not think there is anything in which the Government could spend money with greater benefit. The hotel, unfortunately, charges a high rate and poor people are unable to get any benefit. In addition to that, those who go to the waters have absolutely no amusement or recreation. They go to the baths regularly and drink the water, but they have to sit on the narrow veranda in the hot weather. I think the Government ought to take over that hotel—they could get it for a reasonable amount—and they should also appoint a medical man and provide some little recreation for the patients. It is as necessary that they should get exercise as medical attention. Some shed should be provided for them to sit in and some golf links or bowling alleys or something of that kind.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Golf links!

Mr. SPENCER: That is one of the things that is recommended. It would not be costly to have golf links, bowling alleys, tennis courts, or something of that kind so that the unfortunate people can get some little amusement and at the same time some exercise. The doctors say it is absolutely necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The lame, the halt, and the blind do not want golf links.

Mr. SPENCER: Provide anything, as long as they can get some exercise, and have some shelter from the sun. I look upon this as a serious matter, and I think it is one in which the Government should take some interest. All the medical authorities will bear out what I say. There is no doubt that a good deal of suffering could be relieved by having an institution of that kind.

Question put and passed.

INSANITY.

The HOME SECRETARY: I beg to move—That £174,196 be granted for "Insanity." There are large increases here, due again chiefly to the increased cost of maintenance. There are also additional amounts in regard to wages. The asylum attendants and the other employees who are working in these institutions have obtained awards from the Arbitration Court, at considerably increased rates of pay; and that has largely been responsible for the increase in the vote. The increase in the cost of maintenance at Goodna has been considerable, and that is due largely to the cost of fodder during the dry weather. The increase in the other asylums are proportionate to the increased cost of living in all our charitable institutions. I move the vote.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): There are one or two matters in the report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane about which I should like some explanation. Regarding the new farm ward, the inspector says—

"This ward is now practically complete, and will shortly be occupied. The ward was built mostly of old material from two dismantled wards, viz., old male No. 1 and No. 8 wards. It was erected chiefly by the institution artisan and patient labour, and was handed over to the Works Department for completion when that department took over our artisan staff; at that time the sanitary work, plumbing, and painting had to be done."

What was the difference between the cost of the work as done by the Public Works Department and as done by the artisan and patient labour at the hospital? The inspector further says, on page 39—

"I regret to report that nothing has been done to complete the guttering and kerbing of the main drive, especially that portion close to and in front of the new administrative block, since the work was taken over by the Works Department in 1917. This work had been previously carried out by the hospital artisan staff, and was nearly completed (as regards this section of the main drive) when the work was handed over to the Works Department. At present it presents an unsightly and unfinished appearance in the vicinity of the main entrance to the hospital."

Mr. Moore.]

Practically all through the report the complaint of the inspector is that when work has been left to the institution it has been carried out at a considerable saving, both in time and money, over the cost of work done by the Works Department. It is stated that the work as carried out by the institution has been more economically done than work done by the Works Department.

The HOME SECRETARY: In his opinion. He might be a good man for his job, and he should keep to his job.

Mr. MOORE: The doctor says that when work was undertaken by the institution it was carried out, but when it was handed to the Works Department it was not done. The work in question was handed over to the Works Department half finished two years ago, and the doctor says that if the institution had been allowed to carry out the work it would have been finished and a considerable saving effected. Referring to the new vegetable garden, the report says—

“Unfortunately, production in this garden has been carried out under great difficulties, partly owing to the prolonged drought experienced during the past year. This difficulty would have been overcome had the electric pump and tanks been installed (as mentioned in my last annual report, and which have been asked for now for nearly two years), so that the garden could have been efficiently irrigated throughout the drought, and a plentiful supply of vegetables could have been grown and the maintenance of this large institution could have been considerably reduced.”

Further on the report says—

“Had the institution been allowed to carry out such work, as it has been permitted in the past, a great deal could have been already accomplished, without expense to the Government, such as taking up old existing pipes on the estate and relaying them in this garden; a portion of the cost would, therefore, have been avoided, and the remaining decreased sum for the whole irrigation scheme might have been more readily granted.”

He goes on to point out exactly where the money could have been saved, but apparently the policy of the Government is to take away occupation from the inmates of the institution and hand the work over to the Works Department. The same kind of complaint is made throughout the report in regard to the other hospitals. The Minister says that he would rather take the report of a carpenter on a matter of this kind than the opinion of the doctor.

The HOME SECRETARY: I would sooner take the report of the carpenter or the Public Works inspector on a public building than I would take the report of a doctor.

Mr. MOORE: In spite of the work which has been efficiently done by the institution, and the increased cost of work as done by another department, the Minister repeats that he would rather take the word of a carpenter or inspector of public buildings than the opinion of the doctor.

The HOME SECRETARY: If you want to build a house, do you employ a doctor?

Mr. MOORE: No; but when I get a man who carries out his work economically and efficiently, I do not give the work to a man

who does not carry out the work now entrusted to him.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is very sour about it.

Mr. MOORE: I can understand his being very sour when the work is left unfinished.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has been approaching you instead of me on the matter.

Mr. MOORE: I do not say that he has been approaching me, but I may inform the hon. gentleman that I have read the doctor's report, and I understand from that that work has been carried out by the institution in an economical way, and I say that under those circumstances it is madness to take the work away from the institution and give it to another department. There is another matter that I should like to refer to, and that is the way in which the several institutions show a profit on their transactions. The profits are evidently regulated in such a way that one institution shall not show any more profit than another. For instance, the report shows that vegetables grown and used at Ipswich are put down at 2d. per lb., while at Toowoomba the price is given as 1d., and at Goodna the price is reckoned as 3d. per lb.

Mr. BRENNAN: What is the difference?

Mr. MOORE: Only 1d. and 3d. These things are grown in the institution garden, and it is an extraordinary thing that there is no regulation requiring that the basis upon which the articles produced shall be paid or charged for at the same rate in all the institutions. It seems to be an extraordinary thing that the director of each institution has to put a different price on what he produces in order to show a profit or a loss on his work, and may thus escape making a loss.

The HOME SECRETARY: You ought to call in the doctor and he will advise you on it.

Mr. MOORE: These things appear to be very peculiar, and the least thing the Minister could do is to take steps to remedy the matters complained of in the report. The articles produced at these institutions are produced for the benefit of the institution, and the report is not written by the doctor for fun, but in order that he may benefit the institutions under the control of the Government. He points out ways in which money can be saved; he points out certain systems which will reduce the cost of maintenance; he points out things that will be for the benefit of the patients; he points out ways in which the nursing staff can get better treatment and better conditions. When he points out these things, surely it is up to the Government to take notice of them. There is something further on page 51 of the report which is worth calling attention to—

“Under the eight-hour system, inquiries into any irregularity or special event can always be effected within twenty-four hours. Under the present system, the patients do not and cannot receive the same interest from the nursing staffs because the nurse or attendant will always be off duty the next day, and naturally interest in their patients ceases owing to want of continuity of work. Under the present system, too, the patients are deprived of many advantages, privileges, and comforts owing to the great expenditure such would incur in payment of overtime to provide them.

[Mr. Moore.]

"Under the proposed system (three shifts of eight hours each) the following advantages would be gained:—Firstly: There would be continuity of work, thereby creating a greater interest in and therefore knowledge of the patients individually and of their peculiarities. Secondly: Practically all patients, except acute cases and those who are very troublesome and dangerous, could have the advantage of sitting up until 9 p.m. instead of being put to bed at 5.45 p.m. and having to stay in bed until 6.15 a.m. as at present. Thirdly: Entertainments could be given more frequently without entailing the heavy expenditure of overtime necessary at present. Fourthly: Acute, troublesome, faulty, and dangerous patients could receive better and more individual attention until 10 p.m., after which time from experience it is known that such patients settle down for the night, give less trouble, and require less attention, and therefore a smaller staff is sufficient to look after them."

Surely recommendations such as those, based on the experience of the medical superintendent, are worthy of some notice. When he finds that the present condition of affairs is unsatisfactory, when he finds that the patients are not getting the treatment they should receive, when he says that an alteration can be brought about without further expense to the department whereby the patients will receive better treatment and the nurses better training, and that everything will be more satisfactory, surely it is worth while for the department to take notice of such recommendations! All through the report, not only does the doctor make recommendations this year, but he calls attention to the fact that those recommendations have been made previously and that no attention has been given to them. Probably these reports have never been read by the people in charge of this department; and here we have the expert who is placed in charge of an institution such as this, who takes sufficient interest in the institution to write to the heads of the department and suggest ways in which things can be improved and economy effected, and yet the department takes no action to ascertain whether there is anything in those recommendations. A little further on he says—

"The training of the pupil nurses and attendants could be practically accomplished during their duty hours.

"The overtime and expense incurred under the present system, which necessitates the night staff doing twelve and a-half hours' work (entailing one-half hour overtime) to allow for change of shifts would be entirely done away with under the eight-hour system."

At twenty-five minutes past 9 o'clock p.m., The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MOORE: All these things must materially benefit not only the patients but the employees, and the Minister will be well advised if he will take notice of the remarks and recommendations that have been made by the medical superintendent.

The HOME SECRETARY: He does not put these things before the Minister; he writes them in his report.

Mr. MOORE. He writes them in his report, and apparently his printed reports are

beneath the notice of the Minister. Surely, if a man in charge of an institution like this writes a report, the Minister should take some notice of it. Surely the Minister does not expect the doctor to write a special letter to him on every subject. He makes his recommendations in his annual report.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is to prevent him making recommendations before he writes his report?

Mr. MOORE: He says that he made many of these recommendations last year, and no notice was taken of them. Surely the hon. gentleman does not expect him to make them all the year round! He makes them in his annual report, in which he says that he wants certain things remedied.

The HOME SECRETARY: His asylum shows up badly against the others so far as economy is concerned. He wants everything under his own control.

Mr. MOORE: It seems to me that the policy of the heads of the department is to say that the recommendations of those in charge of these institutions are no good. This man has a reputation to keep up.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is not interfered with in any way by the Minister.

Mr. MOORE: He may not be interfered with, but he is not backed up. If he were backed up by the department with reference to his recommendations, possibly the work would be carried out—as he suggests—more economically and efficiently.

The HOME SECRETARY: Look at the amount of money that has been spent in his time on buildings.

Mr. MOORE: That is just what I want to get at. I want to get the amount of money that has been spent in carrying out work done by the institution and the amount of money that has been spent in getting work carried out by the Public Works Department, and then we could see where the economy is. If it can be proved that the superintendent is wrong and that the work is now done cheaper and better, the Opposition will have nothing to say. But if the superintendent is proved to be right, and the work can be carried out more efficiently and economically under his administration than by the Public Works Department, then it shows the necessity for some change in the present system. The department say that they are right; that is what we want to find out.

The HOME SECRETARY: He goes to you people; he does not come to us.

Mr. MOORE: There is no occasion for the head of any Government institution to come to us. He writes his reports; we read them. He writes his report for the Minister to read. One would think that the Minister would read it before presenting it to Parliament.

The HOME SECRETARY: I read it, but it was written before I became Minister.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman had an opportunity of perusing it before the Estimates came on. It is extraordinary that the first time the Minister knows anything about the report is when it is brought under his notice here.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are making some inaccurate statements now, like the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not make any inaccurate statements.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: I have only asked a simple question referring to matters dealt with in the report, and the Minister tells me that I should give notice of the question. How could I possibly give notice of a question on the Estimates when the report was tabled months ago?

The HOME SECRETARY: You wanted to know the cost of certain works that were carried out by the Public Works Department.

Mr. MOORE: I want to know whether the cost is greater under the present system or under the system advocated by Dr. Ellerton.

Mr. WHITFORD: You get your facts from a lunatic.

Mr. MOORE: I get my facts from Dr. Ellerton's report. If he is a lunatic, the Government should get rid of him. He is the medical superintendent employed by the Government to administer this asylum, and surely it is the duty of the Government to see that the man in charge of such an institution is capable and sane, and not a lunatic, as suggested on the other side. Dr. Ellerton deals with several things that are worthy of attention. I do not want to read what he says on page 52, but I would recommend the Minister to read what he says there, because it has a great bearing on the future with regard to those with deficient intellects, and what it is going to cost the State to look after them. He points out that it is a suicidal policy to go on as we are doing, and he suggests means of bringing about a better state of affairs.

Mr. WHITFORD: That man should be inside and not outside.

Mr. MOORE: Can you imagine an hon. member sitting behind the Government making such a statement as that?

Mr. WHITFORD: That is my own personal view.

Mr. MOORE: In effect, the hon. member says that the Government have placed in charge of this institution a man who is insane. The hon. member is as responsible as Dr. Ellerton for seeing that people of feeble or unsound mind are looked after by the State. And yet he has the audacity to make the suggestion that the

[9.30 p.m.] man in charge is of weak intellect, that he should be inside instead of outside. Does it not seem an extraordinary thing that a member sitting behind the Government should make that admission? I could understand that a member of the Opposition, after reading a report such as this, might suggest there was something wrong with a member sitting behind the Government in whose power it was to put in charge somebody who was fit to carry out such suggestions and who did not do so. The report that has been written by the doctor is eminently sane, is quite clear, and shows where discrepancies have occurred and gives the Minister the opportunity of remedying the wrong principles that are being carried out in the institution. But all we get from this Minister is that he would rather take the word of a carpenter than the man who wrote the report. I think that a Minister in charge of a department such as that should see that the statements receive more attention than they do at present.

[Mr. Moore.]

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Before making any comments regarding the asylums, I would like to call the Minister's attention to what is obviously an inaccuracy, on page 25 of the Estimates. When he has finished his conversation—

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member going to continue his speech?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No. I am waiting for the Minister to conclude his conversation. I shall make my speech in my own way as I like.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Do I understand the hon. member to say that he would make his speech as he liked himself?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Precisely, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

The CHAIRMAN: I am calling your attention to the Standing Orders.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I would like to call the attention of the Minister to the fact that I think he will find that the total at the bottom of page 25 should be £82,753 and not £24,327, and that the carry-over should be the same figures. I do not know whether it will make any difference to the vote, but it is just as well to call attention to it.

Mr. WEIR: It is adjusted on the next page in the totals.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I was somewhat sorry to hear the remarks of the Minister regarding the gentleman in charge of the asylum at Goodna, because, in my opinion, the report which he has submitted to each member of the House is one that deserves our careful consideration. He has made apparently the one great error of showing in what direction economies can be effected, and that seems to be an offence in the eyes of this Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He has clearly and explicitly set forth not only on this occasion, but on previous occasions, directions in which economies can be effected, but because he dares to do so, because he dares to express himself freely and frankly, he is evidently a marked man—judging by the remarks of the Minister.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is a very excellent man in his own department, but he wants to be Government Architect, Commissioner for Railways, and so on.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Government have put him in charge as manager of that asylum, and I presume, therefore, that he is capable of running the department economically and properly, but because he has the audacity to suggest directions in which economies can be effected, the hon. member for Burrum suggests that he should be an inmate and not the superintendent. Of course, I can quite understand the Government putting that kind of value on such a man's service. Any man who suggests economy in these days is a fit inmate for a lunatic asylum—anyone can see that in the whole of the Government's financial operations. Whenever any savings are suggested in the Auditor-General's report, he is a fit inmate of an asylum, and in that regard we can see something of the kind of

victimisation exemplified in the remarks of the Minister for Mines in another Chamber last night—that unless a man was a Labour supporter he should not be allowed to buy meat at a State butcher's shop. And because it is assumed that Dr. Ellerton is not a supporter of the Labour party, he is a marked man. How dare he fulfil his obligations to the House by pointing out directions in which economies can be effected! I happen to know Dr. Ellerton fairly intimately, and I have met him on many occasions—he is in my electorate—but never on one occasion has he made the slightest complaint to me about the department which controls his asylum.

The PREMIER: You have let the cat out of the bag.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He is a man who is scrupulously honourable in the way he conducts his affairs, and for the Minister to suggest that the superintendent has come to us to lay complaints about his department is in keeping with some of the other statements of the hon. member, and in my judgment is a scandal and disgrace, because you can see that because a man has been brave enough to suggest directions in which money can be saved he is going to take the word of a carpenter instead of his word. He complains in his report that the work done previously under his supervision was more economically done than it is done under the Works Department. When a pipe wanted mending, he was able to effect that repair.

The HOME SECRETARY: When did he tell you this?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He has not told me this. I have got it from other men in the asylum. I am pointing out that he is not a man who comes and crawls to members of Parliament. The asylum is in my electorate, and it is my duty to look after it. The superintendent points out that if anything wants mending or some slight job requires attending to, the Works Department has to be notified, and a man has to be sent up.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why does not the superintendent at Dunwich do the same thing?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am talking about Goodna, and I am not going to be switched off my point. Because the superintendent is bold enough and fair enough to us—and his duty is to the Opposition just as much as to the Government—and to the people of Queensland—he is belittled by the Government. The Home Secretary thinks he is a man who has exceeded his duties, just as the Auditor-General is accused of having exceeded his duties when he points out directions in which economies can be effected. That is an offence, something which this Government cannot tolerate, yet the Premier, on every occasion when we talk of economy says, "Show us where they can be effected." If we only had a sufficiently retentive mind, we could occupy the whole time allowed to us for speaking by showing where economies can be effected. Here is one way in which they can be effected, but it is an offence to mention it. So long as we are in opposition it will be our duty to point out these things, and to look to these managers and superintendents to show us in what directions money is being squandered and in what directions economies can be effected. If the Government does not appreciate them, we, as an Opposition, do.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to support the remarks of the last two speakers. It is rather a remarkable attitude for the Minister to adopt towards a man who has made a report. One cannot help noting that there is a spirit of hostility to him because he has had the temerity to criticise the department in such a bold and open way. There is no question that the department seems to be trying to carry out the policy of the Trades Hall, not to work economically, but to create labour, so that the inmates shall not have the privilege of doing work which can be done by unionists outside. That seems to be the whole bone of contention. If we have men in the institutions who are capable of doing work just as well as, if not better than, the class of workmen who will be sent there, why should the principal in charge of an institution not practise economy, which he can do, and save the public the expense? Why should the recommendations of a principal not be taken heed of? Look at the incident reported about that engine.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has an absolutely free hand.

Mr. VOWLES: He has a free hand, and makes a report, and he is then hostilely criticised by members of the Government, who, instead of condemning him, should applaud him. If a man in charge of such an institution has the interests of the institution at heart, he will attend to every minor detail there. The medical superintendent is placed there, first of all because he is a good man as a doctor, and because he has other ability in addition.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you give the control of the buildings of the General Hospital in Brisbane to the medical superintendent?

Mr. VOWLES: That is quite a different thing. Do you expect the matron of an institution simply to do the nursing? No, you expect her to get results from the farm in connection with poultry and other side lines for the upkeep of the institution; yet she is not a poultry expert or farmer. It is the same with the medical superintendent at Goodna. There is no need for me to strain that point any further. The criticisms of the last two hon. members who have spoken have made the hon. gentleman wince, and he should take notice of what has been said. It is scandalous to think that in the vegetable garden the superintendent twelve months ago recommended the purchase of an engine for irrigation purposes, by which they could save a tremendous amount of expense, but that engine has not been procured.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are now trying to get two silos built at Goodna.

Mr. VOWLES: You are ready to act now that the drought is over. The hon. gentleman said he could not expect results during the drought, and that was just the time when other men came down to Brisbane to buy oil engines, but when the head of an institution made a recommendation—

The PREMIER: He wanted to spend £3,500 for £45 worth of vegetables.

Mr. VOWLES: That opens up another question. I would like to know from the Minister what is the practice at the various institutions in connection with the purchase of vegetables. Are they purchased from the State Produce Agency? Is there any competition, or is the institution simply there for

Mr. Vowles.]

the purpose of buoying up another one? It is remarkable if the only profit the State Produce Agency is able to make is the profit which it derives from the sales of stocks to public institutions, for which it charges higher prices than the general produce dealer would charge. It would be far better to close the State Produce Agency than run it on those lines.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The State Produce Agency does not come under this vote.

Mr. VOWLES: No, but produce is part of the stuff which has to be purchased for these institutions. It is time to close down the State Produce Market and purchase your produce in the cheapest market. If a produce market is to be bolstered up with a monopoly of the trade of institutions such as this, and it is charging higher prices, we should close it up, as it is really being run at a loss, and allow the principals of the other institutions to buy their necessaries in the cheapest market.

There is another vote which I think comes under this heading—that is, the consumptive sanatorium at Dalby.

The CHAIRMAN: It came under the previous vote.

Mr. VOWLES: In that case I will not refer to it.

Question put and passed.

LAZARET.

The HOME SECRETARY: I move—That £6,198 be granted for "Lazaret." There are some increases here amounting to £1,016. In maintenance there is an increase of £800. This afternoon, the hon. member for Bulimba suggested that I should visit the Lazaret, and I will do so as soon as I have an opportunity, and inspect the establishment. If I can do anything to help these people and make their lives more bearable on account of the awful disease they are suffering from, I shall be very willing to do so.

Question put and passed.

MEDICAL.

The HOME SECRETARY: I move—That £2,570 be granted for "Medical." This is the usual vote for the amounts paid to the various medical officers.

Question put and passed.

OUTDOOR RELIEF.

The HOME SECRETARY: I move—That £41,580 be granted for "Outdoor Relief." This matter was very fully discussed this evening on the first vote, and there is no need to repeat the statements made then.

Mr. MORGAN: It seems extraordinary that, while last year only £8,986 was placed on the Estimates, we are to-day asked to vote £41,580 for outdoor relief. Does the Government anticipate that the relief given during the present financial year will be so much greater than during past years?

The HOME SECRETARY: The last six months have been bad.

Mr. MORGAN: I suppose that a great amount of this money has already been spent on outdoor relief.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

[Mr. Fowles.

Mr. MORGAN: I would like the Minister to tell us whether they are paying relief to men out on strike, the same as those who are out of employment.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. Men who are out on strike do not get relief, but their wives and families do. We must give them relief.

Mr. MORGAN: That is practically the same thing. Do they get the same amount?

The HOME SECRETARY: They get what the police consider necessary.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not a proper thing. Previously, if a man was out on strike the unions gave strike pay for the purpose of relieving distress caused by the strike, but now evidently the unions have been relieved of their responsibility in that direction, and these men obtain relief from the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not so. It may have happened on a few occasions.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government of no other State gives relief to strikers.

The HOME SECRETARY: They do. They paid relief during the seamen's strike in every capital in Australia.

Mr. MORGAN: Not to the strikers.

The HOME SECRETARY: They did. The Commonwealth Government did.

Mr. MORGAN: I object strongly to this Government paying relief to those on strike.

The PREMIER: Why do you sidestep the Commonwealth?

Mr. MORGAN: The time is ripe when greater inquiry should be made in regard to those needing assistance.

The HOME SECRETARY: Every inquiry is made.

Mr. MORGAN: We have read in the Press that at Townsville and other places men got ration tickets from the police to obtain bread, and then sold them to people who were prepared to buy. We have also read of men who have had rolls of notes in their pockets being allowed to obtain relief from the police.

The HOME SECRETARY: That has happened with past Governments.

Mr. MORGAN: I admit that that might have been so, but the Minister will agree that it has happened to a far greater extent since the present Government has been in power. That is why I would like to see more inquiries made. I have no objection to the Government giving assistance to those genuinely in need of it, but for many months past, if not for years past—I go so far as to say during the regime of the previous Government—people who are, comparatively speaking, well off have obtained relief when they were not entitled to it. People who have homes of their own, well furnished, and who are able to keep a horse and sulky, have been obtaining relief from the Government. Is that a fair thing? I do not think it is when we have genuine distress in the country and when we have settlers struggling for their very existence who are not getting relief. I would like to see a Commission appointed; perhaps a Supreme Court judge.

The HOME SECRETARY: It could make no more inquiries than the police do.

Mr. MORGAN: There are many chronic cases of people obtaining relief from the Government when they are not entitled to it.

The HOME SECRETARY: There cannot be too many. £8,000 would not allow for much imposition, considering the large amount of unemployed.

Mr. MORGAN: There has been some imposition, and I hope the Minister will see that the imposter is compelled to work or starve. Something must be done to alter present conditions.

Mr. CORSER: I desire to protest against this continuous state of unemployment and the necessity for the huge vote that we are asked to pass this evening.

Mr. WHITFORD: Did a deputation wait on you?

Mr. CORSER: They, at any rate, would get sympathy if they did, and they would not get a policeman following them along. Evidently the Government are quite prepared for a continuance of this system of unemployment when they are proposing to pass £40,000 for relief—nearly five times as much as was required last year.

The HOME SECRETARY: You must remember that the allowance which each individual receives has been increased.

Mr. CORSER: Yes. You have increased it by 42 per cent., and the total increase in cost of living is 72 per cent., so that the Government have not done too much in that respect. As far as I know, the people who go for relief are people who want it, and my complaint is that, associated with them, are people who deny others the right to work and who cause strife in industry, assisted, as they are, by the Government to promote unemployment. We have evidence of it tonight in the increased vote for this purpose. I enter my protest at the Government not tackling the unemployment problem, seeing that in every country district, and in the towns also, there is a huge growth in the ranks of the unemployed, and it is up to the Labour Government, which was going to make everything right—which was going to bring the poor, downtrodden worker to the top—to correct that state of affairs. These unfortunates have woken up, and I hope that industry will have the assistance it should have and that there will be no need after this year to provide such a huge amount of money to relieve unemployment in Queensland.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I would not have said anything on this vote were it not for the remarks of the hon. member for Murilla. It was quite interesting to note the different tone in the speech of the hon. member for Burnett and that of the hon. member for Murilla. The hon. member for Burnett said he was perfectly satisfied that in no case did any person apply for relief when they were not in need of it.

Mr. CORSER: I said: "With exceptions."

Mr. McLACHLAN: The hon. member did not make any exceptions at all. I think he ought to be proud of the statement he made.

Mr. CORSER: I am always proud of my statements. (Government laughter.)

Mr. McLACHLAN: The hon. member for Murilla, in an altogether different strain, tried to imply that not only were there undesirable cases getting relief, but that the

Government were knowingly giving relief to undesirable cases.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister admitted that the department had been imposed upon.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The Minister admitted that in the working of an institution such as this there may be impositions. But the desire of the hon. member was not to convey that idea, but to convey the idea

[10 p.m.] that the department was wittingly giving relief in cases where they knew it should not have been granted. Another point the hon. member endeavoured to make was that, because certain men in the community strike for a principle and stand out against injustices that very often are attempted to be imposed upon the working man by employers, their wives and children should be allowed to starve; that the Government should not grant relief to the wives and children of those men while the men are standing for this principle. I think it is a pity any hon. member in this House is prepared to stand up in his place and give utterance to such a sentiment—that he would be a party to allowing women and children to go hungry because their husbands and fathers were standing up for a principle which they conceived to be right. With reference to inquiries that are made in this connection, I know we have very capable inspectors as far as the city of Brisbane is concerned. The ladies who are doing this work are doing it effectively and well. I have had conversations, not only with the Minister, but also with the officer in charge of Government relief, and that officer speaks in very high terms of praise of the work that is being done by the inspectors. I am perfectly satisfied that there are very few cases in the city of Brisbane where relief is being granted which is not deserved.

Mr. MORGAN: You will admit there are some?

Mr. McLACHLAN: I am not prepared to admit that there are any. I do not know of any in the city of Brisbane. But I say it might be possible, in a big vote such as this is, that there would be imposition. But, for the hon. member to say that the Government are a party to that sort of thing, is to say something that cannot be borne out by the facts—cannot be verified in any way at all. It is a pity that we have to have such a big vote for relief.

Mr. MORGAN: It never was necessary under any other Government.

Mr. McLACHLAN: But, while there is a necessity for food to be granted to the people who are in need of rations, the Government would be lacking in their duty if they did not act in the manner in which they now are acting. Following up what the Minister said by way of interjection to the hon. member for Burnett, I would like to say the Government have recognised the need there is for increasing the amount of rations at this particular time. I think the Government are to be commended for taking action of this kind when this relief is needed in the community. (Hear, hear!) I hope the hon. member for Murilla, before he again makes such rash statements, will consider the question very carefully.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not withdraw one word.

Mr. SPENCER: This extra vote is necessary because the Government anticipate there is going to be a large number of unemployed. What is the reason for there being unem-

Mr. Spencer.]

ployed? The hon. member for Toowoomba said the squatters only employed old-age pensioners and children, and consequently all the other men came down to the city.

Mr. BRENNAN: In a number of cases.

Mr. SPENCER: We all know that, once he accepts employment, the old-age pensioner loses his pension. I suppose the hon. member was really referring to the elderly class of man who works for a lesser wage than the award rates. There is no man in Queensland who has suffered more than the elderly man under the award rates. These unfortunate people go to the court and ask for permission to work at a lower rate. I know of several instances. One man, seventy years of age, was offered a job as a gardener on a station at £1 10s. a week. He applied to the court, and the Labour organisation opposed the application. This unfortunate man was told he must get the award rate or he could not go to work. Another instance occurred on the station of the hon. member for Carnarvon. A man, who was an invalid practically, who had been pottering about the place for some time, was getting £1 10s. a week. When the new award came in he had to get £2 13s. He applied to the court at Surat for permission to work at a lower wage. The Labour organisation opposed the application, and the consequence was the man was told that unless he got the full award rate he could not work on the place. Now, that has a very ill-effect on the elderly men throughout the country. There are many men who have been on the stations a number of years. They have been there from boyhood in a number of cases, and they have worked there until they have reached the age of anything up to seventy years. They would rather work on that station, which is a home for them, but they cannot get permission, and consequently they have to go out of employment. Of course, any employer would rather give a young, strong man the award rates than an elderly man. There are other reasons for unemployment which the Minister explained to some extent. He explained that there has been a drought on. We do not realise how bad this drought has been. That has given employment to a number of men cutting scrub. At the same time, it has not given employment to all. A very high price has to be paid for horse feed, and now the Government have raised the railway freights. The cost of living also has gone up. That has an indirect effect upon employment, as the Minister admits. I regret to say that the men who are in these industries are not expanding their efforts in any way, because they find the risk is not good enough. They are quite satisfied to sit down and make an ordinary living.

The HOME SECRETARY interjected.

Mr. SPENCER: None of these men on the land have money lying idle in the bank. Nearly every one has a mortgage. If you go to the Lands Office you will see mortgages registered on nearly every lease.

The HOME SECRETARY: A lot of our surplus money has gone into war loans. That is one real cause of unemployment.

Mr. SPENCER: That is so. If you are going to take away 50 per cent. of the profits of a man, of course everybody will put his money into the war loan, as 4½ per cent. without any taxation is the best investment in Queensland to-day. That has taken a lot of money out of the country which was used for

developmental purposes. These men put their money into the war loan because they find it pays them better, and they have no risk.

Mr. W. COOPER: Do you not think a lot of them were forced into it?

Mr. SPENCER: If I had any money to invest I would buy war bonds; they are far and away the best investment. With regard to unemployment, it seems to me a most extraordinary thing that we have to spend £40,000 in relief. Here we have a country which is undeveloped and is crying out for people to develop it. Our asset in the shape of the land is depreciating and deteriorating every day. The pear is spreading, suckers are growing up, and the land has become valueless.

Mr. WHITFORD: If your party were in power there would be wholesale retrenchment, as was done in the past, and we would have ten times as much unemployment.

Mr. SPENCER: Surely the Government can find work for the unemployed on reproductive works. What is the use of feeding people for nothing? Give them work. There is any amount of work in the country, and it seems to me that it is common sense that instead of finding relief for the unemployed we should put them on productive work from which we shall get some return for the money we spend. We are now spending £40,000 a year without getting any return for our money, when we have the best country in the world, parts of which we are allowing to depreciate, and we might employ people who are out of work for the purpose of rendering valuable and available for settlement land which at present is almost valueless. I know there are some people who are not physically capable of doing the kind of work that is required in that direction, but at the same time there are many who are capable of doing it, and why should we spend money in feeding those people when they might be employed in doing work which will be for the benefit of the whole community?

Mr. WEIR: It is a regrettable thing that in a young country like this we should have to provide relief for unemployed, but I am afraid that this kind of thing will continue as long as the present social system continues. What is required is "work," not "relief." In my own district we have had more than our share of unemployment, but that is mainly due to the fact that it is on the fringe of the sugar-cane growing district, and that many men come from the Southern States to find work in that industry, and when deprived of their occupations they flock into the big cities. I hope that the time is not far distant when the Government will go further in the direction of relief than they are doing at the present time. I know that it is a matter of £ s. d., but I hope that the finances of the country will enable us at no distant date to provide properly for men, women, and children, who cannot live on rations alone; such things as horse rent and clothing demand consideration during "out-of-work" periods. I believe that in big cities at least, particularly in the Southern cities, many women are driven on to the streets through lack of home comforts, and I know that some people state that they are unable to send their children to school because they are not in a position to provide them with needful food and clothing. That sort of thing is happening in

[Mr. Spencer.]

many places, and it ought not to happen in a country like Queensland. Unemployment is a bad thing for any people; no man is ever improved by being out of work, and no home is ever improved by the parents being out of work. Nothing brings down a man more quickly than unemployment, and it should be our endeavour to provide in the best possible way against unemployment. We have got to the stage when we have increased the sustenance allowance to persons in need, and I am proud of that fact, and I hope that in the future we shall go further in that direction and provide for the clothing and housing of those people who are not in a position to provide those necessities for themselves. I think that one big factor in the causes which have brought about unemployment in Queensland is the absolute disregard of their obligations by the Commonwealth Government. Our State Government endeavour to find employment for returned soldiers whom the Commonwealth Government promised should be given sustenance at 6s. a day, while the Commonwealth Government are neglecting their obligation to provide for those men. While in my district the State Government have spent £50,000 in relief, the Commonwealth Government have spent only £350 in assisting returned soldiers. Even where Commonwealth work would relieve unemployed soldiers—for example, Walkers' Government contracts—nothing is being done to expedite the work, despite the fact that similar contracts in other parts are well in hand. Newspaper reports regarding the quantity of work in hand at Walkers have also done much to encourage the unemployed from all parts to flock to Maryborough. That is the way returned soldiers have been treated by a Government who wanted to conscript men and send them away to the war. As a matter of fact the Commonwealth Government are doing nothing for the returned soldiers. We shall always have the unemployed among us as long as our present social system is allowed to continue.

Mr. VOWLES: What about your labour exchanges?

Mr. WEIR: The hon. gentleman knows that the Government cannot place more men than they can find work for. The duty of the labour exchanges is very clear, and that is to place men where they are required. If an exchange gets a request for twenty men, they place those twenty men in the part of the country where they are required. But I can give a hundred cases in my own district, in which men who are out of work do not belong to the district, but have come from Tasmania or some of the Southern States to obtain work in the sugar industry. We cannot expect those persons to live on air. I have gone to Croydon Junction to see those people in their tents, and to see what home comforts they have, and I know that many of them need assistance. I hope that we shall go ahead with the work we are doing while there are any unemployed in the State. I would remind the leader of the Opposition, that a good deal of the present trouble would have been overcome, and we should have gone a long way towards solving the unemployed problem, if he and his party had passed the Bill introduced by the Government entitled the Unemployed Workers Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR: Anyone would think from the remarks made by the last speaker that the Commonwealth Government was a foreign

Government outside this State. The hon. member evidently appears to lose sight of the fact that whatever money the Commonwealth Government may expend has to be raised in the several States of the Commonwealth. It is not an outside foreign power, and my own opinion is that the Commonwealth Government are doing the very best thing possible for the returned soldiers. Any unbiassed man must admit that they are endeavouring to solve the problem of repatriation honestly and fairly. It is a problem the like of which has never had to be faced by any Australian or Queensland Government before, and I think that they are doing all that is possible in that direction. With regard to this vote, I take it that the outdoor relief fund was established principally to relieve genuine cases of unemployment and distress that might arise from the sickness of the breadwinner or in the family. When the Minister was asked if strikers received anything from the fund, he said that they did. We have been told that, if assistance was not granted, women and children would starve. Certainly women and children should not be allowed to starve, but I contend that, with the machinery that the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have put in operation for the settlement of trade and industrial disputes, there is no need for any man's wife and children to starve, and that a man's first duty is to his wife and children. Considering that the Government have placed at the disposal of the trade unions judges to hear their cases and to decide one way or the other, in the event of a strike, who is responsible for women and children starving? This fund is established to relieve every genuine case of unemployment; but strikes have no business to exist in this State or in Australia. What did this Government start their Arbitration Court for? In order to prevent strikes and to settle industrial disputes. This fund was not started to encourage strikes.

The HOME SECRETARY: A lot of relief is given, not to direct strikers, but to men who are thrown out of work by reason of a strike somewhere else.

Mr. TAYLOR: Expenditure in that direction is quite legitimate, and I have not one word to say against it; but I say that the first duty of any man, before he thinks of striking, is to his wife and children, and he must not look for relief to the State, which has provided an Arbitration Court to see that he gets a fair "do." Another matter to which I would like to make some reference—I would not have mentioned it but for the fact that it has been referred to by other speakers—is that, in connection with the outdoor relief, the whole of the institutions with which we have been dealing to-night have a right to buy the produce they want for distribution in the cheapest possible market. Although I will not say that they are not getting it at the cheapest possible rate, I say that they have no check on the prices they pay to the State Produce Agency for anything they purchase there under the present system. They should get quotations all round the city, and the people whose prices are the lowest and whose produce is the best, should get the order. If the State Produce Agency is not able to stand on its own legs and do a fair thing by the State, it should get out of business. I hope that the Minister will see that, as far as possible, only really deserving cases will be helped from this particular fund.

Mr. Taylor.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I think there are many reasons for unemployment in this State, and, perhaps, for the increase in this vote. One of those reasons is that such advice is given as the hon. member for Maryborough is reported in the Press to have given. It is stated that he advised people to keep their money in the bank and apply to the Government for rations.

Mr. WEIR: That is near enough for you. Go ahead! I would not deny anything you say, or admit it either.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Another reason is that industries and manufacturers are not encouraged in Queensland. If a man with capital wanted to start an industry that would give employment to 100 men, the first thing he would find would be some organiser coming along and persuading the men to come out the first day. There is no security whatever for persons to invest capital here in any manufacturing industry. Nearly eighteen months ago I asked the then Secretary for Agriculture if he would inquire into a certain industry that was being started in New Zealand and Victoria. The hon. gentleman said he would do so, but I have never heard of any inquiries being made. I know that one firm has taken up the manufacture of the article in Sydney, and they are spending nearly £500,000 in one factory alone. Yet this Government did not think the industry worth inquiring into. If that firm had received proper encouragement there is no reason why they should not have come to Queensland, because they could get the raw material here better and cheaper than they can get it in New South Wales.

At half-past 10 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under Standing Order No. 306, I must now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

HARBOUR BOARDS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. VOWLES: I have had a look through this Bill and it appears to me that there is nothing in it to which exception can be taken. It provides for the appointment of a deputy chairman, and also makes certain provision whereby harbour boards are entitled to borrow money for temporary accommodation on a certain basis. I think that it is a measure of which some boards may wish to take advantage, and so far as I have noticed from the papers, and so far as I am personally concerned, nothing appears to have got in to which I would take objection. I therefore have no intention of opposing the Bill.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

The three clauses of the Bill were put and passed without amendment or debate.

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

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

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

[*Mr. Bebbington.*]