

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 27 JULY 1922

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 27 JULY, 1922.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 3.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

INDEBTEDNESS TO TREASURY OF ROCKHAMPTON HARBOUR BOARD.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*) asked the Treasurer—

Re the Rockhampton Harbour Board—

“1. What was the total amount of the board's indebtedness to the Treasury on the 30th June, 1921?”

“2. What additional amount has been lent the board from 1st July, 1921, to date?”

“3. (a) What amount of interest and redemption was due by the board during each of the financial years ended 30th June, 1919, 30th June, 1920, 30th June, 1921? (b) What amounts were actually paid during each of those years?”

“4. Concerning the loan of £10,000 offered or made to the board recently— (a) What conditions regarding repayments of interest and redemption attached to such loan? (b) Did the board accept the loan on such conditions?”

“5. Did he, when a deputation from the board waited upon him in Rockhampton recently, say or imply that the board was in a bankrupt State, or words to that effect?”

“6. Is he aware that, notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of the board's finances, they have just recently reduced their wharfage and harbour dues charges on many lines?”

“7. Is he aware that such action must so diminish their revenue as to make it more difficult or impossible than ever for the board to repay its indebtedness to the Treasury?”

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

“1. £388,924 14s. 8d.

“2. £7,598 14s. 9d., exclusive of interest; capitalised, £33,620 10s. 8d.

“3. (a) Exclusive of 12,678 5s. 8d. arrears from the previous year, the amounts are—

	£	s.	d.
30th June, 1919 ...	13,434	18	0
30th June, 1920 ...	13,676	13	7
30th June, 1921 ...	14,271	4	9

Redemption payments were suspended for the period—

	£	s.	d.
(b) 30th June, 1919 ...	9,427	8	10
30th June, 1920 ...	4,616	6	9
30th June, 1921 ...	5,240	5	8

“4. (a) That redemption payments on account of loans to the board be suspended for a period of three years ending on the 30th June, 1925, during which period interest only on such loans is to be charged to the board, but no penalty

to be imposed should such interest be not fully paid. The board to undertake to pay to the Treasury the following percentages of its annual revenue:—(1) When the revenue does not exceed £20,000, 50 per cent. of such revenue. (2) When the revenue exceeds £20,000 but does not exceed £25,000, 50 per cent. of £20,000, and 75 per cent. of the amount exceeding £20,000 up to £25,000. (3) When the revenue exceeds £25,000, as in No. 2 above, plus 100 per cent. of the amount in excess of £25,000. The total annual payments to the Treasury not to exceed the interest due on loans outstanding. Any portion of the interest unpaid for any half-year during the period to be carried forward. (b) Yes.

“5. I asked what was the use of ignoring the fact that the board was hopelessly insolvent.

“6. I have no information on the matter, but will make inquiries.

“7. Without full information with respect to the reductions stated to have been made I cannot offer an opinion; but it does not necessarily follow that such action would reduce the board's revenue.”

WIRE NETTING PURCHASED BY LANDS DEPARTMENT AND APPLICATIONS THEREFOR.

Mr. PETERSON (*Yormanby*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. What quantity of wire netting has been purchased by the Lands Department during the period 1st July, 1919, to 30th June, 1922?”

“2. How many farmers applied for wire netting during the period mentioned above?”

“3. What was the quantity applied for?”

“4. How many application on the part of farmers were refused by the department?”

“5. When does he expect to be able to supply further requests?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

“1. 364 miles of netting was purchased during this period for distribution to settlers and rabbit boards

“2. On account of the prohibitive prices ruling for netting, the department had no netting available during the greater part of the period mentioned, and, therefore, a list of applications was not kept. Applicants were, however, informed that if netting was purchased by them, the department would assist them by advancing an amount up to 25 per cent. above pre-war prices for netting. Seventeen settlers took advantage of this offer, and received advances amounting to £1,693. Since May last netting has again been supplied to settlers.

“3. See answer to No. 2.

“4. Twenty-seven.

“5. The matter of the purchase of further supplies of netting is now under consideration.”

PERMIT FOR RUNNING CARNIVAL OR LIBERTY
FAIR AT LOWOOD.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*) asked the Attorney-General—

“During what period of time was a permit granted to Mr. Mason to run a carnival or Liberty Fair at Lowood?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

“No permit was granted to Mr. Mason to run a carnival or Liberty fair at Lowood.”

COMMONWEALTH GRANT IN AID OF NATIONAL
HIGHWAYS FOR RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYED
RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*), without notice, asked the Premier—

“1. Has he received any confirmation of the published statement that the Federal Cabinet have decided to make available £250,000 on a £1 for £1 basis for national highways as a means of relieving unemployment of returned soldiers?”

“2. Owing to the seriousness and the extent of such unemployment, will he expedite the matter so far as Queensland is concerned?”

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore) replied—

“So far I have no official communication from the Prime Minister on the subject.”

WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

INITIATION.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Workers' Homes Act of 1919 in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS
ACT.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*), in moving—

“That in order to prevent further disfranchisement of country districts, it is necessary to amend section 7 of the Electoral Districts Act of 1910 by repealing the words ‘but in no case shall such quota be departed from to a greater extent than one-fifth more or one-fifth less,’ and inserting in lieu thereof, ‘Provided that, notwithstanding anything contained in this section or in the last preceding section, electoral districts which are wholly comprised within the boundaries of cities or towns shall have not less than 40 per cent. more electors than those of electoral districts which are wholly beyond such boundaries, and electoral districts which comprise land partly within and partly without such boundaries shall have not less than 25 per cent. more electors than those of

electoral districts which are wholly beyond such boundaries’”—

said: This motion is intended to remedy an injustice which has been done to primary producers by the present Government under an Act passed by their predecessors.

Mr. COLLINS: Passed by a Government of which you were a supporter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Although that Act allows for a 40 per cent. difference between the number of electors in country electorates and the number in city electorates, advantage was taken by the Redistribution Commissioners to give the advantage to the cities. A great injustice was thereby done to the primary producers, which nothing that the Government have done so far has removed. The primary producers suffered a great deal at the hands of the Government in 1915, 1916, 1917, and 1918, but this was the crowning insult to the primary producers, as it practically disfranchised from 20,000 to 24,000 country electors. It did not take the vote away from them, but it reduced their representation in Parliament by four members, which practically disfranchised them so far as their political power was concerned. There is no excuse whatever for it, because the Government knew at the time that it was difficult to keep people on the land. They knew that people were leaving the country for the cities, and that it required every encouragement to induce the people to stay on the land. They knew that there was no greater insult they could offer to any community than to disfranchise it. We had Mr. Sastri, from India, addressing hon. members in this Chamber a little while ago in regard to the question of enfranchising a few hundred Hindus, and the Government gave him every consideration. But in connection with 24,000 of the primary producers, who are the backbone of the country, the Government deliberately disfranchised them in order that they might win the next election.

If the Government want to wipe out their past actions, I can show them a very easy way to do it. There are three Bills which it will be necessary for them to place on the statute-book of Queensland, and if they do it as I suggest, it will bring prosperity to the country and restore confidence. It is only reasonable that the Government should do these things. The first thing I want the Government to do is to bring in a new Electoral Districts Act, and in that Act provision should be made to give a better quota for the country districts than is given at the present time. We could then have a new redistribution of seats before another election takes place. If the Government will do that, they will show repentance for their past evil deeds (Opposition Members: Hear, hear! and laughter.) The second Bill which the Government should introduce, if they want to win the confidence of the people of Queensland, is one to take away from the Government the power which they possess at the present time to seize citizens' goods. (Opposition Members: Hear, hear!) If they introduce that Bill and take away from the Government the power to seize goods belonging to any citizen except by purchasing them at their full value, it will be a good thing for the country. The Government should also remove a blot that now exists on the statute-book by re-enfranchising the country districts. We want a new Electoral Districts Act and another redistribution of seats before

Mr. Bebbington.]

the next election, and then justice will be done to the country. The country people will then see that the Government are really repentant.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They might get another term. (Laughter.)

Mr. PEASE: We will get another term without that. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Government go to the country with these blots still existing on the statute-book, instead of winning more seats as they expect to do—seeing that they have cut out four of the country seats—they will get less.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Albert introduced the last Bill for a redistribution of seats. We tried to improve it, but you would not help us.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Government deliberately misused the power given to them in that Act. I say that deliberately. It was no accident; it was done purposely. I am sorry that I cannot do justice to my motion to-day, as I am suffering from an attack of influenza, and I shall have to stop speaking directly. I might, however, show the inequalities between some of the electorates. For instance, we have the Brisbane electorate with 6,310 electors, and Drayton with 6,215 electors, although Drayton is a country electorate. Then we have Windsor with 7,192 electors, Merthyr with 6,902 electors, and Buranda with 6,720 electors. These are all Brisbane electorates. In the country we have Murilla with 5,891 electors, Maranoa with 5,319 electors, Warrego with 5,034 electors, Gregory with 4,560 electors, and, as I have already stated, Drayton with 6,215 electors. There are something like sixty odd schools in the Drayton electorate to-day, while in some of the city electorates they have only got one school.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is a good thing for the member.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In the city electorates, the member can get up in the morning and go right through his electorate before lunch. Just fancy having 4,560 electors in the Gregory electorate! Then there is Warrego with 5,034, and here you have the city of Brisbane, with only 6,310. There is no need to point to anything beyond these figures to demonstrate the injustice done to the primary producers.

Now I shall show how the primary producers are treated in Victoria, which is the most prosperous State in Australia to-day. We have Boroondara, which is a city electorate, with 29,974 electors, and Essendon with 25,295. On the other hand, we have country electorates such as Grenville with 6,287, or less than one-fourth of those city electorates, and Allendale with 6,321. In Queensland we have gone to the other extreme and made our country electorates larger than the city electorates in order that the Government might get back to office. There was never such a misuse of power as has been exercised in this respect against the primary producers. I regret that my voice will not allow me to continue, but I consider that I have shown that injustice has been done.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I wish to second the motion, because I consider that a wrong principle has been followed in the redistribution of seats. It has been generally recognised throughout Australia right from the beginning that the quota for country districts

should be lower than that for city districts. In the Electoral Distribution Act which was passed in Victoria in 1913 the proportion was sixty to a hundred. The people in the cities are always in a better position than those in the country. There is not in the cities the diversity of interests which occurs in the country, because in the former the interests of all the electors are generally the same. A member for a country electorate has to travel over a large area and make himself acquainted with many different industries.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not seem to realise that you are criticising the hon. member for Albert, who was a member of the Government that passed the present Act.

Mr. MOORE: I do not care. I suppose that, if we read up the speeches of hon. members on the other side, we would find that they are not now supporting the same principles as they supported at that time. They were opposed to one vote one value at that time, but they are not opposed to it to-day.

Mr. COLLINS: Read what I said then.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know what the hon. member said; but, at any rate, he voted in accordance with the principles laid down by his party. We find hon. members on that side standing up and advocating one thing and then voting for another. We want men who, when they have principles, are prepared to stand up to them, and, if necessary, come over here and vote for them. (Government interruption.) Apparently, they are merely concerned about getting up and saying something which will enable them to go into the electorates and say, "I advocated this." But it is the vote that counts.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We wanted to make it a good Act, but your party spoiled it.

Mr. MOORE: The Act was an absolute mistake.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is not our fault.

Mr. MOORE: It is your fault. Will any reasonable man say that instructions were not given to the Commissioners last year as to the way in which they were to read that Act? Of course, they were. (Government interruption.) Certain instructions were given to them as to how they were to carry out the work they were to do, and they carried out those instructions because they thought it would be to the advantage of the Government. Can anyone say it is a wise thing to give a preponderating influence to the cities? It should be the object of a Government to promote agricultural settlement; yet we find that four more seats are to be given to the city of Brisbane. There is no doubt that Brisbane has been better served than the country. The influence of town members is greater than it ought to be, yet it is proposed to increase that influence. We surely ought to recognise that what is required is to get a greater number of members who will understand the conditions appertaining to the country. How can you expect men who represent the city to understand the conditions existing out in the far western country? They have their conveniences down here. In many cases in the country they have to find their own conveniences—build their own schools, assist in providing accommodation for vocational classes, and bear a portion of the cost of the equipment. You never hear of that being done in the towns. We want to have greater representation in the country than in the

[*Mr. Bebbington.*]

towns. I think the scheme put forward in Victoria is a very good one. Town electors have easy access to their member. Look at the vast distances which country members have to travel to get over their electorates. The hon. member for Gregory the other day said that it takes three months to get round his electorate. Surely you cannot have one vote one value in an electorate like that! Look at the number of letters a country member has to read and write to enable his constituents to keep him familiar with the needs of his electorate. He has to make himself familiar with the different industries that are carried on. Possibly, in a town electorate—which a member can get round in a couple of hours—there are only two or three different industries, and those people can take their member over their businesses and show exactly what they require. In the country, it is a different thing altogether. We want to see the representation put on a fair basis, because we desire that the people in the country shall have an opportunity of putting their views before their representatives, and have them represented intelligently in this Chamber. In 1913, Mr. Watt, in the Victorian Parliament, was taxed with leaving the introduction of amending legislation to the last session of the Parliament. This was his reply—

“Of course, as hon. members acquainted with constitutional principles know, if we rearranged districts at an early stage, immediately the scheme became operative and the new rolls were alive, we would have been compelled constitutionally, if we followed accepted practice, to go at once to the country. That is the feeling of all sections of the House.”

He recognised that if they effected a redistribution of seats and had new rolls printed, the Government would have to go to the country and see whether or not the people approved of the action which they had taken. If this Government had consulted the people, the people would not have approved of their action, because the country people resent the taking away from them of four seats, and they recognise that the principles actuating the Government were not such as make for the best interests of Queensland, but had for their object the prolonging of the life of the Government. If a fresh redistribution is made every time there is an increase in population in the cities, the time will come when the country will be practically unrepresented. We have too great a congestion of population in the cities throughout Australia to-day. Everybody recognises that that is due, in large measure, to the fact that the conditions are more attractive in the cities and towns than in the country. That has been brought about by the fact that the cities have been able to influence action in the direction of making them more attractive.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Victoria is the worst State of the lot.

Mr. MOORE: The city population in Victoria is greater, comparatively, than in any other State in Australia. That is due simply to the fact that the conditions in the city have, by legislation, been made more attractive than they are in the country. That is what has happened in New South Wales, and it is what is happening in Queensland. The conditions of labour in the city are more

attractive than they are in the country, simply because the cities and towns have had a preponderating vote in Parliament. Centralisation has been the result of the preponderating influence of the cities.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Centralisation is less acute in Queensland than in any other State.

Mr. MOORE: The Government are going to make it more acute in Queensland in their endeavour to make conditions still better in the city. Up to the present it has been less acute in Queensland, because in the past we have had Governments who have recognised that there should be a fair ratio between the country and the towns. When the redistribution of seats was made before, it was endeavoured, as far as possible, to keep a fair ratio.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I can produce figures to show that we have done better in every respect than past Governments.

Mr. MOORE: Figures cannot prove the necessity for wiping out four country electorates. Until the recent redistribution of seats we had four more electorates in the country than we have to-day.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true. Three seats were wiped out under the recent redistribution, and three were wiped out under the previous redistribution.

Mr. MOORE: The Government have wiped out four country electorates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Be accurate.

Mr. MOORE: I am accurate. No figures can disprove that four country electorates have been wiped out, and that they have now been merged in the towns. The redistribution is not going to be in the best interests of Queensland. The Premier has stated that he is going to make the conditions of farmers almost as good as the conditions of those who live in the city, and that shows where the influence has been. That shows the mistake of applying the principle of one vote one value to such a State as Queensland. To-day we have to settle the large open spaces of the State, and we want men to represent those spaces. It has been stated that those representatives should represent not cattle and broad acres, but the human beings scattered over those large areas, and we want to see that they get an adequate voice in Parliament. How can that be done when the majority of the representation is confined to populous centres, and representatives will endeavour to make the conditions in those centres more attractive? Such a state of affairs will act detrimentally to the people in the large areas outside. It is a great mistake that any Government, in an endeavour to give themselves another lease of power, should fix up the electorates in the way that has been done.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are very hard on your own Government.

Mr. MOORE: I am not referring to our own Government. It is no good sheltering behind what has been done in the past. Whatever was done then was most vigorously condemned by hon. members opposite; but, when they get into power and have an opportunity of doing something, instead of getting away from the bad principles that they previously condemned, they try to outdo their predecessors by making the position worse. The speeches delivered by hon. members

Mr Moore.]

opposite on that occasion can be referred to. If they held those opinions then, what has made them change their minds so suddenly? It is to keep this Government in power. Hon. members opposite who represent country electorates and thought then that it was a mistaken policy, would like to-day to see those electorates cut up even more and thus make the disproportion even greater. It would be far better to go to the country on the old rolls rather than on the rolls that have been the result of the miserable gerrymandering that took place last year.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. COLLINS: It was your friends who asked for a Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Mr. MOORE: There were tremendous anomalies in the city proper. One electorate had more than twice as many electors as other electorates. There were also anomalies in the country; but we did not say that you should make the country and town electorates equal so far as numbers are concerned. There was no suggestion of that kind.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you say the country electorates and town electorates are equal?

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member knows perfectly well that the Redistribution of Seats Commission never went anywhere near the legal margin they are allowed under the Act. The number of electors in the Brisbane electorate is less than the number in the Drayton electorate. Surely that shows that a wrong principle was adopted. The hon. member for Drayton is perfectly right in bringing this matter forward. He is only voicing the opinions of the electors whom he represents, because they have held meetings and have expressed, through the Press, their strong objection to being disfranchised. They recognise that under the redistribution of seats they are not going to have the opportunity of getting their views placed before this House that they have had in the past. The Premier will be well advised if he withdraws the redistribution altogether and has it done in accordance with the policy he is now endeavouring to carry out—what he calls an agricultural policy. Hon. members who represent Northern constituencies must recognise that a wrong principle has been adopted. Years ago the representatives from these Northern constituencies stated that they did not get the justice that was due to them. Why? Simply because they did not have proper representation.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Simply because there was a Nationalist Government in power.

Mr. MOORE: In the past hon. members have talked about Queen street Governments. That was made possible because there were too many members representing city electorates. We are getting the same thing again to-day. Hon. members on the other side who railed against what they called a Queen street Government are now making it possible to have a Queen street Government again. Surely there is no consistency in that. When they have an opportunity of making a redistribution of seats, we want to see them make it in accordance with the views they have expressed in the past; but, instead of doing that, they have made a redistribution in such a way that they will get a political advantage, and the country districts are going to suffer. I am sure hon. members who represent country electorates know the conditions under which the people live, and know the numerous requests that are made to members representing country electorates, while the

people living in the towns do not understand the conditions of the country districts at all. A country member has to represent many industries, and is continually going to the different departments to rectify grievances, and members representing town electorates have nothing like the same amount of work to do. They may have a few industrial matters to look after, but that is all. If the country electorates are going to be of a huge size, it will be utterly impossible for the members to get in touch with their electors in the outside parts. It must be recognised that in a huge State like Queensland we have a limited number of members in comparison to the size of the State. Victoria is a small State, compared to Queensland, and you find the same objection there to reducing the number of country members.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You say there are too many members here.

Mr. MOORE: We want a reduction of members here, but we want it brought about in such a way that the preponderance of voting will be with the country.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You asked for a reduction of half the present number of members.

Mr. MOORE: Nobody asked for a reduction of half the number, but the Government are making the position harder by giving greater representation to the city. Take the electoral district of Gregory to-day, which goes right down to the South Australian border, and see how difficult it is for the member representing that electorate to get all round his district; yet the Commission endeavoured to provide the same number of electors in that electorate as for the electoral district of Brisbane. The Premier should recognise the position. We will certainly recognise it the first opportunity we get, and we will make it possible for the people living in the outside districts to have a better opportunity of having their views expressed in this Chamber than they have at the present time. The Attorney-General may smile, but I do not think hon. members on the Government benches feel too comfortable, and probably it will not be very long before members on this side have an opportunity of bringing in a Redistribution of Seats Bill and putting the electorates on a proper basis. I second the motion, because I recognise that a great injustice has been done, and that the people in the country are not going to get the representation they should have.

Mr. CATTERMULL (*Musgrave*): Although I do not altogether agree with the way in which the motion is worded, certainly something should be done to see that the country interests are better looked after than they are at present. The Redistribution of Seats Commission which was appointed by the Government did not carry out the spirit of the Act. There are three principles laid down in the Act: community of interest, means of communication, and natural boundaries. I say without hesitation that the Commissioners did not carry out the spirit of the Act in accordance with those principles. Some of the electorates have been made most unwieldy, and it is almost impossible to get round them. They have taken small districts adjoining different towns and placed them in country electorates, and they have taken districts from country electorates and put them in town electorates. I do not know whether the Commission got instructions from the Government to do that or not,

[*Mr. Moore.*]

but it seems very much like it. The Government profess to be the friends of the farmers, yet it appears that they deliberately gave instructions to the Commissioners to cut out four country electorates and give more representation to the towns.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. CATTERMULL: That is the only conclusion any reasonable man can come to when he sees the divisions which have been made.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Did you not expect the Musgrave to go before it was actually wiped out?

Mr. CATTERMULL: Had the Musgrave still been held by Labour it would never have been cut out.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CATTERMULL: I would advocate a different system to what we have to-day in regard to country representation. There should be city areas, suburban areas, and country areas—city areas having a voting strength of 20,000, suburban areas 10,000, and country areas 5,000. I believe that by that method you would get better representation. You could also, under that system, reduce the present number of members from seventy-two to fifty. We were promised when we went into federation that a reduction of members would be one of the first things done, and yet we find that it has never been brought about. I venture to say that on the lines I have laid down the country areas would have better representation than they have to-day. As the hon. member for Aubigny said, if we go on passing legislation as we are doing, it will be very harmful. The people are leaving the land and flocking to the towns, and the whole of the representation in this Parliament will shortly come from the big towns and cities, and the men on the land will be disfranchised. I think that if something was done on the lines I have indicated, we would all be better served and the interests of the country would be better protected. People are leaving the land to-day and coming into the towns and cities owing to the better conditions and the higher rates of wages which obtain there. Farmers have left their farms because they have not been able to get the cost of production reduced, and have come into the cities to get work. They also come because they have not got proper representation in the country. The Government have not done what they should have done for them. That remark is applicable, not only to the present Government, but to other Governments as well; but we should try to remedy that position as soon as we can, and encourage the farmers to remain on the land by giving them proper representation in Parliament, so that they can have their wants attended to.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I was one of those who, when the Electoral Districts Act was passed in 1910, predicted what would happen.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes; and you also voted against a wider margin being allowed for the country.

Mr. MORGAN: I practically said that we should not have a margin at all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: But you opposed the one-third margin as against one-fifth.

Mr. MORGAN: I said that the time would come when the number of seats in the country would eventually be reduced and the cities and towns would have greater representation under that measure. I took as an illustration what had happened in Victoria under a measure of this description. Fortunately, in that State they foresaw the result, and now in Victoria some of the electorates have 30,000 voters, while others have as low as 6,000 or 7,000.

Mr. COLLINS: Where are the 6,000 voters? In country electorates?

Mr. MORGAN: In country electorates where the population is small. In certain electorates where there is a large town they may have 14,000 voters. There are practically four times as many voters in large city electorates as there are in country electorates. When the Bill of 1910 was going through, I remember that there was a great fight put up by hon. members. As a party man, I might have pledged my support to a Bill allowing a margin of 30 per cent. above or below the quota; but I would remind the hon. member that there was no provision for any margin at all, and I fought against that. The point I want to make is that the Commissioners who were recently appointed have not done their duty in that respect. The Act provides that the Commissioners, if they so desired, should allow for a difference of 40 per cent. in the number of voters in electorates like the city of Brisbane and the electorate represented by the hon. member for Gregory. Gregory is the largest and most sparsely populated electorate in Queensland, yet we find the margin very small in comparison to what it should be. We also find discrepancies in regard to other country electorates. Can the Minister justify the fact that Brisbane has 6,310 electors, while Carnarvon has 6,571 electors? There are over 200 electors more in Carnarvon than in the city of Brisbane, where the population is so dense.

Mr. COLLINS: What is the size of Carnarvon?

Mr. MORGAN: It is a very large country electorate, with an area, I should think, of 10,000 or 12,000 square miles. My own electorate has an area of something like 18,000 or 20,000 square miles. The electorate of Brisbane has an area of not more than 1 square mile.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: One electorate represented by an hon. member on this side of the House represents more of Queensland than all the electorates represented by hon. members opposite.

Mr. MORGAN: Then there are other anomalies. Toowoomba, which is 100 miles from the seat of government, and which is what may be called a country city, has 6,930 electors, or 600 more than Brisbane. In Albert—which is a country electorate—there are 6,691 voters on the roll. Then, there is another anomaly, which shows that the Commissioners were not thorough in their work in respect of country electorates. Take Murilla, which is the sixth largest electorate in Queensland. There is no large town in Murilla, and there are 5,891 voters on the roll; while the Maranoa electorate, which contains the large town of Roma, has only 5,319 voters.

The PREMIER: There has been practically no progress in Murilla since 1909.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman has evidently not kept in touch with any part of Queensland other than his own electorate. The first time I stood for Murilla, in 1939, there were 1,300 voters on the roll, and the number increased from 1,300 to over 6,000 at the last election.

The PREMIER: You have made more progress under the Labour Administration.

Mr. MORGAN: My majority at the first election was only 82, but it was over 700 the last time I stood. The point I wish to make is that the country electorates are not properly redistributed. Maranoa has the large town of Roma in the centre, whereas Murilla has a number of small towns, yet the Commissioners decided to put more voters into the Murilla electorate, which has an area of 20,000 square miles, and which extends 350 miles from Goondiwindi in the south right to the northernmost portion of it as the crow flies. Why should the Murilla electorate have more voters in it than the Maranoa? Then in regard to the number of schools, I think I hold the record, because there are more schools in the Murilla electorate than in any other electorate in Queensland.

Mr. CLAYTON: No; I beat you.

Mr. MORGAN: No; you lose by two schools. There are seventy-eight schools in the Murilla electorate.

The PREMIER: There was a great increase under this Government.

Mr. MORGAN: No. Some of the schools were closed up under this Government. Although there are seventy-eight State schools in the Murilla electorate, I have been informed that there are one or two electorates in the Brisbane area which do not contain one State school. At any rate, I was told that by an hon. member.

Mr. KIRWAN: Which electorate is it?

Mr. BRAND: Yours.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is not mine, because I have more than one State school.

Mr. MORGAN: The Commissioners did not take the Act fully into consideration at all, because, if they had, they would have provided for more electors in the city of Brisbane than in any other electorate. It is generally considered that Brisbane is the most populous place in Queensland; therefore the maximum number of voters should be in the Brisbane electorate. It was also thought that Gregory would have the minimum number. Anyone would think that there would be 40 per cent. difference between the number of electors in Brisbane and the number of electors in Gregory, but such is not the case. It was thought that a margin of 40 per cent. would be allowed for in the case of a big country electorate like Gregory, and that in other country electorates the margin would be 30 per cent., 20 per cent., and 10 per cent., according to the particular locality. I mentioned just now that the electorates of Carnarvon and Albert, both country electorates, have each a greater number of electors than the city of Brisbane. That shows that the present Government are pandering to the city interests and to the Queen street interests, and the people living in the country districts are not getting the parliamentary representation they are entitled to. I have here the "Hansard" for 1910, when the Electoral Districts Bill was passed.

[Mr. Morgan.]

On that occasion Mr. Hamilton, who represented Gregory, said—

"He agreed with other members that this was not a Bill to make better representation in Parliament; it was a Bill which was going to concentrate all political power within a radius of 100 miles of Brisbane."

Notwithstanding that the Bill provided for a margin of 40 per cent., Mr. Hamilton was of opinion that it was going to concentrate all the political power around Brisbane.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And yet you voted for that Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: What Mr. Hamilton said on that occasion was quite correct. Mr. Land, the hon. member for Balonne, also represented a country electorate, and, speaking on the same occasion, he said—

"He would like to remind Government supporters—and especially the Queen street supporters—that, by creating more centralisation in Brisbane than there had been in the past, they were only cutting the ground from under their feet—in fact, they were only cutting their own throats."

That showed that the hon. member recognised that even in the Bill passed in 1910 the country districts were not receiving fair treatment. What I claim now is not that the Act passed in 1910 was wrong, but that the Commissioners have not allowed the margin they should have done.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You admit that the Commissioners did better than any other Commissioners?

Mr. MORGAN: Certainly not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. You have not read the figures.

Mr. MORGAN: When the first redistribution took place in 1911 the Commissioners who were appointed recognised what was laid down in the Act, and they allowed a margin of 40 per cent. in some cases as between the large city of Brisbane and the country. Then they continued that margin right down to 10 per cent. for the suburban areas. If the Commissioners had done that last year, as they were supposed to do under the Act, it would have been all right. In 1910 both sides were in favour of giving more representation to the country districts, and even the Labour party were in favour of a larger proportion of representation being given to the country. Had the Commissioners acted in accordance with the spirit of the Act, we would not have the anomalies that exist to-day, and I would have no reason to get up and point out that Brisbane does not contain the largest number of voters. There are country electorates 100 miles or more from Brisbane that have a greater number of voters than the city of Brisbane, where the seat of Government is situated. That is proof positive that the Commissioners did not do their duty. I have already compared Maranoa and Murilla to show that the Commissioners did not carry out the spirit of the Act. Why should there be more voters in Murilla than Maranoa, which has the big town of Roma in it?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Is there no important town in Murilla?

Mr. MORGAN: There are several important towns in Murilla, but they are small.

Goondiwindi is the largest. There may be ten or twelve important little towns.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Why should you not have more electors then?

Mr. MORGAN: The important little towns in Murilla are spread over quite a large area. Goondiwindi is the largest. I am doubtful if there is a town in my electorate with a population of more than 600 or 700 people. I also notice that the hon. member for Mitchell spoke in 1910. According to "Hansard," this is what the hon. member said on that occasion—

"Clause 2 of the Bill wiped out the Electoral Districts Acts of 1887 and 1892. As had already been stated, the Bill would undoubtedly centralise the power in and around Brisbane, and under the system of one vote one value it was pretty hard to get away from that."

The hon. member for Mitchell recognised that under that system it would be pretty difficult to get away from the state of affairs he mentioned. If there is one thing more than another which is likely to bring about separation, it is the fact that the country people living far away from the seat of Government are not getting fair representation in Parliament. That argument has been used by other hon. members. There is a movement in Central and Northern Queensland at the present time to divide Queensland into three States, owing to the actions of what are termed Queen-street Governments. It has often been said that Brisbane has more representation than it is entitled to. Although that particular question is not under discussion just now, I have always voted in favour of cutting Queensland up into three States. I am also in favour of it at the present moment. I am of the same opinion now as I was years ago—that, so long as Queensland remains as it is at present, we shall never get the prickly-pear destroyed; but, if Queensland is cut up into three States, there will be some chance of dealing with that pest.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I shall connect my remarks with the motion. If Queensland had been cut up into three States, the Central and the Northern Governments would have known the danger of prickly-pear, and they would have taken steps to prevent it spreading any further. The motion calls for the support of country members on both sides of the House. It may not appeal to city people.

There may be something in the [4.30 p.m.] argument of the man who says,

"Why should one person in the country have more say in the government of the country than one person in the city?" It might be argued that, in proportion, the people of the Gregory have two representatives to the one representative of the people of Brisbane, but that principle has been followed throughout Australia. It has been observed in Victoria from its inception. The producer there has had a better "spin" owing to the fact that he has had more representation than the man in the city and suburbs, because he has had less taxation, and has in every way been able to make a greater success on the land than the man in a similar occupation in any other part of Australia. There is no denying the fact that the producers of Victoria, taking them by and large, are better off and have better opportunities of making

a success of their calling than those in other States.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Then why do people leave Victoria to come to other States?

Mr. MORGAN: They leave to go where they can have larger areas. We have a big scope in Queensland, and there is more inducement in a young country like Queensland than there is in a closely settled small State like Victoria. Why do people leave Great Britain? What induced me to come to Queensland? It was the fact that I could get hold of a large area here. I was ambitious; I had a young family coming on, and I knew that here I would find a greater opportunity for them to get hold of land, if they so desired, than in Victoria.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I hope the motion will be carried, and that we shall have the support of the hon. member for Bowen and other Country members. I am sure the hon. member for Bowen is only waiting for the opportunity to get up and say he will vote for this important proposal. It is not a party question in any shape or form. I know that Bowen has less than 5,000 electors, and that the Murilla has a great many more. Bowen is one of the most promising electorates in Queensland. They have a fine irrigation scheme, and they are going to have steel and iron works.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: And they have coal-mines.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not know why the Commissioners considered Bowen of less importance than Murilla, though Murilla has pear from one end to the other.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I have listened carefully to the debate as far as it has gone; but it does not follow, as some hon. members would argue, that what suits one State should suit every other Australian State. The hon. member for Murilla said that in Victoria country electorates had 7,000 electors, and city electorates had 30,000. What is the position in Victoria? In spite of that proportionately great representation of country districts, we find, according to "Knibbs," that 50.5 per cent. of Victoria's population is in Melbourne, showing that the drift in that State has been to the cities. In Victoria, besides Melbourne, we find big cities like Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, and other fairly large towns, whereas, if the hon. member was logical, the increase in population in the country districts ought to be greater than that in the cities. In our own State, on the other hand, with this wrong redistribution of seats, as claimed by the Opposition—which, by the way, was piloted through this House in 1910 by the hon. member for Albert, who made several speeches in its defence—one would naturally think that the tendency would be to drift towards the city of Brisbane. But we find that only 27.75 per cent. of our population is in the metropolitan area.

Mr. MORGAN: We have three important centres in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course we have. What I am trying to prove is that the electoral system of a State is not responsible for the condition of the State. On taking up the Canadian "Annual Review"—which I shall have occasion to quote in another debate—I find that the same growth of the cities is

Mr. Collins.]

taking place in Canada. You cannot blame the electoral system for that result. The hon. member for Murilla said that the electorate I represent has a small number of electors, but it is the quota allowed by the Act of 1910, which the hon. member supported. There is nothing wrong about my quota. Before the redistribution took place, I had the honour to represent more electors than any other man from North Queensland. There were 7,446 electors on my roll, and it was reduced to 4,836. At the present moment I have 5,000 electors on the roll, showing the wonderful growth of the district and the wisdom of the Commissioners in recognising that it is a growing district. When I was returned in 1915, there were a little over 5,000 electors on the roll, and the figures before the redistribution and those I have just given show the wonderful growth of the electorate during the period I have had the honour to represent it. In the first redistribution under the Act of 1910, North Queensland lost two seats—Carpentaria and Croydon. That was under the scheme of redistribution of the Donham Government, of which the hon. member for Albert was Home Secretary. Is not North Queensland a country part of the State? If it is, and if the hon. member were logical, North Queensland should have greater representation than any other part of the State, because of its long distances from the seat of Government. Under the redistribution which took place the other day, North Queensland has not lost a single seat, which shows the growth of North Queensland. The hon. member should know that no part of Queensland has grown so rapidly as the Herbert Federal electorate.

Mr. MORGAN: The South would not have lost any seats if the Commissioners had treated it in the same way as the North.

Mr. COLLINS: Anyone who studies the growth of modern democracy must know that democracy, as a rule, comes from the cities. The Act provides for an electorate strength of one-fifth more or less than the quota, and we in the country districts are representing one-fifth less, and I do not think there is a great deal to complain about. The Country party are in a very bad position. I believe one of their planks aims at a reduction in the number of members of Parliament to fifty. If they brought about that reduction, would it not follow that the country districts would have less representation in this Chamber? The Attorney-General, who has the electoral machinery under his control, has pointed out that the hon. member for Gregory represents a larger area than is represented by the whole of the Opposition put together. Let us assume that their idea was carried out and that we had fifty members of Parliament. The natural result would be that the country would have less representation, unless the reduction was made on the lines suggested by the hon. member for Murilla—that the city electorates should contain 30,000 electors and the country electorates 7,000. But that would not be representation of the people; it would be representation of trees, sheep, cattle, and so forth. I am as sound on this question as I was in 1910. I think there is not much room for complaint in the redistribution of seats which has taken place. The growth in our metropolitan area is no greater than that which has taken place in other parts of the Commonwealth. Take South Australia, which has produced a Premier who holds

ideals about populating the northern part of Australia with black labour. Adelaide, the capital, contains 51.50 per cent. of the total population of South Australia. In that respect it is the worst State in the Commonwealth, as it has more than half its people congregated in one centre. I do not know what their electoral system is; but, considering they are governed by men who hold views similar to those of hon. gentlemen opposite, I have no doubt that the country parts have greater representation than the city. Yet that has not stopped the growth of the city. Cities are growing all the world over, as the result of modern conditions. The man on the land to-day, with modern machinery, can produce, with less effort, much more than he could in past days. The result is that the cities are growing. I think they will continue to grow until we have a change in the whole social system. An alteration in the electoral law or even a redistribution of seats will not alter it. Hon. members opposite ought to be consistent. They believe in reducing the numbers of members of Parliament. Surely they ought to know that it will mean larger electoral districts in the country. They ought to realise that the man in the city who is doing useful work has a right to as much representation as the man in the country who is doing useful work. Society has said to the people living in the city that they should manufacture implements and so forth for the man on the land. Let hon. members, then, blame society, and not the individuals who are forced, under the present conditions of society, to live in the city and work under conditions which are not ideal. While I believe that the country should have proper representation, I do not say it should have overwhelming representation.

Mr. EDWARDS: Did you support the Premier in his reduction of wages?

Mr. COLLINS: I would be pulled up by the Speaker if I were to attempt to deal with that question. If the hon. member's party were in power, not only would they reduce wages, but they would abolish the Industrial Arbitration Court, amend the Trades Union Act, and have a vigorous policy of immigration; and we would be back to "six bob a day." (Interruption.) I do not think there is much to complain about in the redistribution which has taken place.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The big question behind this motion is whether we stand for enfranchisement or disfranchisement of the people. I cannot see my way to support the motion, because I do not think it is in the best interests of the State or of the people generally. I am quite at a loss to understand the attitude of the mover of the motion and some of those who have spoken, when they tell us that the present system practically means that the country districts shall not have proper representation in this Parliament. What are the facts with regard to this Parliament? There are elected to this Chamber seventy-two members, of whom forty-six represent country electorates. Where is the injustice? Where are the country districts being penalised by the representation which the city has? We have heard a good deal about what is called "Queen-street government," and the domination of the whole State by metropolitan interests. That is only a parrot cry. If you go through the list of members, you will find that what I have stated is correct.

[*Mr. Collins.*]

Mr. EDWARDS: You must take into consideration the fact that four country seats are being wiped out.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not referring to future Parliaments. In my figures I have included some men who really represent city interests—such as Townsville, Rockhampton, Gympie, and Bundaberg, so I have tried to be as fair as I could in making the comparison. That proportion must continue until the population in the country districts grows more rapidly than it has done during the last fifteen or twenty years. I take it that Governments are not out to do a manifest injustice. Some mistakes may have been made in the boundaries that have been fixed. I have no doubt that, if my electorate had been cut out, I should have said that the Commissioners had done a wrong thing. (Laughter.) I do not find fault with those who say that the Commissioners have not been fair in that respect. But the country interests of Queensland have been, and will be, preserved by the Parliaments of Queensland; no matter what Government may be in power, they must look after the country interests if they desire to see the State develop. As the hon. member for Bowen has pointed out, there always has been, and there always will be, an aggregation of people in the cities. What do we find in regard to our railway system, so far as country interests are concerned?

Mr. PETERSON: Where would your cities be without the country districts?

Mr. TAYLOR: Nearly £50,000,000 have been spent on the railways, and of that sum £10,000,000 would probably represent the total amount that has been spent in the metropolitan area.

Mr. PETERSON: That is a weak argument.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member may call it a weak argument, but I call it a strong argument. The country has not suffered on account of what has been called in this Chamber "Queen street influence" or "Queen street government." The capital is the seat of government, and in carrying on the administrative and executive work of Parliament expensive buildings have had to be erected. Throughout Queensland schools have been erected, and before federation post offices and a number of other public buildings had to be erected. The country has had a fair chance, and has received a fair proportion of the expenditure of public money in years gone by. No man, whether his shade of politics be Labour, National, or Country party, will come into this Chamber and say that he wishes to see the country suffer at the expense of the town. We all come here to act as far as possible in the interests of the whole State, and, notwithstanding any inequalities that may have been created by the recent redistribution of seats, I certainly think that the country has not much to complain about. If a reduction in the number of members did take place—I would be in favour of a reduction—we would find hon. members complaining about the size of their electorates. Some of the electorates are tremendously large, and it is a difficult and expensive matter for a member representing one of those electorates to cover his territory. It means a large expenditure of time and money. If we are going to reduce the number of members in this House, and follow the suggestion made this afternoon by one hon. member, the city electorates would embrace 20,000 electors and the country electorates

would embrace 5,000 electors. I do not stand for that. I do not stand for the wholesale disfranchisement of people like that. I consider that the quota under which this Parliament was elected has been a fair quota, and has given the country districts the fair representation which they deserve and which they ought to have in this Chamber. We have heard a good deal about one vote one value. That has always been conceded, and the country has had special advantages given to it in that particular regard. Their representation at present, compared with representatives of city electorates, is forty-six to twenty-six, and I do not think they have very much to complain about. That ratio will continue for quite a long time.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. In days gone by the country has not had fair representation. I am not stating that the Commissioners received any instructions as to what they were to do, but the finding of the Commission is at least suspicious. The Commission has wiped out four country electorates, but not one Labour electorate, and that is suspicious. I am satisfied that every person residing in Queensland to-day is trying to do his very best to develop the State. That is taking place even in the cities, but, unfortunately, the city people are of practically the same mind as the leader of the Nationalist party. They do not understand the conditions of settlement away out in the backblocks of Queensland. If the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat would travel more into the country districts and see the conditions that the people have to put up with, he would not make such a speech as he has made this afternoon. He mentioned that so many million pounds more had been spent in country districts than in city areas on the construction of railways. What a ridiculous, foolish statement to make. If railway communication had not been extended to the country districts, the cities would have been starved out. The country districts have paid for every rail that has been put down, and they are paying more to-day in comparison than the people in the large centres.

Mr. STOFFORD: They were paying more before this Government repealed the Railway Guarantee Act.

Mr. EDWARDS: They are paying it at the present time, by paying nearly 100 per cent. more in freights and fares. Does any hon. member suggest that we are going to develop the country districts better by reducing the representation of those districts? The only way that we can get those districts fully populated is by giving them the fair and square representation which they deserve.

Mr. COLLINS: With fifty members?

Mr. EDWARDS: With fifty members, if the hon. member likes. An hon. member representing a city electorate embracing 50,000 electors could represent that electorate far easier than a country representative representing an electorate not so thickly populated.

Mr. SIZER: Why?

Mr. EDWARDS: I have been told by one hon. gentleman in this Chamber, who for many years represented a city constituency, that he has never at any time been in any of the Government departments.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is he?

Mr. KERR: Name him!

Mr. Edwards.]

Mr. EDWARDS: There is not one country representative in Queensland who does not know every one of the departments from A to Z. It was stated this afternoon that in some country districts there were seventy schools, whilst in some of the city electorates the representative has not even one to look after. If any hon. member represented the whole of the city of Brisbane, he would not have the same amount of work to do as a man representing a country constituency.

Mr. KERR: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am satisfied that these chaps are up against me.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to other hon. members as "these chaps." (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member will not be in order in referring to them as "comrades" either. (Laughter.)

Mr. EDWARDS: We have had far too much of the city in the past, and we are getting it again now. I realise that hon. gentlemen representing city electorates do their best in the interests of the country, but they really do not understand those interests.

Mr. PEASE: What do you call the country? You do not know anything about the country.

Mr. EDWARDS: I have been told by the hon. member, who is a storekeeper and a middleman, that I do not know anything about the country. I hope that, in the near future, the members who represent city electorates will wake up and realise the necessity, not only for better representation of the country districts, but for better

[5 p.m.] conditions for the people living in the country districts. I will give one clear instance to show that the city can be easily represented from an educational point of view in comparison with the country. Before this session of Parliament commenced the people in my electorate endeavoured to arrange for the Secretary for Public Instruction to visit the district, and he considered that it would take a fortnight to go through my electorate and one other electorate, and he had to put off his visit until after this session. That proves beyond doubt that those people are not getting that consideration from the Secretary for Public Instruction which is due to them. In the city the hon. gentleman can take a tram and visit any school within half an hour.

Mr. SIZER: What would he do if he went up there?

Mr. EDWARDS: He could see the unfortunate condition of the schools in the district.

Mr. SIZER: He would charge two guineas a day for that. (Laughter.)

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Bowen endeavoured to prove that the proportion of population in the large centres in the Southern States is greater in comparison than it is in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: That is true.

Mr. EDWARDS: I admit that it is true, but why is it true? Because of the unfortunate fact that Queensland has had a Labour Government in power for the past seven years. If you take the number of factories in the South—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. EDWARDS: Take the number of secondary industries that have been built

up in Melbourne and Sydney. The hon. member for Bowen will quite understand that we are sending all our raw material down there for manufacture, and those factories are employing thousands of people.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the motion.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is an argument in favour of greater representation in the country districts. Hon. members representing metropolitan seats should consider what is necessary in the country districts of Queensland in the interests of the unfortunate settlers who are situated hundreds of miles from a railway. No one will say that the children in the country districts are getting a fair and square deal in comparison with the children in the large centres of population. In many instances parents are leaving the country and coming into the cities in order to educate their children. Surely that proves beyond all doubt that more consideration should be given to the country districts! I have the greatest pleasure in supporting the motion, and I hope the Government will see their way clear to allow a further redistribution of seats, as provided in this motion, so that the country will get proper representation. No one will say for a moment that Queensland is going to be developed by cutting out the representation of the country districts. If we want the people to settle in the country, we must give them better representation in order that they may get in closer touch with the different departments.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I am not one of those who wish to oppose country interests. Far from it! But at the same time there has been much said in this Chamber to-day which cannot be allowed to go without some explanation of the facts of the position. Some hon. members seem to have got an idea, because we represent constituencies which happen to be a few miles from this House, that we have a much greater pull with the Government than they have; furthermore, that because we happen to be in the metropolitan area, we are better able to represent a larger number of constituents than country members.

Mr. PETERSON: That is true.

Mr. SIZER: They contend that, because the Secretary for Public Instruction does not visit their electorates as often as he does some of the metropolitan areas, they are at a disadvantage. The ideal form of government is one adult one vote, and one vote one value; and, if it were possible in a closely congested State, that is what we should aspire to. But in a new State such as Queensland people must congregate in the seaports, because it takes a certain number of people to perform the functions necessary to carry on the business of the State, and it cannot be argued that those people must be disfranchised because they live in a congested area. We recognise in Queensland that the principle of one vote one value is not possible, and therefore we have made provision in our electoral laws that the metropolitan areas must have a larger quota than the country constituencies. I am prepared to admit that the quota for the city electorates should be from 25 per cent. to 33 per cent. higher than the quota for the country electorates in order to overcome the disadvantageous position the country would

[Mr. Edwards.]

be in if we had an equal number of electors in each electoral district. I maintain that that has been reasonably provided for.

I would like to see a change in our electoral system. I am not a believer in the straight-out, sudden-death single member electorates. I maintain that, so long as we have single-member electorates, there must be a tremendous disparity in the representation of the country districts in this Chamber. The only system which will give us equal and fair representation is the system of proportional representation.

Mr. PETERSON: Mr. Ashford, in New South Wales, does not like it. (Laughter.)

Mr. SIZER: That may be; but it shows the equity of the system, inasmuch as, when a mistake had been made by the electoral office, the electors were able to appeal to the Elections Tribunal, and the votes were allotted as they should have been, and the member lost his seat because he was not properly elected. What can be fairer than that? I would like to see a system introduced under which we could make better provision for country electorates. We cannot bring our ideals of one adult one vote and one vote one value into operation at present; but we could adopt the system of proportional representation, and strike a different quota for thickly congested areas to what we would for the country areas, which are sparsely populated. Let us select our members on the only effective system—proportional representation.

Mr. COLLINS: What rot! You know very little about it.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member has said that, as he gets older, he is becoming more conservative. He has nothing in sympathy with one vote one value; his natural sympathy is in the direction of keeping himself in Parliament, and letting the minority dictate to the majority so long as he is in the minority in office. Principles do not count with the hon. member. They only count with him when his party are in opposition.

Mr. COLLINS: Will you offer to contest the Bowen seat against me?

Mr. SIZER: As I said, the hon. member is becoming more conservative than ever. I become almost think that there is only one piece in Queensland—that is Bowen. After all, what is Bowen? It has not yet got the steel works.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must obey my call to order, and confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member speaks of Bowen, which, after all, is but an infinitesimal portion of Queensland. The hon. member for Bowen may represent an infinitesimal portion of the State on an ineffective voting system, which enables him to hold his seat in this House and magnify himself as a duly elected representative in this Chamber, when, if we argued it out properly, under a system of effective voting he would not be a member of this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SIZER: If the hon. member for Bowen, or any other hon. member only represents 5,000 electors, he should have no more consideration than those 5,000 electors are entitled to. In my opinion, there is only

one true system, and that is proportional representation.

Mr. COLLINS: You do not understand it.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member knows that I understand it far better than he does. The Secretary for Railways advocated that system when he was in opposition, but only when he was in opposition, and not now when he is in the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to deal with the motion.

Mr. SIZER: The Secretary for Railways was a very keen advocate of that system when he was in opposition. I do not agree with the general tone of the argument that the cities have an undue preponderance over the country electorates.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Do you consider that the cities should have fair representation?

Mr. SIZER: I think they should have fair representation, and I think they have got it. They have already, under our Constitution, twenty-six members as against forty-six country members, yet I think that, roughly speaking, the difference between the voting for country electorates as compared with town and city electorates was 86,000 as against 140,000. I am prepared, and anxious, to give to the Country party at least 25 to 33 per cent. additional representation over metropolitan interests, and with that I think they should be well satisfied. The hon. member for Nanango raised the point that the Secretary for Public Instruction could not go to his electorate on account of Parliament the minority in office. Principles do not count with the hon. member. They only count with him when his party are in opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SIZER: What particular advantage is there in a Minister going to your electorate? Everyone knows that the officers of the department and the member for the district represent the case to the Minister. I will say that some of the Labour Ministers are not prepared to recognise the position.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Don't you think that is very unfair?

Mr. SIZER: They know the position as well as anyone else. The mere fact of a Minister not going to an electorate does not undermine the principles of one adult one vote and one vote one value, and it cannot be used as an argument that the system we are enjoying to-day is unfair. In the electorate I represent there are 13,000 or 14,000 electors.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Is that the new roll?

Mr. SIZER: Not on the new roll. I am still representing something like 14,000 people. The Premier to-day is representing less than 4,000 electors. There is the disparity. If anyone has any reason to complain, it is we who represent the large electorates who should complain; but we are not complaining at all. My friend the hon. member for Bulimba represents more electors than I do.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yours is only a pocket borough.

Mr. SIZER: Probably it is, but we have to consider whether it is individuals or acres which have to be represented.

Mr. Sizer.]

At 5.20 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. SIZER: I am not prepared to admit that it is a sound argument to say that acres should dominate souls. I recognise in our extraordinary position as a young State, which we are only developing now, that there must be some disparity, and we must depart from the track and meet the situation as we find it. We are prepared to admit that we should give the country districts a greater proportion of representation, probably from 25 per cent. to 35 per cent. greater than the representation of the cities. All the same, I want to lay it down quite clearly that, although I am prepared to give that extra representation to the country districts—and I am sure the members of the party to which I belong are prepared to do likewise—

Mr. MORGAN: You are generous.

Mr. SIZER: It is not a question of being generous at all; it is only fair. Although one believes in the principle of one vote one value, we, as members of the metropolitan constituencies, must admit that we are entitled to greater representation than those in the country. That is a solid democratic principle of government. We are generous enough and reasonable enough to recognise that in a young State such as this there must be a difference of representation in the electorates, and we are prepared to give to the country 35 per cent. more representation than we enjoy in the metropolis.

Mr. MORGAN: Then you agree with the motion?

Mr. SIZER: We believe in the principle.

Mr. MORGAN: Your party do not agree with it.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member misinterprets our attitude. The motion provides for a greater margin than we are prepared to lay down, but we are prepared to give a representation of 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. more to the country districts.

Mr. MORGAN: The present Act allows 40 per cent.

Mr. SIZER: Then why complain at all?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You would squeal if it affected you.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member is squealing because he has been cut out.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: That is why I am in sympathy with the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. SIZER: I can quite recognise that. We all know that a redistribution of seats brings about a certain amount of discomfort to some hon. members. In all seriousness, I am in sympathy with the motion, but members of the Country party should not make disparaging remarks about members representing metropolitan areas not being sympathetic with their request, because I know they are. I am one of those who believe strongly in the democratic principles of one adult one vote and one vote one value, with proportional representation. However, we are unable to carry that out now, and I am prepared to give to the country a bigger quota in order that they may protect their interests and get the just representation to which they are entitled.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (Pittsworth): I rise to support the motion. Of course, hon.

[Mr. Sizer.

members can quite understand that I am in full sympathy with the hon. member for Drayton. (Laughter.) We are both in the same boat. We are labouring under the same hardship. At the same time, it shows exactly what we have been arguing about, and that is, that the present Administration is prepared on every occasion to wipe out further representation for the country districts. We do not argue that the country is deserving of any greater representation than the metropolitan area upon an unsound basis. We recognise the fact that in every country we have the large populations along the seaboard; but, under present conditions, the country districts are being increased in area to such an extent that it becomes almost an impossibility for an individual member to look after the interests of the electors in the way they should be looked after. When I came to Brisbane I appreciated the fact that there were some electorates here which I could walk round in an hour. I could go over some electorates in less than an hour.

Mr. RYAN: You ought to try mine. My electorate contains 98,000 square miles.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I do not say that the hon. member for Cook would try to walk around anyone's electorate, but he must acknowledge that there are electorates in Brisbane that one could walk around in an hour.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Kurilpa electorate is one square mile.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I quite understand that the hon. member for Cook has an electorate which takes him two or three weeks to go round when he feels inclined to go up there. I understand that it takes him somewhere in the vicinity of three weeks to get from one side of the electorate to the other. The fact remains that we should have greater representation in the country electorates. I admit that there is soundness in the argument of the hon. member for Nundah—that we should have one adult one vote, and one vote one value.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: He used two arguments.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: While there is soundness in the argument in favour of one vote one value, still we have not got the same facilities in the country districts that they have in the metropolitan area, and it is therefore impossible to carry out that principle in the country. The hon. member for Drayton spoke correctly when he asked for a greater margin for the country. There is no doubt that we have a big margin for the country districts, but the electorates have been deliberately gerrymandered, otherwise we would have had a redistribution that would have been equitable and fair to the whole community. I understand that the idea in connection with the redistribution of seats is to give community of interests the chief consideration. In my own case, the Commissioners eliminated my electorate altogether, and I often feel that I am here under more or less false pretences. (Laughter.) But we have to put up with that. Under the new redistribution they have put Millmerran into the Dalby electorate. Ever since Queensland has been Queensland and Millmerran has been Millmerran, Millmerran and Pittsworth have had their interests associated with each other. There has always been a common feeling between the people living in those two places. Yet they put Millmerran into

the Dalby electorate. We now have a man in Dalby who is asked to look after the interests of Millmerran, a portion of the electorate that he is out of touch with every day in the year. Now his electorate is brought down to within 6 miles of the township of Pittsworth. It is a ridiculous state of affairs, and I say that it is not in the interests of the country residents that their community of interests should be ignored in that way. Community of interest in a country electorate is all important—every

man in this House will acknowledge that fact—whilst on the other hand there is no getting away from the fact that in the metropolitan area community of interests is always present. The chief factor in the redistribution should have been community of interest, and the question of railway communication should have come afterwards. In the next Parliament the hon. member for Dalby will represent the Millmerran people, yet their railway communication is through Pittsworth and on to Toowoomba. There is no community of interest whatever with Dalby. When we remember the difficulties which the country people have to face, and their troubles—because they are real troubles, although some hon. members do not think that country people have to face troubles—in my humble opinion it seems to be unreasonable that community of interest should have been ignored, and that the country people should not have had a chance of getting together and so placing their views before their member, and, through him, before the Ministers administering the departments as to afford them the opportunity of getting many of the requirements for which they ask.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you mean to say that country members suffer any disadvantages?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I am not going to say that I suffer any disadvantage, because, so far as I know, I get reasonable treatment; but my constituents suffer disadvantages. Suppose that a deputation is to be introduced by the hon. member for Nundah to the Secretary for Public Works. It probably costs each member of the deputation 6d. or 1s.

Mr. FRY: They may walk in.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Probably they may, because they may not consider it worth 6d. to see the Minister. (Laughter.) But, when I bring down a deputation, those people from the country districts have to pay their train fares.

Mr. FERRICKS: Is it not worth their while to pay that money to see the Minister?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It certainly would not be if the hon. member were Minister.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: They come to see the Exhibition.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It is not a question of the Exhibition. It is a question of fair treatment—of country interests against metropolitan interests—and I am going to stand for country interests on every possible occasion, because I believe that at the present time they are of paramount importance to the prosperity of Queensland. When we consider that four country electorates have been wiped out and country members will have very much larger areas to look after, and that community of interests has been ignored in many instances, we must realise

that the work of country members is going to be infinitely more difficult than it has been. We ask that a definite quota shall be laid down. Had the Redistribution Commission availed themselves of the Act as they might have done, then we possibly would have seen a fairer distribution than has been given to us. I find that many of the country electorates have more electors than constituencies in the bigger centres of population. We find several electorates in which there is a very small margin in favour of metropolitan constituencies over country constituencies, and that Toowoomba and East Toowoomba are taking in a certain area of the country districts, and have been so arranged that the line of demarcation that any man could see should be the boundary has been deliberately crossed over and a certain area transferred from one electorate into the other for the purpose of trying to retain the seat for the Labour man at present representing Toowoomba.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Pittsworth in order in reflecting upon the Commissioners? I think it is contrary to the Standing Orders. It certainly is contrary to good taste. It is a cowardly thing to do, because they are not here to defend themselves. (Opposition interruption.) My point of order is that the hon. member is reflecting on the Government and on the Commissioners, who are not here to defend themselves. His reflections are incorrect and untrue, and he should be compelled to withdraw them or desist from this cowardly attack. (Opposition laughter.) I want to say that this cowardly line of attack has been pursued all the afternoon by hon. members opposite, and it is about time it was stopped.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not understand the hon. member for Pittsworth to be accusing the Government.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I was accusing the Commission.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have no right to do it.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I will say it again.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will recognise that the accepted usage of Parliament forbids reflections upon a public officer who is not here to defend himself.

Mr. VOWLES: Judges have been attacked.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I heard a previous Commission criticised from the front bench on the Government side during the life of this Parliament. I am not in any shape or form criticising the Government. I am criticising the Act which gave them power to act in a reasonable way, and which allowed them a margin, and I say they deliberately wiped out that margin and gerrymandered country electorates.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I rise to a point of order. I claim that it is out of order to impute improper motives to men exercising the duties of a Royal Commission.

Mr. CORSER: Members of Parliament have the right to criticise Royal Commissions.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Why does not the Minister state his point of order? He surely does not need to make an explanation?

Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will address his remarks to the resolution without imputing improper motives. I have pointed out to the hon. member that he would be perfectly justified in criticising any Commission; but to impute highly improper motives would be hardly fair discussion.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: From what I saw personally, I think I was perfectly justified in imputing unjust motives to the Commission. Furthermore, hon. members opposite were in close communication with the Commission; they actually dined with some members of the Commission. Whether the Commission were guided by fair motives or not, it is a most extraordinary thing that they wiped out four country constituencies and gave to the metropolitan areas further seats in the next Parliament. Surely country members have a right to complain. I am not complaining because I was cut out; I will take it like a sportsman, and probably in a better spirit than it would have been taken by the hon. member for Cook. We feel that it is time that it should be laid down definitely in the statutes what margin shall exist between the number of electors in country constituencies and in metropolitan. It is quite possible under the Act for the Commission to have given us a far greater margin than they did.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They gave you a much better deal than ever you had before.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They did nothing of the sort. They wiped out four seats; and the extraordinary thing is that they were four seats which were represented by members of the Country party. I know very well there are not very many genuine country seats represented by Government members; but why should the matter have been dealt with in such a way as to wipe out four seats that are represented by Country party members, two of which seats were wrested from the Labour party at the last election by the hon. member for Kennedy and the hon. member for Musgrave.

Mr. COLLINS: Why did the Denham Government, in 1911, wipe out country seats?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I believe that many country electors thought that the Act would be administered by the Government in such a way as to enable the Commission to give full scope to the meaning of the Act. There is no doubt that the people who introduced and put that measure through recognised that it was essential for country constituencies to have a lesser number of electors than a metropolitan area. The Commission, as far as I can see, never considered the intention of the Act. They said, "We have certain powers under this Act, and we can do certain things." They did those things. If we had been given reasonable and fair treatment, the distribution would have started from the South, not from the North, of Queensland. The Commission started in the North and worked down; and even now the number of electors in the electorates of the Premier and the Home Secretary is nothing in comparison with those in some country seats on the Downs and on the North Coast.

Mr. BULCOCK: How many members should the North get?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Nobody is finding fault with the number of members the North has or is going to have. All we say is that we, in the country districts are

entitled to representation greater than we have under the redistribution. We want to have it laid down hard and fast what the quota shall be, and, as far as possible, we are going to insist upon it. I hope that, when our friends opposite leave the Government benches, one of the first Bills to be brought into this Chamber will be one to make a fresh redistribution in order to give the country districts the fair representation they ought to have.

Mr. COLLINS: Like they have in Victoria, I suppose?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I listened with a certain amount of surprise to the hon. member for Nundah when he said he did not see exactly what good a Minister did when he visited country electorates. I would be only too pleased to take the Ministers, one after the other, into my electorate and show them through. When they come into my electorate I do not recognise them as Labour, Liberal, Country party, or anything else. It is the duty of a member to provide a Minister with every facility to see his constituency, to meet his people, and to get all he possibly can out of him. Nobody blames us for that. If we had 5,500 people to look after instead of 7,000 or 8,000, and had a community of interest, a Ministerial visit would be of far greater benefit to the country than it is under present conditions. Take the electorate in which the township of Pittsworth is situated. There is nothing in common between Pittsworth, Clifton, and Allora; yet those three towns are in the one electorate. Previously, there was a community of interest; to-day, all those interests have been wiped out, and a country member is being given such areas to look after that it will be practically impossible for him to do his duty as it should be done.

Mr. BULCOCK: You do not know what a big constituency is to look after.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: If I looked as miserable as the hon. member—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Under the Standing Orders and under the procedure laid down in "May," references of that kind are disorderly. I ask the hon. member, when addressing hon. members in future, not to make personal reflections on them.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I am sorry. Of course, I do not pretend for one moment to know what a large electorate is. I am dealing with the question of country constituencies as I find them. I am going to give this proposal all the support I can.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) (who was received with Opposition cries of, "You are going to talk it out") said: I am going to exercise my right to reply to the very few things which have been said in support of this motion. In the first place, if the motion had been carefully considered by the hon. member who moved it, I do not think, on reflection, he would have moved it.

At 5.50 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member proposes in his motion to insert in the Electoral Districts Act the words—

"Provided that notwithstanding anything contained in this section or in the last preceding section, electoral districts

[Mr. J. H. C. Roberts.]

which are wholly comprised within the boundaries of cities or towns shall have not less than 40 per cent. more electors than those of electoral districts which are wholly beyond such boundaries and electoral districts which comprise land partly within and partly without such boundaries."

There are no electoral districts in Queensland wholly beyond the boundaries of a city or a town.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, there are.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They contain a city or part of a city, a town or part of a town. The motion of the hon. member is wholly meaningless in that respect.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are electorates comprised within, but no electorates wholly without, such boundaries. Obviously the hon. gentleman has not considered the matter. He further says in his motion—

"Electoral districts which comprise land partly within and partly without such boundaries shall have not less than 25 per cent. more electors than those of electoral districts which are wholly beyond such boundaries."

That would mean that an electorate partly comprised of a city or town would have not less than 25 per cent. more electors than an electorate which comprised several towns. Apparently, what the hon. gentleman intended was that all of the electorates outside the metropolitan area would have the same number of votes—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In such a case the hon. member for Gregory would have as great a number of electors as the hon. member for Drayton. The hon. member for Gregory represents a larger area than is represented by the whole of the Country party and National party put together.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are to blame for that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give the figures. The whole of the Nationalist

party in Queensland represent 1,042 square miles, and the whole of the Country party in Queensland represent 102,751 square miles, or a total for both parties of 103,793 square miles, whereas the area of the electorate represented by the hon. member for Gregory is 106,360 square miles.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: More shame on you for doing it!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. member for Drayton had his way, the position would become more acute; and, if we were to have a reduction of members, as was proposed by certain hon. members opposite, the question would be made still more acute.

Mr. EDWARDS: Will you admit that hon. members on this side of the House represent 24,000 more electors than the Government?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will admit nothing of the kind. I can prove that the Government represent a majority of the electors; but I have not sufficient time to do that now. A great deal has been said about the redistribution of seats by the Commissioners.

Mr. CORSER: Your figures are wrong.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The recent Commission gave a fairer and squarer deal to the country electorates than did the one appointed by the hon. member for Albert in 1911.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The last one gerrymandered, but the other did not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is absolutely untrue that the Commission appointed by this Government gerrymandered. (Opposition laughter.)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You know they did.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The following statement shows the enrolment for the several divisions of the State, together with the number of seats and the average enrolment per seat in each such division as given at the redistribution of electorates in 1911 and 1921 respectively, and also the percentage increases on metropolitan electorates allowed by the two Commissions:—

District.	REDISTRIBUTION—1911.				REDISTRIBUTION—1921.			
	Enrolment.	Number of Seats.	Average Enrolment Per Seat.	Percentage Increase on Metropolitan Electorates.	Enrolment.	Number of Seats.	Average Enrolment Per Seat.	Percentage Increase on Metropolitan Electorates.
Northern District	57,728	16	3,608	12.7	78,815	16	4,925	23.7
Central District	32,675	9	3,630	12.2	46,951	9	5,216	19.2
Wide Bay and Burnett District	34,184	9	3,788	8.1	47,226	8	5,903	8.6
Darling Downs and South-western District	49,396	13	3,799	8.1	63,421	11	5,765	10.7
Ipswich and West Moreton District	31,681	8	3,960	4.2	49,057	8	6,132	5.1
Brisbane and Suburbs	70,322	17	4,136	...	129,252	20	6,462	...
	275,985	72	414,722	72

Quota.—1911—3,765.
Max.—4,515.
Min.—3,011.

Quota.—1921—5,760.
Max.—6,922.
Min.—4,608.

Hon. J. Mullan.]

We did much better for the country interests than did the Commission appointed by the hon. member for Albert.

Mr. FRY: Your commission did more for the benefit of the Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You say "we." That means that you did it. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: The figures are wrong. You admit that again.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I guarantee that the figures are right.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why don't you sit down and let us take a vote?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I ask hon. members in their spare time to test the accuracy of my figures. They will be able to see them in "Hansard."

Mr. CORSER: I beg to move—

"That the question be now put."
(Loud laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give the hon. member a chance of taking a vote directly.

Mr. CORSER: Sit down!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The question has not been sufficiently discussed yet. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are cowards.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If hon. members on this side of the House had had their way in 1911, when the Electoral Districts Bill was going through, we would have increased the margin from one-fifth to one-third.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move—

"That the question be now put."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give hon. members opposite a chance of voting on the motion.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): Certain statements have been made, and I claim the right to speak. The debate has got down to a level which does not reflect upon the House itself. The big basic principle, after all, is what is best in the interests of this great State.

At 7 p.m., the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

FRUIT CASES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

(Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Fruit Cases Acts, 1912-1916, in a certain particular."

Mr. MORGAN: Give us some information.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know that it is necessary to give any information at this juncture.

Mr. VOWLES: Tell us what it is all about.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In response to a request from the fruitgrowers, it is proposed to amend the Fruit Cases Acts by giving power to make regulations for the packing, grading, and standardisation of

fruit. It is a Bill which has really been asked for by the fruitgrowers themselves, and the object of providing a standard by regulations is obvious; because, if we were to lay down a standard in the Act and it was found unworkable, it could not be altered except by act of Parliament. It is thought desirable, in order to meet the wishes of the fruitgrowers, to take power by regulation to set up standards for various fruits.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It seems to me that the Minister has not given much information. I know there have been several requests made for reform in connection with fruit cases and also in the matter of packing; but, so far as I can see, the Bill seems to be wrongly named. If it is dealing with the standardisation of fruit, this is not a suitable name at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is the simplest way of doing it.

Mr. WARREN: I know there is room for improvement in connection with the transport of fruit.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I would like to know from the Minister whether the provisional Council of Agriculture brought this matter up.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The suggestion first came from the Southern Queensland Fruit Growers' Association, and then, when the provisional Council of Agriculture was brought into existence, it was brought before them, and they approved of it.

Mr. COSTELLO: If the people who are interested in the fruitgrowing industry have recommended this to the Minister, it is quite right.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) presented the Bill, and moved—

"That the Bill be now read a first time."

Question put and passed.

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

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): In moving the second reading of this Bill, I may say that it is the outcome of the very marked success during the last five and a-half years of rural schools. From that date up to the present time we have established four rural schools, and eighteen vocational schools in connection with those rural schools, and the number of young people we have enrolled in those rural and vocational schools is over 1,000. We have teachers in those schools who have given the best education to those who have passed through the schools during the last five and a-half years. I feel satisfied that hon. members opposite—especially members of the Country party—will welcome a measure of this class, because it is simply putting, as it were, the

[Hon. J. Mullan.

copying store upon rural education, and giving the children in the country something which will be of distinct advantage to them.

Mr. MORGAN: Can you give us the figures to show the number who have gone on the land from these schools?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I cannot answer that question, but I am satisfied that all those hon. members who have rural schools in their districts have very much appreciated the good work done for the children who attend them. At the present time we have over thirty applications for the establishment of rural schools. These rural schools will virtually supply means of secondary education for students who cannot very well attend the high schools or technical schools. In rural schools the age is limited, and also the curriculum. The age up to which the children may attend school is fourteen years, and those who attain the fifth standard may take part in the rural school work. Of course, we extend to the children who have passed out of the school, and who are over the age of seventeen years, the advantage of technical training. This Bill goes beyond the ordinary school fifth standard, and includes something besides it; that is, a boy may elect to take the secondary education in an agricultural school, absolutely distinct from that of a rural school. The education to be provided will be absolutely free, as in the high schools and technical colleges.

Provision is made in the Bill that the Governor in Council may at any time, on the recommendation of the board, establish agricultural schools or agricultural classes, and provision is made for carrying on part-time agricultural schools or evening classes. It is proposed to have a board consisting of seven members, of whom two members are to be appointed by the Senate of the University of Queensland, two members by the Council of Agriculture, and three by the Government. On account of this being a very important subject, the Government have the right to select three of the members. The board will become a corporation. It will be absolutely distinct from the present system of rural school training. The present rural schools will remain under the Department of Public Instruction. The work in our rural schools is being well conducted at the present time, and will be continued. Provision is made to enable a pupil wishing to enter upon agricultural pursuits to obtain a degree of agriculture in the University. Necessary provision is also made for having agricultural classes in the high schools and technical colleges, and the Government are prepared, on the recommendation of the board, to grant a subsidy of two-thirds of the capital cost of providing an agricultural section in connection with any of the grammar schools. There is little need for me to say any more in favour of the Bill. I am not anticipating much trouble from members so far as the passage of the Bill is concerned, because it has been long recognised that the people of the country should get a far greater share out of the general revenue than they have had in the past. (Hear, hear!) If the Bill goes through, I am sure it will be received with as much favour as our present rural schools. Hon. members will recognise that we have nothing to hide in this measure, and everyone can see what it is intended to do.

Mr. GREEN: Why do you bring the local authorities into it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is provided in the Bill that a single local authority, or two or more local authorities combined, may, if they wish, establish a rural school in their area. We know that in the past many people in the country have asked for the establishment of rural schools, and we have established them, the whole cost being borne by the Department of Public Instruction. We have always considered that it is only right that the children in the country should have the same educational advantages as the children in the town. Provision is made in the Bill for local authorities to contribute towards the cost of a rural school, under certain conditions. I may say that just recently the National Association have taken an interest in the question of rural school work, and as a result of the visit of members of the council and the secretary of the association to Childers, where they saw the work the rural school was doing, they applied to the Department of Public Instruction for permission to have the same exhibit on view at the coming National Association show. The National Association will pay the whole of the cost for bringing that exhibit to Brisbane. They own frankly that they did not know of the good work that was being carried on in the rural schools.

Mr. WARREN: The Nambour Rural School had an exhibit at the Brisbane National Association show two years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is only by having exhibits from the rural schools at the National Association show in Brisbane that the people in the towns can be shown the good work they are doing. I understand that Mr. A. E. McCahon, head teacher of the Boonah Rural School, is also bringing an exhibit to Brisbane.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Is it proposed to pay the members of the board?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is provision for payment in the Bill. It is intended to devote some of the time of the schools to the agricultural classes in the same way as the domestic science and other subjects are taught in our technical colleges at the present time.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Do you propose to establish any schools in the larger towns and metropolitan areas?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: As a matter of fact, no rural schools are established in them.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It is a very important matter that agricultural education should take place in Brisbane as well as elsewhere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think that the people of Brisbane will acquire a desire for an agricultural education when they see those exhibits in the National Association show. I have very much pleasure in moving—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) The Minister has given us an explanation in some detail of this Bill, which is entitled “A Bill to make better provision for agricultural education.” He has told us that, as a result of the great success of our rural schools, there is such a demand for the establishment of similar institutions that the Government have found

Mr. Vowles.]

it necessary—the provisional Council of Agriculture take a hand in the matter, too—to bring in a Bill to empower them to create agricultural schools throughout the country on certain conditions. It is a funny thing that there should now be all this waking up on the part of the Government to the wants of the people in the country. Let the Treasurer ask himself, “Where is the money coming from?”

The PREMIER: Are you against it?

Mr. VOWLES: I am not. It seems to me that this is one little additional case of window-dressing upon the part of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is the outcome of the success of the rural schools.

Mr. VOWLES: We have been told that twice. The Premier has told us that it is necessary to bring about economy in the administration of the State by reducing the wages of the public service by 5 per cent.; that is, he has to economise to the extent of £300,000 or £350,000, and then he expects to finish up with a deficit of about how much—half a million?

The PREMIER: He will let you know in due course.

Mr. VOWLES: Those are the figures we have to work on. We know—more particularly representatives from the country—that urgent works are necessary in our primary schools and provisional schools, and in many other directions, for the education of our children. We constantly get replies from the Department of Public Instruction that this or that work will be undertaken when funds are available. The department will tell you that they regret that there is not sufficient money to go round the various departments, and the Department of Public Instruction has to suffer.

The PREMIER: Did you say that you had fifty-two schools in your electorate?

Mr. VOWLES: Seventy-two. It shows what an important place it is; and I can show requests for improvements such as putting a fence round a school yard to secure the horses of the children who come 6 or 8 miles to school, and, in addition to those requests, offers by parents to provide the labour and erect the fencing if the Government will supply the material—a matter of a couple of pounds, or five pounds, or ten pounds, as the case may be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Send those cases along, and they will soon be attended to. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: I have sent them along until I am tired and the people in the country are tired. We have all this sort of thing going on practically daily, yet we are told that the Government are in such a position that they can launch a scheme like this.

The PREMIER: Are you in favour of it or against it?

Mr. VOWLES: We get that every day.

The PREMIER: It is a pertinent question, and you will have to answer it.

Mr. VOWLES: What? Answer the Premier's questions?

The PREMIER: Or get the reputation of straddling the rail.

[Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: That is exactly what the Premier is doing, and the Minister is straddling the rail too. Within the next twenty-four hours the Premier will have to meet a deputation from the Trades Hall on the question of reduction of public servants' salaries. The hon. gentleman will have them pulling his leg from either side.

The PREMIER: They cannot say I straddle the rail.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman will probably walk the plank within the next twenty-four hours; he will be put in his place, one way or the other. The hon. gentleman wants to know whether I am against the Bill or for it. I am in favour of anything which is for the interest of the people in the country. But what I want to know is: Are we going to approve of something which is going to be put on the statute-book merely for the purposes of an election; or is there any business in it? If there is business in it, surely the Minister should tell us what the approximate expenditure per annum is going to be. We are going to start another branch of the public service. As I have said in connection with other Bills, we are going to create a host of public servants. These men will have to be paid big allowances for being absent from home. I understand they get something like 15s. a night when absent. The allowances will equal the salaries. All I ask is that the Minister should tell us what it is proposed to cost, and where the money is coming from. Does it mean that, in order to give facilities to one section of the community, the Government will have to impose on another section further taxation or carry on with an increased deficit; because this cost is going to come out of the consolidated revenue?

The PREMIER: If there is to be a deficit, you are against it?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is trying to trap me. Anyone can see there is an election in view by that class of question. They would have on placards, “The hon. member for Dalby said so and so.” I am not against it; I favour anything for the benefit of the people in the country. We are told that children over the age of fourteen years, up to the fifth-class standard, will have the benefit of this education and get certain diplomas. Where are those diplomas coming from? There is a very big distinction between a diploma and a certificate. This is to be in no way identified with the University.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes, it is.

Mr. VOWLES: In what way?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Because we shall have two representatives from the University.

Mr. VOWLES: What right have they to give diplomas? Have you a Chair of Agriculture at the University?

The PREMIER: What are you talking about?

Mr. VOWLES: Agriculture is not known in the University. There is to be a board consisting of seven members—three to be appointed by the Governor in Council, two to be appointed by the Senate of the University of Queensland—where agriculture is unknown—and the other two are to be appointed “by the Council of Agriculture or such other similar body as the Governor in Council may determine.” I do not know what “similar body” means; that is one of the things I object to in this Bill. We have

established quite recently a Council of Agriculture, and we know what that is. "A similar body," we may be told, is the Trades Hall. If the Council of Agriculture has any business in it, there is no necessity for the inclusion of those words "or such other similar body."

Mr. COLLINS: You seem to be awfully alarmed about the Trades Hall. (Loud Opposition laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: The Bill goes on to tell us that one of the Government nominees shall be the chairman of the board. Why the board should not be privileged to appoint its own chairman I am at a loss to know. There seems to be political influence in this. Why should the Governor in Council say who is to be chairman? It is not possible for probably the most practical man—the man from the University, who understands education in all its phases—to get into the chair, because the Minister in charge of the Bill, or the Governor in Council, shall declare from time to time who is to be the chairman. The tenure of office is to be for three years. Provision is also made for filling vacancies and for collecting fees.

The PREMIER: It is a governmental system of education.

Mr. VOWLES: So much so that the Governor in Council can destroy the board, and create one individual in whom to vest the whole of the powers of that board.

The PREMIER: That is a fatuous argument.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not. If it is competent to appoint a person to be the Superintendent of Agricultural Education later on, why not do it now and be done with it? The Governor in Council has power to destroy the board, yet we are told it is to be a corporation, which it is not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is.

Mr. VOWLES: I cannot see it in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is in the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: A corporation can only mean one thing. The board will—

"co-operate with local authorities in the establishment of agricultural schools and classes and, generally, in the promoting of agricultural education."

The board also is to have power to make reports and issue bulletins. I sincerely trust that during the Committee stage we shall be able to insert the words "non-political bulletins." It seems to me that every Government department to-day is being used for Government propaganda purposes, and one has only to look at the "Agricultural Journal" to find that it is rapidly developing into an advertisement for "Theodore and Co." (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. DASH: A pretty good firm.

Mr. VOWLES: The Bill provides that an application—

"for the establishment of an agricultural school or classes may be made by any local authority or more local authorities having jurisdiction within such localities, or by any society, association, or body of persons,"

and they shall be called upon to give proof of their bonâ fides by finding one-third of the estimated cost of establishing and equipping

those schools or classes. The Governor in Council then have power, if they so decide on the advice of the board, to find the remaining two-thirds of the cost. The money is to be expended on schools, part-time schools, evening agricultural classes, and for hostels for the pupils. That is one of the things that I have advocated for the country, more particularly in connection with high schools. We find in a good many places in the country children come 25 and 30 miles by train and otherwise to the high schools, and there is no place at which they can stop if they have to remain in town overnight. The local authorities are to come into this matter in quite a big way. They have no funds for a general purpose other than what is levied specially, and it would be necessary for them to find the money in connection with this scheme by striking a special rate for that purpose. Clause 12 of the Bill says—

"A local authority may from time to time raise any moneys required by it for the purposes of agricultural education under this Act by means of a special rate, which rate may, if deemed necessary, be a separate rate."

Clause 9 provides for the establishment of agricultural schools. Power is given to the local authorities to do certain things under that clause, and they are entitled afterwards to find money for agricultural education, and they can levy a rate, after complying with the provisions of the Local Authorities Act for the taking of a poll. They will provide one-third of the initial cost, and, after that, apparently the money is to be found by the Government for the cost of education.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: If that is so, I would like the hon. gentleman to explain to me why it is necessary to provide that a local authority may from time to time raise any money required by it for the purposes of agricultural education. In one place [7.30 p.m.] the Bill refers to the establishment of schools, which means the erection of buildings and the equipment of the schools, and then, later on, it says "for the purposes of agricultural education," which might mean finding the fees necessary to carry on. There is one thing I wish to draw attention to before the Bill gets into Committee. On line 30, page 3, we find the word "Council." I am at a loss to know what that word means. Should it not be "Board."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It should be "Board."

Mr. VOWLES: So far as the principle is concerned, I approve of it. We should give all the educational facilities we possibly can. (Government laughter.) A man in his ordinary everyday life may have the desire to do certain things on principle, but he has not the cash to do them. The Government are in the position of an ordinary business concern, and they desire to do all sorts of things which are highly desirable; but we know they have not got the cash to do them, and we want to know where the money is coming from before we commit the State to any additional expenditure. We naturally want to know what the scheme is going to cost, and if there is any business in it. We are told a good deal about rural schools. We are told that they have been a huge success. Would it not have been a reasonable

Mr. Vowles.]

thing for the Minister to have given us the history of the rural schools, and traced the history of the pupils who have been through the schools?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Don't be absurd!

Mr. VOWLES: If you are going to boost up your educational system, we naturally look for the results. We know the facilities are there, and we would like to know what pupils attended the schools, how they succeeded, and what eventually became of them. We would also like to know what it is proposed to do with the experimental stations we already have. What is going to happen to Gatton College, and what is going to happen to the experiment station at Roma? Are these institutions to degenerate into rural schools? Are they going to be scrapped and the staffs dispensed with, or are they going to be brought under this scheme?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It will be the duty of the Board to attend to those matters.

Mr. VOWLES: Has the Gatton College justified itself to such an extent that it is desirable we should incur more expense yearly? Because Gatton College, to my knowledge, has never shown a credit balance for many years.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you want it to do so?

Mr. VOWLES: Gatton College should show better than it is doing at present.

Mr. KIRWAN: It produced the hon. member for Burnett; so what are you complaining about?

Mr. VOWLES: That is one good thing it has done. It has also produced some very good teachers—among them the hon. member for Stanley. But we understand that Gatton College is going to be scrapped, so it must have degenerated since those days. Outside the principle, the Bill is purely a matter for Committee, and there is very little further that I can say on it. I will give it my support; but I sincerely trust that, when we get into Committee, the Minister will be able to give us information and figures, and enlighten the Committee on the matters to which I have referred.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): During the debate this afternoon hon. members opposite criticised the Government because, as they stated, they had neglected the interests of the country in connection with the redistribution of seats. During the debate which took place on the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill hon. members opposite continually reiterated the statement that the Government had never done anything for the country; and now, when the Government propose to introduce a Bill to provide agricultural education—it was very difficult to find out, from what the leader of the Opposition said, whether he supports or opposes the Bill—when the Government introduce such a Bill as this they criticise and charge the Government with chasing the farmers for their votes. Hon. gentlemen opposite argue to suit their own book; they cannot condemn the Government for not doing a thing and then later on condemn them for doing it. I am going to support the Bill, because I have always considered that the greater the opportunities presented to the rising generation, the better it will be

[*Mr. Vowles.*

for the interests of the rising generation themselves, and also of the country as a whole; and particularly does that apply in regard to the young people brought up in the country. Having been reared in that atmosphere myself, and having gone to school under difficulties, I feel to the full any disabilities or hardships which are placed on boys and girls in the country; and, for the life of me, I cannot understand why members of the Country party as one man should not welcome the introduction of this Bill, which aims at the dissemination of greater knowledge amongst the boys and girls of the country. It virtually means taking the school to them rather than taking them to Gatton College or the University, or any of the secondary schools. The object of the Bill is to place educational facilities as conveniently as possible before those who most require education; and for that reason I was nonplussed when I heard the contradictory statements of the leader of the Opposition. I am pleased to see that the Government are going on with this proposal. I think it will be a success, and, even if it does cost a little money, it will be money well spent. I realise fully the excellent work that this Government have done in regard to educational facilities while they have been in power. Only this afternoon I looked up the details which were given to the hon. member for Rockhampton last session in answer to a question regarding the amount of money spent on education by the Liberal Government during the six years ended 30th June, 1915, and the amount spent by the Labour Government for the six years ended 30th June, 1921. The comparison was wholly in favour of the educational administration of this Government. Not only was it in favour of their administration, but also in regard to the erection of new buildings and the placing of educational facilities throughout the State. The increased expenditure by the Labour Government in six years over the total amount spent by the Liberal Government in a similar period was £2,334,022. The leader of the Opposition complained that this Bill was going to result in increased expenditure. That is the last item to which exception should be taken. During those six years great strides in progress have been made by this Government, and that excellent record is being continued; and I am wholeheartedly in favour of the policy of the Government in placing these educational facilities before the people of the country. When the Minister was speaking, the hon. member for Pittsworth inquired whether any extra educational facilities were to be granted in the larger centres of population, particularly in the metropolis. It is well known to hon. members that there has been a movement for the establishment of a high school on the south side of the river, and that the department has acquired land in Musgrave Park.

While I take no exception to, but wholeheartedly support, the proposals outlined in the Bill, there is a congestion, so far as educational facilities are concerned, in the metropolitan area. The Brisbane High School is at present being conducted in the old Normal school buildings and the old fire brigade buildings. The rooms in this institution, I find from inquiries made, are altogether too small. The grounds are very limited and unsuitable, and the congestion brought about by the 469 scholars at the

school is not in the best interests of those attending. It was understood that the rural schools which were established in the country, and the eighteen vocational schools which were worked in conjunction with them, were to be linked up with the University. I have heard comments from men in all stations of life with regard to what is to be the future of the boys and girls whom we see going to and from the Technical College morning and afternoon. A number of them take shorthand and typewriting lessons, while others are receiving technical education generally. I have heard the opinion expressed that, perhaps, after all, the attendance of these young people at the Technical Colleges may not be in the best interests of the State—a sentiment with which I thoroughly disagree. I contend that the more one learns—and I think that this has been the experience of all of us—the more he realises how much there is yet to learn; in fact, he just begins to realise how much he does not know. These boys and girls who are attending our Technical Colleges, whatever occupation they may follow in the future—whether they be farmers, carpenters, blacksmiths, or labourers—will make better workers at those occupations by virtue of having that education.

Mr. COLLINS: Some of them may become leaders of the Opposition. (Laughter.)

Mr. FERRICKS: By virtue of that education they will be better fitted to carry out the duties of the occupations which they take up. I may point out that at the Central Technical College there are 320 pupils—220 at the Technical High school; 120 at the Domestic Day School; and 480 at the Commercial Day School; making a total of 820; in addition to which there is a number of students who take courses in one or two subjects, and also 100 girl students who are learning various subjects under the heading of domestic science. I made it my business to ascertain from the Secretary for Public Instruction the position in regard to these matters, and the Minister was good enough to give me what he stated were official figures in this connection. Those boys and girls, as well as the boys and girls in the country who are to be given educational facilities by the operation of this measure, will be better citizens by virtue of having acquired that knowledge. On the South side there is a population which would be served by the going on with the erection of the high school in South Brisbane—a population of about 75,000 people, represented electorally to the number of 40,000. That area embraces quite a number of electorates—Bulimba, Logan, Kurilpa, Maree, South Brisbane, and Buranda. In that area there are forty-nine schools operating under the State, which would be feeders for the high school. In that area there are 13,755 State school pupils. In view of the congestion and the unsuitability of the old Normal school and fire brigade buildings for the carrying on of the high school, and of the full working capacity of the Central Technical College, I trust that the Government will give consideration to the matter of proceeding with the erection of the high school at South Brisbane to keep in step with the excellent work they are continuing in the country in this regard.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Under this Bill?

Mr. FERRICKS: In conformity with the excellent work which they are continuing

under the operations of this Bill. In 1920 the estimated cost of school construction was about £22,800, and it is supposed to-day to be somewhat less. I would like to see the Government put on the Estimates this year a sum of about £10,000 as a commencement. Then we would be able to say that the boys and girls of the metropolitan area and in the large centres of population are given equal facilities, but not better, by this Government, to those given to the boys and girls in the country. The people who are living in the country have had many of their disabilities removed.

Mr. MORGAN: It is easy to see that you do not live in the country.

Mr. FERRICKS: For every mile the hon. member has been over the State of Queensland I have been over 50 miles.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: In view of the sentiments expressed by hon. members opposite, it is a marvel to me how they fail to sympathise with Labour Ministers. Fortunately, the Government go on with the idea of doing what is right in the interests of the country, quite irrespective of the gibes, insults, and false charges which are almost incessantly hurled across the floor by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Pittsworth this afternoon deliberately said that it was not worth paying a 6d. tramfare to interview a Labour Minister, but I think he was not speaking seriously. The Labour policy is based on the idea of doing what is right in the interests of the whole of Queensland and of every section of the people. The hon. member will see that he is not giving a fair deal when he states that Ministers are animated by the sentiments he expressed. Fortunately for the interests of Queensland, Ministers are not so affected. My whole-hearted support goes in favour of this Bill; and any measure of a similar nature which is brought forward in the interests of the people of the country or the larger centres of population will have my equally hearty support.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I take a great interest in this Bill. If there is one thing that strikes me as essential for the future prosperity of agriculture in the State, it is a Bill to provide education for the people who are occupying the land to-day as well as those who wish to go on the land in future. I do not know that the Bill provides for all the good things that are hoped for it. I am afraid that it will create a certain amount of disorganisation in our agricultural education. When I say that, I cast my mind over the various institutions which have already been established and the amount of work that has already been done. We have here a Bill for providing agricultural education in the State, and we have left outside the operation of the Bill the Agricultural College at Gatton—an institution on which a great amount of money is being spent. Whatever the Agricultural College may be at the present time is best known to the Government, but no Bill dealing with agricultural education can be perfected until it includes within its scope the whole of our agricultural institutions. We are setting up under this Bill a gentleman who is to be termed the Superintendent of Agricultural Education, and he is practically to be the mouthpiece of the Board of Agricultural Education. That Board practically disappears, so far as its name goes,

Mr. Corser.]

in clause 5. I claim that we should start at the top of the tree, and not at the bottom. We should try and organise our agricultural education, and, in view of the fact that an amount of elementary agricultural education has already been provided in this State, I consider that we would be right in establishing a Chair of Agriculture at the University. I do not wish in any way to decry the enthusiasm that may be behind the Bill, but the Chair of Agriculture should be first established, and I will give my reasons. You must have our agricultural education in the guiding hands of somebody who knows more about it than those who are controlling our agricultural education to-day. I say that advisedly, because we have to get bigger men in agriculture to instruct our instructors and our people and to teach them something more than they know already. It is no good putting people in the leading position in matters such as this unless they have more knowledge than the people they have to teach. If we established a Chair of Agriculture, the professor would appoint the lecturers to the various faculties under him. There would be lecturers for such subjects as agricultural chemistry, plant pathology, and veterinary science.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you want two chairs?

Mr. CORSER: One chair—not two chairs. I noticed, when the hon. member for Barcoo was speaking at the introductory stage of the Bill, that he did not grasp the position at all. Only one Chair of Agriculture is needed, and it will be occupied by a Professor of Agriculture. We have not got a Professor of Agriculture in this State to-day, but we should have a Professor of Agriculture to occupy the Chair of Agriculture at the University. As the Director of Agricultural Education he would formulate his scheme, appoint lecturers to the various branches of agricultural education, and, as he knows what higher education is, what it is necessary to impart, what is necessary in the way of investigation and research in this new country, and what elementary education is required, he will go ahead step by step through our rural schools, our experimental plots, our Agricultural College, and eventually enable the students to go for their diplomas in agriculture at the University. That is the sort of man we should have at the head of our agricultural education in Queensland. In that way we shall be able to train students who may wish to graduate in some of the higher branches in agriculture. We know how agricultural education has advanced in America and European countries. The position they have attained in those countries was only reached by long years of research, and by making available all scientific means which enabled them to get over the difficulties which nature has put in the way of the man on the land. I have already given a considerable amount of attention to this subject, having secured a diploma at the Agricultural College at Gatton; but I can say that, having obtained that scientific knowledge in connection with agriculture, it showed me just what knowledge I had, and how much there was yet to be learned in connection with this important subject. When we talk about agricultural education, it opens up great possibilities of research in Queensland. It is quite right that we should equip our young men so that they will be able to carry out this research in the interests of agriculture. We cannot

secure the services of men from the other side of the world to come over here and help to the greatest degree because of the difficulties which we find here. The conditions are totally different to ours. They have an excellent University in Wisconsin, in the United States, where they are able to deal with conditions as they find them in America. Every State in the United States of America has its own University, and each one has a distinct fund to draw on for research work without having to depend on its Legislature from year to year. A certain amount of money is also granted by the Federal Government, which they are certain of from year to year, and they have not to apply to the State Legislatures for funds to carry on the work from year to year. During the time that I was at Gatton College, Parliament used to vote £6,000 annually.

Mr. COLLINS: Were there any unborn eggs there? (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: Yes; you were the first. (Laughter.) Out of that sum £4,000 per annum was earned by the students of the College, and the remaining £2,000 went towards paying for scientific education and the entertainment of members of Parliament and other visitors to the institution. To-day we find, not £6,000, but a vote of £20,000 appropriated to Gatton College by Parliament.

Mr. COLLINS: Are the students "going slow"?

Mr. CORSER: I believe there are a few Labour representatives there. (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you think that Gatton College should be made to pay?

Mr. CORSER: Not for one moment. This Bill is supposed to provide an amount of money for agricultural education, and we are told that we are going to have the assistance of that fund, if it is necessary. I may state that the other day I asked for two coils of wire netting to enclose a little school plot to enable the "kiddies" and the enthusiastic teacher to grow agricultural crops.

Mr. BULCOCK: Did you get it?

Mr. CORSER: I got one coil. I was told that the regulation provided that only one coil of wire could be supplied. (Laughter.) If we have not got enough money to supply two coils of wire for a little school, how are we going to provide the money for these agricultural schools? It is stated that Gatton College is not a success at the present time. One of the reasons is because the farmers of Queensland were deprived of the advantage of attending the farmers' classes usually held at the college during the holiday period. The Government withdrew the cheap fares, but that was no discredit to the college. If that is the way our present agricultural institutions are treated, how are we going to find the money to do all the good things provided by this Bill? If we first established a Chair of Agriculture at the University and appointed a Professor of Agriculture, he would have his big experimental farm and would be able to carry on his research work and enable the students to gain their diplomas in agriculture. Unless we carry these things out properly, how are we going to deliver lectures to our farmers in the country? It is no good for a theorist

[Mr. Corser.

or even a practical man to go to a number of farmers in the country and lecture to them unless he can show them by results that they can do something better than they are doing themselves. It is no good telling

[8 p.m.] them things—you must show them. The professor could

have his experimental plots on which he could use the scientific methods which he claims are efficient to improve agriculture for the benefit of the farmers. We have our practical farmers here to-day; but from the theoretical side such a man could show us how, for instance, to secure nitrogen from the air instead of buying it in bags and dumping it on the soil—as the hon. member for Stanley can tell us. We can use the organisms in our soils to collect nitrogen from the air and so help the farmers and also ourselves. When we can show the farmers by scientific experiment the possibilities of improving their own conditions, we shall secure their interests, which will reflect benefit on the State and everybody concerned. Let us secure a good scientific man as director who would also fill the bill as professor at the University.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

Mr. CORSER: I claim that neither at Sydney nor Melbourne have they established a system similar to what I have suggested, and appointed a Director of Agriculture occupying the Chair of Agriculture at the University, and having in his hands the direction of the whole of the agricultural education of the country. Had they that system of organisation, they would fill the youngster with interest and equip him with knowledge that would make him a useful unit in agriculture; but their agricultural colleges, like that at Gatton, do not provide sufficient study to enable a lad to gain a diploma which will fit him for the University. There is at Gatton no stepping-stone to-day from which a lad could, if we had a Chair of Agriculture, rise to the University with that higher degree of efficiency—that higher education in any particular branch of agriculture which is necessary to enable him to understand the course. That is the position in which many students found themselves when I was a student there, although there were suggestions in Parliament—and many of us believed in them then, although they were made generally from the kerosene case before the elections—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Your father spoke on it here. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: He never spoke on it, because a kerosene case would not hold him. (Laughter.) The suggestion was that they should take two or three lads from Gatton who possessed the necessary qualifications and send them to America to seek the education necessary to enable them to become professors and aid in research work in our own State. It is impossible to qualify as anything more than an ordinary agriculturist at Gatton College—Parliament has not made the provision; we cannot blame the college. We have there as good stuff as they have in America. From what one can gather from our soldiers who went to America recently to study agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, and other branches of knowledge, they could, with proper advantages, have qualified here to the same degree as our American cousins.

Under such an organisation, the professor occupying the Chair of Agriculture being also

the Director of Agricultural Education, some of the existing staff in our institutions would provide his lecturers in various subjects. He would require his big experimental farm and college, his equipment to carry out research work, and his experimental plots with the necessary managers, and the organisation of the teachers in the grammar schools and primary schools. We are considering an Agricultural Education Bill, providing for the appointment of a Superintendent of Agricultural Education, and he is to be appointed after the Bill has passed through the House, whereas I claim that he should have a hand in directing the organisation. If he is going to be the director, why should he not direct?

The PREMIER: Do you suggest that we should appoint a superintendent without parliamentary authority?

Mr. CORSER: I do not. Hon. members opposite do a lot of things without parliamentary authority. The organisers under another Bill were appointed and out in the country before parliamentary authority was given. I am not opposing the Bill, but I am offering suggestions which I think might be of value.

Mr. W. COOPER: Go along to the Director of Agriculture and advise him. Don't make the suggestions here.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member looks upon the Council of Agriculture as a kind of Soviet. The hon. member can go and get his instructions there; we have the right to speak here on the Bill. We know that practical knowledge and practical education, too, are of very great value. I would take hon. members back to the early days of dairying, when the farmers got their start from the travelling dairy under the late Mr. John Mahon, which was practically the beginning of the co-operative system in Queensland, the greatest in Australia. It went right throughout the State when there were no factories, and set up in a place for a fortnight. The farmers were asked to bring their cream or milk, and the young women were invited to help make the butter. The people began to say, "If we had a little money of our own, we could have a factory of our own." They did combine; but we stopped there—we have not done very much more in that way. I do not say that you are going to study the elements of wheatgrowing in that way, although we have in Mr. Soutter, an old Gatton boy, too, a great authority in the hybridisation of wheat, who, with facilities, would carry on an education in the growing of wheat of higher standards that would be of very great benefit to the State. This Bill does not provide for that.

Our high schools are free, but under the Bill higher education in agriculture is not going to be free. We find also that, if a local authority wants an agricultural school in its centre, it must provide one-third of the cost, but it is otherwise if the Governor in Council decide that one is necessary under clause 8, which provides—

"The Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Board, may from time to time establish in such places as are deemed expedient—

(a) Agricultural schools or agricultural classes."

They may establish a school in Brisbane that may supersede in importance the

Mr. Corser.]

Agricultural College at Gatton. Where the Government wish to establish these schools it appears that they can establish them; but, when a local authority wants one in the country, they must pay one-third of the cost. Agricultural education is required very considerably in new areas. We are about to spend £2,500,000 in opening the Upper Burnett lands, where there is not very much known about the possibilities of agriculture. The Government have not established any agricultural farms there. Certainly, the district would give some indication of the things that can be grown. But in such an area we should have at a very early date an experimental farm and a system of education for all the people who go there. People in all walks of life, from other States and the other side of the world, will be going there. We should have a farm growing the various commodities it is possible to grow in that district; it should be demonstrated how they are grown, when it is best to plant, and what variety is best to plant. By that means we shall show people who have not the slightest idea on the matter what the possibilities are in the locality in which they are going to settle. I think that suggestion is timely when we are considering a Bill for the advancement of agricultural education. I am supporting the Bill. I offer those suggestions in the hope that it may be made a better Bill. As far as agricultural bulletins go, Professor Shelton instituted that system years ago; and very valuable bulletins are still on record showing the growth of various crops from both the scientific and the practical side. If the same system is going to be instituted here, it will be of great value to the farmers who are settled and those who will settle in the future.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): Probably if one came to view the activities of some of the greatest men in the world, one could not escape such names as Lawes and Gilbert in the Old World; the great hybridiser of America—Burbank; and, in Australia, Farrar, as being outstanding examples of progressive civilisation. Their activities will be more or less confined to breeding and evolving plant life more suitable to the sustentation of human life, and evolving types more suitable to the districts for which they are evolved. That brings us to a consideration of what is true greatness. I think it was Dean Swift who said that a man who makes two ears of corn grow where one grew before is probably one of the greatest men in the world. If that is so, then a Government or an individual who is going to make these things possible in the future to a greater extent than they have been possible in the past is, probably, no less a benefactor. When I was considerably younger than I am now—(laughter)—I was a mere boy then—I had a vague recollection of Mr. Farrar, and his activities in the Riverina district. I remember the treatment which was meted out to him. He probably did more for the wheatgrowers of Australia than any other man in Australia has done up to date; but he was thought so little of by a paternal Government that he was allowed to pay the cost of his own experiments in the early years of his work.

Mr. EDWARDS: He brought millions to Australia.

Mr. BULCOCK: It was a positive disgrace! A conservative Government were not

prepared to spend money on agricultural education. Farrar was not deterred by that. He instituted a system of plant breeding. We may have in our community to-day individuals just as capable as Mr. Farrar. We may have a boy or girl in our community who will take up the good—I was almost tempted to say the glorious—work being performed by Mr. Soutter at Roma. (Hear, hear!) No one has a greater admiration for the work of Mr. Soutter than I have. Any nation, or any State, that refuses to spend money on agricultural education, decays; and national decay leads to national destruction. In the settlement of our empty spaces we have a big problem. I know that a great many individuals who returned from the front and settled on the land were incapable of making a livelihood owing to a certain lack of training. If we want to build a house we insist on that work being done by a journeyman carpenter under a foreman. If we want to have any other work done, we insist on having, not the apprentice or the labourer, but the trained intellect. Yet in the most vital aspect of our life—the preparation and growth of our food supplies—we have been content in the past to go along without providing facilities for national training. Training in agriculture necessarily, I think, must be a charge on the State. The hon. member for Burnett was constrained to think that we should establish a Chair of Agriculture and Veterinary Science; but appeared to put the two together. If we were to put the two together, it would take about seven years for a student to take a diploma and become efficient in both branches. In New South Wales there is a Chair of Veterinary Science and a Chair of Agriculture; they are absolutely distinct one from the other; each is presided over by a professor of the faculty—the School of Agriculture by Professor Watt, late of Johannesburg University, and the Veterinary School by Professor Stewart. But, in spite of the fact that two faculties are maintained in both the Sydney and Melbourne Universities, we find that in the Chair of Agriculture in Sydney there are twenty-five students, and in the Chair of Agriculture in Melbourne there are only ten students. In veterinary science in Sydney there are fifteen students at the most up-to-date and best-equipped school in Australia; and in Melbourne, in the two schools of veterinary science—the Melbourne College of Veterinary Surgeons and the University School of Veterinary Science—we find an aggregation of only forty students. I take the attitude that the money which will be involved in this question must be spent in such a way as to bring about the utmost good. I do not think the establishment of a Chair of Agriculture and of Veterinary Science—one seems to me to be inseparable from the other—would produce the effect that we desire. But I think that, when we have started on the groundwork and trained the individual, we may be able to pass him on to another Chair of Agriculture. I have made the suggestion more than once in this House, and I reiterate it, that, while at present I cannot see that the expense in connection with the maintenance of a Chair of Agriculture is justified, yet I think that our system of education should provide that students who have distinguished themselves—say, in research work on the one hand or veterinary animal husbandry on the other, in the elementary course

[*Mr. Corser.*]

provided at Gatton, or any other branch of agricultural research—other things being equal and their qualifications warranting it, should be allowed to take out an exhibition, scholarship, bursary, or whatever you like to call it, at the Sydney or Melbourne University to prosecute their studies. That would be a temporary way of overcoming a difficulty that could be overcome in no other way in Queensland. The leader of the Opposition mentioned the question of finance. That is worthy of some consideration. The cost of the maintenance of the officers who will be appointed under this Bill, and the general system of instruction which will arise out of this Bill, should most necessarily not be charged against consolidated revenue, but should be more or less in the nature of an investment. It will be money spent to produce wealth just the same as capital is invested in industry to-day. The individual, because of training, will produce a greater harvest, and that greater harvest will in itself produce greater prosperity to the State. I cannot see any very definite reason why the financial obligation under this Bill should be insurmountable. I want to be quite frank in dealing with Gatton College. On two occasions I have availed myself of the opportunity of visiting that place. On one occasion I went, not under the wing of any Minister, but in order to gain a fair opportunity of seeing what the college stood for and what it was doing. I say frankly that I was disappointed at the educational facilities offering. The Gatton that I saw may be different from the Gatton that supplied the diploma to the hon. member for Burnett, but I am going to speak of Gatton as I found it. My impression was not a favourable one. I have for a long time held the opinion that we could institute a better system of agricultural education than exists in our State to-day. It is rather significant that the State which stands out in the forefront with regard to agricultural education is New South Wales. It offers greater agricultural facilities than any other State in the Commonwealth. Those agricultural facilities, or the foundation for those facilities—strange though it may appear to hon. members opposite—were laid down by Labour Governments. We should look at the policies underlying the various Governments to see whether agriculture is a plaything, or whether it has received serious consideration by various parties. I suppose the Queensland Parliament to-day as a governing body has more agricultural projects before it than any other State in the Commonwealth, and I believe rightly so. So far as the agricultural policy is concerned in other States, there is a singular lack of unanimity. Agricultural education to be successful must be progressive. I would like hon. members to make one single application of that statement. I would ask hon. members to look at "Knibbs," and they will see that from year to year the agricultural facilities provided in the other States do not vary one iota. I am pleased to have an opportunity of welcoming a new progression to the art and science of agriculture.

Mr. FRY: Is not all education progressive?

Mr. BULCOCK: It should be. Agricultural education has not been progressive in recent years in other States. Turning to other countries, we find that in Great Britain for the current year £1,000,000 is being spent on the encouragement of agricultural research and agricultural education. I think it is a

sign of the times that those countries that have the greatest industrial and economic problems are turning to the land as a solution of the difficulties that are confronting them. I am not going to say that this Government is turning to the land, but the individual boy and girl attending our schools to-day must be educated in the problem of agriculture so that he may be able to go on the land and help fill our empty spaces. The leader of the Opposition threw a challenge across the floor of the House to the effect, "You want to close up Gatton." I will state what I would like to see evolve out of this Bill. I do not regard Gatton as being the centre of agricultural education. Gatton can never become that centre. It is situated in a certain climate under certain conditions; it can only grow certain crops, and can only deal with certain agricultural questions, and, that being so, if we are going to concentrate our agricultural education at Gatton, the result will be that we can only train along certain lines.

Mr. GREEN: Does that not apply to every agricultural college?

Mr. BULCOCK: We have in our central institution the possibility of only educating along agricultural lines in a set sphere of agricultural industry. The hon. member interjects, "Does that not apply to every agricultural college?" It undoubtedly would apply to all institutions, but to-day we are undergoing the stage of specialists. The hon. member for Townsville, coming from a Northern constituency, is interested in sugar-cane. We are all interested in sugar-cane, because it is a national industry. Have we got any places where we can train students successfully in the various stages of the growth of sugar-cane? It is essential that we should have our different institutions in our different climatic belts.

Mr. GREEN: Decentralisation?

Mr. BULCOCK: In agricultural education decentralisation is essential. It is because of the decentralisation of climate that we have rural schools and experimental stations. We have an agricultural experimental farm at Gindi, one at Hermitage, one at Home Hill, and one is now being established in the Dawson Valley. I think that in the future Gatton will have to resolve itself into a centre where dairying, and farming associated with dairying, will be taught. It is an ideal place and has ideal lands for such a project; but we have the problems of mixed husbandry. The time will come when he shall have to face that problem. We are not facing it to-day. Let us see how it is being faced, or sidetracked. In the Central-Western district of Queensland there is a necessity for thousands of rams every year. We have the climate and the soil, and we can breed those rams in Queensland; but, unfortunately, we have not got the stock; and we have not got the stock because we have not evolved it, and every year we send thousands and thousands and thousands of pounds out of our State to purchase rams, very frequently at a great loss, in the Southern stud markets and bring them to Queensland. Let us assume, for the purpose of my argument, that this Board of Agricultural Education, which will be established under the Bill, has before it the necessity for considering the question of improving the condition of our stock and our wool. Let us confine the issue, for the sake of simplicity, to wool. On Gindie could be bred the type of

Mr. Bulcock.]

sheep that would fulfil our needs. Hon. members opposite might say that the flock that Gindi could carry would not be large enough, but we could do what has been done at the various experimental stations in New South Wales, and that is, lay the foundation for good flocks. The chief need of the selector to-day is rams, and they cannot get them because it costs too much to bring them from Southern Riverina, and they are not bred to any extent in Central-Western Queensland. As a matter of fact—I think I am fairly right in this instance—I [8.30 p.m.] know of only one station in Queensland selling stud rams, that is Bercaldine Downs, and they have a very small flock there. We can improve the quality of our wool by training men who are capable of looking at the wool and telling for what purpose it is most useful. I was out in Central-Western Queensland a little while ago, and, to my surprise, I met Mr. Matthews, who was the wool expert in New South Wales—I studied sheep and wool under him for some considerable time. When I met him I said, "What are you doing here," he said, "I am classing stock." I said, "Cannot they find men out here capable of doing that?" He said, "They cannot. Do you think they would pay me to come all the way from Melbourne to class this stock if they could find a local man to do it?" I know there are no local men capable of doing the work; but under this system of education we can train local men and we can evolve a type of wool which will bring greater wealth to Queensland—a type of wool that the markets of the world are crying out for to-day; a type of wool similar to that which was sold at 51d. per lb. on the open market the other day, and which was produced in North-West Queensland.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That shows that someone has been developing the industry.

Mr. BULCOCK: It would be quite unfair to suggest that nobody has been devoting any time to the breeding of these sheep. I do not want to convey that impression at all; but I want hon. members to bear in mind that the small selector buys the culls from the flocks from the bigger stations, and he is not able, as a general rule, to class that stock efficiently, and he goes along blindly in the dark breeding that sort of wool that Nature is good enough, unaided, to allow him to produce. It is possible to train a lad and teach him what to look for, what characteristics are necessary, and what points manifest themselves in the wool, and breed accordingly. That can be done; and we can do it in this State if we only have the courage to face the position. At the Hermitage we can teach mixed husbandry, and at the Northern State farms we can teach sugar culture. All these things have a distinct advantage so far as economic conditions in Queensland are concerned, and we will solve our problems more by regard to this question than by regard to many other questions that come before this House. I have dealt at some length with the bearing that this Bill will have on the sheep industry. The same argument might be applied so far as the cattle industry is concerned, and will definitely apply so far as the farmers are concerned. I do not for one moment want to cast any reflection on the average farmer. I recognise that the farmer is an exceedingly busy man, and an exceedingly important unit in our civilisation to-day. But, unfortu-

[Mr. Bulcock.

nately, the farmer has not got the time to apply himself to the more or less scientific problems of agriculture or, in the alternative, to the application of the scientific problems that are laid down by those who are engaged in agricultural research. I may be thought a visionary, and it may be said that I am looking a long way ahead; but I believe this Bill is capable of putting a trained man into every farmer's home in Queensland. That is what I want to see. The farmers are losing incredible sums year in and year out because they have never been trained in some of the essential details of agricultural science. I do not want to talk about agricultural science; but quite recently I was in an agricultural district in New South Wales, and a farmer there, a very great friend of mine, whose place I was visiting, was busy applying lime to the soil. A very laudable thing; but the next week he came along and put bonedust on the soil. Now, hon. members know that the lime, combining with certain properties in the bonedust, forms free nitrogen, and the value of that fertiliser was completely lost to the soil. In spite of that fact, this farmer was doing as I say; and he is not an isolated instance. In any number of cases we know farmers apply bonedust, quite regardless of the constituents of the soil. They have only one item in their manurial calendar. The hon. member for Murrumba knows that they only use bonedust. Under this system the boys will be trained so that, when they go on the farm, they will be able to distinguish between the different classes of soil. I am not going to say that soil analysis and that sort of thing is necessary. I do not think soil analysis is worth a snap of the fingers so far as agriculture is concerned, because there are so many variations. But there are general rules to follow so far as the majority of soils are concerned. The average farmer probably only gains knowledge after years of experience, and during those years he has lost very considerable sums of money year in and year out. If he had the elementary training that was necessary, these amounts would not have been lost. This Bill, therefore, means, not further expenditure, but the conservation of the agricultural wealth of Queensland, and, in turn, the benefit will be distributed over the whole of the community. In the near future, thanks to the policy of leasehold tenure that this Government advocate, there are going to be big tracts of land available. Who is going to settle those lands? It is all very well to say we have men who are prepared to go on those lands. I do not give a rap for the man who goes on the land without training. I have seen too many failures, limited and all as my agricultural experience has been. But, much and all as we are inclined to decry agricultural education, much and all as we are disposed to condemn it, much and all as the farmer is disposed to regard it as being an excrescence on farm work, my experience leads me to say that the men who went through an agricultural college at the same time as I went through one, and who settled on the land, made a success of it. The trained man does make a success to a greater extent than the man who is not trained.

Mr EDWARDS: I do not think that has been so.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am afraid the hon. member belongs to the type of farmer who does not believe in agricultural education.

Mr. EDWARDS: It has been said that the lad trained at an agricultural college is a failure.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is not my experience.

Mr. EDWARDS: That has been my experience.

Mr. BULCOCK: I would like to remind the hon. member that I belong to an old boys' union from a certain agricultural college, and every now and then we have a reunion, and most of the fellows who went through that college with me are on the land, and most of them are doing well.

Mr. EDWARDS: How many thousands are doing well who never had a college education?

Mr. BULCOCK: That is so; but has the hon. member stopped to consider how much better they would have been doing had they had a college education; and, again, how much money have they lost through lack of education; and how much money has the community lost because those people had not been educated? Let us go a little bit further. These leasehold properties are going to fall vacant, and it is necessary that we should people them with an efficient people; and efficiency means training. This is the age of specialisation.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: How long will it take?

Mr. BULCOCK: The problem has to be faced some time, and, if it has to be faced some time, why not face it now?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: We have got the courage to face it while other Governments did not have the courage. Hon. members opposite may say we are facing it at the eleventh hour; but better the eleventh hour in the interests of Queensland than not to face it at all.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FRY interjected.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Kuripa is disposed to sneer at these things; he is disposed to put his elementary rudimentary knowledge against the avowed knowledge of agricultural organisers and agricultural societies. If the hon. member was sincere in these matters, he would certainly pay some attention to this discussion rather than loll back in his seat in this House and continually throw inane interjections across the Chamber. Let us go a little further. I see another great and important development in this connection—the creation throughout the length and breadth of Queensland of centres where agricultural work will be carried on. Only the other day I received a sample of cotton from the Jericho State School. Jericho is on the Jordan, and it is situated in the heart of the desert. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: I never saw any river when I was there. (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: At Jericho there is nothing but sand. The State school teacher came to me, and said, "Could you secure some cotton seed for me?" I secured some seed for him, and he said, "Mr. Bulcock, would you like to talk to the children for a little while?" and I said I would. I talked to them about agriculture, and about what they could do in their little gardens. I did not promise them chocolates or anything like

that. (Laughter.) The cotton was planted out, and the children did their best to grow it. I submitted the sample of cotton which they grew to the cotton expert of the Department of Agriculture yesterday, and in a letter to me on the subject, he states—

"Following on your visit of yesterday having reference to the quality of two samples of cotton submitted to you by the head teacher, State school, Jericho. I have to advise that these are distinctly fine samples of Upland cotton, being bright in character and long in staple, the lint being of a particularly good quality."

That was grown by the children, practically unaided and without instruction from the teacher. There we have an instance of how the children are prepared to do something to advance agriculture. They only require a little incentive. This Bill should make it possible to have an agricultural plot or plots at every school, with travelling agricultural instructors.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is not bad land about Jericho.

Mr. BULCOCK: You cannot compare the soil around Jericho with the soil in any other district; but my time is limited and I will discuss Jericho soil with the hon. member afterwards. I have shown that the State school children at Jericho can grow cotton very satisfactorily. The chief disadvantage which we labour under in the West is inability to secure acclimatised seeds. I believe that under a proper system of education, with travelling agricultural instructors visiting the various schools, superintending the plots, and giving instruction on hybridisation and crossbreeding, we would, perhaps, evolve types suitable for Central and Western Queensland, and other districts also. The question of grasses is distinctly bound up in this matter; and who are more competent to attend to the improvement of grasses and to watch and collect data in connection with the artificial grasses than the school children where there are school plots zealously tended by enthusiastic children? I see unlimited possibilities in this Bill. Hon. members opposite may be disposed to cavil and sneer at the Bill.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true.

Mr. BULCOCK: I do not think all hon. members are; but, like the hon. member who inately interjects, some are disposed to find fault. Some hon. members ask what the Bill will do; but a casual perusal will show that it is more or less a skeleton—

Mr. WARREN: It is window-dressing.

Mr. BULCOCK: Which will be filled in by the Superintendent of Agricultural Education. It has been suggested by the hon. member that it is window-dressing. If it was desired to make this Bill a window-dressing Bill, there are not one or two, but a dozen, points in which it could be made attractive, but they have been purposely left out so that the superintendent of agricultural education to be appointed under the Bill will have full and unfettered control to work out the destinies of agriculture as he may think fit. But the Bill is colourless, and you have to infuse life into it by recognising the functions that will be performed by the officers who will be appointed under the measure. We have conferences on town planning, and we talk about beautifying our cities. Our Governor remarked upon the dull

Mr. Bulcock.]

greyness of Brisbane. I am one who believes both in practical, utilitarian, and artistic measures, so far as they can be harmonised with each other. Brisbane is a city of drabness and want of colour. In Sydney, if you wanted to gain some little knowledge of agriculture, you could go along to the Technical College there, and in two years you would get a very fair working knowledge of the principles underlying agriculture—a knowledge sufficient, if you were an attentive student, to enable you to work a little garden or anything like that. In Melbourne, the same thing applies. But, unfortunately, in Brisbane we have had no central system of agricultural education up to the present. I think that there is an opportunity under this Bill to establish a system of agricultural education at the Brisbane Technical College. We have highly trained officers at the Department of Agriculture. I have frequently thought that it is rather to be deplored that, when an officer distinguishes himself outside, and has done excellent field work for the Department of Agriculture, he is brought in within the four walls of the department and made into a penman. There are many officers in the department who are highly trained and qualified specialists in different branches of agriculture, which they are administering, and it would be possible to utilise their services in an agricultural class or classes at the Brisbane Technical College. I hope—and it is provided for in the Bill—that the time is not far distant when persons who want to know the best way to grow a cabbage, a rose, or artificial grasses, or to fertilise sweet peas, will be able to get that information through a course of lectures at the Brisbane Technical College, and so bring us into conformity with the agricultural education of the Southern States. I am quite sincere—and I am not speaking strictly as a party man—when I say that I will vote for this Bill. I believe that it is essential, and more so in view of the Bill which preceded it—the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill. I think that the two measures, worked in conjunction, are going to produce a system of agriculture. If we have not got trained men, we cannot produce our maximum quantity. If we are producing our maximum quantity, we are only producing it because we have trained men. Trained men are essential. The Bill we put through last night does not make any provision for trained men, but provides for the establishment of a market while men are being trained. If they are handled fairly, these two Bills, the one with the other, will mean a new era of development in Queensland, and I congratulate the Secretary for Public Instruction on bringing the measure before the House. I confidently believe that the Bill will fulfil not only the highest expectations, but will be remembered when the authors of it have long ceased to be objects of public veneration or otherwise. (Laughter.)

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): On perusing this Bill, in conjunction with the Education Acts of 1875 to 1912, one cannot but come to the conclusion that it is a scientific piece of window-dressing. It is nothing more or less than a lot of fine phrases. Already, under the Acts I have mentioned, the Department of Public Instruction is quite at liberty to establish these schools. It is quite at liberty to go ahead with all that is proposed in this Bill, which is, as I stated, nothing but a

collection of fine phrases. If we only take the very beginning of the Bill, it defines "Agricultural education" as—

"Education and instruction, theoretical and practical, in the principles and methods of agricultural, rural, and farm science and crafts in all or any of their branches or departments: the term includes vocational education for industries directly pertaining to agriculture; in the case of females the term also includes education and instruction in the domestic arts and sciences and home management;"

That is all very fine, but there is nothing in this Bill, with the exception of the proposal to tax local authorities, which is not already provided for in our Education Acts from 1875 to 1912. One is confirmed in that by the statements made from the Government benches. They have been told to talk. If this is such a fine Bill, then in the ordinary course hon. members opposite would not stand up and orate for hours upon it. Every one of us recognises that the Government of to-day have done nothing for the education of the farmer or for his future career in life. Let us look at the result of the work in our trade schools to-day. We find that they hold an examination, and, as a result of the examination, more than 50 per cent. fail to pass in a simple sum in arithmetic. They are now cast on the world, where they will join the ranks of the unskilled. Previously we had an examination for apprentices, and we have now seventy apprentices who qualified at that previous examination waiting to be placed in positions. It will be just the same with some of these schools. Instead of providing somewhere for them to go after their education is complete, they are to be instructed in the various arts and sciences, and that is as far as they will get, because there will be no positions for them to fill. There are hundreds coming into the city from the farming centres, because there is nothing for them to do in the country. The Government have not provided for them in this Bill. All that is provided is that they shall receive instruction; but, if the Government told them where there was freehold land available, and agreed to advance them money to start, then there would be some incentive for a student to gain a knowledge of agricultural science. In one of the first speeches I made in this House, I stated that a line of distinction should be drawn between the country schools and the city schools. I said that I found that the same subjects were being taught in the country schools as were being taught in the city schools, and that that was quite wrong. I stated that rural instruction should also be given in the country schools. The question of teaching agriculture in the schools of this State was advocated long before this Government came into power, because I well remember that we had our agricultural plots in connection with the various State schools, and inspectors were appointed to go around and give instruction. There is no doubt that this is just a new method of raising taxation to assist the Government in paying for what should be free education. The cost of carrying on these classes has got to come out of revenue. According to the Bill, two-thirds of the cost is to be voted by Parliament, while there is also a provision that one-third must be provided by the local authorities. The local authorities will have to get the money out of the ratepayers. There, again, we have sectional legislation on certain

[Mr. Bulcock.

owners of land, who will have to pay rates to pay the cost of these schools and classes. They will have to pay by way of rates on the money which will have to be raised by way of loan. That means that the ratepayers in particular localities are going to be asked to pay for the education of the people who are not owners of land. There is exactly the same principle in this Bill that there is in the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill. The people who own the land have got to pay rates to provide other people with cheaper travelling facilities. The same people who own the land will now have to pay the rates for educating other people.

Mr. COLLINS: What is wrong with that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is only when the local authority asks for it.

Mr. KERR: Yes, when the local authority applies for an agricultural school a levy will be struck, and the burden will be put on the ratepayers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Only the local authority can apply for it.

Mr. KERR: A certain amount of revenue has got to be obtained in order to carry out these agricultural classes. Two-thirds of it will be provided by the Government, and the balance has to be paid by the ratepayers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think you had better study the Bill.

Mr. KERR: I have studied the Bill, and I have also read the previous Acts. I notice that it is provided in the 1912 Act that the Governor in Council may establish continuation classes. This Bill also provides for continuation classes, but they are already provided for in the previous Act, as I have pointed out.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you supporting the Bill?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that for the benefit of this country we have to support the Bill. We cannot throw out a Bill like this. If it is thrown out, the Government will say that we stopped them from doing a certain thing. They will not realise that they have already got the power to do these things. I am simply pointing out where they have the power to do it already.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If it is already provided for, you should vote against it.

Mr. KERR: No; it is not likely that we will give you a lever in that way. I am not going to raise the question of the rights of the country as against the city at all. I think that both the city and the country should receive consideration. We know there is going to be a good deal of expenditure in this matter, although some of the schools already in existence have not sufficient accommodation. In my electorate, owing to the number of pupils increasing year after year, I have one school where more accommodation is required. I know the Minister is sympathetic, and I know that he sent the request for more accommodation on to the Works Department, but I know that the Works Department are in the unfortunate position that they have not got the money, and the children have to suffer. Under this Bill more loan money will have to be raised. We are building our State school buildings out of borrowed money, and that money is not being spent in reproductive work. If you look at the education of the children and the value it will be in years to come, it is reproductive

in that sense; but, in the meantime, it is a burden on the taxpayer, who has to meet the interest on the public debt.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Would you suggest that we build the schools out of revenue?

Mr. KERR: Not so long ago, in dealing with the loan money invested by this State, I pointed out that, owing to the Government's maladministration, we were £2,000,000 behind in our revenue as compared with 1914. If our loan money had been invested properly, then the £250,000 which the Secretary for Public Instruction requires for building schools would be available and we would not need to borrow money for that purpose. We would have sufficient money to build all the schools required; but, unfortunately, the revenue is sacrificed in other channels, and the children are suffering because of that.

Instead of establishing a board, [9 p.m.] involving the expense of fees and travelling and other allowances, the Department of Public Instruction should be in a position to build on the solid basis they already have. In New South Wales, in the country areas, they have State schools doing such work as is proposed here. For instance, they get free seed, as mentioned by an hon. member opposite, and at some of the schools I have seen windmills and model irrigation plants. There is no reason why our instructors should not build on the foundation we have on the lines of those schools, the Council of Agriculture having included as one of their functions the giving of advice to the Department of Public Instruction, instead of creating another department that is going to require more revenue and more taxation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: This is not going to create another department; it is to be under the Department of Public Instruction.

Mr. KERR: That is so; it is to be a sub-department. I cannot help thinking that the Government are lacking in initiative, because all their functions are being placed on outside boards. We have technical experts who from time to time are being ignored, whilst other experts, or alleged experts, are coming in and being created into boards, for which the State is paying.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are just saying that for purposes of agitation.

Mr. KERR: I am not. The Minister knows very well that there are boards everywhere. I admit that the Government have control, but the boards submit their reports annually to Parliament through the Minister. These boards have a good deal of independence, and we should not increase the number when we can ill afford it. We should not increase our public service—because they eventually become public servants. I say that the time is not opportune, when so much retrenchment is going on, for creating these boards and giving men extra fees and travelling allowances—giving them benefits because of their political opinions or otherwise. It would be better for us to concentrate on assisting the boys who are attending our State schools. We know that very often, when a boy leaves school in the country, his father has not a penny with which to start him on the land. The result is that he goes about on a milk cart or does something else for a couple of years, and then his father says, "Go and earn a few shillings," and he

goes to the city and tries to get unskilled work. There is one way to overcome that; and they seem to be overcoming it in the other States. It is quite practicable, and there is no necessity for a Bill at all; it may be done by a regulation under the existing Act. In New South Wales they have 836 State school savings banks, and since 1877 they have accumulated credits of £695,000; in South Australia they have 552 school banks with 28,000 depositors and £30,000 to their credit; in West Australia they have 434 school banks, with a credit of £41,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. KERR: It has this to do with it: that, when he leaves school, he has some cash, however small the amount may be. Why not give that boy something he can utilise, instead of providing him with something which, perhaps, he will never use? It has been mentioned in this debate that certain men went to America at the expense of the Commonwealth Government to gain knowledge in agricultural subjects. I know of one man, of whom I spoke to the Premier, who in a couple of years acquired a very good knowledge of irrigation. Like hundreds of other boys who visited America at the expense of the Commonwealth, he had to leave the State because there was nothing for him here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you mean to say they all went to America?

At 9.7 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. KERR: I do not say they all went to America, and in any case men are always travelling from one country to another; but many of those Queenslanders like Australia so well that I am quite sure that, if they could get jobs, they would rather stay here. The Minister knows perfectly well that from our University to-day qualified men have to go to other countries—the Malay States, India, and so on—to find scope for the knowledge they have gained. Such an outlook in agriculture, caused by the restrictions placed on the land—the land tax, and all that sort of thing—is depressing, and I am beginning to think that the Government may find no applications for such a Bill as this. I hope it will not be so; but I come into contact with more individuals from the country districts than most members, and make it my business to ascertain the reasons why they come to Brisbane. The Secretary for Public Instruction knows perfectly well that from the last examination but one for apprentices there are still seventy waiting; and goodness knows where they are going to find work; no provision being made for them.

I say this is only window-dressing. The Government have not gone far enough. It is only a shrewd move on their part; it cannot be called anything else. If the Minister would only read the existing Education Act he would find that he could go ahead and do everything this Bill enables him to do, with the exception of the taxation. I say that, unless something is done subsequently to give the men who will qualify under it an opportunity to use their education, it will never be a practical measure; and that is possibly the explanation of why it has not been carried into effect before now. We know perfectly well that by effluxion of time there will be an election in

[*Mr. Kerr.*

October twelve months; we know that, owing to dissension in the ranks of the Government, an election may possibly occur any day, and again I say that the Government have no hope of doing anything further with this Bill than utilising it purely for window-dressing purposes—that it is a scientific election dodge. The ideas in it we agree with, because every man in the community recognises that something must be done in the matter of rural education, including such education for our girls. But no Bill with a lot of flourishing words was necessary to establish the Nambour Rural School—it was set up merely by a new regulation under the existing Act; and, if it required no Act of Parliament to do that, why is one necessary here? Why should hon. members come to this House and waste their time because the Government have outlived their usefulness and lost their initiative, and so call upon boards to help them, bringing in propaganda in the shape of Acts of Parliament? I do not blame the Minister. Probably he has been asked, "What is the particular thing you are going to appeal to the country with?" and this is what he has brought forward. I do not say that, if others were in power, they would not do it. I am going to support the Bill, because I agree with the ideas contained in it, and I hope we shall be able to improve it in Committee.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I agree with the title of the Bill, and, in general, with the principle it contains. But I think its introduction is rather belated. Had a great deal of the money which has been spent in technical education been spent some years ago in the establishment of rural schools and in giving the people in the country the opportunities which the people in the city have of educating their children, we would not have witnessed the rush of people from the country to the cities and towns. I have visited the Central Technical College on many occasions, and have taken a keen interest in it. I do not begrudge the children the education they are obtaining there at the cost of the people of the State; but, as one who has spent the greater part of his life in the country and who knows the educational disadvantages in the country, I contend it would have been much better from a country point of view had a portion of the money which has been spent on technical education been spent in fitting boys for rural occupations. Instruction in numerous trades can be overdone. A great number of the children who are now being instructed will find it very difficult to get employment in those trades.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is not so much the trade as the commercial subjects.

Mr. MORGAN: The scope is unlimited in regard to rural occupations. Provided we have markets properly organised in other parts of the world, we cannot overproduce in butter, wool, meat, or anything we export. What would it matter if we had another 100 or 200 men growing sugar-cane? What would it matter to the wool, beef, butter, or wheat industries if we had several thousand men connected with the growth of those products? It would not interfere with the price, because we have the world's markets to consume any surplus. But it is possible to have too many persons engaged in different trades, and that is where unemployment occurs.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS conversing in loud tones,

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members ought to have consideration for the "Hansard" staff if they expect to be correctly reported. Hon. members certainly have the right, if they desire, to indulge in conversation; but they should not do so in loud tones.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: I want to complain of the differential treatment of the people in the country under this Bill, compared with the people in the cities and towns. This Bill provides that, if it is desired to have a school established in any locality, the Government may require that one-third of the money shall be provided by the people who desire the school. Are city people asked to provide one-third of the cost in regard to the establishment of technical colleges? The hon. member for South Brisbane to-day advocated the establishment of a high school in South Brisbane. If that is established, will the people of South Brisbane be asked to provide one-third of the cost? Why should the Government differentiate so far as the people in the country are concerned? I am against that principle. The Secretary for Public Instruction will remember that at one time, if we desired the establishment of State schools in country centres, we had to find one-fifth of the money. I came to Queensland with a group of settlers. We had no school within miles; we wanted a school, and I, with the five or six other families, had to put my hand in my pocket to help build a school so that our children should be educated. Yet at the same time, as a taxpayer, I had to contribute indirectly towards building schools in large centres of population.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They had to do that in large centres of population, too.

Mr. MORGAN: That was abolished unanimously by Parliament, because we recognised that it was a bad principle. Yet the Government are introducing it with respect to this particular measure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If they choose to do it.

Mr. MORGAN: That is only a subterfuge. The Government are not prepared to take the responsibility of saying to the people of a district which makes an application, "Owing to existing circumstances we are not prepared to build the school." We had the system of guaranteed railways. In order to prevent people making application for railways in certain localities, they were told that they would be put under the guaranteed system. The Government of the day were not game to say to the people of that locality, "We will not construct the railway; you are not entitled to it."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Who abolished it? You didn't.

Mr. MORGAN: I voted for its abolition. The present Government abolished it; yet they are going to introduce the same system in respect of these schools. Where is their consistency? It is a wrong principle. The Government should be strong enough to take the responsibility of saying when a school is necessary. The carrying out of this Bill will depend on the financial position of whatever Government may be in power. This Government have not stunted the educational

facilities of large centres, but to a certain extent they have done so in regard to the children who live in the bush. I have had schools closed in my district owing to the fact that the attendance has not averaged nine or over. There is any number of places in my district where there may be ten or eleven children.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They have not been closed when the average attendance has been nine.

Mr. MORGAN: If the average attendance has not been nine over a period of three months, the school has been closed; the attendance may have been eight in one month, nine in the next, and seven in the next, but the average attendance has not been nine, and the Minister has closed the school. There are nine children receiving no education at all, except by means of correspondence, or in some instances an itinerant teacher may visit them once in three months. The aggregate number of children thus receiving no education in Queensland may amount to thousands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: How many children would the hon. member keep a school open for?

Mr. MORGAN: A child in the country is just as important as a child in the town. I certainly think a school should be kept open where the attendance is six or seven.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You would pay rates in order that £20 a year should be paid at that school for each child?

Mr. MORGAN: Is it not worth it? Does not the hon. gentleman think that the teachers in the cities could teach a few more children, and thus do with fewer teachers in those places?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The teachers are growing now because they have too many children to teach.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman should control the teachers and not allow the teachers to rule the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do control the teachers. I have not appointed a teacher for two years.

Mr. MORGAN: I have read where deputations have complained that schools are overcrowded. There are many places in the country where there are no schools at all.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to restrict the hon. gentleman, but I do not want him to discuss that matter on this Bill; he will have an opportunity of doing so on another occasion. I ask him to connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: The Bill proposes to place the children in the country on a different footing to the children in the city. I agree with the Minister that they should be on the same footing, but that is not going to be so under the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: More capital has been sunk in schools in the hon. member's electorate than in mine.

Mr. MORGAN: I represent an area of about 20,000 square miles, and the Minister represents 1 or 2 square miles.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am talking about the capital value in the electorate.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: If it was not for the fact that we had the schools in my electorate to send children to, there would be no Brisbane. It is the people in the country who keep the people in the city alive. It is the people who go out into the bush whose children are not sufficiently educated to occupy the same positions possibly as the children of the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The people of the city are just as necessary as the people of the country.

Mr. MORGAN: If we produce more than is required for local consumption, the surplus is exported; but we do not get any greater price for the produce consumed locally. I would like to see the provision calling upon local authorities to pay one-third of the cost wiped out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They are not forced to come in.

Mr. MORGAN: When an application is made for a technical college or high school, a report is made by an inspector, and on that report the college or school is established or not. The people are not asked to contribute one-third of the cost in that instance; and why should they be asked to contribute one-third of the cost in the case of the establishment of country schools? If an application comes for the establishment of an agricultural school, and funds are available and a favourable report is made, then it should be established, or the Government should be prepared to accept the responsibility of turning it down. The payment of one-third of the cost of education is against the principles of the Labour party and against the principles of the Country party.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We shall be establishing certain classes without the necessity of the one-third payment.

Mr. MORGAN: That will be placing the country people on the same footing as the city people, but where the hon. gentleman is going to demand one-third of the cost they will be placed on a different footing. The factor that should influence the Government should be whether the district is entitled to a school or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The country districts will not rush it if they have to provide one-third of the cost.

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. gentleman has introduced the clause providing for the payment of one-third of the cost with the idea of preventing schools being established, then the Bill is all humbug. The hon. member for Enoggera said that the Bill was window-dressing. I thought the Minister was genuine in introducing the Bill, and I did not think it was window-dressing; but, after hearing the interjection by the hon. gentleman, I am beginning to think that it is, and that there is nothing in the Bill at all. We are far behind any other State in Australia in regard to agricultural education. If this Bill is properly administered and funds are available, it will be a step in the right direction. In Victoria they have got these agricultural schools. They also have instructors from the Department of Agriculture holding classes in the different towns for a week or ten days at a time, as might be done at Roma, Chinchilla, Miles, Dalby, or any other place. In Victoria the poultry instructor holds classes for a day, and then the wool-classing instructor gives instruction in a similar manner. In the various important

centres in Victoria every year the instructors from the Department of Agriculture visit the different localities for eight or ten days for the purpose of giving agricultural instruction. The only thing the Government do in that direction is to draw the [9.30 p.m.] children down to Gatton College once a year for a week or ten days. It would be much better for the Government to send their instructors into the centres of population for a week or ten days and give instruction to the people in the district the same as was done in the days when they had the travelling dairies. To-day you want the farmers to send their sons down to a large centre, and often the expenses are greater than they can afford, and that system does not meet the needs of the case in any shape or form. I give my support to the principles of the Bill. It is a step in the right direction, and I am sorry that a Bill of this sort was not introduced and agricultural schools established before technical colleges were established. However, better late than never. The Country party will endeavour to make the Bill a better one in Committee, and, if the Minister is reasonable, as no doubt he will be—the Secretary for Agriculture gave a demonstration of reasonableness in connection with another Bill last night—if the Minister shows his reasonableness by accepting amendments from the Country party which will make the Bill a better one, then it will have our support.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I promise you that I will accept any good amendment, but I will not accept a bad one.

Mr. MORGAN: I hope the Minister, when deciding whether an amendment is a good one or not, will recognise that the members on this side are producers who have had practical experience, and that they know the conditions existing in the country. We only want reasonable amendments, because it will not be long before we will be administering the Bill, and we do not want anything put into it that is likely to cause us trouble, or which we will not be able to carry into effect. It has been stated that these agricultural schools will cost a considerable amount of money. If the money is available and we can afford it, then the Government should go ahead; but we must take into consideration in regard to all expenditure whether the cost will be greater than the benefit received. One hon. member told us that more money had been spent on education by the Labour Government during the past few years than was spent by the Liberal Government previous to 1915. The hon. member will admit that the figures he quoted prove nothing. It may be that so many more thousand pounds have been spent in building schools; but the hon. member knows that the school buildings, under the present day-labour system, cost three times as much to construct as they did prior to 1914.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Nothing of the kind. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. MORGAN: Those figures only prove that more money has been spent on school buildings. Even suppose the Government have spent more money on the teaching staff, we have to take into consideration that the population has increased, and, no matter what Government were in power, an increase in the number of teachers would have been necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about the increases in salaries?

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. MORGAN: The fact that the Government are paying more to the teachers does not mean that the children are getting additional education commensurate with the increased expenditure.

Mr. WEIR: Of course, it does.

Mr. MORGAN: The fact that the teachers are getting £100,000 per year more than they were getting in 1914 does not mean that the teachers are any better off. Owing to the increased cost of living, they are no better off. We are not getting any more benefit, so far as the children are concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes; the teachers are more satisfied to-day than ever they were.

Mr. MORGAN: The teachers may be better satisfied, but that does not say they are imparting a better education to the children. I have heard a number of people say that the education the children get to-day is not nearly so sound as the education imparted thirty or forty years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I say the children are getting a better education than ever they did.

Mr. MORGAN: Does the hon. member mean to say that the boys to-day are going out better fitted to fight the battle of life than they were thirty years ago? I am very doubtful whether there is not a certain amount of pampering of the children. There is such a thing as spoiling a child. I am very doubtful whether the present system is not making "mollycoddles" of the children; whether we are not bringing them up in such a way that they want to sleep on feather beds and are not fitted to stand the strain and stress of life.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member claims that the Government have spent so many more thousands of pounds on education than the previous Government did, and I question very much whether we are getting the results from the present system of education that we should get.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): Any Bill that has for its object the bettering of the conditions of the people on the land, or the encouragement of others to go on the land, will have my most hearty support, and it should not be taken, because one offers suggestions to better a Bill, that it is hostile criticism. It is a very easy thing to accuse an hon. member of trying to belittle a Bill, or to belittle the Government or the Minister, by making suggestions. I have stated quite frankly that I intend to support the passage of this measure, and, if the Opposition bring forward amendments likely to improve the Bill, I shall support them. I notice that the Minister has claimed that this is a measure which is aimed at developing the country; in other words, to provide a scientific education to enable young fellows to be thoroughly equipped to go on the land. From these schools they will merge, if they qualify, into the University. We have to consider the thing fairly and squarely. I want to ask the Minister why it is that, when a technical college is required in the city, or a high school or school of class No. 1, it is built at the expense of the State? If the hon. gentleman is sincere in desiring to assist primary producers to have their children

thoroughly educated, why does he place in clause 9 an obligation upon the local authorities to find one-third of the cost?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is no obligation. That is only in cases in which they apply for schools.

Mr. PETERSON: The Bill provides that an application to the Governor in Council for the establishment of an agricultural school in any particular locality may be made by the local authority. Clause 9 states—

"Such application shall also be accompanied by satisfactory evidence that towards the estimated capital cost of the purchase and erection or other acquirement of the necessary site and buildings and all necessary equipment thereof, the applicants have already raised, contributed, or otherwise secured a sum of money equal to at least one-third of such estimated cost."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Nobody asks them to do it.

Mr. PETERSON: If the Minister is sincere in placing country children on the same plane as children in the cities, and is honest in his desire that they shall have equal facilities, why is he inflicting this one-third tax on the primary producers of the State? I am sure the hon. gentleman will agree in Committee to amend this provision by making it less drastic. I hope he will see the wisdom of doing away with it. If the clause remains in the Bill in its present form, Government members can say to the country: "We gave the Opposition a chance of obtaining this higher agricultural education, but they would not take it. The local authorities did not move in the matter—therefore, the blame is on their own shoulders." But when the unfortunate farmer, who, through drought conditions and other circumstances, is unable to make a decent living to-day, finds that he is mulct to the extent of one-third of the cost of a school, he is not going to see all the glamour in the Bill that the Minister makes out. One is inclined to agree with the hon. member for Aubigny in his remarks at Crow's Nest the other day, when he said that by the time all these measures have got through the farmer will be in a position to find out how he can pay the interest on the money he will have to borrow to carry on his farm. I hope the Minister will accept a reasonable amendment on that clause. We heard a very fine speech from the hon. member for Barcoo, who is to be congratulated on the very lucid speech he made. It is always a pleasure to listen to the hon. member—although I may differ with him on other matters—because he thoroughly studies his subject, particularly with regard to agricultural matters. He referred to the wonderful work Mr. Farrar performed in New South Wales in connection with the expansion of the wheat industry. There is no doubt that men like Mr. Farrar have done great work for this country, and there is no question that Governments in the past have neglected their duty in rewarding these men in the way they should have been. But Mr. Farrar is not the only man who suffered through having brains. How many inventors have made money out of their inventions? It is generally left to someone else to exploit their brains, and the result is that many of them have come to paupers' graves. As far as wheat is concerned, I agree with the hon. member for Barcoo that, if anybody deserves a monument from the

Mr. Peterson.]

farming community in Australia, it is the late Mr. Farrar. We have heard a great deal of the advantages of this proposed scheme of education. I have already said that I believe in the system outlined in the Bill. There is one feature which seems to be forgotten by hon. members. What concerns the farmer to-day is not that his sons are not being educated, or that he himself has not had enough education in agricultural pursuits, but the fact that he does not get a decent price for his produce. How does the Bill propose to get over that? Is it going to alter the position of the primary producer when there is a slump? In 1917 baled lucerne was sent to the Roma street markets, and brought £1 10s. per ton. I remember that one man on the Darling Downs was prepared to let anybody take his lucerne off who cared to do so. Take the position of the butter industry. Why does the farmer require a higher education for the production of butter? If we are going to ameliorate the condition of producers, let us show those who are already established in primary production the way to get a decent living out of it. Up to the present there has been no tangible scheme submitted from either side of the House for giving the primary producers a better price for their products.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Will you propound a scheme?

MR. PETERSON: Yes. The mere fact that I am making a reference to that matter does not show any hostility to the Bill on my part. It is up to the Minister and his colleagues, if they are sincere in regard to the primary producer, to see that some Bill is brought in under which the producers will get a decent wage for their labour. We are also told that the young men who go to these agricultural schools will receive the benefit of an expert education. Have we not already got experts in the Department of Agriculture—Mr. Quodling, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Graham, and half a dozen other experts—men who stand right at the top of the agricultural industry? Why are their services not availed of to-day? We know that their recommendations are turned down over and over again. I am sure that, if Mr. Quodling's reports and the reports of the other officers were given effect to, we should have a better state of agriculture than we have to-day. The agricultural vote has time after time been starved by all Governments and kept back. What is the use of having experts unless you take advantage of their expert knowledge? We have those experts; but no advantage is taken of their services to any appreciable extent. Book experts read up and study how you can grow all sorts of crops; and that may be all right in its place. I know a gentleman who wrote an article in "The Producers' Review" some years ago on lamb-raising. The other day he told me that, when he wrote that article, for which he was complimented by the then Secretary for Agriculture, he had never seen a lamb in his life, and had had nothing to do with sheep-raising. That does not prove that the expert is in all cases the most successful man. I have yet to learn that the boy who comes out of the agricultural college and is dumped down in the country on an agricultural selection with no capital can beat the farmer's son who goes on the soil without education. We have to devise some scheme whereby the producers can get a reasonable living out of their produce.

[*Mr. Peterson.*]

Unless we do that, all our educational schemes will count for nothing. The burning question to-day is: How we can better our conditions? If the Government, allied with schemes such as that in the Bill we passed last night, are prepared to bring in schemes to further that, no one will more readily support them than myself. We may be able to boast of the advantage of an education of this kind; but of what use is it?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is ridiculous to talk about both sides. If you don't like the Bill, vote against it, and use some common sense.

MR. PETERSON: I will use my discretion. I am not going to be judged by the hon. gentleman's measure so far as common sense is concerned. What use is it for the hon. gentleman to get annoyed, when we find there is no co-ordination amongst the departments? The difficulty is that, while one department may have a brilliant idea and a brilliant Act on the statute-book, another department will work diametrically opposite to it. Suppose the Department of Public Lands settles people upon drought-stricken areas where it is impossible for them to make a living, what is the use of a higher education to them? The whole thing wants to be remodelled. You will have to deal with every department in a thorough way, and not in a hotchpotch way. The whole system of agricultural education—an advisory board and everything else—must be thoroughly overhauled, and the whole of the departments should be made to co-ordinate and dovetail into one another in order to get the best results. What is the use of a higher education to a man placed on a drought-stricken area when, if he cannot meet his land rent, he is asked to pay a penalty of 10 per cent.? There is a lot of problems for the man on the land that this Bill does not solve, and the sooner we get down to hard facts and recognise our duty to the primary producer, the better will it be for Queensland.

I want to speak to the Minister about the Gracemere Rural School. We have heard a lot about rural schools to-day. The late Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr. Hardacre, was good enough to grant a rural school for the Normanby electorate, and it was placed on the border of several other electorates. I understood when we got that rural school at Gracemere that the object was to endeavour to instil into the minds of the children some idea of agriculture. The most essential thing in connection with a rural school, in my opinion, is to appoint a man in charge who has some adaptability for the work. You may have a gentleman at the head of such a school who is a bachelor of arts, and his proper vocation is to be at the University or a high school; but to appoint as head master of the Gracemere Rural School other than a qualified rural teacher was sheer nonsense. What was the result? When I went to Gracemere I could not see the slightest evidence that it was a rural school. There was hardly a tree in the school grounds, and there were no experimental plots or anything else. On going upstairs you would find some young ladies cooking scones and some boys showing how many shavings they could make. The head master could not be blamed for the system. If that is the way you are going to develop agriculture in these schools, then it will not be of much benefit to the State. You should

put someone in charge of a rural school who can teach subjects that will be of use to the children afterwards. I have gone to the Minister and asked him to put such a man in charge.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you ever apply to me to put a man in charge of Gracemere school?

MR. PETERSON: Yes; twenty times.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You never did it once.

MR. PETERSON: I went to the Minister's office over and over again and asked that that be done.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You never asked me once. You did come to see me about a friend of yours; but it did not come off.

MR. PETERSON: He was also a friend of the hon. gentleman. That does not alter the fact that the Minister obstinately kept to the same class of teaching. He allowed someone else to be appointed; but he was only there for a few weeks when he had to be shifted.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why?

MR. PETERSON: It is not fair to the teacher to say why.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then you should not have referred to it.

MR. PETERSON: Instead of making it a truly rural school, the Minister did not go about it in the way he should have done. So far as providing ordinary educational facilities in the Normanby electorate is concerned, I can say that we could not have a better Minister than the present one, and I can say the same about the Minister who preceded him. I have no complaints so far as the general educational system in the Normanby electorate is concerned. But I do object to the department having a rural school which is not used for that purpose. It is not put to the fullest possible use.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is. We have sent up a man there who is suited for the job.

MR. PETERSON: I am very glad to hear it, because it will make the Gracemere School a truly rural school in every sense of the term. If that is so, I shall be the first to compliment the Minister. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept reasonable amendments from this side, particularly in regard to that iniquitous clause which calls upon the country people to pay one-third of the cost.

MR. WARREN (Murrumba): I agree with the hon. member for Barcoo in most of what he had to say. There is no doubt that the hon. member gives us a lot of good stuff on agriculture every year. There is one statement he made, however, that I take exception to, and that was in regard to stud sheep. It was quite unfair to say what he did about the Wando stud sheep, because they had nothing to do with any school at all. The owner of that stud bred his own sheep quite apart from any school, and it is a credit to him to produce a stud like that.

As to the Bill, I am going to support anything that will improve the methods of production in this State. No doubt, in most respects, we are behind other States in agricultural production; but it seems to me that the result at which this Bill aims could have been brought about by improving on our present schools. The previous speaker has

mentioned the Gracemere Rural School. I might say, with all due respect to the Minister in charge of the Bill, that the Nambour Rural School is in exactly the same position. It is not a rural school in the true sense of the word.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Have you not a good man in charge of it?

MR. WARREN: I am not complaining about the man at all; I am complaining about the system. The man is doing what he is instructed to do.

[10 p.m.]

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

MR. WARREN: The hon. member has made his speech and has the chance to speak again, and I am very sorry that he has not given us more information. Mr. Steele is carrying out at Nambour every function he is supposed to carry out, and doing it very ably. The school there teaches the girls cooking, and housekeeping, and millinery, and so on; they are doing good work, and, under modern conditions, it is necessary that those things should be taught. The boys learn tinsmithing, saddlery, carpentry, and the like; but, whilst those things are good to know, they are not rural education. Why should not Nambour be the centre of a rural education—and so give us exactly what the hon. member for Barcoo has suggested—decentralised education? We could have sugar-cane and fruit and all the coastal products growing there, and thus have agricultural education right at the doors of the people who produce them. Of course, we would be simply fools and not men of the world if we could not see what this is for, and I for one, when I see the Government clutching at the last straw—which is the man on the land—feel proud of being a man of the soil. Why are all these things being thrown to the farmer? If we remained the ordinary, common garden primary producer, we would have them marrying us right off the reel. (Laughter.)

But I say it would be wrong if we did not do everything possible to improve agricultural production; there is room for improvement. I am prepared to assist to make this Bill the most perfect measure possible; but why should we not utilise the beginning? we have to get something better than we know at present? Nambour, and probably Caboolture, could be centres on the North Coast line—they should have their truly rural schools. I do not say we do not need a board of control—I think it necessary, and that much of the machinery of the Bill is necessary—but the rural school should be the first step in this agricultural education. If the Minister understood the man on the land, if he knew the son of the soil, he would realise that the first essential is the class of which he is bred, and the next that he shall be educated right. It is quite plain that, so long as we go on as we are, we shall not produce the best type of man. We are asked to produce—produce more and more—so that our debts may be paid and that we may be able to export and save the country from insolvency. I say it is an absolute insult to the man on the land to ask him to produce more, for there is not a man on the land who would not produce more if it were possible.

MR. COLLINS: That is the slogan of William Morris Hughes—Produce! Produce! Produce!

Mr. Warren.]

Mr. WARREN: I never followed Mr. Hughes; the hon. gentleman did, and he will be following him again before very long. We producers are asked to save the State and the Commonwealth from going insolvent. Where is the money to come from to put this scheme in operation? We are as free from money as a frog is from feathers. (Laughter.) We have not sufficient for our schools. I asked the hon. gentleman in charge of this Bill whether he was going to increase the vote for schools this year. He gave me the assurance that it was going to be increased. But where are we going to get the hundreds of thousands of pounds that are necessary? This must not be treated in a mean, petty manner, if we are to get anything out of it. We are not going to get big men into this scheme unless money is put into it. How are a bankrupt Government, who have not sufficient funds to teach our children in the country, going to get sufficient to carry out this great scheme? The Government do not realise that this has been put forward by one who has in the back of his head something that he thinks can be worked, but who has not counted the cost. If our military leaders had gone into an engagement counting the cost as little as the hon. gentleman who has produced this Bill, we would have gone down all the time.

Mr. COLLINS: You have not read much about the war.

Mr. WARREN: I saw more than the hon. gentleman did; I did not need to read about it—I saw for myself. It was the greatest lesson to see the officers, right down through the ranks, counting the cost and studying the results before an action took place. That is what we want to do in connection with this Bill. The hon. gentleman has told us nothing; it is wonderful how little he told us. After I had spoken to him during the dinner hour I expected that he would have come into this Chamber with all the information possible. We are launching out on something that has never been attempted in this or any other State. We have nothing to guide us, yet we are asked to support the Bill; and, if we do not support it like a lot of sheep being led by a shepherd, we shall be accused of being antagonistic to the measure. Any true lover of his country wants to put agriculture on a better footing than it is on to-day. But I am not going to follow the Government blindly, nor am I going to follow my own party blindly. I will support anything that is going to help make us more prosperous and more intelligent. I use that word advisably, because without intelligence in producing our primary products we are not going to achieve the high level we ought to achieve. We have all the natural resources; it is possible for a country to have. There never has been a country that has the smile of God on it to a greater extent than Queensland. Yet the results of the last fifty or sixty years are startling. If you go along the coast, you will find hundreds of farms abandoned.

Mr. COLLINS: Tenant farms?

Mr. WARREN: Everybody's farms; due not to one Government, but to all Governments. This is where education has to start. You can have all your top-heavy education; you can have your Chair of Agriculture and whatever else you like, but, if you do not have a proper selection of land, if you do not put men on land which is able to return

something, you are going to get nothing out of all your Bills or boards. The first necessity is for the Government to reclassify their lands. It is all very well to talk about your Councils of Agriculture and your agricultural schools. Let us start at the very foundation, not at the top of the ladder—start at the place where no Government has started!

The PREMIER: Your leader wanted to start at the top—at the University.

At 10.5 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. WARREN: One of the planks of our platform is the reclassification of land. We have thousands of farmers in this State who cannot make a living out of their land. Education must start with those men. We have placed 2,500 soldiers on the land and a great number of them will not be able to farm their land successfully. More than likely you will find that 75 per cent. of that land will not be occupied in ten years' time. We want a reclassification and a better system of placing people on the land. Before we spend £200,000 to £300,000 on a scheme like this, we must first use a little common sense. I believe in science every time. If it had not been for the aid of science properly applied in connection with the recent outbreak of plague, the plague would have had a very disastrous effect on the people of this State.

Mr. PEASE: Thanks to the Home Secretary.

Mr. WARREN: I give the Home Secretary credit, because, no doubt he took a strong stand in connection with the matter. It was science that saved the situation. A lot of our primary products to-day are suffering because of the lack of scientific knowledge in dealing with plagues affecting them. Fertilisation is a matter of great importance in connection with our agricultural industries, and we need greater scientific knowledge in connection with that matter to enable us to get out of our difficulties. The hon. member for Barcoo instanced a case where lime and bonedust were applied to land almost together, with the result that the lime liberated the nitrogen in the bonedust. If we had the knowledge and we could use the correct fertiliser in the proper way, we would not have the losses that we have to-day, but would be able to save sufficient to pay the whole cost of this scheme. If this scheme is conducted in the right way, it will be worked in conjunction with the present rural schools, and the children, instead of going to a trade or farm, could stop in the school and receive higher education, so that they might be able to go on the land, and thus prevent thousands of the very best and brightest of our people from coming to the city. The man who leaves the country to come to the city is practically lost to the State, because he is not fitted to take up city life, and when he returns to the country he is not as good a man as he was originally. I intend to do all I can to make the Bill a success, and I hope the Minister will not get angry because some hon. members attempt to make it better than it is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am not angry with you.

Mr. WARREN: I have always known the hon. gentleman to be one of the most fair-minded of men; and, when I complain about the schools in my district being in a bad state of repair, I know he is not to blame for it.

[*Mr. Warren.*]

It is the fault of the miserable Government he is connected with. (Laughter.) I am very sorry he is tied to people who starve our children.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And I am going to stick to them.

Mr. WARREN: I am sorry they are not able to do better for the schools, but that will not stop me from assisting them to make this Bill a good one; and I hope they will succeed in doing something that will be beneficial to Queensland and put us in a position we have never been in before.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I wish it to be understood that hon. members on the Opposition side of the House, who may represent agricultural interests in Southern Queensland, should realise that agriculture is carried on in Northern Queensland. Also I want to point out that this measure is a step in advance of anything done in the past; and that this Government have done something in that direction in Northern Queensland. We have a rural school established at Home Hill, in my electorate, and we also have an experimental farm there. I can remember some thirty-eight years ago in Queensland when it used to take 20 tons of sugar-cane to produce a ton of raw sugar. The hon. member for Mirani will also remember that. But we have made considerable improvement since those days, and in some cases, owing to the improvement that has taken place in the growth of sugar-cane, 6 or 7 tons of cane now produce a ton of sugar. I know that is not the average throughout Queensland, but it shows that in carrying out experiments in connection with sugar-cane we have been able to increase production considerably, and to-day we are getting 2, 3, or 4 tons of sugar from an acre of land when in years gone by we only obtained 1 ton. This measure is further to improve agriculture. I must congratulate the hon. member for Barcoo on the splendid speech he delivered to-night. It was one of the best I have listened to since I first became a member of this House, inasmuch as he dealt with the question as it should be dealt with. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat referred to window-dressing, and several other hon. members have done the same. Why did they not deal with the principles of the Bill? Is it a good Bill, or is it not a good Bill? That is the question. If it is a good Bill—if it is in the interests of agriculture—why do they not say so? At any rate, the tendency is in that direction. I do not intend to delay the House, as I only got up to let hon. members know that there is an agricultural industry in North Queensland, and we who represent the North believe that we should have the same advantages in the North that they have in the South. I hope that every consideration will be given in that direction. I notice by the Bill that a local authority or local authorities can obtain a school under this scheme by providing one-third of the cost, and I have no doubt that provision will be taken advantage of in the near future. But it is just as well to make it as widely known as possible, because in my travels in the North, owing to the fact that we have got a real Tory press in North Queensland, I find the people practically know nothing about what this Government are doing. It is quite true that the hon. member for Townsville gets his speeches

reported in the "Townsville Bulletin," but I do not get mine reported in that paper. I wish to let the people know that there is a measure going through to assist agriculture, or, in other words, to bring about a more up-to-date system than that which we have got at the present time.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.