

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 1922

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WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER, 1922.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 11 a.m.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

INITIATION.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the better regulation of the public service.”

Question put and passed.

MATERNITY BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): 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 make better provision for the establishment and maintenance of maternity hospitals and baby clinics, and for other ancillary purposes.”

Question put and passed.

IRRIGATION BILL.

INITIATION.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make better provision for the establishment and maintenance of maternity hospitals and baby clinics, and for other ancillary purposes.”

ness of introducing a Bill to make provision for the construction, maintenance, and management of works for the storage and supply of water for the purposes of irrigation, and for other purposes."

This Bill was foreshadowed in the sessional programme in the Governor's Speech. Primarily it deals with the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme, but subsequently other schemes may be brought under its provisions by resolution of the House.

Question put and passed.

SUGAR WORKS BILL.

INITIATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the construction, establishment, maintenance, management, and control of sugar works by the State, and for other purposes."

This Bill is to give authority for the Government to erect an additional sugar-mill or additional sugar-mills, on the receipt of the report of the Royal Commission which has been appointed to go into the question of location of sites.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*): I called "not formal" to this motion for the purpose of obtaining some information. First of all, I would like to ask if it is to apply to existing mills in any way? Will it alter the conditions prevailing in connection with them?

The PREMIER: No; it will apply only to new mills.

Mr. SWAYNE: Is it intended to apply the provisions of the Co-operative Sugar Works Act of 1914 in connection with new mills?

The TREASURER: No. Under this Bill we are providing new conditions somewhat similar to the provisions of the old Sugar Works Act. I will explain that when we get into Committee.

Mr. SWAYNE: What I set special store by in that Act are the co-operative provisions whereby the mills eventually become the property of bona fide producers. It is also provided that there should be advisory councils of farmers to assist the management of the mills brought under the measure. I do not think that these advisory councils have received the recognition which they should have had.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: I hope that, in connection with this new departure, that principle will be recognised with regard to the mills which are going to be built, and that these councils will receive even far greater powers than they have at present. I think that is most desirable from the growers' point of view.

Question put and passed.

INCOME TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its present

sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to further amend the Income Tax Act of 1902 in certain particulars."

This Bill also figures in the sessional programme read by His Excellency the Governor at the commencement of the session. Briefly, the object is to re-enact the super tax which, as hon. members will admit, will, in view of the financial requirements, have to be imposed again this year. We are taking the opportunity to make a number of amendments in the existing laws which have been found necessary in consequence of the administrative work of the Income Tax Department, and to embody a number of amendments which are considered wise, and which have been brought under my notice by what is termed the Taxpayers' Standing Committee.

Mr. ELPHINSTON: Are you extending the average clause to the farmers?

The TREASURER: No.

Question put and passed.

IRRIGATION BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make provision for the construction, maintenance, and management of works for the storage and supply of water for the purposes of irrigation, and for other purposes."

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 TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) presented the Bill and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

SUGAR WORKS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to authorise the construction, establishment, maintenance, management, and control of Sugar Works by the State and for other purposes."

* HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): Before the motion is passed I would like to ascertain from the Treasurer whether it is proposed to erect any new sugar-mills, and, if so, are they to be erected on some of the sites originally decided upon by a previous Commission, or is a new Commission to be appointed to deal with the matter? The Treasurer will remember that a Commission was appointed some years ago to deal with the question of sites, and they recommended them in a certain order. This motion provides for the construction and establishment

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of sugar works. I think hon. members have a right to know whether it is proposed to erect a new mill, or whether it is proposed to erect two or more mills? There is another point to be considered, and that is, how far south it is proposed to come. So far as I know, it is not in the best interests of the State that we should erect sugar-mills in the South. They do better in the North. I know that from my own experience, but there has always been a distinct desire to get some mills further south. I know at one period that Rockhampton made a very big move in that direction. I think hon. members have a right to know what are the intentions of the Government in regard to this particular matter.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): It is true that a Commission was appointed in 1913 and another in 1916 for the purpose of reporting on the advisability of erecting new sugar-mills, and as to the localities in which such mills, if any, should be erected. All the sites dealt with by those Commissions have not yet been occupied by mills. Circumstances, of course, have changed. For instance, one of the sites recommended was at Freshwater Creek, in the Cairns district, but the land there has now been allotted by the Central Cane Prices Board to one of the central mills; therefore that locality does not now come into competition with other districts which want mills. Then again, the chances of some of the sites have improved and in other cases they have diminished, and in order to ascertain the districts which should be favoured by the erection of an additional mill or additional mills, the subject has been referred again to a Royal Commission, consisting of Mr. Harris, police magistrate, as chairman, Mr. Salisbury, the Lands Commissioner at Rockhampton, and Mr. Easterby, as members. They will shortly start on the task, and I suppose, in the course of two or three months, we shall receive their report, which will be followed by the building of a new mill or mills.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I would like to know from the Treasurer whether the Bill makes provision for the purchase of mills by growers on the co-operative principle.

The TREASURER: The Co-operative Sugar Works Act has never really been operative, and is not likely to be operative in regard to new mills. It may be made use of with respect to the purchase of existing mills, but it is hardly likely to be applied to the erection of new mills, for the obvious reason that, if mills are erected in new districts where the land, or at least a considerable portion of it, still remains in the hands of the Crown, there will be no existing settlers who could subscribe the one-third of the cost which is required under the Act. That is why this Bill is necessary. It will be necessary for the Government to defray the whole cost of those mills.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I quite agree with the Premier. The 1914 Act really was not intended to apply to the erection of new mills. It was intended to enable growers to purchase mills already in existence; but I would like to know whether the 1911 Act, which was responsible for the erection of the Babinda and South Johnstone mills, could be applied to these new mills?

The TREASURER: I can deal with that on the second reading.

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Mr. SWAYNE: I have brought the matter up now because I think the Co-operative Sugar Works Act of 1914 includes a proviso—which I do not think is in the Sugar Works Act of 1911—to the effect that, even after the time when the liability to the State in respect of any mill is liquidated, all the shares must be held exclusively by producers of cane; so that for all time it is impossible for anyone who is not a grower of cane to hold a share in such a mill. It must be essentially co-operative. In fact, I do not think you could find on the statute-book of any country in the world a more truly co-operative measure than the Act of 1914, and I would suggest that the Treasurer should include in this Bill that very desirable condition, or, if necessary, introduce legislation applying it to mills to be built in the future. Although the 1911 Act does not contain that safeguard, it does provide that dividends shall be limited to 5 per cent. The 1914 Act does state specifically that for all time shares shall be held by growers; it entirely eliminates the dry shareholder, and I ask the Premier to apply that very desirable provision to the mills which are to be built.

* Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I think that the Treasurer fails to realise how very important it is that the co-operative principle should be continued in any measure that may be introduced.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The co-operative principle is safe in the hands of this Government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Minister who has interjected may say that it is safe, but we have a duty to perform to our people. I am perfectly certain that the Treasurer will give us any information he can.

The TREASURER: The co-operative principle is perfectly well safeguarded in regard to new mills.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: If the safeguarding is in the direction of re-establishing the co-operative provision in the Bill, it will be all right, but if it is something outside the Bill, I doubt very much whether it will be safeguarded. I quite agree with the interjection that has been made that there are dangers ahead, and we have a right to protect the grower. In protecting the grower we are certainly doing our best to develop the State. Even in connection with the production of sugar there is a limit to consumption so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, and we have the right to see that no mistake is made in the initiation of such a measure as this.

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 TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the better regulation of the public service.”

This is a consolidating measure. The original Public Service Act dates back to 1889. It has been amended several times since that date, and now we are proposing to consolidate it in order to make it more convenient to understand what the law is relating to the public service. The public service has been under the control of the Commissioner for the last three years. He is responsible for the administration of the public service, and he has approved of the introduction of this Bill.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I would like to ask the Premier that, in dealing with the consolidation of the Public Service Act and the amendments, he should give the Opposition time to peruse the Bill. I do not know whether he realises that some hon. members on this side received at 9 o'clock this morning copies of a Bill the second reading of which is to be discussed by the House this morning.

The PREMIER: What Bill—the University Site Bill?

Mr. VOWLES: No, the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Bill. We are asked to become acquainted with the new principles that that Bill contains and deliver second reading speeches on it this morning. That is an impossibility, more especially when you realise that we are working double shifts. The House generally adjourns at about 10.30 o'clock at night, and members get home just in time to go to bed. They get up in the morning and have only time to read the newspaper, and they are then expected to occupy the time between then and half-past 10 o'clock in reading Bills.

The PREMIER: An hon. member is foolish to impose upon himself the task of reading the newspaper. He ought to have some more important duty. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: It is only by reading the condensed reports of the contents of Bills in the newspaper that hon. members can get information about the measures that are coming forward.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What would the hon. member for Brisbane do without reading the newspapers. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: It is grossly unfair, and it is an impossibility to deal with the business in the Chamber in the time at our disposal.

Mr. POLLOCK: There is no need to read the Bills. Read the “*Courier*.”

Mr. VOWLES: That is what some hon. members have to do under existing conditions. Under such circumstances it is impossible to expect the best results from the criticism that will be offered, and you cannot expect hon. members to be in a position to criticise the business that will be introduced. It was bad enough when we met at half-past 3 o'clock; but we should be given some consideration in the way of sufficient time to discuss a measure such as is now before the Committee, which hon. members are not very much in touch with.

The PREMIER: I will give the hon. member ample time to peruse the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: I suppose that means that we shall have two hours. I remember on one occasion the hon. gentleman said he would give me time to peruse a Bill, and he gave me one hour to peruse a Bill containing sixty-eight clauses, and then I was expected to make a second reading speech on it. We do not pose as geniuses on this side, and we do not pose as being able even to read the measures in the time at our disposal. It is very unfair. If the hon. gentleman wants to have his business facilitated, he will have to give us time to peruse the proposed legislation, otherwise there is only one way that we can carry on, and that is to delay the proceedings so as to give some hon. members an opportunity of going through the Bills. That is not desirable. Every man should be given the same opportunity. I have to make a second reading speech on very short notice. What opportunity have I of doing that, and what opportunity have I to offer criticism? I was given the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Bill last night as an act of courtesy, and I am expected to make a second reading speech on it this morning. The hon. member for Aubigny and myself discussed the Bill before breakfast. Is it a fair thing that we should have to do that? That was the only time at our disposal.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman could have got a copy of the Bill yesterday afternoon.

Mr. VOWLES: How?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: By asking me for a copy of it.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman should do as other Ministers have done. He should send advance copies to the leader of the Nationalist party and the leader of the Country party.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: If the hon. gentleman likes, I will give him an explanation of the Bill in type. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: We had an example of the hon. gentleman's explanation on the early stages of the Bill. He pointed out the desirable portions and very discreetly made no reference to those that were undesirable. That is like the hon. gentleman. Judging from the way the business is being brought forward, we can only come to the conclusion that there is a desire on the part of the Premier to get rid of the business quickly, whether the Opposition are inconvenienced or not, and without caring whether they have a reasonable opportunity of knowing what is in the Bills and being able to discuss them when they are brought forward.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): There is some justification for the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in regard to the way we are asked to rush very important measures through this Chamber. There are a number of measures on the business-sheet that are not of such great importance as others. We were given ample time to discuss the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill that we were considering lately, and we have been able to look into that Bill and draft reasonable amendments. On the other hand, we have had the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Bill put into our hands this morning for the first time, and we are asked to consider that Bill to-day. Government supporters probably have had a month or two to go into the details of these Bills and see how they affect the State; but surely, as an Opposition, we should have a

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reasonable time to consider all the legislation introduced by the Government. With Parliament sitting all day, as it is at the present time, I contend that we are not being given the opportunity that we should have; and we must not lose sight of the fact that we are carrying out legislation this session with only one Chamber, while previous to this session Bills, when they left this Chamber, went to the other Chamber, where a further discussion took place, and any weaknesses were pointed out in that Chamber and amendments, at times, were accepted, although more often since the present Government came into office they have not been accepted. The experience of the Opposition in this Parliament has been that very rarely have amendments been accepted. On two or three Bills the Government have accepted amendments; but, by and large, they have been treated as not worthy of consideration whatever.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not justified in saying that.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier knows that the House is fairly evenly divided in so far as members are concerned, and he also knows that a majority of the electors voted against the Government.

The PREMIER: A majority voted against the Nationalist party.

Mr. TAYLOR: Every opportunity should be given to the Opposition intelligently to discuss these measures, so that, when they are placed on the statute-book, they will be reasonably operated. In the past a considerable amount of the time of Parliament was taken up in amending previous legislation, and under our present system we are going to find in the future that in every session of Parliament we shall be considering more and more amendments to legislation than has ever been the case in the history of the Queensland Parliament.

With regard to the proposed measure, I think a consolidated Act will be a most useful measure, and I do not think there will be any great discussion in regard to it; but I do ask the Premier to see that we have Bills in our possession, especially Bills such as the one which was introduced yesterday—which we only received this morning—at least forty-eight hours before we have to discuss them in this Chamber. It is only a reasonable request, and it is a request that I feel sure the Premier could accede to, and it would lead to a more intelligent discussion. At the present time we have to get up in this Chamber and speak after we have hardly read the Bill, and it is difficult at times even for the legal fraternity to explain the Bills, and, when they do explain them, one will tell you they mean one thing and another will say they mean something else; yet we are supposed to come here and discuss those Bills in an intelligent manner. That is quite impossible under the conditions in which legislation is introduced by the present Government.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I feel inclined on this occasion to support the views expressed by the two members of the Opposition who have spoken, and I commend their suggestion to the Premier as an experiment that is worth trying, particularly as the desire on the part of the Opposition seems to be to discuss Bills intelligently. If, under present circumstances, their source of information is the "Courier" or the "Daily Mail," of course no one could expect them to discuss Bills intelligently, so

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I hope the Premier will make it possible for them to get information first-hand by perusing the Bills themselves. If that is done, the germ of originality that might be displayed by members of the Opposition might be very interesting.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat forgets that from an intelligent point of view we are quite capable of looking after ourselves. In that respect we do not want any help from anybody, and, if the hon. member is in the habit of going to the "Daily Standard" every day to get his instructions, I want to inform him that we do not go to other papers to get our instructions.

Mr. HARTLEY: You get them in bed from the "Courier."

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knows that he gets his instructions from two or three sources. One source is Turbot street, and, if he does not get it there, he knows that, unless he follows what he is told to do in connection with another organ, then there is trouble in the camp.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is going to be trouble for you people for running down the "Courier" the way you have been doing.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Premier told us that, very largely, this is a Bill to consolidate the present Acts, but he did not say whether there are to be any fresh regulations or fresh clauses introduced.

The TREASURER: I mentioned that there would be amendments as a result of the administrative experience of the Commissioner.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad the Premier has said that. I do not know what the experience of other hon. members has been, but my experience has been that, when the hon. gentleman or his colleagues have been introducing something fresh, you generally find associated with it clauses which are most objectionable.

The TREASURER: I assure the hon. member that there is no "nigger in the wood pile" in this instance.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then it is the exception, because with every Bill that has been introduced there has been a "nigger in the wood pile," and I am glad to know that there is at least one exception that is going to prove the rule. This is a matter that concerns a very large number of people, because, after all, the public service is a big service, and the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Nationalist party are quite right in asking that the fullest information should be given in this connection. We have no right to rush anything through. The fact remains that it does not matter how much time individual members may desire to give to Bills that are introduced, it is almost physically impossible for them to do them justice under present conditions. I am sure the Premier is ready to assist in this direction and give us ample time, so that we may be able to consider Bills intelligently.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I notice that this is "a Bill to provide for the better regulation of the public service," and I would ask the Treasurer if the public servants will have equal rights in regard to public criticism of the various departments. I have to recognise that in the matter

of "deflation" and in the matter of reduction of salaries, the public servants had a very fair innings in their criticism of the Government, but such was not the case in connection with the Department of Public Instruction. Some time ago, at Toowoomba, the president of the Teachers' Union, Mr. Exley, delivered a prepared speech at the request of the union, which desired to put certain information before the Secretary for Public Instruction, who had intended to be present at that conference. I was there myself and heard the remarks, and I am certain that Mr. Exley was merely voicing the opinions of the union, and because he did that he was made to suffer.

Mr. W. COOPER: What did he suffer?

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: He was recalled, and called upon to make an explanation to the Minister, and an anticipated position was put aside and he was given another appointment of a lower status. That was definite evidence to me of where a public servant was made to suffer for having voiced the opinions of the men for whom he was for the time being acting as mouth-piece as president of the union. I would like to be assured that equal justice will be dealt out to the public servants. I think that the various officers of public service unions should be entitled to express their opinions without fear of being called before Ministers and severely censured.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will recognise that under the system of a Public Service Commissioner public servants have greater freedom and liberty than they ever had before.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: I am not going to say that. The evidence before me is quite to the contrary, notwithstanding the assurance of the Premier. I have been told that certain officers who have advocated claims have had no punishment whatever; but that other men giving voice to their opinions have suffered therefor. I say that position is unjust and unfair.

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 PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) presented the Bill and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

INCOME TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to further amend the Income Tax Act of 1902 in certain particulars."

It is necessary to re-enact the super tax this year, and opportunity is being taken to make some amendments to the Act. There is a

fair number of amendments, but I do not think any of them are contentious. Some of them are the result of representations made by the Taxation Committee representing the taxpayers. One or two are the result of the recommendations of the Royal Commission appointed by the Commonwealth to inquire into taxation matters, and others are the result of administrative experience in Queensland. I can explain the amendments more fully on the second reading.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): The motion states "that it is desirable that a Bill should be introduced to further amend the Income Tax Act in certain particulars," and it is regrettable that the reason why it is necessary to do so is because we have to reimpose the super tax to pay our way. I hope that we shall not have to do that for long, and that we shall be able very soon to relieve the taxpaying public from that portion of the burden of taxation. We can deal more fully with the amendments in the Bill when we get into Committee.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I hope that the Treasurer will endeavour, as far as possible, to lessen the burden of income tax which people are suffering under at the present time.

The TREASURER: I am with you all the way.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am pleased to hear that. Personally, I am sorry that the hon. gentleman did not retain the position of Treasurer all the time, instead of handing it over to somebody else.

The TREASURER: At any rate, you might trust me for another year. (Laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: The fact remains that we are paying the highest income tax of any State in the Commonwealth, and I do not think it is any credit to the Government or the people of Queensland that such is the case. I trust that the Treasurer will do his utmost to see if it is not possible to relieve the people in some direction of some part of the heavy taxation which they are now compelled to pay. We realise, of course, that traders and the business community generally have had a somewhat trying time during the last year or two, and that trying time has not passed by yet, although we are having a very excellent season, for which we have every reason to be thankful. I suppose we are having, this week, one of the finest wool sales we have had for years.

The TREASURER: Some of the Western country is suffering from a severe drought.

Mr. TAYLOR: The wool sale is going to mean a sum of £1,000,000 to Queensland. We are also having a very fine sugar season, and I think it is time there was some endeavour made to relieve the people of the burdensome taxation they have laboured under during the last few years.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miram*): I would like to inquire whether anything is being done in connection with this Bill to carry out the promise which was made by the Treasurer some time ago as to the averaging of the incomes of producers. We have already had a measure passed in that connection, but unfortunately it affords no relief except where the producer suffers a total loss.

The TREASURER: Any loss.

Mr. SWAYNE: There are many fluctuations in a producer's income. Take the

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sugar-cane industry, in which I have a case in point, where one year's crop was 1,200 tons, and the next year it was only 600 tons and hardly paid expenses; perhaps it might leave a small income. So far there has been no relief given in that regard. The same thing applies to the cattle and sheep industries—in fact, to any industry where the producer is entirely dependent on climatic conditions for his success or otherwise. The position is most unfair. We know that every four or five years there may be an abnormal crop and consequently a good income that year, and the producer is taxed at the highest rate; but perhaps for four or five years previously he has just scratched along with a bare living, although his income comes under the tax. Compare the tax which he pays with that of people in settled employment, over whom he does not have any advantage by reason of averaging his income over a period of five years. Averaging the income for that period, the man with a settled income will have a much smaller income tax to pay than the man who pays a small income tax or no tax for four years and then a big income tax in the fifth year. The hon. gentleman has not carried out his promise with regard to averaging in respect to the primary producer, who is so dependent upon the varying seasons. I trust that in the measure which is now brought before us something will be done to carry out that promise.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): There is no question that the people generally are feeling the increased taxation very keenly. One of the reasons for the increased taxation is found in the Financial Statement introduced by the Treasurer, where he estimates a deficit at the end of the financial year. That is something that has not been touched upon this morning. We ought to get right down to bedrock and find out the reason for it from a State point of view. The Government are constantly clapping on taxation and continuing the super tax, and we must not forget that a good deal of the reason for this kind of thing is the result of the operations of the Government. I want hon. members to look into it, and they will see that, since the Government have embarked on State enterprises, it has added considerably to our interest bill, and added very considerably to the losses which the State has been suffering. It is just as well for us to face the question. We have got to realise that, before there can be genuine prosperity in Queensland, these loads which the people are being asked to carry must be removed. It is all very well for the Premier to say now that he is sorry that this has to be done, and he agreed with the leader of the Nationalist party that he would like to be able to reduce taxation.

The TREASURER: We have already remitted some taxation this session.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know what has been done. The hon. gentleman took it out of one pocket and put it in another pocket. The policy of the Government is what I might term a policy of political intrigue. It is a policy which has been adopted to make the taxpayers in the community think that the Government are doing something when they are really not doing anything at all.

The TREASURER: What do you mean by that?

[*Mr. Swayne.*

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that we have been told that the Government are going to embody a number of things in their legislation. The hon. gentleman told us to-day that the proposals embodied in this measure are not very contentious. I have not seen the Bill and I do not know what it contains, although probably you, Mr. Kirwan, as the worthy representative of Brisbane, know all about it. I venture to say that, when we get the Bill, we shall find that there are some things in it which go in the direction of squeezing more and more out of the community.

The TREASURER: More "niggers in the wood pile."

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes. The hon. gentleman, however, always manoeuvres and gets his Bill through, and then afterwards we discover, to use his own expression, that there are "niggers in the wood pile." The hon. gentleman knows that the policy of the Government has been to squeeze. They came in with that determination, and they have faithfully carried it out. The Treasurer knows that Queensland has been burdened with an increased amount of loan money. We know that our loan indebtedness has increased by £35,000,000 since the present Government came into office.

The TREASURER: Do you object to borrowing?

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are other avenues for getting money rather than continuing the present undue loan expenditure.

The TREASURER: What do you suggest?

HON. W. H. BARNES: We should encourage outside capital to a greater extent than we have encouraged it in Queensland of late, so that we can get outside capital to carry some of the burden which the State has been carrying.

The TREASURER: Are you suggesting private-enterprise railways?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not want the hon. gentleman to misrepresent me. There are many men in this State who should be encouraged more than they have been while the present Government have been in power. We know that, so far as they are concerned, there is a very offensive smell in Queensland. It is our duty to sweeten things and encourage people outside to come to the assistance of this great State.

MR. ELPHINSTONE (*Ostley*): Last night we heard a good deal about visions. The hon. member for Bowen said that the Opposition were lacking in vision. The introduction of this measure, which seeks to reimpose the super tax, is the price the people of Queensland have to pay for having a Government which is suffering from visions. We are told that the main principle in this Bill is the reimposition of the super tax, which means continuing a burden of something like £300,000 which the taxpayers of Queensland will have to pay for an indefinite period. The super tax was looked upon as a war measure when it was first introduced, but it looks as if we shall have to continue to bear that burden until the country is rid of this spendthrift Government. There is one point in connection with this measure that I would like some information upon. Seeing that the Bill is to amend the Income Tax Act in certain particulars, I would like to know if any further attention has been given to the question of averaging income

tax assessments. I judge from the Premier's objection that no further attempt is being made to give relief in that direction. I might point out to the Premier that he could give considerable relief and relief to the taxpayer if he extended the benefits of averaging the income, as the Federal Treasurer proposes to do. It will be a great relief in some instances where the burden of taxation is becoming intolerable. The Federal Treasurer, in his last Budget, appreciates that taxation is becoming oppressive, and he has permitted the concession of averaging to become the general practice.

The TREASURER: I do not think he will ever do it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We shall see whether that is so or not. It is true that we have given a certain amount of relief to a number of primary producers by permitting them to average their incomes, but I think that the principle could be well applied to other taxpayers. It stands to reason that, if a man makes a good income in one year, and he is not permitted to take into consideration the losses he has incurred in previous years in arriving at his taxable income, then it is unfair and unreasonable that he should have to pay at the higher rate. It must be admitted that there are occasions when a taxpayer may have a poor year, and he will have to pay on the higher rate of his good years if the averaging system is adopted; but, taking one year with another, it is far better to make the averaging system of general application. It would be a great relief to the taxpayer, and I suggest to the Treasurer that he should make some provision for extending the averaging system in the present Bill. We have heard nothing further in regard to the proposition that one authority should collect the taxes for both State and Commonwealth. I understand that in Western Australia they find it a most desirable arrangement. A great saving is effected in that State, because the Commonwealth collects the taxes for both the Federal and State Governments. I contend that we should adopt a similar arrangement in Queensland. It would do away with the onerous practice that prevails to-day, where the taxpayers have to make out two income tax returns, while, at the same time, we would save considerable sums in the cost of collection. In these times of burdensome taxation, we ought to give consideration to this matter.

The TREASURER: We tried to come to some agreement with the Commonwealth; but, unfortunately, we were never able to come to an agreement. The Commonwealth submitted a proposal to New South Wales for an agreement, but the New South Wales Government would not accept it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Well, how is it that Western Australia finds it so desirable? It cannot be said that we are establishing a precedent if we adopt a similar arrangement.

The TREASURER: Western Australia had to hand over the whole of the authority to collect and everything else to the Commonwealth.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There is a Nationalist Government in power in Western Australia, and I should not think that there is any unfair advantage attaching to such an arrangement, or we should have heard about it. Speaking from memory, I think it has been in operation for two years,

and we have been conferring with the Federal Government for at least three years without arriving at any solution. I do not

contend that in a matter of this description we have the incentive of knowing that by such an arrangement we would effect very considerable economies in the cost of collection and save the taxpayer the burdensome duty of making out numerous forms.

Another point I want to stress is that we should take into consideration the question of whether it is not possible to allow greater deductions in respect of the children and dependents of the taxpayer. The man who is suffering most in these days is the small income earner—the man receiving from £200 to £500 per annum, who has a number of children and a wife dependent on him. He is not getting sufficient deductions for the maintenance of that family, and I consider we could well give much greater allowances. If we admit that we must maintain this burdensome imposition of taxation, I contend that it is up to us to arrange it so that it will inflict the least possible hardship on the taxpayers who are really doing the greatest duty to the State—that is, maintaining the class of people who are looked upon as being the pioneers of industry and as taking some lead in commercial activity. I refer to those people who want to spend some money on secondary education with a view to making their children a little above the average in mental ability, and I think a concession of a slightly greater deduction per child would be very greatly appreciated.

Another point we might consider on this motion is that we have been subjected to very serious indignities in this House by being compelled to eat our words by repealing two enactments which had as their object the exaction from investors in Commonwealth war loans of payments quite contrary to what it was understood they would be liable to meet when the investments were made. We have experienced the indignity on a second occasion recently of having had to withdraw certain regulations, the original object of which was to exact from the taxpayers some additional burden distinctly contrary to the promises made to them at the time.

The TREASURER: The hon. member's statements are not accurate.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Treasurer may say so, but his bald statement does not convince me. I have a distinct recollection of reading only quite recently that the Premier made a virtue of necessity in conceding to investors a condition which applied to them as a right.

The TREASURER: We did it as a concession at the suggestion of the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It may have been one of those concessions which the Government were forced to make simply to avoid litigation.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is wrong in saying that there was any necessity for it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I shall have a better opportunity of dealing with those matters on the second reading; but, in my opinion, it is a most undignified position in which to place the Parliament of Queensland in an endeavour to get behind the promises

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to investors by the expedients that have been adopted on two occasions to my knowledge.

A few days ago I asked a question of the Treasurer as to the small number of taxpayers in Queensland in comparison with the large number of male adults on the electoral rolls, a great percentage of whom must have been in receipt of the basic wage of approximately £25 in excess of the taxable income. Speaking from memory, I said that there were 229,000 male electors last year, whilst for the last financial year there were only 37,000 taxpayers, and the basic wage for the period was £225 a year. How comes it that a percentage of those thousands of employees—most of whom—not all of them—must have been in regular employment for the whole year—are evading taxation? If it is the law of the land that anyone in receipt of an income in excess of £200 a year should pay taxation, and, if we know by the Arbitration Court awards that the basic wage is in excess of that minimum, then thousands more should be drawn into the realm of taxation than has been the case.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is wrong in assuming that everyone in receipt of over £200 per annum is liable to pay income tax.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I agree that there are certain deductions; but I say that, presumably, a very large number of persons who are in receipt of the basic wage of £225 should have paid taxation, and we know that it is probable that they evaded taxation. My object is not to make political capital, but to cause the burden to fall on the shoulders of the men who the law says should pay. No matter how small the tax, I believe that everyone in a responsible position should contribute towards the maintenance of the State. I admit that there is a certain amount of political intent in my comment, because the more people who are drawn into this dragnet of taxation the more quickly will this Government be turned out of power, so that I am only too anxious to see that number of 37,000 increased to the proper number, so that we shall have an end of this Government and the reimposition of super taxation to the extent of £330,000 which it should not be necessary to collect in these days.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): Sooner than see the income super tax removed, I would prefer to have the land super tax taken off land which is being used for its proper purpose. If you take £4,000 or £5,000 a year, or any other amount, from a business man in land taxation, it is quite certain that the man with a family pays the largest share of that sum. That is one of the things which increase the cost of living and make it so difficult nowadays for the man with a family to pay his way. I do not suggest that the land super tax should be removed on land which is not being used. I refer to land which is being used for its proper purpose, whether it is agricultural land or whether business premises are built on it, because, under the existing extreme conditions under which land cannot be cut up or put to any better use, the Government are merely hindering business and increasing the cost of living. I do not refer to income tax so much, because a man with an income has usually a fair amount to live on; but I do want to see something done to reduce the cost of living

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which falls on the man with a family, because the land taxation of business premises in any town you like to name is one of the greatest causes of high prices.

There are several things to which I would like to refer as being causes of this increased income tax. One of those is the bad investment of loan money. The Treasurer will admit that the Government have spent £35,000,000 of loan money in seven years, whereas the Liberal Governments took fifty years to spend £50,000,000.

The TREASURER: You are entirely wrong in saying that we have spent £35,000,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I admit that a fair share has been loaned to local authorities. That is perfectly safe, and the interest will be paid; but, outside that, it will be very difficult for the Treasurer to prove that there has been a return of 1 per cent. I challenge him to make that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the hon. member is not going to initiate a discussion on the expenditure of loan money. He may refer to it in passing, but I cannot allow any discussion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am showing where the money has gone. These ill-spent loans are the real reason for the imposition of this super income tax. The hon. member for Oxley said that £300,000 was received from that tax. That will not meet the interest on the loans. So the ill-spent loan money is the real reason for the super tax being needed. Had the loan money been invested in such a way that it would return, say, 3 per cent. interest, there would have been no necessity for this super tax.

I would like to see more plainly stated the deductions allowable in respect of income tax. The instructions which are issued neglect to state many things which can be deducted. When people are filling up their forms the instructions state clearly what deductions are allowable.

The investments in State industries have caused the imposition of this super tax. I would compel every State industry to keep its books in the same manner that a private employer has to do. I would not mind the expenditure of the few pounds for the extra time required to do the bookkeeping.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the hon. member is not going to discuss the question of the conduct of State enterprises.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am referring to the necessity for the imposition of the super tax. The losses in State enterprises are another reason for the imposition of that tax. I would make those industries keep their books in the same way that a private employer has to do. They would then have to show their losses.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member might refer to that as a reason, but he is not justified in entering into a full discussion on the administration of State enterprises. If I allow him to do that, I must allow every other hon. member to do the same.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Bad bookkeeping by State enterprises is a reason for the imposition of this tax.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They do not show what a private employer has to show.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has said that three times already. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A good thing cannot be said too often. (Laughter.) The Treasurer spoke about averaging the incomes of primary producers.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Oxley spoke about that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is very little good. If you have one good year and carry it on to the next, when you have a loss, probably, if there were no averaging, you would have no tax to pay in the second year. So the averaging system is not much good. I agree that greater family allowances should be made.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Previously in this discussion I referred to the need for a fuller carrying out of the Treasurer's promise in regard to the averaging of the incomes of primary producers, which fluctuate so considerably on account of the seasons. I have here a letter which I wrote to the Press on 1st November, 1921, emphasising the position. I would like to read an extract from it, because it makes the thing clear—

“Or, take such cases as have happened when during long droughts lasting up to four years, during which a grazier has only been able to keep his stock alive by expensive handfeeding, or relief country, and then things take a turn, and at last he has an income of, say, £1,000; each of the previous four years it having been only £62 10s. Then, compare his position, from the taxpaying standpoint, with that of two other instances—the one being that of a clerk or tradesman who, during the five years, has received in the aggregate a sum equal to that received by the grazier, and the other that of a professional or business man who for the same period has received twice as much.”

I have given a table which sets out that, for each of the first four years, the net income would be—clerk or tradesman, £250; professional or business man, £500; farmer or grazier, £62 10s. The taxable income of a clerk or tradesman would be £62 and a professional or business man £375, and each of those would pay tax during those years. Then, we come to the fifth year, when the farmer or grazier does well. The taxable income for the clerk or tradesman would still be £62 and for the professional or business man £375. With the farmer or grazier the deduction of £200 disappears altogether, and he is taxed on the full amount of £1,000. For that one year he will have to pay a rate of 12d. in the £1, as compared with 8.25d. in the case of the professional or business man, and 6.372d. in the case of the clerk or tradesman. Although he has no taxable income for four years, his taxation for that one good year will amount to £50. Surely such a case should be provided for! The letter goes on—

“From the above it will be seen that the grazier, who has practically starved for four years, but who has, through having one good year in five, made £1,250 in five years, pays more than six times the tax paid by, say, a clerk or tradesman, who has made the same net income during the same period. He

pays almost the same tax as, say, the professional or business man who has made £2,500, or double, during the period of five years.

“In addition, the farmer or grazier will have been allowed no deduction whatever for wife and children, while the clerk or tradesman and professional man respectively will have been allowed the statutory deduction of £26 for wife and each child in each of the five years.”

I think that should be made very clear. The primary producers are under great difficulties because of the fluctuation of seasons and the total inadequacy of the provision to enable them to average their incomes. I hope that the Treasurer will in reality carry out his promise, and that he will afford some relief to the injustices the primary producers are now suffering under.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I hope that the Treasurer does not intend that the super tax will be any higher than previously—it is high enough to-day. I trust that there will be no subterfuges in this Bill. It seems to be a very humiliating position that the Government should endeavour to get round their promises by subterfuges, and try to catch people who have no right to be caught, and then back down afterwards, though it would be more unfortunate if they did not have to back down, as the people would then be taxed in a way they should not be taxed. I hope that the primary producers will be taxed on their actual incomes and not on the incomes they are supposed to earn. By that I mean the primary producers are very often taxed on incomes that they do not receive. They have to pay tax on stock on hand which very often does not materialise. I do not think that should be allowed to continue. The averaging system was supposed to help that to a considerable extent; but the present system is not an averaging system—it is only an averaging system when a man makes a total loss. He is then allowed to average his loss over future years. It is not an averaging system in the strict acceptation of the term. The Federal Taxation Commissioner pointed out in his report that the graziers were suffering under the tax as imposed at the present time, and the Federal Government are now bringing in an averaging system. The Treasurer cannot say that the present averaging system is affording any great benefit except in cases of great hardship. I hope that, when the Bill is introduced, the Premier will not adopt a hard and fast rule of accepting no amendments. We know that the taxpayers are unduly burdened, and every possible relief should be given to them. I agree with the hon. member for Oxley that taxes for the State and Commonwealth Governments should be collected by one office. It is an extraordinary thing that the two taxation offices cannot come to a reasonable understanding whereby one body can collect the tax and thus prevent duplication. I do not see anything in the way of a reasonable understanding being arrived at. It would cut down the overhead expenses to a reasonable degree. The two sets of deductions allowed are causing no end of muddle to-day. People are making a living by making out income tax returns for other people to enable them to have a fair “go.” I think the income tax forms should be so simple that people can make them out themselves, and know that they will receive

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a fair deal and that they will receive the correct deductions without any appeal to experts. Under the present system people have been for a number of years paying income tax that they had no right to pay, simply because they were not taxation experts. Under our complicated system a man has to be an expert to make out his income tax returns. The Federal Taxation Commissioner said that there was no desire to collect taxes from people that they had no right to pay; but in this State it has occurred that people have paid taxes that they had no right to pay simply because they did not understand what deductions ought to be made. I think the Treasurer should make the position simple and clear.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): At this stage I think the Treasurer should reconsider the whole question of the reimposition of the super tax. He would not consider its remission when the Bill amending the Land Tax Act was introduced, notwithstanding that the Commonwealth Government had abolished that tax. We have to realise that it is by means of taxation that we are able to balance our accounts. Possibly because we anticipate a deficit of £576,000 it is necessary that extra taxation will be required. It appears that Consolidated Revenue will be called upon to pay for unemployed workers' insurance and other matters, and it will be necessary to get more money to meet those payments, and the only way the present Administration can meet those payments is by taxing the people.

I have gone through the figures very carefully. If the Government would analyse very closely the figures relating to loan money invested in this State they would be able to obtain sufficient return from those investments to make the reimposition of the super tax unnecessary. The Treasurer in his introductory remarks stated that the Bill was introduced to carry out certain arrangements required by the Commissioner in the administration of his department. It appears to me that this is just another attempt to make the industries of this State pay a little more. The users of a public utility like the railways are not paying sufficient for their travelling and for the use of that utility. The people in business are being taxed. It means that is taxation against the profits, and naturally the cost of living must go up. We know that some revenue is collected by way of totalisator tax. If a Bill had been introduced to control racing, the revenue obtained by taxation would have been reduced to the extent of totalisator tax; but the Government were not game to sacrifice that small amount of taxation. They preferred to allow the gambling spirit to continue. If the Government are going to carry on business to make profit in the same way as any ordinary business, then is it not reasonable to ask that their trading concerns should contribute a certain amount of revenue to the State? If private people are compelled to pay taxation, then State enterprises that are being carried on for the purpose of making a profit should also pay taxation. The Government should go into these matters and see if they cannot secure a greater amount of taxation from these enterprises. It is a privilege in any country to pay taxation, but the abuse of taxation is killing this country. It has become a social evil, and it is creating unemployment. The overhead charges in various

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industries in this State are greater than they are in the Southern States, and the result is that we have agencies here because we cannot establish manufacturing industries. If our taxation is to increase year in and year out, it naturally will lead to a restraint of trade, and it is only reasonable to say that capital will not come into this State. The hon. member for Oxley has mentioned securities. That all indicates what has been done, and the Government themselves must realise that it is going to rebound on them in the very near future.

There should be only one method in regard to taxation. As I said before, it is a privilege to pay taxation, and it is good for the community; but the policy of raising taxes from various industries to balance the railway account to the extent of £1,750,000 is simply a process of the dog chasing his own tail. It is necessary to get down to something sound and make these enterprises pay their way. It is much better to have indirect taxation than to take large amounts of money from year to year from industry by direct taxation.

There is a vast difference between Queensland and the Commonwealth in regard to taxation. We have only to refer to the Federal Treasurer's Budget to see that. The Federal Treasurer realises that the taxation is a tremendous burden on the people, and he is reducing taxation by a considerable amount, while, on the other hand, the Government of Queensland are bringing in an amendment of the Income Tax Act for the sole purpose of extracting additional taxation. You cannot camouflage it by words, and I hope the Premier will consider the advisableness of accepting amendments to provide that under no circumstances will he increase the taxation of this State. It has gone up by leaps and bounds since this Government came into power. It has been one of the bugbears of this Government, and yet they are not satisfied. They do not seem to be able to read the writing on the wall. The time is not opportune to increase taxation one iota, and we should reduce it as low as possible.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I take this stand regarding the real position of the super tax—that it should not have been necessary, and would not have been necessary, if the Government had managed their affairs as they should have been managed. With a deficit of £576,000 anticipated at the end of the year, I am not surprised that the Treasurer has to come down and seek to impose the old super tax. But that does not do away with the fact that, if the affairs of the country had been properly managed, and the Government had not been prodigal in many cases, there would have been no necessity whatever for the introduction of this tax. What does strike one as being very extraordinary is that again and again we have been told that economies are being practised in various directions, yet the country is receiving no relief as a result of the economies which the Government say they are bringing about. Surely, we can assume from what has been said outside that the salaries of the public servants are being reduced, and it is appalling to think that taxation should have gone on increasing as it has done during the last seven or eight years. In the year 1916-17, the amount collected in income tax was £756,292, and last year it was between £2,100,000 and £2,200,000—I have not the exact figures before me. However, I find from the Auditor-

General's figures that in 1920-21 the tax collected was £2,410,171—an increase of 218.7 per cent. as compared with the amount collected in 1916-17. Truly an alarming thing! To find that the Treasurer has not solved the problem of reducing taxation is extremely disappointing, yet he has no distance to look. He has only to look around him to find the real cause for having to impose this taxation. The State enterprises account for a very serious sum which has to be made up in direct taxation. If the moneys invested in State enterprises had not been invested at all, a very large income would have been forthcoming. That is to say, those people who sold their station properties to the State would have had to pay income tax, and that tax is lost because the income they receive from their bonds is exempt from taxation. You allow men to escape who have really made a very fine realisation of their assets, whereas they should continue to support the State in its time of need.

However, that does not do away with the fact that there was no need for an expenditure of that kind. The sorry aspect of the thing to-day is that the Government are still carrying on their wild schemes; and there is no evidence that they intend to retrench in this direction, that direction, or in the other direction regarding State enterprises. The ordinary mortal carrying on a business and finding it to be a non-paying concern would deal with it very promptly. If he did not, he would be dealt with himself, and I take it that the only way to view these matters is in the light that an ordinary business man would view them. Those who manage the affairs of the State have a right to conduct the business of the State in a thoroughly up-to-date businesslike way. I am not aware that the Treasurer has given the least indication as to when the imposition of this super tax will cease. It appears as if that is going to stay with us for ever. We had information a short time ago that the Government hoped to be in a position to reduce taxation, but it is nothing more than the expression of a pious hope. There is apparently nothing in the Bill to substantiate that expression of sympathy. We want something to be done in this direction, and it is our duty to protest strongly against the imposition of the super tax. I know that it is inevitable, because we are in "Queer street" with regard to our finances. At the same time, it is our duty to state that we are averse to the imposition of the tax, and that it is not in the best interests of the State.

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 TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) presented the Bill and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

UNIVERSITY SITE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*):

In moving the second reading of this Bill, I may explain the reason why we are asking for an increased area for the University site. In 1907 an area of 60 acres was allotted for University purposes, but the matter was allowed to remain in abeyance until the University was founded in 1909. Since then the Senate have been very busy inquiring into the question of the University site, because they recognise that an area of 60 acres is not sufficient, and they have visited various parts of the metropolitan area, and inspected the Yeronga Park site in Ipswich road and various other sites. As it was found that the site originally selected was not the most desirable for University purposes, overtures were made to the Brisbane City Council that certain land which the council had at Victoria Park might be ceded to the University, provided it received the sanction of Parliament. The council agreed to grant an additional 111 acres, which, with the 60 acres already allotted, brings the area up to 171 acres. Considerable agitation has taken place to have this site reserved for University purposes, and we are now seeking power to obtain this extended site for the University. The area of 171 acres is all that will be needed. The Melbourne University has an area of some 109 acres, which has been found to be unequal to the needs of the various faculties, and there is an agitation to secure more land. In connection with the Sydney University there is an area of 194 acres, inclusive of the reserve in front, but even that area is not sufficient for the needs of the University. The reason why the Senate are so anxious to acquire the additional site is because the General Hospital, the Children's Hospital, Wattlebrae, and the Lady Bowen Hospital are in close proximity to the proposed site, and the Lady Lamington Hospital is not far from it; and they will have near at hand the means whereby medical students will be able to get the fullest training in their profession.

Mr. MAXWELL: What is the attitude of the city council in regard to it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The city council are quite at one with the Senate in acquiring this site. They say that the 111 acres includes a strip of land of over 3 acres, in possession of the Railway Department, running from Normanby towards Bowen Bridge. There is a railway line running through it now, which is found to be absolutely inadequate for railway purposes.

Mr. KIRWAN: The old Sandgate line.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Hon. members will remember that in the early eighties the railway line ran from the Central Station through Roma street via Normanby and linked up at Mayne.

Mr. KIRWAN: Before John McMaster got the Valley railway.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: This will leave the city council with some 96 acres. They will have the frontage to the adjacent Children's Hospital and part of Gregory terrace, and they will be well satisfied with the area they have left for park purposes. One important thing in connection with this university site is that it will be open to the people for all time. No one will be excluded from entering the park held by the

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University. What is more, the University will have to maintain all the gates connected with the area. The hon. member for Toowong raised the question as to what the city council thought of the matter. As I said, they are quite with the Senate on the matter. There is no provision made with regard to a time limit within which the University shall commence the erection of buildings, although I have information which indicates that the University authorities will be moving very quickly in regard to the matter—I do not say in one, two, or three years. I think there will be money found for the University as a result of the people taking a greater interest in the project.

I think that covers all the ground. I hope that the Bill will be quickly passed through all its stages.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What consideration are the Brisbane City Council getting?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No consideration whatever. They are quite satisfied with the 96 acres which will be left to them.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the present University site?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The present University site will be surrendered, and a deed covering 108 acres, plus the 60 acres, will be issued to the University.

Mr. VOWLES: What are you going to do with the present building?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If I might make a suggestion, I should think it would make a good museum or an art gallery. It seems to me that, when they decided to have the University in its present position, they spoiled a good Government House and made a poor university building of it. However, there is a good building there, and I should think it would make an admirable art gallery.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If we have the art gallery there, it will give people an opportunity to visit it under better conditions than the present art gallery. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It is a pity that, when the University was established, more consideration was not given to the site, particularly as regards area. It was felt at that time that, by establishing the University in its present position, it was taking away one of the lungs of the city. It appears to me that they only made provision for the present, without paying any regard to the future at all. That has been the trouble in the past—that the people concerned did not look into the future. I am pleased to see that the increased area has been granted, and I am sure that it will be many years before the University authorities will ask for an increased area. I remember when I used to attend the Brisbane Grammar School many years ago that the University site in Victoria Park was spoken of. It was always considered it was a good thing to have it near the grammar school, and also near the General Hospital. It was considered that it

would be better near the hospital, because of convenience for the medical faculty. I am glad to know that the Brisbane City Council have no objection to the proposal. I would like to know the meaning of clause 4, which reads—

“The public shall at all times have free and unrestricted access to the whole of the University grounds, with the exception of such portions thereof as may be occupied by the University buildings and the land appurtenant thereto.”

In the interpretation clause “University grounds” are defined as “the lands described in the third part of the First Schedule to this Act,” etc. On looking up the First Schedule I find it describes the addition to the University site as containing 108 acres 20 perches, and it is shown in the map coloured blue. I cannot understand why the public should have free and unrestricted access to the University grounds at all times. I can understand that they should have access to the ground as a park; but we know that the University authorities will wish to go in for sports, and the only chance they have of raising money for improvements is to hold sports and charge for admission.

Mr. KIRWAN: The Sydney University grounds are opened as a park.

Mr. VOWLES: I know. I attended a football match in the University grounds in Sydney, and they charged for admission. I understand that is one of their sources of revenue. It is quite necessary, as the Minister pointed out, to reserve a portion of the ground for railway purposes. One of the reasons for establishing a University in Victoria Park is that it will be near the General Hospital. If the turf is no better than it was when I used to go to the grammar school, then I think that the University students will have plenty of use for the hospital.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I recognise the importance of granting an addition to the University site. I have just been reading through the report of the University for last year, and I see it refers to the overcrowding which exists at the University at present. The report reads—

“These lectures were well attended; in fact, the hall was too small to accommodate those who were present. . . .

The attendance at these lectures emphasises the need for a large lecturing theatre in the University, for the room used (the largest available) was quite inadequate for these lectures. On each occasion numbers stood on the verandas and veranda railings peering through the windows throughout the lecture.”

It seems to me that it is not right that students should be placed at such a disadvantage. They are unable to attend the lectures because of want of room. I think that we want to make provision for providing more room at the University even before it is transferred to Victoria Park. I hope the Minister will find some way of dealing with the overcrowding which exists at present. There is a splendid hall alongside the University, connected with the Technical College buildings. The hall is used sometimes for holding conferences. We might allow the University students to use that hall as a lecture room. It makes no difference to a lecturer if he has fifty students or 150. I hope the Minister will

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be able to provide sufficient accommodation for the students so that they can attend the lectures.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I do not wish to delay the passage of the Bill, but there is one point I would like to bring before the Committee. The removal of the University to the Victoria Park site will mean a considerable expenditure of money. I might point out that, when the University was established, it was thought to be a wise provision to have the engineering branches of the Technical College adjacent to the engineering classes connected with the University, and the same building was made available for both purposes. We are making a departure from that, and it appears as though there will be two separate engineering branches—one for the Technical College in its present position and one for the University at the new site. At the time it was decided to utilise the one engineering establishment for both institutions it was considered to be wise to economise in that direction. Now it is going to cost a lot of money to transfer the engineering branch to the new site.

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 4—“Rights of public”—

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The clause reads—

“The public shall at all times have free and unrestricted access to the whole of the University grounds, with the exception of such portions thereof as may be occupied by the University buildings and the land appurtenant thereto.”

Does that mean that the public are to have free access to all the grounds used in connection with the University?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The clause means that the public will have absolute freedom of access to the whole of the grounds, except that part of the grounds used for the University.

MR. MOORE: That is, the buildings?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes.

MR. MOORE: Will they have no private tennis courts or anything of that kind?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The public will have access to all the grounds except the University colleges and halls, but there will also be areas for the use of the students, just [2 p.m.] as there are in Musgrave Park to-day. The public have free access to that park, but certain areas are set aside for tennis courts for particular clubs. In the event of any breach of trust in this respect the land will revert to the city council.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 7, both inclusive, Schedules 1 and 2, and the preamble, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday, 27th September.

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS INSURANCE BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): In dealing with the problem of unemployment it will not be out of place to consider for a moment some of its causes, because if we can trace unemployment to its sources then Parliament and the people generally will be able to understand the problem much better, and understanding it, be able the easier to cope with its causes. In all forms of society in all ages and in all countries you are faced with the question of unemployment. That has become particularly so in countries which have developed to a very high degree industrially. At one time, prior to what might be termed the industrial revolution, had a man been able to look into the future and see the machinery and other methods of production that would increase man's productive power, had he been an optimist and one who loved the human race, he might have prophesied that the machinery era would usher in what might be termed the Golden Age. But we find that that has not come about. With the progress that has been made in the methods of production, with the improvements in the volume of production, society has had a wedge driven into it. The people on one side of the wedge have improved enormously their pecuniary position; whereas those on the other side of the wedge have become little or no better off as the result of the improved methods of production. That is due largely to the fact that a few people in the community own the means of production, the instruments of industry, and consequently they can take from industry what they desire and pay labour a subsistence wage for using those means of production. As a consequence, men are employed by industry only when it is profitable to employ them, and men's services are dispensed with when there is no longer a means of making profit from their services. As a consequence, in a community organised highly industrially, there is this problem of unemployment to deal with.

The measure under consideration does not claim in any way to solve the evils of the present imperfect state of society; a much more drastic economic change than we can deal with under the scope of this Bill would be necessary to bring that about. But I do claim for the Bill that it deals with an admitted evil in the community, that it will be the means of organising to a very large extent the available work in the community and regularising it, and that it will do away to a very large extent with the suffering which is caused as a result of unemployment. We know that in any community where unemployment exists, if no steps are taken by Parliament to cope with the distress resulting therefrom, it means that a very large number of people become destitute and are forced to live on charitable doles. Not only do they become destitute and enfeebled physically, but, as the result of living in those undesirable conditions, the psychological effect on the man brought about by his receiving doles and charitable assistance is a very bad one.

Allow me to state it in another way. I remember well the Poor Law Commission

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which was appointed by the Balfour Ministry in Great Britain. That Commission inquired into the causes of invalidity and poverty in Great Britain. It sat for five years and took evidence throughout Great Britain as to the causes of those things. Both the majority and the minority reports dealt very largely with the causes of poverty, and both recommended far-reaching improvements that could be made by legislation. There was this point of agreement in both the majority and minority reports—that the problem of society was not so much a question of dealing with the unemployable as of dealing with the unemployed in such a way that they would not become unemployable.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Sir Leo Chiozza Money, who is now a member of the British Parliamentary Labour party, a recognised authority on this question, has rendered very valuable service to society generally by his investigations. He states—

“The essence of the problem of unemployment is that all work, or nearly all work, is more or less irregular, and will, in large part, always remain so. Man can never hope to reduce his operations to machine-like regularity; and, indeed, if a man were a machine he would be less than a man. He cannot hope so to control the forces of nature as to prevent bad seasons, shortages of material, and other primary causes which affect the regularity of employment. He can neither hope nor desire so to regulate the demands and tastes of mankind as to make every trade permanent and regular in character. But while he cannot reduce industrial operations to a perfect regularity, with wheels ever turning at the same rate for so many hours per day, he can by concerted effort and common rule decide that irregularity of work need not mean irregularity of maintenance, and that the first duty of a civilisation is so to pool its resources and its risks that no man, or set of men, shall be made to endure the consequences of an irregularity which civilisation cannot prevent. Society can assure to every honest man, if it cares to do so, the regular maintenance which it now admits to be due to the dishonest man. A civilisation which puts its rogues under a roof, and maintains them in physical efficiency, should be ashamed to make the honest man bear the brunt of unemployment when it has full knowledge that industrial operations cannot always offer employment to each of its citizens. We have got to recognise that there is a known risk of unemployment, and that a certain proportion of us becomes the targets of that risk. There is no secret about it. There is in it no element of the unexpected. As regularly as the seasons pass—that is, with a general regularity tempered by minor irregularities—a certain proportion of the workmen in a large number of trades, we know, are unable to find work to do. We have to face this ascertained thing and to decide that we will not allow certain amongst us to be crucified in order that our civilisation, as a whole, may enjoy the fruits of the irregular work that we know of.”

The position of the problem is clearly, emphatically, and candidly set out in that

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quotation. It is having those things in view that has led to the Government introducing this Bill. The evils of unemployment are such that they need not be elaborated to any great extent at the present time. Suffice it to say that this evil of unemployment exists in every country in the world, and in every State in Australia, and it is the duty of Governments to cope with them. Mr. I. G. Gibbon, appearing before the London School of Political Economy, stated—

“Unemployment enfeebles the present, poisons the future, and breeds poverty, disease, and demoralisation in the community. The community that takes no heed of its existence, and allows it to develop unchecked, will find itself burdened with a multitude helpless and destitute, and passing rapidly beyond redemption. The penalties which a community suffers from the idleness of its members is likelier to be heavier when those members have lost their self-respect and become dependent upon charity. A proportion of men struggling in the storms of fate will sink to those depths of depravity which make a penal code and the maintenance of prisons a necessary part of the administration of justice.”

It will be seen from that quotation, which bears out what I said earlier in my speech, that the subject has to be dealt with in such a way that men shall not lose their self-respect, that men shall not be impoverished, and, as a result of their impoverishment, become, to a certain extent, unemployable. Consequently, I claim on two grounds that this Bill should have the support of every right-thinking man and woman in the community. First, on the ground of national efficiency. If you leave the humanitarian standpoint out of consideration altogether for a moment, on the ground of national efficiency, and on the ground of maintaining a population of healthy and virile men and women, it is necessary to prevent destitution in the community. If we take it on moral grounds, who can fail to be touched with the appeal that poverty makes to every right-souled man and woman? Can any citizen of this State or any member of Parliament contemplate with equanimity the fact that a number of our fellow-citizens are suffering destitution, and are not sufficiently housed, clothed, and fed to maintain themselves in that standard of efficiency which it is necessary and desirable that men and women should have? On those grounds I claim support of this Bill.

The Bill sets out a scheme of insurance whereby men in employment, working under Arbitration Court awards, will be insured and become subject to the benefits of this fund. There will be three contributors to the fund. The State, the employer, and the employee will each contribute one-third to the general fund. I consider that to be a most equitable method of establishing such a fund. On economic grounds, it can be asserted, and the argument cannot be combated, that the maintenance of unemployed men should be provided for by the industries in which those men are engaged. To put it another way, industries requiring reserves of unemployed men to call upon during times of seasonal prosperity and so on, should maintain those reserves during the period when they are not required by those industries. That is an argument in

favour of the employer subscribing to this fund, and he also, in common with the rest of the community, will get the advantage as a result of the improvement in the efficiency of the worker as a unit.

Then let me look at it from the point of view of the employee. It is the first law of nature that man should make provision for his own maintenance so far as it is possible. Members of Parliament cannot afford to disregard the value of thrift in the community. It is not a desirable thing that men, while they are in employment and while they are in funds, should spend all their money without making some provision for their maintenance during a period of unemployment which almost inevitably is bound to follow in many cases in industry at the present time.

Then, there is the further point—and this is the most important of all from the point of view of this Bill—that it is a cardinal feature of the Bill that only insured persons shall participate in the benefits of the fund. This is safeguarded by making the employee subscribe to the fund.

We know that within less than five months close on 2,000 men have come from other States to seek employment in Queensland. Those men have registered for employment in the various Labour Exchanges within the State. Many of them have found employment; consequently it is desirable in dealing with an unemployed fund to maintain its solvency by providing that only those shall participate in the benefits who have contributed towards the fund. The employee who contributes towards the fund will have evidence of that fact, and will be able to furnish it when making his claim for unemployment sustenance. One could easily understand that, if a fund were drawn upon where there is no means of differentiating between the insured worker and the uninsured worker—no means of differentiating between a man who was a worker and one who was not a worker—a drain would be made upon the fund which would rapidly bring it to insolvency.

Then, there is the psychological argument which I wish to emphasise. I have said that it is undesirable that men should receive something to which they have not directly contributed. Any system other than the one which I am advocating, and under any system whereby doles are given to unemployed workers, would, to a large extent, injure that self-respect and that manly independence which I regard as the badge of free citizenship. Under the old methods men received assistance during periods of unemployment as a charity. Under the scheme which I am now advocating insured persons will be able to demand this assistance as a right; or, in other words, will demand sustenance from a fund to which they have contributed.

Then, the State is the other contributor. The State has also a responsibility in this matter, inasmuch as the State executive—Parliament—has means at its disposal of coping with industry and regulating it in a way which, to a large extent, will minimise unemployment. In addition to that, men in the community not directly associated with industry are brought within the scope of the fund; that is to say, there are many men in the community who receive direct

benefits from industry in the shape of direct income therefrom who need not subscribe to the fund directly, whereas the State, by becoming a contributor to the fund from the consolidated revenue throws its proportion into the general pool. Consequently I say that a fund established in this way is perfectly just in its incidence, its solvency can be sustained, and the men participating in the benefits can demand maintenance from the fund as a right to which they themselves have contributed.

That is the argument which I put forward in favour of this method of subscribing towards the fund. It has been argued before, and will no doubt be argued again by some hon. members opposite, that individuals should take care of themselves—that in seasonal industries the rates of wages are fixed in such a way as to provide for irregularity of employment, and, as a consequence, the opponents of this measure will argue that an individual should look after himself and should not be in a position to receive benefits from this source. Men who argue in such a way take a short-sighted view of the situation. I find the matter is very well put in this quotation—

“Against insurance it may be urged that individual alertness and ability are encouraged when each person has to stand or fall according to his own individual effort. But this objection is of more validity to a placid arm-chair philosophy than to the actual stress of political life. The tree which has to stand the buffets of wind and rain without prop or stay may become firmly rooted, and the need for social wellbeing of individual strength of mind no less than of body cannot be overlooked. But it is equally true that the problems which principally concern the workman at the present time are to be solved, not in isolation, but only in co-operation with his fellows. Man has survived the ages, not only by the instinct of self-preservation and the development of individuality, but also through the instinct of social solidarity. Progress has been made, and progress will be made, only in proportion as these two instincts are properly balanced and safeguarded.”

That deals with the argument which has been used by certain opponents of this Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: What are you quoting from?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I think I have said enough on that point to outline my views, and to state what are the fundamental arguments in favour of the Bill. They are arguments which cannot be seriously combated by those having the best interests of the whole of the people at stake.

Mr. VOWLES: What did you quote from? Was it “Billy Demaine”?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Only those men who are affected by Arbitration Court awards will come within the scope of the measure. It is necessary that that should be so, because all employment, no matter what it is, is subject to periods of depression and periods of unemployment. The sum that men in regular employment will be called upon to contribute to this fund is infinitesimal. Some men may take up a selfish attitude, because they think that, as they happen to have a regular job, they should not be called upon to contribute to this fund. That is a very shortsighted view to take,

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because the man who is subject to irregular employment would be willing to speedily change positions with him. It is fair and just that industry as a whole, from the point of view of both the employers and employees, should be called upon to bear portion of the cost of the fund. I wish to indicate at this stage that benefits will not accrue from the fund until six months have elapsed. That is to say, if this Bill becomes law, as I anticipate it will, when it is put into operation the fund will accumulate for six months before any benefits will be payable therefrom. That is desirable and necessary from the point of view of the solvency of the fund. We must look at it from the point of view of insurance risks, and build up suitable reserves to meet those risks. We know that in countries where insurance has been carried on, notably in Great Britain and Switzerland, funds have been allowed to accumulate during periods of prosperity in trade. That has been a splendid safeguard to workers in periods of depression. At the present time in Great Britain the proportion of men who are unemployed is 4.5 per cent. of the population. It is fortunate for the people there that the fund from which they receive out-of-work insurance has been able during periods of prosperity to accumulate to very large proportions. I have not the official figures, but in one publication which I read it was stated that as much as £93,000,000 had been accumulated in the fund, and they were enabled to call upon that fund during the depression immediately following the war. In Switzerland they have been able to build up huge funds, which they have been able to utilise, not only to assist men who are unemployed, but to use those funds to balance the difficulty in regard to exchange, and so enable industries to continue operations. As a matter of fact, 75 per cent. of the funds of the Swiss system is not expended in allowances to unemployed persons, but is expended in the direction of providing employment. With that phase of the question I will deal later on in my consideration of the Bill. It is proposed that the fund shall accumulate for six months to establish reserves to meet what can be legitimately regarded as insurance risks.

Then again, it is another safeguard to provide against men receiving from the fund that which they are not entitled to. If there were not this six months' [2.30 p.m.] qualification, it would mean that men from the other States, without contributing towards the fund at all, would be able to draw on it, and other men who might not be regarded as bona fide workers would also be able to draw on it. The test of the right to sustenance from this fund will be that the applicant shall be an insured person who has been a worker in this State for not less than six months and a contributor to the fund.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What do you call a "worker"?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: A worker is anyone engaged in an industry subject to an award of the Arbitration Court.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about the present unemployed?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Then we differentiate between men who desire work and those who do not. Nobody can be blind

to the fact that in the community there are a certain number of men who do not desire to work. They are not confined to any class in the community. Hon. members opposite often regard the unemployable as belonging only to the working class; but one can point out in the wealthy, the better dressed, and the better fed section of the community men who never do any useful work from one year's end to the other. They draw in idleness sustenance from industry and society—a condition of things which is permitted under the existing social system. Any social legislation of this character cannot afford to ignore the problem of men who do not desire to work, because many people, some of whom are supporters of hon. members opposite, think that the great end in life is to live on somebody else's labour. That is one of the causes of the economic evil which exists in the community—that a number of men, most of whom are supporters of hon. members opposite, desire to live upon the labour of others. Such persons will not receive the advantages of this measure.

Some men in politics and others writing in journals to-day, who have not seriously studied the question from its economic and moral aspect, have adopted a wrong attitude towards this Bill. There are two aspects from which it must be studied in order that men may be able to grasp the situation and deal with the problem satisfactorily; but we find men in certain parties and in certain journals condemning the measure without a knowledge of its features or of the problem itself. I notice that in this morning's "Courier" it is described as "The Loafers' Paradise Bill." I unhesitatingly hurl that lie back in the teeth of anyone who uses that opprobrious epithet against the genuine workers of this State and the men who will get the benefits of this Bill. Men who are desirous of obtaining work in order to maintain themselves and their families in decency and comfort should not be insulted in that way. I know what it is to be unemployed. Fortunately, I have not suffered as much from unemployment as many men I have known—good men and good tradesmen, too. I do not think there is anything more humiliating for a man of independent mind than to be placed in the position where he has to search day after day for work which is not available to him. Under this scheme such men will be protected. Efforts will be made to secure employment for them, and self-respecting men will not be insulted in the manner which I have condemned as coming from the "Courier" and some of its political supporters.

At 2.35 p.m.,

MR. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Speaker in the chair.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: This measure will be worked through an Unemployment Council, which will be composed of the Secretary for Public Works, the Director of Labour, the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and two other members to be elected by the industrial unions and the Employers' Federation respectively. I may say here that it will be a condition of obtaining sustenance from the fund that the applicant registers as unemployed at the nearest labour exchange—that is to say, men will not be entitled to sustenance from the fund unless,

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in addition to having been contributors, they are also prepared to take work that may be offered to them. If a labour exchange offers a man work which there is no good reason for his declining, and he declines to accept it, he will not be entitled to any advantages.

On the Unemployment Council certain important duties will devolve. It will be in the nature of an information bureau as to the condition of the labour market. For this reason the Council may call upon the various Government departments, local authorities, or other local governing bodies to furnish statistics and other data in their possession. The Council may also—

“(a) Inquire into the causes and extent of unemployment within the State or any part thereof;

“(b) Inquire into and consider what are the most effective measures to be taken for temporarily or permanently reducing or eliminating unemployment within the State or any part thereof;

“(c) Obtain and disseminate information on all matters connected with industrial occupations and the callings of workers, with a view to improving the industrial relationship between workers and employers and lessening the evils of unemployment;

“(d) Consider and report to the Governor in Council upon the industrial efficiency of the community, the organisation of the labour market and opportunities of employment, and all matters and questions relating to unemployment;

“(e) Consider and report to the Governor in Council upon the working of the State labour exchanges and make any recommendation deemed necessary for their improvement and extension.”

The Council may also appoint one of its members or any other person to hold an inquiry into any matter, and shall have the powers of a Commission for that purpose. The Governor in Council, on the report of the Unemployment Council, has power to order any class of employer or any individual employers or employer to take measures for temporarily or permanently reducing or eliminating unemployment, if the Governor in Council is satisfied, upon the report of the Unemployment Council, that such employers have failed to begin or proceed with works which could reasonably be begun or proceeded with by such employers. If an employer makes default in complying with the order of the Governor in Council, the Unemployment Council may levy on the employer a contribution, which shall be recovered accordingly. It will be seen that the functions of the Unemployment Council are very important. It is necessary that it should have these powers for the efficient carrying out of the measure, and it is desirable that we should have men capable of filling those offices. In the Director of Labour and the Registrar of Friendly Societies we have men eminently fitted for discharging these responsibilities, and I feel sure that the employees' unions and the Employers' Federation will also appoint men well fitted for the duties.

It may be argued—it has been argued—that certain drastic powers are given by the Bill to the Minister and the Unemployed Council, and that these may affect industry. I wish to deal with the position of employers as it

affects industry generally. We know that there is certain work which does not urgently require to be done at any particular time, and I think it is desirable that the available public works in the community should be regularised as much as possible—that is to say, those public works should be undertaken as far as possible during the slack periods of the year. Take, for example, the situation in any of our large seasonal industries, such as the sugar industry and the pastoral industry. We know that the sugar industry requires large numbers of men for from six to seven months of the year, and during the remainder of the year little or no work is available for those men, and consequently they are dependent to a very large extent on casual labour. We know also that local authorities in those districts often approach the Treasurer for funds to carry on various public works. I consider that many of those public works could be done with advantage during the slack period of the year. I think it is not a good thing, when employment is available in a seasonal industry, such as a sugar-mill or meatworks, that the local authorities in those areas should be spending large sums of money in public works. Rather would it be better, in making advances to those local authorities, to stipulate that, so far as is possible, those works should be carried out during the slack period of the year. That is a sound proposition.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: By day labour?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is good from the workers' point of view, inasmuch as it regularises the amount of employment available in the community during the whole period of the year. It also is a good proposition from the business point of view, because it is desirable from that standpoint to have as many men in employment in a given district as is possible. The hon. member for Bulimba has interjected, “Will the councils be called upon to do this work by day labour?” That is a matter over which the councils will have complete control, if they carry on the work. At the present time we do not dictate to local authorities how they shall carry out their work. All the conditions we impose are that the work is a desirable one, that the proposition is a sound one financially, and that the money advanced is spent for the purpose for which the advance was made. It is a fair thing that, so far as it is humanly possible, public bodies such as those I have indicated should assist the State in this way by regularising employment.

Then we proceed to deal with the functions of local authorities under this measure. Objection may be taken to the fact that we may call upon local authorities, during periods of depression, to carry out certain public works. I think that that is only a fair and reasonable proposition. I remember that some years ago certain local authorities in Queensland at a certain period of the year asked the Treasurer to advance money to enable them to go on with certain public works within the ambit of their control. The money was not made available by the Treasurer at that time, but later, during the slack period of the year, the Treasurer wrote to those local authorities indicating that, if they were then prepared to go ahead with those public works and absorb as many men as possible within their own areas, sums of money would be made available for that purpose. Unfortunately, those local authorities, holding the same political views and having the same

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narrowness of vision as hon. members opposite, refused to assist the State in this way. They indicated by their conservative attitude that they preferred to see numbers of men unemployed rather than that productive work should be carried on and those men be absorbed.

Mr. GREEN: What local authorities?

Mr. KING: Name the local authorities.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Under this Bill power will be given to the Unemployed Council, during periods of abnormal distress resulting from unemployment, to call the attention of the Governor in Council to the amount of unemployment in the community, to the districts where that unemployment is at its worst, and to make recommendations to the Governor in Council. On these recommendations the Governor in Council may start public works of his own, or may direct local authorities to commence public works within their areas, and the Treasurer will be called upon to advance funds for that purpose. Every Treasurer each year receives deputations from local authorities asking for funds for certain public works. I received this year, on behalf of the Treasurer, a number of deputations of that nature. Not all of those propositions are agreed to for the time being, but we always have a list of the works which local authorities are desirous of going in for if funds are available. During a period such as that the Unemployed Council will be able to find out the public works which have already been approved by the local authorities, and by that means we will be able to call upon the local authority concerned to start this work with a view to reducing the amount of unemployment, and the Government will provide the funds necessary for it to do so. Some people may argue that such public works, being of a relief character, may be more costly than those undertaken in ordinary circumstances. That, also, is provided for under the Bill. In cases where the local authority has incurred financial loss as a result of carrying on those relief works, it will be reimbursed to the extent of the excessive cost of those works. Viewed from that point of view, the proposition is eminently sound. After all is said and done, local governing bodies have their responsibilities as well as the central Government.

Mr. KING: Why interfere with them?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is part of a local authority's functions to find employment for its citizens so far as it is humanly possible for it to do so, and it is only a fair proposition that local authorities should be called upon to carry out public works during periods when men are not required in seasonal industries. That is being done by my own department at the present time. The building trade is fairly brisk in the metropolitan area, and as a consequence, I am not authorising other than absolutely urgent works in the metropolitan area at the present time. Later on in the financial year, if men in that industry become unemployed to any considerable extent, I shall have the opportunity of initiating those works and so absorbing the men who are not required in other directions. I consider that to be a fair and reasonable proposition. Viewed from the correct aspect, no one can take any reasonable objection to it.

With those few words I think I have outlined the salient provisions of the measure.

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The Bill is an honest and serious attempt to deal with an economic evil in the community at the present time. It is intended under this measure to prevent people becoming destitute. It is intended that people will get advantages from a fund to which they contribute themselves, so that they will not suffer any loss of the spirit of independence. I commend the measure to all fair-minded men and women in this community. I ask hon. members opposite to consider the Bill for themselves, and not be misled or whipped into a certain position by the article which has appeared in the Brisbane "Courier." Let them view it from the standpoint of citizens in this great State and legislators in this State who have a duty to perform in the community. The Bill cannot be regarded as being of a utopian or impossible character. We do not claim that it will remove all the social and economic evils in the community, but we claim that the Bill, if put into operation and given a fair chance in administration, will do much to relieve the distress in the community caused by unemployment, will do much to improve the status of the workers in the community, and will do much to promote the efficiency of the workers, and to lay down a foundation of social legislation, which, as a result of experience thus gained, may be built upon in the future. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): When the Minister in charge of the Bill was speaking at an earlier stage, he told us that he was bringing in a Bill, not in the form in which it was introduced in 1919, but on the lines of the legislation in existence at the present time in Great Britain.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I said it was an improvement.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman said it was on the lines I have indicated.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: He said that the Bill was to make provision for the insurance of workers and for other ancillary purposes. I predicted at the time that the measure would contain certain principles which we could subscribe to, and I went further, and predicted that it would also be found to contain principles of an objectionable nature which outweigh the good principles and make it impossible for the Opposition to support it. That is the position I find myself in this afternoon.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you going to oppose the Bill?

Mr. VOWLES: The good principles are so outweighed by the bad that it is impossible for me to have anything to do with it. It is the earnest desire of the Opposition to attempt genuinely to do something to cope with unemployment; and we realise that one of the ways of coping with it, next to good government, is by the creation of insurance legislation which will protect the worker in times of depression. We showed that we were prepared to do that when we put forward a counter scheme to the scheme proposed by the Government in 1919. The measure that was introduced at that time was different in form to the Bill which is before us to-day. It is astonishing that the alternative scheme suggested by the Opposition at that time, and which was rejected by the Government with scorn, is now taken by them to their bosom, and is embodied in

the insurance portion of this Bill. We pointed out in 1919 the conditions that existed in Great Britain, where the unemployment was more acute than here. We were told that the position was different here. We were told that unemployment was likely to continue at that time, and that there was a greater proportion of unemployment in Queensland than in the old country.

Mr. PEASE: That is not right.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member was not here. He does not know what was said.

Mr. PEASE: I have experienced unemployment, and you have not.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is not experiencing it now—he is living on the fat of the land. We were told that the conditions were different then to what they are now. At that time, when unemployment in Great Britain was not so acute as it is to-day, when the proportion of unemployed was greater per capita than it is to-day, more drastic measures were required than are sought to be brought into effect to-day. The unemployment in the old country has been brought about to a very large extent as a result of war conditions, as the result of devastation, altered conditions, and the disorganisation of industry. Men were taken away from their regular callings to make munitions, and after the war that work ceased suddenly, with the result that there was not the same demand for their services as previously, and many of them became unemployed. The conditions which obtain in Queensland are very different, and the causes of unemployment are very different. If you look for the causes of unemployment here you will find that to a great extent it is due to inefficient work brought about, firstly, by the prescription of a fixed wage irrespective of the value of work performed; secondly, preference to membership of a union instead of to efficiency; thirdly, to employers being debarred in many cases from choosing their own labour; and fourthly, because of the preaching of the poisonous class-hatred doctrine instead of trying to introduce a spirit of friendly co-operation. It is no good looking at this matter from an ethical point of view. We know that unemployment has existed from the time the world began. There is one section of the community which is industrious, there is another section which is semi-industrious, and there is another section which most of its time is trying to avoid work. That is the hardest class to deal with. Some people are unfit to carry out the responsibilities that work entails. The English Act differs very considerably from this Bill, and this Bill differs very materially from the Bill which was introduced into this Chamber on a previous occasion. The essential differences between this Bill and the English Act are that this Bill provides for the establishment of an Unemployment Council, relief works as a remedy for unemployment, the right to work provisions, and unemployment insurance, labour farms for unemployable, and miscellaneous provisions. Under the English Act there is provision for insurance only. It also provides for the refund of the amount by which contributions exceed the benefits at the age of sixty, plus interest. The main difference between the Bill introduced in 1919 and this Bill is that this Bill provides for contributions by employees and the Government. The Crown is to be included as an employer, notwith-

standing what the Premier said in 1919. In "Hansard," 1919, at page 504, the hon. gentleman stated—

"Because their employees will not be so likely to be unemployed. The Government do not sack large numbers of employees."

Do you get that, Mr. Dunstan? (Laughter.) He continued—

"Perhaps the hon. member has in mind a fear that some Government might resort to the vile tactics of past Governments of retrenching men and creating unemployment in that way, but, surely, he cannot consider that there is any possibility of this Government doing that?"

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Read it again. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: I will ask hon. members to read it in "Hansard." This Bill differs again in connection with the disqualification for six months of an employee taking part in an illegal strike. It will be remembered that we stressed the point that [3 p.m.] men who take part in strikes in contravention of the law, and, as a result of their illegal act, come on the unemployed market, should not be entitled to receive the benefits which will accrue under legislation such as this. That principle was agreed to, but that principle is not being agreed to to-day.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: There is a clause which might be strained to cover that position, but it is left to the industrial magistrate to decide whether a man is out of employment as the result of his own action.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are wrong. It is provided in the Bill that, if a man refuses to accept work, he cannot receive the benefit under the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: Refuses to accept work is quite a different story to the man who goes out illegally.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are barking up the wrong tree.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know that I am barking up any tree. There is one clause which might be strained to cover that position. If a man or a body of men do anything illegal in that respect, they should be outside the benefits of this legislation and should not come on the fund.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Neither they will under this Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: I remember in 1915, when the Labour Exchanges Bill was going through this House, the preamble read—

"A Bill to encourage workers to insure themselves against distress and unemployment."

But there were no provisions in the Bill to that effect. The hon. member for Mirani, as reported on page 668 of "Hansard" for that year, moved the insertion of the following subclause:—

"To provide the means by which wage-earners may insure themselves against the consequences of unemployment."

That was rejected by the Government. Surely that shows the position when you refer back to 1915 and compare it with 1922. In their first year of office—following on a

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previous Government which only had to find £5,000 in the whole course of the year for unemployment in the way of relief—the Government found in 1915 that there was no necessity to bring in legislation for the insurance of unemployed workers; but now in 1922, after seven years of office, they have come to the position that they found themselves in in 1919. They find the expenditure increasing each year and that it is absolutely necessary that something shall be done in order that unemployment shall be recognised and put upon a sound basis. Conferences have been held throughout the Commonwealth at different times dealing with the subject of unemployment. Two have been held—one between the representatives of the Victorian Employers' Association and the Victorian Trades Hall and a conference convened by Mr. Hughes. The astonishing thing is that at both these conferences the only solution that was offered by the representatives of labour was the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

Mr. COLLINS: A very good suggestion.

Mr. VOWLES: If it is a very good suggestion, how is it that this Government—who have been in charge of the State's affairs now for nearly eight years—introduce this Bill to cope with the question of unemployment when they have all the means at their disposal to bring in their policy for the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange? The English legislation does not apply to all workers as workers; but it applies to different classes of occupation which require different treatment. For instance, it exempts certain occupations such as those of a permanent nature where insurance is unnecessary. It allows for a scheme of insurance by agreement in a particular class of employees, and exempts them from the Act and provides for a refund of the amounts paid by those who reach the age of sixty. The present system will compel the good worker to carry the bad worker on his back; and I would like in passing to make this reference to the definition of "worker," and ask the hon. gentleman if he has realised the position which will arise so far as that definition is concerned. First of all, in respect of the youth—boy or girl—who has attained the age of eighteen years, is looking for work, and has never had the privilege of receiving wages, is that individual, merely from the fact that he has never earned anything in the way of wages, to be precluded from coming under the fund? The definition of "worker" reads—

" 'Worker'—Any person, male or female, of the age of eighteen years or upwards in any manner engaged or employed by an employer in work of any kind whatsoever, subject to the direction and control of an employer, and whether the worker's remuneration is to be according to time or by piecework, or at a fixed price, or otherwise howsoever."

You will find, on referring to clause 5, that the only workers who are to participate in the fund or receive any benefits from it are workers—

"over eighteen years of age employed within Queensland whose rate of wages, salary, or allowance is fixed by award or industrial agreement and every employer

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of any such worker shall be liable to pay contributions to the fund at the prescribed rates."

On the face of it, that would go to show that, unless there is a contribution, there are no rights under the Bill. The term "employer" includes—

"The Crown and any Minister of the Crown and any corporation or officer representing or acting as the agent of the Crown."

There are certain public servants who receive salaries of over £300 a year and who do not come under an Arbitration Court award. Will they not contribute to the fund? I am only pointing this out because I would like to know whether that position has been considered.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you want to bring them in?

Mr. VOWLES: We are told that all employers, including the Crown, will have to contribute, and then they start to differentiate so far as the Crown employees are concerned. There is a loophole there, and we want to tighten it up if it is necessary. The exceptions are practically the same as they were in the last Bill. They deal with professional men, contractors, auctioneers, and apprentices. The Unemployment Council which is to be formed is not to my liking at all. I cannot see why the Minister, a public official—the Registrar of Friendly Societies of all men in the world—and the Director of Labour should be appointed—why there should be three representatives to look after the one-third which the Government subscribe to this fund, and only one representative of labour and one representative of the employers. Why is there all this Governmental control?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: How many do you want?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know. I should say there should be one Government representative, one employers' representative, and one employees' representative.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Registrar of Friendly Societies is not a Government representative.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know why the Registrar of Friendly Societies comes in at all.

Mr. BRENNAN: He is a statistician.

Mr. VOWLES: We do not want to have him on the Council, because he will have to exercise powers in other directions than in relation to statistics. Why not have a Government representative, an employers' representative, and an employees' representative? It is rather indefinite as to what class of organisations are to be entitled to participate in the benefits of the fund. Subclause (2) of clause 3 reads—

"For the purpose of the election of a workers' representative and an employers' representative respectively, each union, association, or organisation of workers or employers respectively shall, by its executive have votes proportionate to the respective number of members of such association, union, or organisation at the date of the voting."

Does that mean a registered industrial organisation or association, or does it mean any band of persons who are appointed in any district at all as a workers' association?

The term of office of the Unemployment Council is to be three years. Then here you have a very astonishing principle that the Government have at last agreed to—that both the employers' organisations and the employees' organisations have a power that Parliament will not give to the electors; that is, the power to recall their representatives and terminate their office if they desire to do so. The subclause says—

“The workers' representative and the employers' representative shall respectively be so appointed for a period of three years, but shall be eligible for re-election and re-appointment: Provided that the executives respectively electing such representative may at any time terminate his office, whereupon a casual vacancy shall be deemed to have arisen.”

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What is wrong with that?

Mr. VOWLES: Why do you not give power under the Elections Act to the electors to do the same so far as members of Parliament are concerned? On a previous occasion, when members of the Opposition wanted to broaden the Popular Initiative and Referendum Bill by including the principle of the recall to members of Parliament, hon. members opposite, who now propose to adopt that principle in regard to the employers' representative and the employees' representative, were not prepared to trust the people. The Government have recognised the principle here, and I hope that before long they will be able to bring the principle into effect generally.

Mr. COLLINS: It would be a bad job for the Opposition if it were in operation in connection with Parliament.

Mr. VOWLES: If it had been in operation previously, hon. members opposite would before now have been amongst the unemployed. We have got as far as the establishment of an Unemployment Council. Let us next see what the duties of the Council are. We find those duties are in the nature of an information bureau. Clause 4, subclause (2), provides—

“The Council may—

(a) Inquire into the causes and extent of unemployment within the State or any part thereof;

(b) Inquire into and consider what are the most effective measures to be taken for temporarily or permanently reducing or eliminating unemployment within the State or any part thereof;

(c) Obtain and disseminate information on all matters connected with industrial occupations and the callings of workers, with a view to improving the industrial relationship between workers and employers and lessening the evils of unemployment”—

and so on. They are deemed to be a Commission of Inquiry under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act of 1910, to take evidence and submit reports on any matters dealing with the subjects referred to in my previous remarks.

The fund is the beginning of the trouble. All payments which are levied from employers and employees and the contributions of the Crown, have to be paid into a fund.

That fund is to lie idle for six months so as to accumulate, and after that any genuine worker in Queensland who has been here six months, and who is out of work for two weeks, is entitled to relief if he has contributed to the fund. The employer gets a special power here which he has not got under the Wages Act; that is, to deduct from the wages of his employee the contributions towards the fund so as to protect the fund. The contributions are reversed. The Crown limits its liability under the fund to £15,000.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Not at all. That is only a contribution at the commencement.

Mr. VOWLES: Clause 8 deals with the annual grant of £15,000. It states—

“There is hereby appropriated out of the consolidated revenue, as and by way of grant to the fund, the sum of fifteen thousand pounds for the financial year ending the thirtieth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three; and the amount of such appropriation for each and every financial year thereafter shall be determined as prescribed.”

The rates of contribution are in thirds. Clause 5, subclause (11), states—

“If at any time the Governor in Council is satisfied that the moneys to the credit of the fund or from time to time payable to the credit thereof are or are likely to be or become insufficient to meet the sustenance allowances and other expenditure under this Act payable out of the fund, the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council published in the ‘Gazette,’ give such directions (including, if deemed necessary, an increase in the rates of contribution during a specified period) as will in his judgment ensure the sufficiency of the fund for the purposes aforesaid; and all such directions shall be obeyed by all persons concerned.”

Then the principle begins to develop, and the employer has to pay one-half, and the Crown and the employees one-fourth each—not that it matters very much whether the employer or the Crown pays it, because they are practically the same individual. The people who carry on industry in Queensland are asked to pay this taxation, and it is from that taxation that the one-third or the one-fourth of the fund, as the case may be, will be levied, and they have to contribute their one-third or one-fourth, as the case may be, in other directions, and, if they do not pay in accordance with the principle imposed upon them, the Government come in worse than a pawnbroker would do, and impose a 10 per cent. penalty.

Mr. BRENNAN: How much is it a week?

Mr. VOWLES: It will not be a great amount, but we are dealing with the principle. I admit that the payments are small.

Mr. BRENNAN: Give it a test.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not propose to give it a test. So far as the insurance scheme is concerned, we are perfectly in agreement with it; but we are now coming to principles which I object to. We are told in clause 7, subclause (1)—

“In any case where the Governor in Council is satisfied, upon the report of the Council, that any class of employers or any individual employers or employer

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are or is failing to begin or proceed with works which could reasonably be begun or preceded by them or him, the Governor in Council may from time to time, by Order in Council, order and direct that such class of employers or individual employers or employer shall do such things and take such measures as in his opinion will be effective for temporarily or permanently reducing or eliminating unemployment within the State or any part thereof.

We find that a Government who cannot run their own State enterprises, who have failed lamentably so far as the State stations are concerned, who have had to close down other undertakings and to admit their incapacity—are now going to turn round and compel private employers and individuals to do something—to tell them how to carry on their business, and how to spend their reserves, whether they want to spend them in that direction or not. In many cases if the Government exercise this power they will cripple industries which exist to-day, or, if they do not cripple them, will place Queensland in the position that we cannot expect new industries to start. The Government have been driving people in some instances to other States, where conditions are much better.

Mr. COLLINS: You have driven your own supporters out of the Chamber.

Mr. VOWLES: I noticed that, when the Minister was speaking, there was not a third of a quorum present. You did not show him very much courtesy.

Mr. COLLINS: I did.

Mr. VOWLES: When the Minister was introducing the Bill, hon. members opposite were so forgetful of the unemployed that there were only four Government members in the Chamber.

Heavy penalties are to be imposed upon those individuals who are not prepared to carry out work when they are offered work to do. It is provided that if, at any time, the extent of unemployment within the State is such that in the opinion of the council it requires special measures to be adopted, the council shall report to the Minister the number of workers unemployed in the various localities affected, and the classes of workers unemployed, and such report shall set out the nature of the work which, in the opinion of the council, will afford the greatest relief.

What follows after that? The Minister submits a report to the Governor in Council for his consideration. The Governor in Council is then empowered to provide work from the public funds, or to compel the local authorities to carry on such works as the Government desire they shall do. The Minister tells us, in justification of this principle, that almost every month there are applications from local authorities for money to be expended in Government works in various parts of the State; and he says that these works should be held over until the slack time, when men are released from seasonal occupations and will be able to take advantage of the work offering. The Minister says that there will be no unemployed, or that the unemployed will be lessened under such a system as that. I ask the hon. gentleman if he remembers an application which came from Townsville some years ago to carry out a scheme of public

works there. I think the amount involved was something like £40,000 or £50,000. There were a lot of unemployed in Townsville at the time living on charity. They appealed to the local authority, and the local authority appealed to the Government. The local authority was prepared to borrow 50 per cent. of the money required if the Government would find the other 50 per cent., in order that certain public works should be carried out in Townsville. The local authority thought that it was better to provide the men with work, and pay them the arbitration rate of wages in preference to the men being out of work and receiving doles.

Mr. DASH: That would not have kept many men employed.

Mr. VOWLES: It does not matter if it would have kept many men employed; it was better than giving them doles.

Mr. BRENNAN: This scheme will stop all Government doles.

Mr. VOWLES: It is proposed in this Bill that the local authorities shall carry out their work so that the employees engaged in seasonal industries will be able to get work in the slack time. The Government need not expect the best results from that system.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why?

Mr. VOWLES: Because the work will not be congenial to them. A cane-cutter may be a good cane-cutter, and a shearer may be a good shearer, but neither of them cares to take on any other class of work, and you cannot expect them to do it. You cannot expect them to do tradesmen's work. The result will be that these men will have a statutory right to be reimbursed. Who will pay these workers if they have not got work to do? They will be paid out of the funds. Why should the fund have to pay?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is better for the fund to be at a loss under those conditions than to have to pay for unemployment.

Mr. VOWLES: I pointed out to the Minister that in the Supplementary Estimates the sum of £66,000 was provided, in addition to the £55,000 provided in the Estimates in Chief, for the relief for unemployment during the current year.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is for outdoor relief.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes. That shows that £111,000 is being provided for the current year.

Mr. BRENNAN: What do you suggest for relief?

Mr. VOWLES: I suggest that you put a Government in power which will inspire confidence. (Government laughter.) That is the first thing that you have to do. It is suggested that men have big bank balances. Well, you cannot attack deposits in banks. You can attack land. You may decide that men shall do a certain amount of clearing in prickly-pear areas; you may decide that they shall do fencing; or you may decide that they shall do other works in other directions; but you cannot interfere with their bank deposits. The workers seem to be privileged under this measure. One section of the community who might be regarded as the lucky section or the provident section—that is those who are in work—will in the future have to pay a proportion of their

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earnings just because they are employed, in order to make provision for men who do not work, or who cannot work.

Mr. BRENNAN: Are you complaining about that?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I am not; but I am drawing attention to it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Are you going to try and repudiate it?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not want to repudiate it. I do not want to repudiate you, and I do not want you to repudiate me, so keep quiet. (Laughter.) I was pointing out that these workers seem to be privileged in certain cases, and they will be in a better position than their fellow workers who are in constant work, or who receive a reasonable amount of work during the year.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is the brotherhood of man.

Mr. VOWLES: That is a very pretty picture, no doubt. I have never known the hon. member to practise the brotherhood of man. We heard what happened in Toowoomba the other day, when someone asked the hon. member for 2s. for unemployment. (Laughter.) There is a provision here that the Minister may give an unemployed person a ticket or railway pass to enable him to travel by railway to any place where he has a chance of getting employment. I notice that the cost of every such ticket is to be defrayed out of the funds. Why should that be so? Under our present system, if a man receives a railway pass into the country where he has a chance of getting employment, the amount that is paid for his railway pass is deducted from his first month's wages. That principle is to be departed from in connection with this measure. The Government is making a good fellow of itself, at some one else's expense.

I notice there is provision for setting apart an area of land for the purposes of a labour farm for men who are unemployable. I do not know how the hon. gentleman expects to make a success of that. When I see the provisions made in respect of the unemployable it looks as if the Minister is expecting trouble, because he is making provision to get rid of that man. He is making provision whereby men who are loafing on the fund will not receive employment, and will not receive any benefits from the fund.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you think that provision should not be there?

Mr. VOWLES: There is a provision that any man who refuses to work can be dismissed from the labour farm, and shall not be entitled to be admitted into another labour farm, or to receive any allowance from the fund.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What is wrong with that? You have to make provision for all these things.

Mr. VOWLES: You have to make provision, but it shows you are looking for trouble.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you suggest that we should not have those powers?

Mr. VOWLES: You should certainly have those powers, but you are anticipating trouble.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We are dealing with a difficult situation.

Mr. VOWLES: It is going to be carried out, not at the expense of the general tax-

payer, but at the expense of a section of the employers. The Government have no right to put their ideas into effect at the expense of any section of the community.

Mr. BRENNAN: You are there to oppose.

Mr. VOWLES: Of course, I am here to oppose. This is an iniquitous and vicious measure. Part of it is very similar to the Bill which was rejected in 1919, but the Government were not prepared to bring it forward in that form again. The rates of wages for work on the labour farm may be prescribed. The men will not receive the award rates. Every unemployed worker will have the right to register at any State labour exchange, as the Government recognise that every man has the right to work.

[3.30 p.m.] The only difference is that under this Bill, having once made application to a Labour exchange and having been unable to get work and not having refused work when it has been offered to him, he may then take advantage of the fund.

I do not propose to deal with all minor matters, because they can be considered in Committee, but there is in clause 16 a provision to which I take very strong exception as the very worst feature in a bad Bill. That is the dragnet clause, which gives the Governor in Council power to do anything he likes in respect of unemployment, including power to apply the drastic sections of the Industrial Arbitration Act to those vocations to which at present they do not apply. It says—

“In addition to and without in any way limiting the powers of the Governor in Council or the Minister under this Act, the Governor in Council is hereby empowered from time to time by Order in Council to issue such orders and give such directions and prescribe such rules as will in his judgment be calculated to safeguard the requirements and well-being of the people and to give full effect to the provisions of this Act.”

What on earth do those words mean?

“to safeguard the requirements and well-being of the people.”

We have had such dragnet clauses in other Bills. There is no need to remind this Assembly that it was discovered that under the Sugar Acquisition Act power had been taken to commandeer cattle, and I warn hon. members that under the wording of this general power the Government are taking to themselves powers far in excess of those in the rest of the Bill—power, in short, to do just as they think fit. That is the class of legislation to which I object. I object to legislation by regulation; I object to any measure which contains dragnet clauses, which gives in a covert way power to do something which the Government are not prepared to put in black and white.

For these reasons which I have given, and for other reasons which I shall give in Committee if I have the opportunity, I do not propose to support the second reading of the Bill. I want to make it perfectly clear that I support the unemployment insurance portion of it, but that, on account of the pernicious principles which are embodied in the rest of the Bill, because of the bad which is wrapped up with the good, it is impossible for me consistently to have anything to do with it, and consequently I shall vote against it on the second reading.

Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I asked the Minister in charge of the Bill yesterday whether it contained a certain provision which was in the Bill of 1919, and the reply was not altogether as candid as one might have expected it to be. This morning we find that practically the same provision is embodied in this Bill, or a provision, if anything, ten times worse. In my judgment quite a number of the provisions of this measure are absolutely detrimental to the best interests, not only of the workers, but also to the best interests of the whole of the community. Right at the start I would like to say that hon. members on this side of the Chamber have just as much sympathy with the unemployed as any other section of the community. We desire to see no man destitute or unemployed, and, if evidence of that attitude were wanted, it could very readily be got together from an account of the various efforts which have been made from time to time to provide work for the unemployed members of the community.

That unemployment is an evil we all admit, and that it exists in every part of the world, as the Minister stated, we have also to admit. The best way to eliminate the evil from the body politic is rather difficult to find. Many countries of the world have endeavoured to solve this problem, and have found that, although they have provided various schemes, including insurance, yet to a very great extent it still exists. One can well understand how it comes about that men and women are thrown out of employment in the crowded cities of England and the congested parts of Europe, where practically the whole of the population are dependent for their livelihood on secondary industries, when depression happens to strike those places. But the conditions in Queensland are quite different. We are not a manufacturing community in the same sense as some of those countries, and our secondary industries are not developed to the extent we would like to see; but for that reason there should not be the same reason for unemployment in Queensland as in them.

Mr. STOFFORD: What about the seasonal industries?

At 3.37 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: Seasonal industries are difficult matters to deal with, but I claim that the Bill is not going to help us to solve the difficulty. Every member of this Chamber knows perfectly well that many workers associated with the seasonal industries come from the other States—a great many, no doubt, belong to our own State. The people of Queensland are asked by the terms of this Bill to provide either employment or a sustenance allowance for those visitors from other States in the off season. Probably if we could get at the true facts of the case we would find that those men have sent half or three-quarters of their earnings down South to maintain their wives and families—if they are married men—whilst the remainder has been spent in paying for their board and lodging and meeting other expenses which they have incurred here. Therefore, I say that the whole of the people, and in particular those involved in this scheme, including the employees, are asked to find a certain amount of money for the benefit of persons who are not really what we might call residents of our State. That is not a fair proposition. We cannot prevent people

from coming into Queensland in search of work. They are Australians and they have a perfect right to come and go as they choose, but I certainly think that a Bill such as we are discussing is premature. By that I mean that it should not be the duty of any one State to pass an Unemployed Workers Insurance Bill. Such legislation should be federal in its scope.

Although certain responsibilities would be thrown upon the States, the Act should be a Federal one. When the present Premier introduced the Unemployed Workers' Bill in 1919, he said that one of the troubles was the spectre of unemployment which always confronted a man with a wife and family, who did not know when his job was going to terminate, and he, his wife, and children would suffer. It is a spectre which is to be dreaded by any man who thinks anything of his wife and family. This Bill certainly provides that the contributors to the fund shall not be confined to the employers in the State, as was the case in the previous Bill. The manufacturers and distributors of goods of all kinds are taxed at a very much higher rate in Queensland than is the case in any other State in the Commonwealth. Is that an inducement to people to come into Queensland, notwithstanding the magnificence and greatness of the State—and we who have been in Queensland for any length of time know that it is a great and a magnificent State—and invest their capital when they know they are going to have another burden placed upon them? The Minister, in reply to an interjection a few moments ago, said that the contribution would amount to about 3d. per employee per week. To a man employing 400 or 500 hands that would be a heavy tax, in addition to the taxes he is paying at the present time. Seeing that in other States there is not such a tax, while income tax and land tax are lower, we should consider how far the Bill is likely to impede industry in Queensland. The figures which have been quoted from time to time show that there are not very many fewer employees in the factories to-day than was the case a year ago. That should not satisfy us. There should be a continuous growth of factories and factory employees throughout the State. During the last few years we have had exceptionally good seasons. We are having a very fine sugar season. The wool sale which is proceeding in Brisbane this week means £1,000,000 to Queensland. The revenue received by the Government has been of a very buoyant character. Notwithstanding all those advantages, of which we are, or should be, reaping the benefit to-day, we are obliged to introduce an Unemployed Workers' Insurance Bill. That does not reflect credit on us or on the Government.

I have not very much time for the class of farm provided for by the Bill. They have never paid. We would not expect them to pay in this particular instance. The return from such an expenditure is governed by seasonal conditions. You might spend quite a lot of money on a farm of that kind, and a drought or pests would come along, and, instead of reaping any benefit from the farm, the whole expenditure would probably result in a total loss. I realise that work of that nature might help to put on their feet and give a fresh start in life to men who probably have been unemployable for many years.

[*Mr. Taylor.*

In the 1919 Bill there was a provision which is not contained in this measure. It reads—

“If at any time any strike occurs, no person who goes out on strike shall, during such strike, be entitled to receive any allowance.

“If at any time any strike occurs in contravention of or without compliance with the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, no person who went out on strike shall, for a period of six months after the cessation thereof, be entitled to receive any such allowance.

“Provided that the Council shall have the right to review the disqualification under either of the provisions of this paragraph, and, if they think fit, remove such disqualification.”

I think that was a very necessary and wise provision. It would be interesting to know why the Government have not included it in this Bill. Imagine what the position would be with regard to this fund if we had a strike of 2,000 or 3,000 men. If we had trouble such as occurred in Mount Morgan last year, the fund would probably be wiped out two or three times over. Yet under this Bill men who go out on strike will receive the sustenance allowance provided for.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are wrong there. Men who go on strike will not be entitled to participate in the benefits of the fund.

Mr. TAYLOR: Clause 14, subclause (4) (a) provides inter alia—

“Refusal to accept employment in a situation vacant in consequence of a stoppage of work due to an industrial dispute shall be deemed a reasonable excuse for the purposes of this paragraph.”

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is quite a different thing.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is in the English Act.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: As a matter of fact, if men go on strike on a job, not in accordance with the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, they will not be entitled to benefit; but the man who refuses to “scab” will be entitled to the benefit. We are following the English practice there.

Mr. TAYLOR: You do not state it in this Bill.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes. I will deal with it in Committee.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have read the Bill carefully, but I cannot see where it comes in. A lot of legislation which we have been considering lately has been of a fantastic and experimental nature. I cannot understand what the reason has been for the bringing forward of the principal provisions of this measure, unless it has been to hamper and discourage industry.

I would like to deal for a few moments with the local authority aspect of the question. The Unemployed Council will have the power to say when a local authority shall carry out its operations. Local authority work, of necessity, has to be carried out immediately funds are available. It consists largely of road construction, maintenance of roads, drainage, and the building of bridges. Surely, those matters are always of an urgent character. The Minister knows that permission was refused to local autho-

rities to go on with work in connection with the installation of electric light in quite a number of local authority areas because it was contrary to the policy and the ideas of the Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: Quite right.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member says “Quite right.” A lot of unemployment was caused in consequence.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The logical conclusion of the hon. gentleman’s argument is that the Government should grant a franchise to any private company to carry on work for the sake of providing employment.

Mr. TAYLOR: Any Government can allow work to be done, and, if they will only exercise ordinary intelligence, they can safeguard the whole of the rights of the people at the same time. I consider that the work done by the local authorities throughout Queensland is a credit to them. If you look up the Auditor-General’s report you will find that the amounts in arrear owing by the local authorities for interest and redemption are simply negligible. Every local authority carries out its operations, especially with respect to expenditure of loan money, under the direct supervision of the Government. They cannot get any money till they submit their plans, and no payments are made until the work has been approved of and signed for by a responsible officer of the department. The local authorities have done their very best in this direction. Now another authority is going to be constituted. This Unemployment Council is going to come along and say to the local authority, “You have got to do this particular work. You cannot do it when it will suit you; you have got to do it when we say there is a slack season; you have to take the workers whom we provide for you to carry on that activity.” Under the amendment of the Local Authorities Act the local authorities are elected on the franchise of the whole people, and not on the property qualification which previously existed. Now we are to have an Unemployment Council dictating to the local authorities when and how the work shall be done, and what work shall be done. If you are only going to allow a local authority to be a rubber stamp, what is the use of it? You might as well wipe it out altogether. Probably there are certain times when it is really necessary for the Government to say to a local authority that it has got to do this or to do that.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: In some countries the local authorities have to find all the money for the poor law rate.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes; but I do not think it is a good plan to say to a local authority that it must do this and do that.

With regard to the trams, there is no alternative but for the Government to insist that the local authorities take them over. But now we are going to create a Council which is going to tell the local authorities when and how work shall be done and what work is to be done. I think that is a very great mistake and a great misuse of power. The Minister says that the Bill contains very drastic provisions. I consider that they are not only drastic but revolutionary. The Bill provides that the Unemployment Council can not only go to the local authority, but it can go to the Government, to a company,

Mr. Taylor.]

or a contractor, and say, "Look here, you have not built any warehouses for some considerable time; we think it is up to you to go on with some."

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is not involved in the Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: Then, what does this clause mean—

"In any case where the Governor in Council is satisfied, upon the report of the Council, that any class of employers or any individual employers or employer are or is failing to begin or proceed with works which could reasonably be begun or proceeded with by them or him, the Governor in Council may . . . take such measures as . . . will be effective for temporarily or permanently reducing or eliminating unemployment within the State or any part thereof?"

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That refers to works already decided upon, and where tenders are called and accepted.

MR. MAXWELL: That is practically the same thing.

MR. TAYLOR: The Unemployment Council can demand that the contractor or builder shall go on with work at a time that suits the Council. The experience of men and things generally is that, if there is any money in the business, they are after it. Men are not going to tie up works if there are any prospects of profits being made. They are in business to increase their profits. If there are no profits in the business, then I think they are perfectly justified in staying their hand. I think an individual has a better knowledge of that matter than any Unemployment Council that may be created. The Council will have power to state how advertisements are to be worded when seeking for labour.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is a very important provision, too.

MR. TAYLOR: It has power to say exactly how the advertisements shall be worded. It seems that the Bill, from beginning to end, is simply a curtailment of individual privileges and rights.

MR. KING: It is speculation.

MR. TAYLOR: It is absolutely despotic.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is the attitude of Conservatives on all forms of social legislation.

MR. TAYLOR: I would remind the Minister that all forms of social legislation have been introduced by Conservatives whom he is constantly running down. His Government are simply building on that foundation.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I do not run down the Conservatives—I merely seek to instruct them.

MR. TAYLOR: We shall not get very much instruction from this Bill. The Unemployment Council will not be able to carry out anything like what is in the mind of the Government in connection with providing employment in this State. I have advocated before in this Chamber, in regard to secondary industries in particular, that there should be some board associated with some Government department to inquire into industry and find out just exactly what goods we are importing into this State, not only from overseas, but from other States, and see how

far it is possible to develop our own secondary industries to a greater extent than we are doing at the present time.

Let me take the sugar industry. If the business people in the South knew to what extent the success of their business was dependent upon North Queensland, there would not be the opposition in the South that we have had to the sugar agreement during the last few months. The people in Bundaberg, Townsville, Cairns, and other towns import more of their necessaries from the Southern States than they receive from Brisbane. The people who are making such a noise about the sugar agreement do not seem to realise the amount of trade they receive from the towns along the seaboard of Queensland. They seem to see only the 1d. per lb. more that they have to pay for sugar.

We want to see, if possible, that employment is provided for every man and every woman in the community; but in providing that employment we do not want to make

the position worse than it is at [4 p.m.] the present time; and I certainly think that is exactly what is going to happen under a measure such as this. One of the things we have to guard against is that in a lot of this social legislation we are not going to undermine and sap the self-reliance of the community. That is the great danger that exists in connection with quite a lot of the social legislation in Queensland, and in Australia, to-day. Here we are going to pass legislation that will permit of men coming from the other States and getting a sustenance allowance in Queensland on a fairly liberal scale. It is going to create another huge army of mendicants. I do not suppose there is an hon. member in this House who has not had people coming to him, as a member, in regard to the old-age pension and other pensions. Under ordinary circumstances, a number of those people would not come near us, but they say, "So-and-so is getting it, and I would like to get it." That argument has been used to myself and probably every member in this Chamber has heard similar arguments, showing that the people, under this system of pensions and doles, are losing their self-reliance, and are becoming dependent on the Government for their main support. I do not think that is a healthy state of affairs. I do not think it is a state of affairs that we should encourage in any shape or form. Let us provide employment as far as we possibly can. Work is the best solution, and the only solution, of unemployment, and in Queensland at the present time we ought to be able to find work. Such work should not be of a temporary character or simply of a relief nature, but should be developmental work of a permanent nature. That is what Queensland is crying out for to-day. In criticising some of the Government's activities during the last session of Parliament, I stated—and it will bear repeating to-day—that we want to see Government money expended, not on visionary affairs such as have been mentioned here to-day, but on permanent work of a developmental nature—not on mining, or trawling, or such like ventures. They will look after themselves all right, and they will be provided for all right. Let us spend our money in the direction in which we are going to get the best possible return for that expenditure. We talk about wanting railways and irrigation works. We do want them. The State

[Mr. Taylor.

has suffered very considerably in that direction in years gone by, and we should go in for such works as that instead of having these labour farms. I have always spoken most highly of the work of the Forestry Department. I would sooner see these men put on reforestation than on farm work.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is nothing to prevent that being done.

Mr. TAYLOR: There is probably nothing to prevent it being done. That is a perfectly legitimate Government activity, and, if we had had expenditure on reforestation and the production of timber throughout the State many years ago, the probabilities are we should not have the high taxation which prevails throughout the State to-day. We shall have an opportunity when we get into Committee of dealing with the various clauses of the Bill, but, if it is going to remain in anything like its present form, it will be unworkable.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Are you suggesting any amendment?

Mr. TAYLOR: We hope to suggest many amendments.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will accept every reasonable amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR: We have been told that before. I would like to remind the hon. member that all the amendments that come from this side are reasonable, but, unfortunately, the Ministers in charge of the various Bills are so unreasonable that they cannot see the reasonableness of our amendments. However, we claim that the amendments which we shall submit in Committee will be such that they will improve the Bill. The general principle of some kind of insurance or some kind of provision for the unemployed person must commend itself to every man who has a spark of humanitarianism in him. There is no doubt the genuine unemployed man deserves to have employment given to him, and, if we cannot provide employment, then he has a claim on us for sustenance. But I certainly think we ought to be in a position in this State to provide the whole of the employment necessary to maintain every unit in the community in fair and reasonable comfort, if we only go the proper way about it.

Mr. PAYNE: No Government have ever done so.

Mr. TAYLOR: We are not likely to do that by the introduction of a Bill such as the one we are discussing this afternoon.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): This Bill is totally different to the one previously inaugurated in this Assembly. I think the Opposition must know that the war brought about a good deal of dislocation in industry, and no Unemployed Workers Bill could possibly succeed under the conditions which then existed. The only way to meet that position was by relief work, or by some assistance such as we are now giving to people who have become unemployed owing to the dislocation of the meat industry and the metal industry. But this Bill certainly goes a long way towards providing for the unemployment which happens yearly by virtue of seasonal occupations. That appears to me to be the object of this Bill, which is a credit to the Minister who introduced it, and a great credit to the Government. Hon.

members opposite have objected to clause 7. subclause (i), which reads—

"In any case where the Governor in Council is satisfied, upon the report of the Council, that any class of employers or any individual employers or employer are or is failing to begin or proceed with work which could reasonably be begun or proceeded with by them or him, the Governor in Council may, from time to time by Order in Council, order and direct that such class of employers or individual employers or employer shall do such things."

That is subject to appeal. If employers say, "We did let a tender, but we now find that, because of certain matters beyond our control, we are unable to go on with it," the industrial magistrate can deal with it and hear objections. That is a safeguard for the employer; but, if the employer deliberately keeps back work and thus keeps men out of employment, there is no reason why he should not be compelled to go on with that work. The contributions on the part of the employers will be at the rate of 3d. per week per head of the employees, and, if an employer has 100 workers the contribution will amount to 25s. per week. Imagine any employer with 100 employees objecting to pay 25s. per week! I say no company would object.

Hon. members opposite are always crying out, "What are you doing for the unemployed?" Now that we are attempting to do something for the unemployed they say, "You are not to do it, because it will break the industries of Queensland." Fancy a contribution by the employers of 3d. per head of employees wrecking the industries of Queensland! Employers are making profits out of industries, and employees are also making a living, and, if the employees are agreeable to pay 3d. a head into the fund, the employers should have no objection. If £150,000 a year was raised by this method, that would keep 1,000 men employed for forty weeks at £4 a week. Just imagine the great benefit conferred by 1,000 men being employed for forty weeks in a year, and the small tax it would be on the employees who will pay 3d. a week to the fund. This is not going to dispense altogether with the relief which is now being given to assist men who are out of work. We may still have to fall back on that system of relief in case an industry fails; but this scheme is going to be the means of building up on solid lines a provision we have been looking for for years. If hon. members opposite can point out in Committee anything in the Bill which is likely to be deleterious or harmful to the welfare of employers, let them do so, and an amendment can be made. The employers had a meeting to-day, and objected to this Bill. They always object to any progress being made in this direction. We had also a deputation of unemployed to the Premier the other day, amongst whom there were certainly a few men who were not anxious for work. One newspaper has described the Bill as a "Loafers' Paradise Bill."

Mr. VOWLES: Who said that?

Mr. BRENNAN: Your journal, the "Courier."

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The leader of the Opposition used the term himself yesterday.

Mr. BRENNAN: I heard the hon. member for East Toowoomba say this afternoon that

Mr. Brennan.]

the Bill would be prejudicial to the worker. This Bill is a start in the direction of building up something which will be greater than the English Unemployed Insurance Act. It is not going to hurt the employees. I think they will be agreeable to pay their weekly contribution of 3d. a head. The Government will pay a contribution of one-third out of the consolidated revenue. It is our duty to give this experiment a proper test. It will take six months to get sufficient funds to start operations. I think that the Bill is going to be a great success. The Government are the one Government who have attempted to do something for the unemployed, and to relieve the conditions of men who are out of work through no fault of their own. Hon. members opposite call the Government a Communistic Government. The only stock-in-trade of hon. members opposite is abuse of the Government when they try to assist industry. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that this should be a Federal matter, but what does the leader of the Nationalist party in the Federal Government care about relieving unemployment? Unfortunately, he is hoping that the Eastern war will eventuate. His anxiety is to get rid of the unemployed by working up a feeling of Imperial Federation—a desire for war. Lloyd George has an unemployment problem to deal with in England. Here are two Prime Ministers faced with the unemployment problem, and saying they cannot improve matters. The reason they cannot improve the position is because capitalistic institutions hold them in the hollow of their hand. Mr. Hughes received a present of £25,000.

Mr. KERR: That is a sore point with you.

Mr. BRENNAN: It is not a sore point with me. I think it was a disgraceful thing on Mr. Hughes's part to take that money. He cannot put into practice what he used to preach when he was connected with the Labour party, because he is now in the hands of trusts, combines, and monopolies. We have in Queensland alone sufficient monopolistic combines to find sufficient money, by way of a tax placed upon them, to cope with the unemployed problem in Queensland. We see what huge profits they are making. One combine could afford to close down the Gowrie Junction factory and pay £10,000 to the shareholders. They were prepared to lose £100,000 at the Wyreema factory and shift it to Nerang. If combines can do that, it is up to this Government, and to the Federal Government, to deal with these combines, and take some of the profits they are making, to relieve unemployment. Look at the profits which the banking institutions have made. The Queensland National Bank was reconstructed in 1893, and could not pay its creditors at that time, but to-day it has paid off the whole of the Government guarantee and is making huge profits, after having gone through the war and the drought. At the same time, our opponents are cavilling at a weekly contribution of 3d. a head from the employers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How much have you made out of your business?

Mr. BRENNAN: I have made nothing out of my business. The Government should clip the influence of the trusts, combines, and monopolies operating in Queensland, and obtain money from them to relieve unemployment. All our opponents are doing is

[Mr. Brennan.

to abuse the Government, who are bringing in this measure to deal with the unemployment situation. The unfortunate workers should be assisted by hon. members opposite instead of being used by them when it suits them. They are out to use the unemployed; but we on this side are out to assist them. We are prepared to adopt practical methods in order to give them work. Hon. members on the other side opposed the proposed railway in the Central district yesterday, and also the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme, and to-day they are opposing this Unemployed Workers' Insurance Bill. We are making every effort we can in a reasonable way, without dislocating industry, to meet the contingencies which arise in the industrial situation, and hon. members opposite try to down the Government because they are making an honest effort to bring about unemployment—to relieve unemployment.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What you said before you corrected yourself was quite right—to bring about unemployment.

Mr. BRENNAN: I hope that the hon. member will take advantage of the Eastern war.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will if you do.

Mr. BRENNAN: You were the last in and the first out. Hon. members on the other side are not fair in their opposition to this Bill. The Bill is a fair and honest measure, and it should have the whole-hearted support of hon. members opposite. It is an experiment which will result in something big for the relief of the unemployed.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I have something to say so far as unemployment is concerned.

Mr. BRENNAN: Tell us about the Wyreema factory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Wyreema factory carried on its business the same as the co-operative factories in the same industry and the same trade, it should get the same profits. For the last eight or nine years I have been advising our co-operative company to take up these things. When Mr. Massy Greene was Minister for Customs he gave us a copy of a report dealing with the co-operative factories in the United States. It was an exhaustive report and a very useful one, and it was considered by the Country party for a week or two, and then we submitted it to the Secretary for Agriculture. That hon. gentleman went down South, and made inquiries there, but we never got one penny worth of good out of his visit.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You suggested that we should commandeer the Wyreema factory under the Sugar Acquisition Act.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We asked the Secretary for Agriculture to go into the matters that we considered, and he said he would give them his serious consideration. I do not know what serious consideration he gave them, because he never gave us any report of it.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It was this Government that took over the factory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Government only gave the Wyreema factory enough work to keep it going for seven days.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will deal with the Bill.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It was this Government who induced Nestlé's company to reopen that factory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, but you only gave them seven days' work.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have got letters from the farmers giving us credit for reopening the Wyreema factory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister is like all the rest of his colleagues: he wants to take all the credit.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: All the Wyreema farmers gave us the credit. I will read you some of the resolutions of the farmers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Quite a number of the farmers were misled. In regard to the re-employment of the people at the Wyreema factory, the hon. member for Stanley gave more assistance in reopening it than anybody else, because he went to Melbourne and discussed the matter with the general manager. He did far more than the Government, who sent their representative to Melbourne. I understand that the general manager of the company there turned the Government's representative out of the door, and would not listen to him.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to deal with the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am dealing with the unemployment which took place at the Wyreema factory.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Which this Government solved.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. You cannot claim that, because the general manager turned your representative out of the office.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: My representative?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, you ask the hon. member for Toowoomba; he will tell you all about it. The Government policy is to a very large extent responsible for the unemployment to-day.

Mr. KIRWAN: Rubbish! There is unemployment everywhere.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is owing to the fact that the Government have a very small majority behind them that the unemployment position is better. As the Government majority dwindles, confidence in the State increases. If the Government had a majority of ten to-morrow the whole of the employers inside the State and out of it would lose confidence in the State, and we would have a repetition of unemployment. It is only the action of the Federal Government and the dwindling majority of the State Government which are restoring confidence in Queensland. Until we have the ownership of the means of production by the co-operative companies we shall not solve the position. We can only relieve the position through the co-operative companies. It is not a matter of wages, but a matter of confidence. The workers are like the farmers in that they want to own their own works and their own means of production. If the policy of the Government had not been carried out during the last six or seven years, we would have had very little unemployment to-day. It is the policy which they have introduced which has caused all the unemployment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am afraid that this Bill is not going to be the success that

the Government anticipate. Members on the Opposition side realise just as much as members on the Government side that unemployment is a very serious thing. It is a serious thing for a man to lose a job and not be able to secure another one; and anything that can be done to ameliorate that would be welcomed by this side. I recognise the way men deteriorate when they are looking round for work, and we gladly welcome anything to ameliorate that position. The first part of the Bill deals with unemployed insurance, and, as that portion has proved effective elsewhere, it is a pity to spoil the Bill by bringing in a lot of other clauses that the Minister knows perfectly well we cannot possibly support. The Minister knows that no Government of any other country would put clauses in a Bill such as he proposes, placing an unknown liability on employers. If it were a Commonwealth insurance scheme, then those clauses would not matter very much, but it is purely a State scheme. No one will start manufacturing in Queensland with such a Bill as this in operation, as it will put enormous powers in the hands of the Unemployment Council. At the present time a judge of the Arbitration Court has more power than Parliament, and he can ruin or mar any industry he likes. Now we are to have an Unemployment Council which will be able to ruin any industry. The Council will have the power to put unfair restrictions on people. The Bill interferes with the rights and liberties of people. We are getting to a state of absolute communism. When it comes to a question of dealing with unemployment, the individual has no rights whatever, because the Unemployment Council can tell him to do certain work and provide employment for a certain number of men. No man can be expected to invest his money in industry when he has an unknown liability hanging over him. The Bill provides for £15,000 to be paid into the fund by the Government, but that sum will not be sufficient, so that there is an unknown liability on the employers. When the fund is exhausted, the employers can be compelled to go to indefinite expense. There is no limit to the liability a man may incur under a scheme such as this. It is not reasonable to expect any man to undertake any manufacturing business in Queensland under such conditions. The Government would not take it on themselves, yet they leave it to an unknown council with no business experience to say how business men shall carry on their work. It is giving the Unemployment Council absolute power to ruin any industry. Local authorities can be compelled to carry out work, whether they think that work should be done or not. That is a position that no reasonable man can tolerate. There is no security for a man to invest money under those powers. The Council will have supreme power. The employer can only appeal to the industrial magistrate; he cannot go to the Supreme Court. His legal rights are restricted under the Bill. The Bill proposes to alleviate unemployment, but with some of the clauses that we have in the Bill it is not likely to do it. Individuals and local authorities have rights given to them by legislation, but those rights are abrogated by an alarmist Bill such as this. It is brought in for a specific purpose. It is brought in at a time when there is a lot of unemployment, and it is not going to improve the position at all.

Mr Moore.]

INTERRUPTION OF BUSINESS.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The SPEAKER: Order! Under Standing Order No. 307, the business of the House will now be interrupted for the purpose of dealing with questions and formal business.

QUESTIONS.

NUMBER AND VALUE OF CATTLE SOLD AND BOUGHT BY THE STATE.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. What is the number and value of cattle sold to meatworks from State stations since subsidy of half-penny per lb. by Federal Government on meat for oversea trade was agreed to?"

"2. What is the number and value of cattle bought from private owners for State butcher shops during the same period?"

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) replied—

"1. 4,922 head at meatworks rates.

"2. From private owners, 7,653, from State stations, 2,221, at market rates."

STATISTICS RELATING TO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS—INSURANCE BILL.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Can he inform the House as to the number of employers in Queensland at the present time?"

"2. What is the total amount paid yearly in wages to those classes of employees who will come within the ambit of the Unemployed Workers Insurance Bill now before Parliament?"

"3. What is the average number of such unemployed throughout each year?"

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH replied—

"The information will be prepared."

PROPORTION AND PERCENTAGE OF QUEENSLAND PUBLIC DEBT DUE IN ENGLAND, AMERICA, AND AUSTRALIA.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Treasurer—

"What is the proportion and percentage of the public debt of Queensland held or due in England, America, and Australia on 30th June in each of the following years:—1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, and 1922?"

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

"I lay on the table a return giving the desired information."

STATE OF QUEENSLAND.

Year Ended 30th June.	Amount of Public Debt Redeemable in—						Total Debt.
	ENGLAND.		AMERICA.		AUSTRALIA.		
	Amount.	Percentage of Total.	Amount.	Percentage of Total.	Amount.	Percentage of Total.	
	£		£		£		£
1900	31,432,034	87.23	..	..	4,601,570	12.77	36,033,604
1905	35,592,747	84.17	..	..	6,692,420	15.83	42,285,167
1910	37,573,247	83.14	..	..	7,617,810	16.86	45,191,057
1915	46,680,147	81.40	..	..	10,660,606	18.60	57,340,753
1920	54,502,547	77.69	..	..	15,649,924	22.31	70,152,471
1922	54,382,947	63.46	4,521,167	5.28	26,787,114	31.26	85,691,228

GOVERNMENT POLICY IN REGARD TO RUNNING TRAINS ON COUNTRY BRANCH RAILWAYS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Will he review the policy of the Government in regard to the running of trains on branch lines in country districts, with a view of providing a reasonable passenger service on special days for the convenience, comfort, and saving of country travellers?"

"2. Will he give special and early attention to such passenger train services as that from Maryborough to Mundabera, which at present provides a maximum of tediousness and discomfort unequalled in any civilised country?"

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

"1. In order to give settlers reasonable railway facilities, the train service on several of the branch lines in country districts is really more than the business warrants; reasonable passenger service is now provided.

"2. This question contains an absurd statement. It is regrettable that a member of Parliament should circulate such a false and damaging statement."

REFUND OF LAND TAX TO PRIMARY PRODUCERS.

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

"1. Is it a fact that, when speaking on the Land Tax Act Amendment Act, the Premier stated that primary producers always could deduct the full amount of the land tax paid from the amount payable as income tax?"

"2. If so, why was the fact not published on the income tax forms?"

"3. Is he aware that on all income tax forms, including the 1922 forms, State land tax is set down as a deduction only in the same schedule as Federal land tax?"

"4. Will he state from what date primary producers had the power to deduct the full amount of land tax paid from the amount payable as income tax—(a) up to the value of £1,280; (b) above that value?"

"5. To what retrospective date can claims be dated?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. I said that in certain cases farmer* could deduct their land tax from the income tax payable.

"2. Sufficient provision has always been made on income tax forms to enable taxpayers to claim the deduction.

"3. The deduction for State land tax is certainly on a separate line to that for Federal land tax, but if the taxpayer fills in the information asked for he will be allowed the deduction to which he is entitled.

"4. Taxpayers have the right to deduct certain payments for land tax from income tax, but not necessarily all land tax paid—(a) from 1st January, 1915; (b) from 1st July, 1918. The Commissioner of Taxes has circularised 17,000 taxpayers relative to deductions allowed by the recent amendment of the Land Tax Act.

"5. No limitation will be placed upon the period."

INKERMAN IRRIGATION SCHEME—COST AND RATES CHARGED FOR WATER.

Mr. BEBBINGTON asked the Treasurer—

"1. What was the first estimate of the cost of the Inkerman irrigation works?"

"2. What was the actual cost when completed?"

"3. What number of wells were sunk on the area?"

"4. What are the measurements of the wells, and the cost per foot?"

"5. What is the annual water rate per acre needed to meet interest and redemption on cultivated land?"

"6. What rates are being charged to farmers?"

"7. What amount per acre is charged to revenue account?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. I would refer the hon. member to the Auditor-General's report for the financial year 1920-1921.

"2 to 5. The information will be available when the works are completed.

"6. Pending completion of the works a charge of 8s. 4d. per acre per month is being made upon the land actually watered.

"7. Nil."

ALLEGED TEMPORARY WITHHOLDING OF PRIZES IN "GOLDEN CASKET."

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*) asked the Home Secretary—

"Why were cheques representing prizes payable to winners in a "Golden Casket" withheld for a short period on or about 23rd February last?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*), on behalf of the Home Secretary (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

"Cheques were not withheld."

SPEECH BY SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE IN SYDNEY DOMAIN PROTESTING AGAINST INDUSTRIAL POLICY OF NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the following report in the 'Daily Standard' of 18th instant:—

The Labour party held a large meeting in the Sydney Domain yesterday afternoon. The Speakers addressed gatherings from several platforms. A motion was carried protesting against the policy of the Fuller Government in depriving public servants of the Arbitration Court, also reducing wages and increasing the hours of the workers. Included in the list of speakers was Mr. W. N. Gillies (Deputy Labour leader, Queensland)?

"2. Is this the Mr. Gillies who is Secretary for Agriculture and Stock in the Queensland Labour Government, which has itself 'deflated' public servants, deprived them of access to the Arbitration Court, increased their hours, and decreased their wages by special legislation, contrary to its electioneering promises?"

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

"1 and 2. I have been informed that the meeting in question was held to protest against the policy of the Fuller Government, which is designed to remove all public servants and Government employees from the protection of the Arbitration Court. The New South Wales Government have already made drastic reductions in wages, and increased from forty-four to forty-eight per week the working hours of many employees, and it is believed the action of the Fuller Government, in attempting to remove employees from the protection of the court, is the prelude to further reductions in wages and interference in conditions of employment."

POLICY OF GOVERNMENT IN REGARD TO INCREASING POPULATION.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Premier—

"1. Is he correctly reported in the Press as having said, relative to immigration, at the Country Press Association's conference on 7th August, 1922—

As a matter of fact, unless we get a vastly enhanced population in the course of the next generation or two, Australia as a nation is doomed. A people can only have one inalienable right to a country—a right which is based on the occupation and use of the country. Therefore, we must have millions in Australia, because Australia is capable of supporting millions. We have only a brief space of time to realise that policy?"

"2. What is the Government doing towards bringing about a sufficient increase of population within the time limit indicated in his speech?"

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

"1 and 2. We are taking the most practical steps to insure an increased

population by developing extensive land settlement schemes in the Northern Burnett, Callide Valley, Dawson River district, Capella district, Innisfail district, Tully River, and Banyan districts, and at various points along the North Coast Railway."

PAPERS.

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

First annual report of the Main Roads Board for year ended 30th June, 1922.

Annual report of Commissioner of Public Health to 30th June, 1922.

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS INSURANCE BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): What I object to in this measure are the drastic powers which the Minister says are not going to be enforced in the way they read. The powers that are given to the Minister or the Unemployment Council are so drastic that I think it is unreasonable that they should be left as they are, and I trust that, when we get into Committee, the hon. gentleman will accept such amendments as will make it clear that those powers are what he thinks they are or should be, instead of leaving the members of the Unemployment Council to read them as they please.

I take very great exception to the part of the Bill dealing with local authorities. It is most unreasonable to give the Council power to compel local authorities to borrow money from the Government and carry out works of a sort they do not want to carry out, or at a time when they do not want to carry them out, simply because the Government or the Council think it should be done in order to create employment for men engaged at other times in seasonal industries, who may not be used to the class of work involved at all. I see that provision is made for giving a certain amount of compensation if the work costs more than it should; but the idea of local government is to have men on the local governing bodies who will carry out work of the nature required at the time when they think it is required—not when the Government think it is desirable in order to get them out of an awkward condition because of unemployment. To give an outside body power to come to local authorities and tell them what they should do is abrogating the powers of local authorities altogether, and I strongly object to those clauses of the Bill.

We all know the condition into which local authorities in Queensland in many cases have got without outside interference. If you are going to have people compelling them to borrow money to carry out work that they consider is unnecessary at some particular period, it will be impossible for them to carry on. I do not know whether the Minister recognises the difficulty which country local authorities especially have in collecting the ordinary rates that are imposed for performing ordinary works. The Crown has so invaded the taxation area, and has so taken away the revenue-producing powers of the local authorities, that it is most difficult to collect the ordinary rates. If we are going to have an outside body coming in at different

periods, because there happens to be unemployment, and ordering the local authorities to carry out certain works—for which they will have to strike a special rate—the local governing bodies might as well give up their positions and let the Government carry out the roads policy of the State. I know the difficulties they experience. If you are going to have an outside body endeavouring to control the local governing bodies, the condition will become so impossible that there will be no chance of their carrying on the work they are supposed to do. I know that the Home Secretary recognises the difficulties with which they have to contend at the present time, because he has been brought into contact with local governing bodies. The Minister in charge of the Bill says that this is going to act only in cases in which the local authorities have applied for a loan which the Treasurer has granted, and that he will stipulate the time when the work is to be carried out. That does not appear in the Bill. The clause gives the Unemployment Council power to have that work carried out at any time it may consider necessary. It wipes away all the safeguards provided by having a poll of the ratepayers on the question of whether or not the money shall be borrowed. I do not think it is a reasonable or fair proposition. There is an inherent right in the individual living in a community to get work if he is able to work, or to get sustenance if he is unable to obtain work. A man can be called upon to defend his country, and I suppose his country can be called upon to keep him when he is not able to keep himself. But that does not say that work must be provided of the most remunerative character and under the best conditions. It might suit the Government to carry out work which would be reproductive in the distant future, but not at the particular time. Work of that nature should not be the ultimate ambition of the worker; it should be a temporary expedient to tide him over a difficult period when other work is not available. Clause 16 is wide enough to allow the Unemployment Council to compel any individual, company, or local authority to do anything, and to allow it to commandeer anything.

Mr. DASH: No.

At 4.44 p.m.,

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

Mr. MOORE: It is the most comprehensive clause you could have in any Bill; the powers contained in it are absolutely unlimited. I object to that feature of the Bill. I like to see definitely stated what can be done. The Minister said that he does not read the Bill in that way, and that, when it reaches the Committee stage, he will explain what the clauses mean. You can read into the clauses whatever you like. The Minister may not intend that they shall be used in that way, but what is meant should be clearly stated. Litigation has been caused frequently because Acts of Parliament have not made clear what has been meant. This Bill has been left very vague. The clauses give an outside authority power to do anything. It has more power than Parliament has. That is not going to be for the benefit of the State, and it certainly is not going to relieve unemployment. To relieve unemployment you must make the conditions of work and investment as attractive in Queensland as they are in the other

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States. Instead of that, unknown liabilities are to be placed on employers; and, if they can get out of Queensland, they will erect their works in States where they will not have the same unknown liabilities and the same harassing conditions. Any ordinary person would.

Mr. DASH: This Bill makes provision for Queenslanders first.

Mr. MOORE: The idea is to prevent or to alleviate unemployment. The clauses other than those dealing with insurance—to which we do not object—are too drastic, and give too much power to the Unemployment Council. Employers are going to be placed in such an invidious position that they are not likely to expand their works or continue in business unless under pressure from the Unemployment Council. No man in his senses would. I remember the hon. member for Toowoomba discussing the previous Unemployed Workers Bill at a public meeting in Toowoomba. He said he was glad it had not passed, because the party opposite had come to realise later that it would have been a menace rather than an alleviation of unemployment. The same objectionable clauses which appear in that Bill are put in here, and they are intensified by the inclusion of a dragnet clause which gives the Unemployment Council power to do anything it likes. It must be recognised that the conditions of employment in Queensland are practically in the hands of one individual, who can make those conditions as drastic or as lenient as he likes. It is not wise to add to those uncertain conditions by making the position of employers intolerable. We have to build up our industries; they are not yet all established, and we have to encourage people to make a start. We have the cotton industry starting. An endeavour is to be made to induce people to start gineries and other allied industries. Is it likely that anybody is going to invest money in such a scheme as that in Queensland if he can get better conditions in other States? The Minister would be well advised in going on with the portion of the Bill which deals with insurance, and omitting the objectionable clauses, which are going to be a menace. If the Minister were considering the question of starting a secondary industry, he would look round for the place where he could carry on his business in the most satisfactory way.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: There will be no interference with people who are carrying on business in a satisfactory way. Take, for example, the position with regard to the sewerage contracts. You know what happened there. The contract has been signed a good while ago, and the contractor is holding up the job waiting for a new award, notwithstanding the fact that he based his tender on the old conditions.

Mr. MOORE: In nearly all contracts the contractor has to protect himself by saying that, if there is a variation of the award, his price has to be raised or lowered in accordance with the award—

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is not so in this case.

Mr. MOORE: Otherwise it would be an impossibility for him to carry on. You cannot base a general argument on a particular case.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It would be only in such cases that these powers would be exercised.

Mr. MOORE: How does the Minister know that?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I assume that the Unemployment Council will be composed of men of common sense.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister is assuming all sorts of things. The Council will have full control, and will say where the work is to be carried out.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The three Government representatives will be men of common sense.

Mr. MOORE: When there is severe unemployment the Government will be anxious to curtail it. Probably the fund will become exhausted, and the Government will say to the Unemployment Council, "It is up to you to alleviate this unemployment." The Council will then either go to the individual, or the company, or the local authority, and compel work to be carried out so that a certain number of men will be employed. The Bill says—

"Provided that any increase in the rate of contribution made by any such Order in Council shall be on the basis that one-half part of the total of the increase shall be made by the employers, and one-fourth part thereof shall be made by the workers and one-fourth part thereof shall be made by the State."

That is an absolutely unknown liability. It is quite possible for the fund to become exhausted as a result of the payments to be made. If a man knows there is an unknown liability held over him, he will certainly hesitate before starting any industry in Queensland.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am satisfied that, if this Bill is put into operation and it is given a fair chance in administration, the other States will follow our example. All the arguments the hon. gentleman is using about the effect it will have on industry were used in the British House of Commons when Lloyd George introduced his first Bill, and it is now admitted by everybody that it is the greatest social safeguard in Great Britain.

Mr. MOORE: We do not object to the unemployed insurance portion of the Bill. It is the dragnet clauses that we object to. The Minister says that men of common sense will not exercise their power in the way set down here.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: They will exercise their power as provided in the Bill, but they will not interpret the clauses as the hon. gentleman suggests. Everyone having authority, whether it be on a board or acting as an individual, if he likes to act as a madman, can do wrong things. But, as a general rule, people rise to their responsibilities and do the right thing. The hon. member knows that to be so.

Mr. MOORE: I do not. Legislation has been passed for a specific purpose, and has been used for an altogether different purpose. Why, cattle were commandeered under the Sugar Acquisition Act. They were prevented from going over the border, which meant a great loss to the owners.

Mr. Moore.]

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: One member of your party suggests that I should commandeer a milk factory.

Mr. MOORE: The Government used the powers under the Sugar Acquisition Act to deal with the Coorparoo racecourse proprietary. That Act was passed with a definite end in view. Now this Bill is introduced to deal with unemployment. The Government in power will expect the Unemployment Council to do its best to alleviate unemployment. It will not be a question as to whether the Minister thinks it ought to carry out its duty in a certain way or not.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is a question of the Council making recommendations to the Governor in Council that certain things be done.

Mr. MOORE: And the Government naturally will want to get rid of the unemployed.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Government will do the right thing.

Mr. MOORE: We have had experience where the right thing has not been done.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am afraid the hon. gentleman is somewhat biased.

Mr. MOORE: I have had experience. When one has had experience of how Acts of Parliament are administered, one is very chary about giving any open order such as is contemplated under this Bill, especially when the effect might be very detrimental to the development of secondary industries.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I venture to say that, when this Bill has been in operation for two years, no Government will dare repeal it.

Mr. MOORE: Hon. members opposite are always talking like that.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Hon. members opposite condemned State insurance. Would they repeal the State Insurance Act now?

Mr. MOORE: We did not condemn State insurance. We condemned the principle of granting a monopoly to the Government.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Would the hon. gentleman repeal the Workers' Compensation Act?

Mr. MOORE: It is no good the hon. gentleman endeavouring to get in election cries. Hon. members opposite have been doing that for a considerable time. We said that, if the State Insurance Department was going to be as good as the Government suggested, it was perfectly right that it should compete with insurance companies and not have a monopoly and compel everyone to insure with the State office. We should endeavour to place all industries on a sound footing, and in that way alleviate unemployment, and not put a further burden on the people who are endeavouring to run manufacturing concerns. The position is becoming intolerable. I admit that some of the big concerns within the last few years have made wonderful profits; but that does not say that those concerns have not been built up on the ruins of smaller firms which have been crushed out of existence by competition. If you take the average profit of all the firms, it will not be found to be very big. Our object should be to get the employees to strike out for themselves and become employers in industry; and we should not place undue restrictions or any unknown

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liability upon them which will deter them from acting in that way. The idea is to encourage the small man. I hope that, when we get into Committee, the Minister will recognise that, when hon. members on this side move amendments, we are only actuated by a desire to alleviate unemployment without putting obstacles in the way of people who desire to develop the industries of Queensland.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will accept any reasonable amendment.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman has a peculiar idea of what is reasonable. It is rather a forlorn hope to propose amendments after what the hon. gentleman has stated. We are just as sympathetic towards the unemployed, and we are just as desirous of alleviating the position as the Minister is; but we do not want to inflict hardship upon local authorities or people carrying on secondary industries. If there are any clauses in the Bill that are doubtful in their application, I hope they will be made clear so that there will be no misconception.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I think that anyone who was in this Chamber when another Bill dealing with this matter was introduced in 1919 must notice the most remarkable change of front on the part of the Government. If this is such a vital measure in the interests of the workers of the State, it is remarkable that there should be so many empty Government benches when the Bill is being discussed. Hon. members opposite say that this is a vital measure to them, and that it will solve all their troubles, yet they are practically taking no interest whatever in the debate. They cannot say that the

members of the Opposition are [5 p.m.] barren of ideas. I have looked through the speeches which were made by hon. members on this side of the House when the last Bill was brought in, and we are practically responsible for the initiation of the insurance part of the scheme which is being advocated by the Government to-day. At that time the members of the Government party said the proposals put forward by the Opposition were impracticable and unsound, and that we were trying to beat down the workers. Yet to-day they are supporting that scheme. I support the insurance part of the Bill, but there are many directions in which the Bill should go further. That change of front is most remarkable, and particularly is it so in connection with the Premier, who was Secretary for Public Works in 1919. In this Bill he includes public servants, but on that occasion he excluded them, because, as he said, they were not likely to be unemployed. I intend to quote his remarks once again, because they are extremely interesting. The hon. gentleman said that the public servants had not been included in the Bill in 1919—

"Because their employees will not be so likely to be unemployed. The Government do not sack large numbers of employees. Perhaps the hon. member has in mind a fear that some Government might resort to the vile tactics of past Governments of retrenching men and creating unemployment in that way, but surely he cannot consider that there is any possibility of this Government doing that?"

Evidently he has gone back on that. He has changed his scheme and has decided to bring

in the public servants, probably as the forerunner of further reductions in the public service, and the Government desire to make some soft place for them to fall.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is a contemptible suggestion.

Mr. SIZER: That is all very well; but, when we told hon. members opposite that they intended to retrench, the Premier made the same assertion—that it was contemptible. The fact remains that they have done the contemptible thing, and they are likely to do more contemptible things. The hon. gentleman and other members of the Government party stated at the elections that they would not retrench and that they would not reduce wages; but they have done those things, and, because they have done those things, they are held in contempt by the people outside. We have every reason to believe that further attacks are to be made on the public servants, and the change of front in regard to this measure lends colour to that belief. I would like to ask those stalwarts of Labour who are so much concerned about the interests of the down-trodden worker, what happened between 1919 and 1922—during the period when this Bill was not brought forward. What happened? They have had ample time to bring it in. They could not complain that they had a hostile Upper House, as they had a favourable Upper House for some time. Even since they abolished the Upper House unemployment has been rampant. It still remains, yet they were prepared to sit behind the Government which failed to introduce a Bill which they said was an ideal Bill. Apparently they never used their influence to urge the Government to bring forward this measure until the dying days of the session—probably on the eve of an election. I would like to ask those gentlemen what has happened to them, and the industrial workers also should ask what has happened to them. The workers will ask what happened to the Unemployed Workers Bill; what happened to their pledges about no reduction of wages and no retrenchment? These are pertinent questions. Why have they waited so long before introducing this Bill for the benefit of the industrial workers? It seems to me that part of their plan is to set the primary producers against the industrialists, and then set the industrialists against the primary producers in the hope that by playing one against another they will manage to retain power a little longer. But I venture to think that the old proverb will hold good, and that they will fall between two stools, and will come to grief.

Let me give some of the reasons which make such a Bill as this necessary. The hon. member for Bowen, on the last occasion that such a Bill was before this House, flooded the Chamber with crocodile tears and regretted that such a measure was necessary. I agree with him; but the Government are not making any effort to relieve the unemployed. Here are some of the things which cause unemployment. One of the greatest causes is that no effective system is provided for apprenticeship in this State. There is no provision made whereby young men can be taught trades which will equip them in life, and which in itself is a good form of insurance against unemployment. On the other hand, by allowing so many unskilled workers to reach maturity without learning a trade, they are practically giving these men a pass to the ranks of the unemployed. It is these

men who, at the first sign of depression, feel the pinch more than any other man. These are the men who are receiving no consideration at the hands of the Government. Occasionally we see that examinations take place at the Technical College for a certain number of apprentices; but when the boys pass their examinations they find that, through some rule or regulation of the union, or, if not of the union, of the Arbitration Court, they are unable to find employment and to make use of the skill which has been acquired.

Mr. DASH: What number of apprentices would you allow for each trade?

Mr. SIZER: Every young man who is prepared to take up a trade or calling should be provided with an opportunity of becoming a skilled artisan. I would not care how many young men were permitted to go into industrial work. What harm could it do? We would have increased efficiency. To use the argument that employers would take inefficient men as against efficient workers is all moonshine, because no industry could be efficient under those conditions. Another cause of unemployment is the continual breach of awards.

Mr. DASH: By your side.

Mr. SIZER: When the parties to a dispute have gone into conference to deal seriously with problems affecting the industry, and the employers have made a suggestion, the friends of hon. members opposite have laid it down that the only principle they will consider is complete control of the industry by the workers. They are only prepared to discuss matters on the socialistic lines which they have laid down. The conference recently held in Melbourne broke down because the friends of hon. members opposite were not prepared to consider any other proposal than the socialisation of industry; in other words, hon. members opposite are prepared to sacrifice the interests of the community and the workers at large to their own political interests rather than make any genuine attempt to solve the problem. That is one of the reasons for unemployment. Another reason is that the Government have no comprehensive scheme whereby they can relieve those who are able to provide work of the burden of taxation. That is essential before we can ever arrive at a solution of the unemployment question.

Coming back to some of the remedies which have been suggested, and some which are laid down in this Bill, we find rather glibly repeated and without much thought the phrase about the "right to work." It is certainly a catchy phrase, and one which needs a great deal of consideration. It is very easy to take a sentimental view of things—and I quite agree with that—but, on the other hand, there are certain dangers about which we have to be wary, as we may get into greater difficulties by trying to bring about some remedy which is unsound.

Mr. BRENNAN: Have you any suggestions at all to offer on this Bill?

Mr. SIZER: I have some to make. In establishing the principle of the right to work, we must not simply provide that immediately a man becomes unemployed it is a passport into the public service. In that direction I do not see much virtue in relief work. I quoted in a previous debate from authorities on relief work, so that I will

Mr. Sizer.]

not weary the House with those quotations at the present time; but those authorities prove that such schemes are financially and in every way unsound. There is a danger, in an ill-considered scheme which simply provides for Government relief work, of people becoming unemployed and automatically passing into the public service in one form or another. We have had experience of that in connection with some of our State enterprises. Our experience in regard to those enterprises has not been favourable, and really substantiates the opinion of the authorities I refer to that relief works generally are unsound.

One of the provisions of the Bill which I think is unsound is the formation of labour farms and colonies. One thing which is more clearly proved than anything else in works on this subject is the utter failure of such labour farms and colonies. I have not yet come across any reasonable authority who advocates them. On the other hand, the majority of authorities say that such farms and colonies are unsound from every point of view. I would like to quote one or two authorities with reference to such labour farms and colonies. I would not have raised the point but for the fact that they are provided for in the Bill. At the same time, I do not want to be misunderstood, because I am not attacking the principle of unemployed workers' insurance; but I oppose some of the other principles in the Bill. Dealing with labour farms or colonies, Mr. T. Mackay, an eminent authority on the subject, says—

“They are asylums more or less satisfactory to the philanthropic sentiment, more or less attractive to persons of unindustrial instincts, but in no large sense of the term are they able to restore or to create industrial capacity in those who resort to them.”

Mr. Tyson, another eminent authority, writing on the same question, says—

“I do not think I was far wrong when I said farm colonies were only doss-houses in which good men were brought down to the level of tramps and wastrels, and became chargeable to the parish.”

The Right Honourable John Burns—a man who spent his life in social reform, and who could not be called a conservative or a capitalist, or anything derogatory from the point of view of hon. members opposite, but who was a real true-blue Labourite—strongly condemned the labour colony system. After he had visited Canada he said the whole project was illusory and delusive. He said—

“The worst way to help the unemployed, in my judgment, is to put them in small celibate compounds on pauper patches in rural districts. The better plan is to prevent them, as free men, being driven from the land in droves. An Essex labourer dispossessed from the soil, briefly employed at the East End, then sent to a farm colony, is worse for the transposition. He has been ‘institutionalised,’ and I never yet knew the average man survive that pauperizing ordeal.”

Such authorities as I have quoted are fairly conclusive of the belief that there is no particular virtue in labour colonies. One's own personal experience confirms that view,

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even without going to authorities in other parts of the world. It has been proved wherever the experiment has been tried on the continent of Europe, in Canada, and other parts of America—and even in connection with the Paraguay socialistic scheme—that colonies of that description, where discipline of a certain kind is introduced, are entirely useless as a solution of the problem of unemployment.

Mr. DASH: The Australian is a different type of man.

Mr. SIZER: I am quite prepared to admit that, and it confirms my argument that to attempt to coerce men into a labour colony, or even to suggest to them the degradation of going into a colony which is more or less of a charitable concern, is going to demoralise them.

I see no virtue in the labour colony clauses. I see no virtue in the relief clauses. I see a good deal in the contributory clauses, because they were stolen from this side. At least we on the Opposition side are prepared to say that, when soundness is required, the idea comes from this side. The Bill introduced by the Government in 1919 was unsound, but our suggestion regarding the contributory clauses was sound, and we are charitable enough to give those ideas to the Government *holus bolus*. We have to remember that we are passing through conditions which are different to the conditions prevailing when we were discussing this measure in 1919. The worker is not so well off to-day as he was then, and conditions in industry are not so flourishing as they were then.

In view of the fact that we have a State Insurance Department, we ought to be able to do something in connection with this scheme. I consider that the rates charged for workers' compensation are exorbitant, more especially as the State Insurance Department has a monopoly. With the aid of that department, some means could be devised for helping this unemployed insurance scheme, without placing any additional burdens on the employers, and without placing any additional burdens on the employees. Seeing that the Government have a monopoly of workers' compensation, I consider they have a huge amount of revenue—much more than is necessary to meet all possible claims. What is the extra revenue used for? It is either used for making up losses in another branch, or else is placed to reserve. If they are placing it to reserve, then they are doing something that no State department has a right to do. They have no right to place enormous sums of money to reserve.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What has that to do with this Bill?

Mr. SIZER: I was going to point out that these enormous sums which have been placed to reserve by the State Insurance Department could be used to pay the contributions of both employer and employee to this Unemployment Insurance Fund. I understand that the Minister estimates that it will cost £45,000 per annum to run this scheme.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I never said that

Mr. FLETCHER: It will cost a long way more than that.

Mr. SIZER: Will the Minister tell us what he anticipates it will cost?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will give you that information in Committee.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman might tell us approximately at this stage.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The sum of £15,000 is provided in this Bill for the remainder of this financial year, but the Bill will not come into operation until the fund has been accumulating for six months.

Mr. SIZER: The scheme will cost £50,000 or more. I have not had time to look up the figures in connection with the State Insurance Department since the introduction of this Bill, but we know there are enormous reserves in connection with that department. There is sufficient money collected from the employers under the compulsory clauses of the workers' compensation business at the present time to pay the contributions of the employer and employee to this fund, without making any further levies. It seems to me that it is easy to arrange a scheme on those lines. The position of the worker to-day is not as good as it used to be. We know that the workers, including public servants and others, have had to suffer a reduction in their salaries, and they have not got so much money to spend. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there has been no reduction in the union levies as yet.

Mr. DASH: Has there been any reduction in the employers' levies?

Mr. SIZER: The unions have the status of trade unions established by Act of Parliament, and they have power to recover union levies. They do not use their union funds as they used to do. The funds are now used to spread class hatred, and to provide work for a few organisers. The unions would be performing some useful function and would be assisting the workers if they paid the workers' contribution to this scheme out of the union funds. Only those persons who are affected by Arbitration Court awards can come under this scheme. The unions have made the law so rigid that only the members of their unions can benefit by it.

Mr. DASH: Quite true.

Mr. SIZER: The members of the unions have levies made upon them, and we know that the funds of the unions are now diverted into different channels to what were intended when those unions first came into existence. The funds are now diverted into non-productive channels. We can carry this unemployed insurance scheme through, and embrace all its ramifications, including those which are embraced by the Imperial Act, which includes sickness and superannuation as well. If the fundamental principle of trade unionism which was adopted in early times were still continued, it would be all right, but hon. members opposite have misdirected the unions from productive paths into non-productive paths, and, instead of being a benefit to the State as a whole, they are anything but a benefit.

Mr. DASH: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. SIZER: I do. It is gentlemen like the hon. member for Mundingburra who are diverting the unions into wrong channels. They have made them merely political machines, and not at all for the benefit of the workers. The hon. member has made

them for the benefit of himself, and we see the result, because it has enabled him to get into Parliament. Instead of the men doing some useful work as members of these organisations, which they could do in the direction I suggest, they are mere political machines. Instead of carrying out ideas for the benefit of the workers, hon. members opposite are prepared to exploit them for their own benefit, and then they ride roughshod over the men who put them into Parliament. I have not had time to collect the figures in connection with the Australian Workers' Union, but I am satisfied that the amount collected from the members of the Australian Workers' Union would be sufficient to pay all the contributions of the employees under this scheme, and still have a fair amount of money left to spend.

Mr. DASH: The Australian Workers' Union publishes its balance-sheet every year.

Mr. SIZER: There is ample money contributed to the Australian Workers' Union by its members without calling upon the employee to contribute any more under this scheme. I agree that the present Bill is much better than the one introduced in 1919, in so far as the contributory basis is concerned. Another provision that should be made in the Bill is to allow private firms to make private arrangements with their employees in connection with the scheme. If a scheme can be mutually entered into between an employer and his employees, then the Governor in Council should give them authority to do so. Provision in that direction is made in the Imperial Act, and it is found to work very satisfactorily. In the Bill which was introduced in 1919 the residential qualification was twelve months, but in this Bill it has been reduced to six months. I would like to know the reason for that change. There is not the slightest doubt that, as a result of the relief doles given in Queensland, a large number of undesirables came from the other States, and we shall find that this measure will also have that tendency. I think a man should be a bona fide resident of Queensland for at least twelve months before he becomes entitled to the benefits of the scheme.

I object most strongly to clause 7, and I fail to see why it should be in the Bill. If the Government make certain contributions to the funds of local authorities, we cannot object to their dictating certain terms to the local authorities; but why they [5.30 p.m.] should dictate to private employers as to how and when they should do certain work I do not know. It is going far beyond the rights of a Government, and is interfering unduly with the rights of the individual; and if there be one clause which more than another will engender suspicion in the minds of employers—whose co-operation will be required to make this measure a success—it is that clause. I say that no good purpose will be gained by keeping that provision in the Bill, and I hope that, in the interests of the success of the scheme, it will be deleted in Committee. It is an unreasonable suggestion, and we should remember that the only way in which we can hope to make the scheme a success is by winning the good feeling of those concerned in it. If coercive clauses, such as clause 7, are retained, how can one expect men to view the scheme otherwise than with suspicion?

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I would strongly suggest that the Government should seriously consider approaching other State Governments before putting this scheme into operation, and attempting to arrive at some co-ordinated effort. I believe that we must deal with unemployment more or less on a Federal basis. We in Queensland are handicapped badly enough by our natural difficulties. We are far removed from the trade markets even of Australia, and we know that in the Southern States huge industrial concerns are being built up, and are working at less cost than our own. To ask Queensland industries to carry an additional burden, therefore, is unreasonable, although I admit that the burden involved in this Bill is nothing to what the burden was under the previous measure. At the same time, the whole scheme would be better if it were Federally controlled. I would commend to the Government the suggestion that before the scheme goes into operation—probably during the recess, while we are accumulating the fund—efforts should be made to co-ordinate a scheme throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. FOLEY: Why not ask the Prime Minister to introduce such a scheme?

Mr. SIZER: If he did, the hon. member would oppose it. I do not know that much more can be said. I fail to see why the clauses I have mentioned are in the Bill. I fail to see any virtue in the provisions dealing with farm colonies, and I hope they will be deleted. I commend to the Government the desirableness of getting their actuaries to ascertain whether it is not possible to provide the necessary funds from the workers' compensation contributions and the trade union moneys, and thus save the employers and employees an additional burden. I would like to see the general principle of unemployment insurance established upon a sound basis, including, however, insurance against sickness and superannuation; but it cannot be expected that industry can carry all the burden, because it is going to be a charge on industry in addition to the charge involved in workers' compensation, which should cover everything.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): It is rather amusing to listen to the arguments of members of the Opposition. Apparently they speak with their tongues in their cheeks. On the one hand they claim to have a good deal of sympathy with the unemployed, and to desire that something should be done. On the other hand, when a Bill is introduced which is a legitimate attempt to do something, they draw all sorts of red herrings across the trail with a view to decrying the scheme. The only conclusion one can come to is that they are not sincere in their plea that they desire to see some cure for unemployment. It is a well-known fact that they represent a class—one can see it during every debate in this Chamber—who have really a desire to see an unemployed problem always in existence. It is a well-known fact that the capitalistic system—and hon. members opposite are on the Opposition benches for the purpose of upholding and perpetuating that system—

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You do not mean that.

Mr. FOLEY: That is a fact. Hon. members opposite are out to uphold and perpetuate the capitalistic system, notwithstanding the evils which they know may arise from that condition of society. Hon. mem-

bers prove it by their speeches. They continually decry anything brought forward by the Labour Administration; and the same remark applies to every country in the world. The Opposition say that our measures are directed against the capitalistic system, and they oppose them. That applies to every measure designed to give greater relief to the working classes which incidentally affects some section of the capitalistic class.

It is interesting to note that throughout the world consideration has been given to this problem by many eminent thinkers and statesmen, and I would like to refer particularly to the remarks of Dr. Royal Meeker, the United States Commissioner for Labour, who at one of the greatest conferences on social insurance held in America a little while ago said—

“Viewing the beneficial effects of insurance against unemployment from a higher plane, we see that the unemployment sustenance allowance will not be in the nature of a dole, but a payment which the worker, having subscribed for, is entitled to receive as a right. In other words, by payment of a small premium he insures himself against the possibility of receiving no money at some period which might happen to him in the course of industrial conditions.”

Dealing with the scheme in general, he says—

“I think that when arranging the programme for the next conference on social insurance, we ought to impress on the speakers and those who participate in the discussion that it is just as important to consider the thing purchased as the purchase price; indeed, it is more important to consider the thing purchased than the purchase price. Workers' compensation legislation was opposed on the ground of the great cost that would be entailed. The opponents either failed to recognise, or else they deliberately concealed, the fact that somebody was footing the awful bill due to industrial accidents. Workmen's compensation laws did not invent or create industrial accidents.

“They have existed from the beginning of industry. All that these laws accomplished was a redistribution of the burden so as to ease to some extent, however slight, the terrific burden that was crushing the very life out of the workers.”

He continues—

“To-day those who are opposed to workmen's compensation laws most bitterly are amongst the heartiest supporters of this legislation.”

He was referring to social insurance. Hon. members opposite have continually asserted that this is imposing extra burdens upon industry. This is what he states—

“Instead of bankrupting industries and driving them out of business, compensation laws have cut down the cost of industrial accidents and removed a principal cause of irritation in industry. Instead of an enormous added cost, we have a net reduction in this item of expense; and we have only just made a beginning. Before making any sweeping statements of the enormous cost of adequate insurance to the workers against accident, invalidity and old age, sick-

[*Mr. Sizer.*

ness, unemployment, and death, we must take into account the entries on the credit side of the ledger."

He goes on—

"I do not care how it is finally worked out. I am interested only in this—in giving to the labouring man, in giving those in the lower income groups—and I do not think we need worry so much about those in the upper income groups—adequate protection against the five great hazards of life, viz., the hazard of accident, the hazard of illness, the hazard of unemployment, the hazard of invalidity and old age, and the hazard of death."

There is a man who has had considerable experience in the Labour world in America adopting quite a different tone of argument to hon. members opposite, and pointing out that workers' compensation was opposed in that country in the same way as it was opposed here by the representatives of the capitalistic class, their contention being that it was going to place a burden upon industry. As he points out, it is useless for the same class to put up the same argument in opposition to insurance against illness or unemployment. I claim that it is useless for hon. members opposite to attempt in any way to dery this scheme, even though it is not as perfect as I would like to see it. We recognise the difficulties we are faced with at the present time throughout Queensland. They are not the fault of this Government; they are not due to any action taken by this Government against industry. Hon. members opposite have tried to lay the blame upon the Government, as though the Government were responsible for all the evils from which industry is suffering to-day. I think that the man in the street, when he hears their arguments, will say—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That he is of the same opinion.

At 5.46 p.m.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. FOLEY: He will say that he is quite satisfied that hon. members opposite are only talking political piffle. When they stand up here and charge the Government with being the main cause of unemployment, if they have any understanding of the social laws operating in society to-day, they know that what hon. members say is not true. One can see from the tone of the debate that members on the other side have recognised the uselessness of continuing in that strain any longer. I will quote another authority regarding the cause of unemployment to back up what I have stated. Sir Llewellyn Smith, in dealing with the causes of unemployment, says—

"In countries whose prosperity is, to a large extent, dependent on their oversea trade, and which are liable to prolonged depression, due, perhaps, to some financial catastrophe thousands of miles away, there is an incalculable risk of unemployment, the exposure to which does the individual workman nothing but harm—a harm from which the community as a whole must suffer in a greater or less degree. So far from exercising an appreciable effect in stimulating self-help, the risk of having all one's savings swiftly swept away by cyclical fluctuations in employment would be demoralising and tend to discourage the development and maintenance of habits of providence."

It has been contended by hon. members opposite, in an indirect manner, that it is unjust for the State to insist upon the employer contributing to the fund which is being created in connection with this insurance scheme. I do not think that they can advance any sound argument in that direction. I think it is recognised throughout the world, especially by social thinkers, that unemployment should be a direct tax upon industry. That is becoming a recognised fact, and it will only be a matter of time when the ideas of men will assert themselves in the various countries, and unemployment will be a direct tax upon industry until such time as a system of society is evolved under which such a thing as unemployment will be unknown. Dealing with the question of contributions by employers to an unemployment fund, Mr. I. G. Gibbon says—

"If a case can be made out for requiring the community to assist provisions against unemployment on the ground that it is partly responsible for it, even stronger may seem the case for requiring contributions from the employer. The manner in which an employer conducts his business is an important factor in determining unemployment. If he were required to contribute towards provision against unemployment made by workmen, he would be more likely to be more assiduous in adopting measures for preventing unemployment to the general benefit of the community. Another argument in favour of levying contributions from the employer is the contention that an industry which does not provide regular employment may readily become parasitic and burden other industries with the maintenance in part of its workers."

There he points out that, to a great extent, there are employers who conduct their businesses in such a haphazard manner that unemployment is inevitable at some period or other. If hon. members opposite are fair, they will recognise that. Take the great pastoral industry. Every year our agricultural experts propound the idea of the conservation of fodder. Yet in the Peak Downs area there are rolling downs at certain parts of the year absolutely overgrown with grass, and the individual selectors and squatters will not contribute a small amount of their surplus toward the purchase of a mowing machine and the employment of a little labour so that some of that grass can be conserved.

Mr. J. JONES: The same thing applies to the State stations.

Mr. FOLEY: The State stations have been operating for only a little while compared with some of these. There are individual stations in my electorate, such as Retro and Prairie, which sow, reap, and stock up with a minimum amount of labour each year, planting crops at the right time, when the rains are almost due. They have fine haysheds containing big stocks of fodder with which they can feed a large number of stock, especially in the winter season. We have the same thing on the Gindie State Farm, where a large herd is supplied with chaff grown on the station. That is an illustration of how some individuals in the community conduct their business on modern lines. You find the same thing in the manufacturing industries in the city.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Money does not count on a State farm.

Mr. Foley.]

Mr. FOLEY: I refer to that as an illustration to show that many employers are responsible for much of the unemployment through lack of interest and a lack of attention to the industry that they are carrying on. Let me take the printing industry. Anyone who knows anything about that industry knows that some of the establishments are carried on in an up-to-date manner, and can compete successfully for many different classes of work, whereas other employers cannot do so because they do not keep their plants up to date, with the result that they lose many jobs and their employees are thrown out of work and are on one continual tramp from one shop to another looking for employment. We find that a number of individuals pay little or no attention to the industry they are carrying on in order to minimise the amount of unemployment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is that not a difference of construction in human nature?

Mr. FOLEY: That may be so. The men who have control of industries are like the rest of the community—they have a different mental make-up as well as a different physical make-up. Hon. members opposite have argued that the State should bear this burden and that industries should not be taxed so that a fund can be created. They argue that it is not opportune to carry out such a scheme at the present time. I believe that the time will come when such a method will be adopted. They have also argued that there should be no compulsory contributions. The same arguments were used in the British House of Commons when a Bill of a similar nature was introduced there.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The position is different here. Stuff can be manufactured and sent up from Sydney.

Mr. FOLEY: The position might look different on the surface, but, when one goes into it deeply, it is found that the Queensland employer is on a better wicket in many respects than an employer in any of the other States. We have only to read the pamphlets issued by the Director of Bureau of Commerce and Industry.

Mr. FLETCHER: In what respects are they better off?

Mr. FOLEY: Our manufacturing interests are able to get their coal cheaper than they are in New South Wales or Victoria. We are also in a better position with regard to the supply of raw material. The bulk of the raw material in this State is practically at the back door of the factories. In comparison with industries in other parts of the country we are in an absolutely perfect position in Queensland. In some countries they have to cart the raw material half way round the globe.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not in the other States.

Mr. FOLEY: There is a big difference in the cost of obtaining raw material and fuel at the factory door here in comparison with other States. The Director of the Bureau of Commerce and Industry shows where Queensland is more favourably situated every time. The matter looks serious on the surface, but on analysis it is not quite so serious. Mr. Winston Churchill, in replying to the arguments advanced against compulsory contributions to a fund, stated—

“The risk of unemployment varies so much between man and man, according to their qualities, character, circum-

[Mr. Foley.

stances, temperament, demeanour towards their superiors—these are all factors—and the risk varies so much between man and man that a voluntary system of unemployment insurance which the State subsidises always attracts those workers who are most likely to be unemployed. That is why all voluntary systems have broken down when they have been tried, because they accumulate a preponderance of bad risk against the insurance office which is fatal to its financial stability.”

If we carried out the suggestion made by hon. members opposite and allowed a voluntary system, the railway workers might say, “We will take the risk of unemployment. We will not contribute.” The public servants, who also hold what are looked upon as permanent positions, would not contribute either. Instead of having a successful scheme established, the whole thing would fall flat. Hon. members opposite have shown opposition to the administration of the fund by the State. The arguments that have been advanced by hon. members opposite were advanced in other parts of the world when such a scheme was introduced there.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because the fund can be used for political purposes.

Mr. FOLEY: When hon. members opposite desire to oppose anything that is introduced they use the same old political influence stunt to bolster up the case they are trying to put before the House. Some of their own candidates have stated that the Opposition have no constructive policy. They must use unfair tactics to try and belittle anything of a constructive nature that is brought forward by the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: See what Captain Rhodes said at Rockhampton.

Mr. FOLEY: In dealing with the unemployment insurance fund in England, Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree said—

“There is, unfortunately, a widespread willingness to take advantage of the State. To the individual workers the source of the benefit appears almost as remote as heaven. Sometimes, too, I fear, public opinion among workers might support a worker who sought to take advantage of the State rather than cooperate with it to check abuse. At the same time, I believe that administrative checks could be introduced which would reduce malingering to an amount so small that it would not imperil the success of the scheme.”

That is one reason why the State has taken control. Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree further points out that it is absolutely necessary that the Government should control

[7 p.m.] the insurance fund, so that they will be in a position to safeguard it against what he calls the willingness on the part of many individuals to take advantage of the fund if the opportunity occurred. If the fund is administered by the Government, there is a better chance of the Act being administered in the spirit in which it is passed than if it is handed over to individuals outside Government control. I have also quoted the statements of various individuals in other parts of the world in support of an unemployment insurance scheme. I quoted Dr. Royal Meeker in regard to one phase of the question, and I would like to quote him again in his capacity as United States

Commissioner of Labour Statistics. In dealing with the matter in his official capacity he stated—

“It is very clear to me that industry should be made as nearly self-supporting as possible. Unemployment is the one hazard that is purely industrial, and it causes more distress and social demoralisation than any other hazard affecting the life and health of the workers. Yet nothing has been done about it by industry and next to nothing by society. The whole burden falls upon the individual worker, except for the feeble sporadic help given by a few trade unions.

“Industry should be made to pay the costs of production. A part of the cost of production under the present organisation of industry is unemployment tempered by under-employment and over-employment. It would be very simple to put the money costs of unemployment upon industries on an insurance plan. The premium rate would be lowest for the most stable industries and highest for those in which employment is regularly irregular.”

Dr. Royal Meeker at one time in his career was absolutely opposed to any scheme of insurance against unemployment, and yet, through contact with the problems of labour in the United States, he has been gradually converted until to-day he is most emphatic and insistent in his advocacy of unemployment insurance for the workers of America.

From the few quotations I have made, it should be apparent that the Opposition, in the attitude they have taken up, are attempting to make the public believe that they are in favour of this scheme, provided it is put in operation by themselves, or on what they call a proper basis. Every position that can be foreseen is provided for, and, as has been pointed out, hon. members on this side are not trying to make out that this is a perfect scheme and will do away altogether with unemployment. Under these circumstances, I think that the Opposition have a weak case. It is just as well to quote some of the factors which will be under the control of the Government once this measure is passed.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Quote what the Premier said when he introduced a similar measure to this in 1919.

Mr. FOLEY: I think that the Premier, when he introduced the Unemployed Workers Bill on the last occasion, dealt with the matter in a similar strain to what I have done.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He made some extraordinary statements then.

Mr. FOLEY: Conditions have materially altered since the Premier introduced that Bill. The hon. member ought to give the Premier credit for recognising the fact that the time is not opportune for introducing a similar measure on this occasion, instead of trying to belittle him.

Mr. J. JONES: You ought to give him credit for causing unemployment.

Mr. FOLEY: That is an old bogey which has been exploded, and no one but the hon. member who has made the interjection believes that unemployment is caused by the Government. Our actions speak for themselves. We have made every effort to meet the trade crisis which has arisen since the

termination of the war. The same thing is going on in other States which are under the control of anti-Labour Governments and also in other countries of the world. Why do hon. members opposite charge this Government with being the cause of unemployment when they know that the Government are not responsible for it, and are doing everything possible to cope with the position which has arisen? They are going one step further in introducing this measure, which, if it does not eliminate unemployment, will give workers in the future a better chance in the struggle under the existing system. Provision is made in the Bill for an Unemployment Council, and certain duties are prescribed for the Council. There is to be an Unemployment Insurance Fund established, contributions to which are to be made by employers, employees, and the Government. A remission of contribution is to be allowed in cases of hardship. If it is proved that an employer or employee is not in a position to contribute to the fund owing to an industrial crisis, or anything of that nature, there is power given under the Bill to the Minister or Council to exempt such employer or employee from payment. Relief works can be established by the Council to assist the unemployed at any particular time. Any Government, whether Labour or anti-Labour, would rather employ men on reproductive relief work and pay them wages than relieve them by weekly payments out of the fund. If the circumstances permit and the number of unemployed is not too large, it follows that relief works will be put into operation. One clause points out that land may be set apart for the establishment of labour farms and the appointment of an overseer, and by that method a good deal will probably be done at a future date towards having ready-made farms prepared for many of our intending settlers, at the same time affording a big measure of relief to the unemployed. Away back in 1911 the House of Commons passed a measure which was experimental. It has been greatly extended since then. Enormous sums of money have been paid out for the benefit of the unemployed in England. In Switzerland they have a scheme in operation, and I understand they have a scheme working in Sweden as well, and in both countries the schemes have worked fairly successfully. As has been pointed out by most authorities on the question, the voluntary system, in every case where it has been tried, has proved a failure. That is our reason for introducing a compulsory system of contribution, and I am sure the scheme will be a success. Most of these schemes have been proved fairly successful, in so far as they have assisted the workers affected, whereas, had no scheme been in operation, they would have been left to the charity of the world. Even this scheme can only be looked upon as a palliative. It is not expected that it will cure the evil of unemployment. Not one member on this side thinks that it is going to do that.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Minister said it would.

Mr. FOLEY: No member on this side of the House thinks that the evil of unemployment can be eradicated from our midst while we have such an economic system as exists at present—that is, the system of producing for profit. It naturally follows that, where we have a system like that under which the whole community are struggling to produce, not for use but for profit, and where the

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surpluses are accumulated year after year, we must have unemployment. With the methods of production which we have in vogue now as compared with the olden days, and when from time to time we have gluts, the result is that manufacturers throughout the world cease operations, and their employees are thrown on to the scrap heap until the surplus production is used up. No one but a madman would say that unemployment can be cured until an alteration of the system takes place. Under the scheme provided for in this Bill employers will pay more attention to the organisation of their industries, and it will tend to eliminate unemployment more than is done to-day. I am proud of the fact that I am a supporter of the Government who are passing this measure. Simple as the Bill is, I think it is a step in the right direction. Other countries have started in an experimental way, and they have progressed, and so will this scheme progress as time goes on. In the near future it will be recognised that, instead of forcing the employees to contribute to such a scheme as this, the whole burden of providing for unemployment throughout the world will be placed, as Mr. Royal Meeker, the American Commissioner for Labour, states, on a fund which will be contributed by the various industries.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I think we are all agreed that it is right to make every endeavour to relieve unemployment and the distress which follows it. It is undoubtedly a most distressing thing to see genuine unemployment, especially in a country like Queensland; nevertheless, we must see that any proposals which are introduced are sound, otherwise the cure may very well be worse than the disease. I contend that this proposal, considered in its entirety, is absolutely unsound. The clauses dealing with insurance may have some redeeming features, but I am not going to commit myself to saying that even they are wise until we reach the Committee stage and get some further information, and see whether the Minister is prepared to accept amendments.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Reasonable amendments.

Mr. FLETCHER: At the same time there are other provisions which are dangerous and destructive and can do nothing but harm to the community. Instead of relieving unemployment, they must make for more unemployment, because they must sap the industry and enterprise of the country. The Minister, when outlining the Bill at the initiatory stage, told us just what he wanted us to hear, and what he thought would be acceptable to us, and left out those features with which he thought we would not agree—showing that he saw the danger of certain clauses of the Bill. When moving the second reading, when he came to those phases which he had omitted, he said, "Possibly it will be argued that this will be harmful," and so forth—showing that he himself recognised that there is a great deal of danger in a certain part of the Bill.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Oh, no.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am convinced that the hon. gentleman does not realise the extent of the indirect harm which the Bill will do—because it will be indirect—it cannot be seen on the surface—or I am sure he would never have introduced it. Only yes—

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terday we considered a Water Power Bill, and—although I think that is more or less a window-dressing Bill—if we are to develop the State we must have enterprise and industries working by that power. But how are we going to establish new industries when such burdens are going to be imposed upon them as are involved in this Bill?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You used that argument against workers' compensation.

Mr. FLETCHER: I did nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Your party did.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not responsible for what they did. I do not say that this measure in itself is going to be responsible for a great lack of enterprise and industry, but the fact that it comes on top of all the other things that are so objectionable is what matters. People do not know where they stand; a feeling of instability is created. The most damaging effect of the Bill is the further unsettling effect it will have on the financial position of the State. I dealt with the financial outlook last night, and I intend to do it again, because it is a most unfortunate prospect. We are facing a most deplorable financial position, and it is going to get worse and worse until in two or three years it is going to be very bad indeed, because, with the new loan money that we are expending and the maturing loans falling due, our interest bill is going to reach such proportions that in about two years it will be £4,500,000 per annum, and we are not getting any increased revenue to provide for that huge expenditure. Our revenue has been augmented by the unsound methods of retrospective rents, "Golden Caskets," and abnormal taxation, which has risen in the last three years by 300 per cent., until to-day it amounts to £3,500,000. The Government cannot increase their revenue from those sources. The imposition of that taxation has already retarded progress and development, and this measure, with others on top of it, is going to have a very bad influence on the development of the State. The only thing which is going to relieve the financial position is development and enterprise. Yet here is a measure which is going to have the reverse effect. Surely the Minister and the Government do not see its ill effects or they would remove the objectionable clauses from it. In the face of the financial position to-day it is astounding to see this measure introduced. It must react upon the workers themselves, because, instead of relieving, it is likely to create more unemployment. In a sense it has the same effect as the giving of doles. It will extend over a greater number of persons, because persons who do not receive doles will receive unemployment money—that is those who are engaged in seasonal industries. This is only a palliative, and it is not going to relieve unemployment permanently. In this young country we want displayed a bigger and a wider vision in order to relieve unemployment. Speaking earlier in the session, I said that quite a lot of unemployment could be relieved by establishing cotton farms. Possibly there will be some benefit in the farms that it is proposed to establish under this measure. In a young country with such a small population and such vast fertile areas which require development, very little resource is shown in depending on such a measure as this.

The Government introduced the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill and other alleged benefits for the people on the land—vote-catching measures to a very great extent—and now we have this measure for the exclusive benefit of the people of the cities. It is anticipated that this will so please the people in the cities that the Government will secure their votes.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Votes are all that your party think about. Our experience has been that we get the votes as the result of our good work.

Mr. FLETCHER: The effect of this legislation is not felt until years after it has been passed. Just as the full effect of this wanton and wasteful expenditure will be felt in two or three years. We shall probably have to bear the burden of it then. I contend that this Bill is unsound and destructive, and, instead of benefiting the community, it may have a very degenerating effect. You are going to take away from young men the incentive to start out and carve their own way in life. I do not so much mind giving unemployment benefits to married men—it is rather different in their case—but we should be able to find some other means of getting permanent employment for young men to enable them to make a real start in life. It should be the last resource to give them unemployment benefits.

The Bill confers on the Unemployment Council tremendous powers. That, I contend, must have a very deleterious effect upon industry and enterprise. The powers conferred on the Council are so great that we do not know what to expect from their operations. One hon. member said that it is possible that £50,000 will be required every year. I contend that the amount will be £200,000 or more. If £170,000 was required in one year for doles, very much more will be required under this system, there being so many more men to be benefited from this scheme than have been benefited from the giving out of doles. The measure is autocratic, and really sets up a dictatorship as far as the Unemployment Council is concerned. Under one clause that Council can force industries to reopen. People who have studied the business all their lives might decide that it is economically impossible to carry on their industry.

Mr. BRENNAN: There is the right of appeal.

Mr. FLETCHER: What is the use of an appeal board? We have had experience of appeals to magistrates. They do not know anything about the particular industry, and they are not in a position to form an opinion. Those connected with the industry have devoted all their lives to learning all about that industry, and intuitively they know what should be done. This Council can come along and declare that a certain industry has to be opened against the judgment of the management. They may not see the indirect effects of opening when it is economically wrong to do so. This Bill will have the effect of preventing people coming here and opening new industries. Can you blame anyone with new capital staying away when they have this sword hanging over their heads?

Mr. STOPFORD: The same arguments were used in connection with workers' compensation.

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know what arguments were used on that occasion. I am only giving my own views.

Mr. STOPFORD: It is peculiar that they coincide with arguments used in connection with workers' compensation.

Mr. FLETCHER: Once you remove the independence of those engaged in an industry you do a wrong and harmful thing. The Unemployment Council can come along and declare that a company or any employer must so regulate his work as to enable some of it to be held back for a slack season. It may not be in the interests of the industry that the work should be held up, yet the Council can say that it has to be held up. While those conditions are hanging over employers' heads, then industry is going to be retarded. I know from my own experience that one likes to know what he is doing. When one feels that his independence is going to be taken away from him, that will have a very ill effect.

Mr. STOPFORD: What clause prevents a private employer from expanding his industry?

Mr. FLETCHER: Clause 7.

Mr. STOPFORD: That only applies to local authorities.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. gentleman is wrong. The Meatworks Bill that was introduced some years ago contained a similar provision, and there was an outcry against it. There should be an outcry against the introduction of this clause now. After all the experience that the Government have had from the unfortunate effects of their legislation, I am surprised that they have not learnt a little more wisdom, and recognised that, when they are sapping the people's independence and interfering with their industries, the result is having an ill-effect upon the development of the State. Another clause I object to is that which gives the right to interfere with local authorities. The local authorities are elected by the people of a certain area to control certain functions in that area. Here you have the Government giving this Unemployment Council power to tell the local authorities what they are to do. The Council can tell the local authorities to engage in certain developmental work which the local authorities might declare to be unwise. If the local authorities default because they consider that the taxpayers cannot stand the financial strain, then the Unemployment Council has power to come in and do the work and charge it to the local authorities and make the taxpayers pay. Can you imagine anything more iniquitous than that—anything more undemocratic than that? The electors of a certain area are prevented from taking a poll to decide whether they will agree to that expenditure or not.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is nothing to this Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: Just imagine a democratic Government having a policy of the initiative and referendum on their platform doing a thing like that! They refuse the electors the right to take a poll on a matter introduced, not by the local authority affected, but by an outside body created by a Government who represent a minority of the electors, and who will pass this measure with the aid of their proxy votes. Voting by proxy is another undemocratic procedure.

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There is also a provision in the Local Authorities Act which provides that a local authority may not borrow beyond a certain amount, but the Bill over-rides that provision.

This Council has full power to inflict [7.30 p.m.] on any local authority any amount it may consider is required to carry out certain works. In that respect it has greater powers than the local authorities themselves; and, seeing that the electors have nothing to do with this Council, it must be realised that the proposal is certainly a most undemocratic one apart from its unwisdom, because it is undoubtedly unwise to interfere with local authorities and with private industries as is proposed under this measure. What the indirect effect is going to be it is impossible to calculate. In clause 16 there is a provision giving the Unemployment Council power to do almost anything. If it thinks certain works are necessary to relieve unemployment, it has power to carry them out. It has very much the same power as is contained in the Sugar Acquisition Act, and we know how that power was used. It was used in all sorts of ways; and the power contained in clause 16 may be used in all sorts of ways, and individuals will never know how they stand. A person, for instance, may embark upon an industry, and things may have been going along smoothly for a couple of years, and then this Council can come along and take action which will undermine the whole position. In the natural course of events enterprise has enough risks to contend with, yet this Government come along and impose other risks. I cannot understand it. It is beyond me altogether.

Mr. STOPFORD: There is nothing extraordinary in that.

Mr. FLETCHER: We have heard a lot about similar measures in England, in Switzerland, and in Germany, but measures such as this have quite a different effect in those countries, for the simple reason that in those places there is a dense population on a small area, while here we have very widespread areas and a very small number of people, and, in addition, most of our industries are of a seasonal nature. Therefore, there is no analogy between the conditions in other countries and the conditions in Queensland. Then, again, there is the question of the wages paid in seasonal industries. I know from my own experience that the judges of the Arbitration Court, every time they are appealed to for an award in a seasonal industry, have always declared that they proposed to give more money to those seasonal workers than was paid in ordinary industries, simply because they have a certain amount of idle time each year. That applies to the sugar-workers, to the meat-workers, and to other seasonal industries.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This Bill will not give them full wages when they are out of employment.

Mr. FLETCHER: I know it will not, but the judges have always contended that, owing to the time they are idle in certain periods of the year, they should receive higher wages. In the future, when the men in these industries appeal to the court, the judges, according to their own argument, should reduce their wages.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why?

Mr. FLETCHER: Because they have awarded a higher rate of wage because they are seasonal workers.

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The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This Bill will not give them full wages when they are out of employment.

Mr. FLETCHER: No, but it provides that married workers shall receive up to 35s. a week, and, if the Arbitration Court judge does his duty, he will have to take that amount off their wages, and, therefore, the seasonal workers will not benefit under the Bill.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is what you would expect the judge to do.

Mr. FLETCHER: According to their own arguments, the judges must take that into account. It will be very difficult to put this Bill into operation. There are so many conditions that enter into it, that it will be almost unworkable. It is a Bill that requires more earnest consideration in Committee than probably any other Bill we have had before us in recent years. The indirect effects will be very great indeed, and will increase rather than relieve unemployment. We have to depend on something better to relieve unemployment in a young country like this. How are we going to develop this country if we are going continually to have unemployment? Surely we can develop some scheme that will cause employment naturally.

Mr. BRENNAN: What do you suggest?

Mr. FLETCHER: As I said before, we should start these people on the land, and it might be possible, if the labour farms are properly administered, to get some beneficial results from them. When we consider this Bill with its extraordinary and destructive clauses, one wonders how it is possible for a Government to introduce such a measure. We can, however, see the position quite clearly. When the Premier outlined his agricultural proposals, following up the sequence of events, one can see he was setting the stage to suit a certain purpose. Then came the wages reduction which caused a split, and he was in danger of being thrown out of his party. Then a certain situation arose which altered the whole trend of events.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A very mean suggestion.

Mr. FLETCHER: He thought he saw an opportunity for a big coup, and he adopted certain measures which are looked upon as most questionable, and we know how things developed after that. The Premier looked upon himself as a Colossus bestriding the earth—as a steamroller that could crush all obstacles—but he displayed exactly the same obliquity of vision as he did in connection with the "Repudiation Act." Now he sees he has made a mistake, and he finds himself controlled by the extremist section, and he has to do what they tell him, and they are forcing him to put through this measure, which is autocratic and undemocratic, in order to counteract the effect of the wages reduction. The Bill must have been introduced against the better judgment of the Premier, because he must know the ill-effects that will result from such a measure as this being placed on the statute-book. It is the fact that it is on the statute-book that does the harm, because, while it is there, people are not going to come to this State and spend their money in building up new industries and in developing the State, and it is by that means alone that we are going to relieve our financial position and at the same time relieve unemployment. It is a great pity that such a measure, with

its most autocratic and iniquitous clauses, should have been introduced. I hope better counsels will prevail, and that, before it leaves the Committee, it will be so altered as to remove all the objectionable clauses, so that the workers will receive some benefit from it without the disastrous effects that must ensue if it is left as it is at present.

* HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The Minister, when introducing the Bill, deliberately stated that it was an honest and serious attempt to deal with unemployment. The hon. gentleman may believe that it is a serious attempt to deal with the question of unemployment; but, before I sit down, I shall be able to show that the attempt, no matter how honest it may be, is not going to work out as the Minister thinks it will. I take it that there is not a member in the House who would not like to deal effectively with unemployment. There are so many varieties of unemployment, and so many kinds of unemployed. You will meet men who cannot possibly fit into any scheme—we have all met them.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You mean the unemployable?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, I mean men who are willing to work, but who, by reason of some kink, are unable to do anything in the shape of what you might call genuine work. They are of such a character that it is most difficult to deal with them. I agree with hon. members who have spoken that there is nothing so terrible as a man wanting a job—not a loafer, but a man who wants to do something in the nature of work rather than accept relief. I have met with many men like that, who, when you have offered them relief, have said: "We do not want relief; we want work." I say that those are the best men you can meet in the community, because they are seized with an earnest desire to do their "bit," and do it well. I believe that this Bill will be found in its operation to increase the difficulties of those who are engaged in industry, and that it will generally be to the detriment of the worker. I know that the Minister will not agree with me in that statement.

MR. STOPFORD: Do you want to threaten the Minister?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Fancy anyone attempting to threaten the hon. member who is interjecting! It would be a very foolish thing for a man like myself to threaten the hon. member. I am afraid the position would not be a satisfactory one from my point of view.

MR. STOPFORD: You are threatening him on behalf of your class.

HON. W. H. BARNES: How will this legislation operate? It seems to me that that is what we have to look at to-night. How is this legislation going to act on the community generally? Is it going to bring about, through normal avenues, more employment? I think it will be at once seen that the Bill itself, like many of the measures of the present Government, will reduce the scope of employment rather than increase it. It seems to me that the hon. member who has just resumed his seat put his finger right on the point when he said that it is intended, like quite a number of Bills which have been introduced this session, to link up in certain directions. On the one hand, we have had Bills brought in which seemed to be trying

to get hold of the producer. It would never do, I take it, from the Government standpoint to have only Bills dealing with the producer, so we have now a Bill brought in by the Government, who say: "Look, all the plums in the Ministerial basket are not for the producers. We have got some plums for those who are unemployed." It is very skilfully worked out, but the Bill, in my judgment, is going to be disastrous to the workers of the State. There is one other point which has not been touched on to-night. You cannot compare this country with older countries where this kind of legislation has been introduced, and you are going to strike at the very foundation of what one might call self-help. In building up our country, instead of making people feel that they have to be nursed at every step of their progress, we should make them feel that they have to exert themselves if the State is to progress. You can nurse a community to such an extent that you will demoralise a great number of persons in the community.

MR. BRENNAN: You would let a baby cry itself to sleep.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member does not know much about babies yet. (Laughter.) I do not know whether he would prove to be a good nurse, but he has some big things to carry now without worrying in that direction. (Renewed laughter.) This Bill seems to go in the direction of trying to rope in everyone. I notice that it excludes the barrister, the lawyer, and the surveyor.

MR. BRENNAN: And the middleman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes; and my friend there, who is the champion middleman, is going to be excluded. On the other hand, the Bill is going to rope in the Director of Labour, the employee, the company, the firm, and, generally, it is out to see if it cannot gather within its ambit pretty well everybody other than those who are specified in one of the clauses of the Bill, which I cannot particularly refer to just now.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It will apply to those who are working under an industrial award.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am glad the hon. gentleman has referred to those who are working under an industrial award. As a matter of fact, the man who has not the true brand upon him is going to be excluded.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you want us to bring them in?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He may be just as good a worker, and may be able, generally speaking, to discharge his duty to the community just as well as anybody else, but he has not got the right brand. Some of us in this Assembly, or even in buildings adjacent to it, have been taking food from those who have not the brand, and I do not know that it has been spoiled. I have had to do with most of the waitresses in the dining-room, who have certainly one and all given us the very best attention; but it seems to me that people like that, because they have not got the proper brand, are going to be excluded from the Bill. I can remember, when hon. members opposite sat on this side, how they talked about victimisation, and said, "Do not victimise, whatever you do"; but the policy of the Government is one of victimisation. If people have not got a certain brand,

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they are not going to get any assistance. I want to know who will control the Government work under this Bill? It states very clearly that the private employer, the local authority, and pretty well every person in the community, may, under the powers given to the Unemployment Council, be included in the Bill, and compelled to do certain things. But who is going to control the Government in that regard?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The same people—the Unemployment Council. It is the Governor in Council who will carry out the work.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What is meant by the Governor in Council?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The people.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Not the people at all. If the Minister wants somewhere to start, I will put him on to the point right away if he wants to deal with the question of unemployment. Will he tackle the Treasury buildings? Will he go and pick up some of those old lineoleums which have been down for almost an age? I do not know whether the Health Department will say that they ought to be removed. I want to ask if the Minister in this matter is going to be sincere? Whilst the Governor in Council may be directed by the Minister to do certain things, I am going to ask if he is going to apply the same test to the Government establishments in Queensland to-day?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Will you give me a "quote" for lineoleum?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am sorry to say I cannot. The hon. gentleman can never look at anything unless from some mercenary motive.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is only natural that I should ask you for a "quote."

HON. W. H. BARNES: If I did give the hon. member a "quote," he might not understand it.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I would know if you were giving good value.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We know that there is plenty to do in connection with Government establishments in the way of necessary repairs. The Government want other people to provide these things, but they evade the responsibility themselves. Ever since the Government have come into office they have pursued the policy of putting the burden on somebody else.

MR. GLEDSON: Last night you said we were spending too much money.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am now dealing with a Bill which says that the Government will insist on the people outside finding certain money. If the Government are sincere, they will attend to their own institutions first. Take the painters, for instance. We know that there are many railway stations which are in a shockingly disgraceful condition for want of paint. Yet the Government have the audacity to bring in a Bill and say, "We are going to tell the other fellow to do something, and make other people pay for it, while we ourselves will stay our hands." I want to ask why it is that the Government have not shown a more excellent example in this regard? Why have they evaded their responsibility? There are some buildings in this State which are a disgrace to the

Government. Yet the Minister comes along with a Bill of this description and says, "Take it."

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Did I say, "Take it?"

HON. W. H. BARNES: Did the hon. gentleman say, "Leave it"? (Laughter.) If the hon. gentleman did not do that, then it implies that he must have said, "Take it!" When the hon. member was asked if he would accept amendments, he said, "If they are reasonable amendments." Under this Bill the Minister may go to a local authority and ask it to carry out certain things.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No. The Minister recommends; the Governor in Council asks the local authority.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is only bandying words about the Chamber. What is the position? The hon. gentleman can tell the local authorities that they have got to do certain things. The local authorities have full knowledge of their own local affairs, but now they have to do certain things when the Minister asks them. Is this Bill another step towards the new heaven on earth which the Government have before them? It is another step to make everybody, whether it be the local authorities or others, subservient to the Government. The Government want to bring in everybody. We know that, when the Minister in charge of the department makes a recommendation, the Cabinet will consider it a worthy recommendation, and then carry it out.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: My recommendations are always good ones.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister told us to-day that we did not have enough vision. I think some of us have had enough vision. We have had vision enough to see this great State driven down step by step, and loaded with increased burdens of debt from time to time while trying to satisfy the unemployed. We know the increased amount which the Government have had to find on the Estimates for the unemployed. We know that they had to find something like £177,000 last year. Is that a record which any Government ought to be proud of? Is it not a record which shows that they are mismanaging the affairs of this great State? The idea of the Minister is to get the work regularised as much as possible. The Minister proposes to do it through the local authorities. We know that the local authorities in the past have had their work carried out by calling for tenders; but the Government will not have it done in that way. This Bill will provide that all that system must be wiped out.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No; that has nothing to do with it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister will tell the local authorities that they must carry out the Government policy and do their work by day labour.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No. The local authorities can carry out their own policy.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We know that that cannot be done. The Government will insist on the local authority carrying out the Government policy. It simply means that the day-labour system is to be carried out by the local authorities at the will of the Government.

MR. GLEDSON: You are misrepresenting it

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HON. W. H. BARNES: No one misrepresents more than the hon. gentleman. The fact remains that it will be simply impossible to do other than what I have stated in connection with this Bill.

Mr. GLEDSON: As a member of a local authority, you know that that is not right.

Mr. STOPFORD (to Mr. Barnes): You suggest withdrawing this Bill, and buying a few "linos" for the Treasury buildings?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will want a new "lino" for somewhere else—I do not want to say where, Mr. Speaker, but when I have an opportunity to have a quiet chat, I will explain where that "lino" should be. The local authority might object to do certain work. We are told that they have the right of appeal; but, when we deal with this measure, and with another measure which has been passed, we know that the local authorities will have to take it. We know the right of appeal that they had in another Bill which was before the House last week; but they really have no right of appeal at all. The Government are out to harass the local authorities at every turn. The Minister tells us that where there is a loss, or where work is carried out at a greater cost than ordinarily it might have been carried out, the deficiency will be made good from the fund. I

want to impress on the people [3 p.m.] of Queensland this danger. If everything the Government do is going to mean a loss, there must come a time when we shall have to come to a stop. We may go on for a time returning 1 per cent. on money which is costing 6 per cent., but this State has to realise that it cannot do more than a business will do, and that there must be something like business management. The hon. gentleman must admit that if he admits what he knows to be true.

Has unemployment increased or decreased since this Government came into office? The answer is very patent—it has increased. If in one year £10,000 is spent on relief, and if in another year £177,000 is spent on the same object, one must come to the conclusion that either money has been given away which should not have been given away or there has been an increase in unemployment.

Mr. DUNSTAN: It is the same in England.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am amazed at the hon. member. He can never bring an argument in regard to his own country—he goes away 16,000 miles. The conditions in Australia are entirely different from what they are in England, and that comparison should not be made. The Government have failed in their responsibilities to this great State. They have had any amount of money to spend. It has been coming from increased taxation, and they have had also abnormal supplies of loan money; yet conditions have been such that they are forced to introduce this Bill. Is it a Bill to find some new billets?

Mr. BRENNAN: No.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Toowoomba—who is not the Attorney-General, but who, perhaps, may be in the secret—says, "No." The history of this Government has been such that, when dangers have increased in the Ministry, some convenient place has been found for somebody. I am not reflecting in any way on gentlemen who have taken important positions, but the fact remains that no other

Government have found more places for men who have held Cabinet rank than this Government, and I wonder whether there is going to be some more in that direction as a result of this Bill.

The Bill provides that the fund is to be found by the employers, the employees, and the Government—each finding one-third. I do not think anyone can take very serious exception to that. That is probably a fair division; but another clause in the Bill says that, if the amount necessary for running the scheme is not secured, the employers are to find one-half of the balance and the other two parties one-fourth each. The Minister in that way shows that his object is largely to get at the man who employs. The clause which makes it compulsory for people to commence work seems to me to be a most extraordinary provision. It is not every man in business with a big wages-sheet who finds it the easiest thing to pay wages from week to week; yet the Bill provides that the Governor in Council may say that certain things must be done in that direction, and the order must be complied with forthwith. You cannot wring blood out of a stone, yet here is a Bill which practically says, "Here is a pistol. We are pointing it at you, and you have to do what we tell you." This Bill is introduced by hon. members on the front bench and their supporters who have never realised the responsibilities of business life; but they are throwing it out to the people in the hope that it will be one of those things which will save them even in their last days.

Another clause to which one must refer is that dealing with relief works. One thing which is very amusing in connection with the labour farms is that there is to be no public-house. Hon. members may say that I should be very glad of that. So I am.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: You would not suggest that we should have one?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, but I want to show the inconsistency of Ministers. I remember that the Denham Government said that there should be no public-house in certain sugar works areas; but, when this Government came into office, they did away with that provision.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know why, unless for the same reason that the hon. member got up that famous thirst at Sandgate one Sunday. (Laughter.) The fact remains that here is inconsistency. The Government said then that there was to be a big "pub" in that area, and now they say there is to be no "pub" on any labour farm. I congratulate them on their conversion. I do not know whether the Minister is going to turn teetotal.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am teetotal.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad to hear it. I am not going to say that his teetotal influence, like mine, has been effectual in the Cabinet and has worked to the very good purpose of including this clause in the Bill.

Mr. GLEDSON: You did not do much for total abstinence when you were in the Cabinet.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member has been a total abstainer all his life, and he will never get beyond that. These relief

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works will not produce the best results. What is the use of doing something which is not going to help the community? If you do that which strikes at the very foundation of the community, you are doing something objectionable.

There is another phase in connection with this compulsion of local authorities. The Government say that they will find the money if the local authority has not got it. Who is going to pay the interest bill? Local authority men, when a loan has been obtained and distributed, cannot say, "Thank God, that debt is paid." It still has to be paid. Every increase in loan expenditure means that there must be an increased rate. It is only another way of getting at the pockets of the people, and in this the Government are true to their convictions.

MR. RYAN: Who is going to pay for the next war?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member will not contribute very much in sympathy, actual work, or money.

MR. HARTLEY: If you want "Turkish delight," you can get it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am sorry that so many hon. members are being disturbed on the other side. This Bill says that the Unemployment Council may step in and say that certain works shall be done. What is the use of having local authorities if they are only going to be pawns to be moved about? Is it that the Government want to get into local authorities men who have no idea of development? Is it that they want people who will be merely tools? Is it not self-evident that it is one of those things which show that the Government are out to destroy existing conditions? That is what they and their supporters are out after.

MR. GLEDSON: We are seeking to destroy unemployment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And making it every time you seek to do away with it.

MR. STOPFORD: What about the fundamental principle of the workers' right to work?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member has not been there very much. I notice one other thing which the Minister has included in the Bill. There is a clause protecting the man who, when there is a squabble on, wants to have an excuse not to work. This Bill should not apply to him.

MR. KIRWAN: That is in the English Act. What is wrong with it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not say it is not in the English Act. What I am saying is that here is a clause which practically says that it does not matter what you do. I have visions of the powers behind who are controlling the Government. It will be remembered, when certain policemen were sent to Townsville, how they were stopped on the road.

MR. GLEDSON: Who stopped them?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The influence of the hon. member probably contributed. The fact remains that they were stopped, and for some time did not get to their destination. That is why this clause comes into the Bill.

At 8.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (MR. KIRWAN, Brisbane) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: The Bill provides that anyone who offends against it is liable to a penalty up to £100. Of course, you can appeal; but what use would there be in appealing when this great Pooh Bah Government are seeking so to alter the existing conditions by the legislation which they have introduced—even with regard to that which is supposed to be in the interests of the farmer—that they may be able to control things and hasten the day which they consider is going to be beneficial to them? The public of Queensland at the first opportunity will demonstrate that they are not going to allow that condition of things to be brought about. Let the Minister hasten that day.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: When would you like an election?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know that the Minister would like to defer it as long as possible; but if he wants to know my wishes in the matter, I would like it to be as soon as possible.

MR. HARTLEY: You will get it a bit sooner than you expected it last time.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We have a right to think of and help the unemployed; but, in trying to help them, we have no right to put on the statute-book something which is going to be another nail in their coffin—I mean less employment—and further take away the powers of the people. While the principle itself in certain directions may be right, the Bill is so shrouded with things which are extremely objectionable that this House, if it does its duty, will dismiss it on its second reading.

MR. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): In discussing a Bill of such far-reaching magnitude as one which proposes to alleviate in some measure the unemployment that is unfortunately present in all communities, we find that we have the support, not only of those who see eye to eye with us so far as politics are concerned, not only those belonging to the same class and who have espoused the same political creed as we have, but others who are not sympathetic towards the platform which we enunciate. I find that one of the greatest authorities on this question of unemployment—W. H. Beveridge—in his work "Unemployment," says—

"So long as the industrial world is split up into separate groups of producers—each group with a life of its own and decaying in ceaseless attrition upon its neighbours—there must be insecurity of employment. It is probable that at least one of the most striking specific factors in the problem—namely, cyclical fluctuations in trade—may be traced ultimately to the same source. Unemployment, in other words, is, to some extent at least, part of the price of industrial competition, part of the waste without which there could be no competition at all. Socialist criticism of the existing order has, therefore, on this side much justification."

The gentleman who was responsible for that statement is definitely associated with the anti-Labour or the anti-socialistic side of politics. Therefore, his terse statement—containing as it does an attack on our social system—is worthy of more than passing notice. On the other hand, we find that we are supported by another big volume of

opinion, not necessarily socialistic or Labour opinion. I have before me a pamphlet, published by the archbishops, of the fifth committee of inquiry, entitled "Christianity and Industrial Problems," which is the outcome of certain inquiries that those gentlemen made into the prevailing social unrest. We find in that pamphlet some very significant passages, two or three of which I would like to quote. Dealing with this question of unemployment, we find the archbishops, the leading dignitaries of the Church of England, committing themselves to a very emphatic expression of opinion in this manner—

"The individuals affected may not at any one time be large, but the material distress and mental suffering of the specialised worker who sees his livelihood taken from him, and himself and family ruined, through a cause which he cannot control, are often acute, and we think they are considered too lightly when they are regarded as inevitable incidents in economic development."

We have, thus, an opinion from a high economic authority and an opinion from high dignitaries of the Church. The question of unemployment is always involved, and must be considered with the incidence and application of a living wage. The same gentleman in discussing that important question said—

"The principle of a living wage involves not only adequate payment during employment but continuity of employment."

The principle that we seek to establish has for its ultimate objective continuity of employment. We desire to do away with a lot of the unemployment which is incidental to the system under which we are living. Going on a little bit further, we find a very pregnant passage from our point of view in this same report—

"Such insecurity of tenure is not merely a material evil; it is a moral grievance. It causes men to feel that they are not fully masters of themselves, and that they live at the will of another person, who may act towards them in an arbitrary manner."

Those remarks were made in discussing the question of the discharge of men from employment. We might accept those statements as an expression of the Church's attitude on this matter. Many thinking people in our community endorsing and believing the contents of this report are forced to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong with a system which produces the extremes of poverty and the wealth that our social system produces. You have the unemployed individual at both ends of the social scale. Under the system in which we live you have the multi-millionaire, who is unemployed by reason of the fact that he does not need or desire employment, and, on the other hand, you have the unfortunate individual who, no matter how much he may try, cannot obtain employment. That is not singular with regard to Queensland. It is a factor and a phase that we have to consider not only in its application to Queensland but in its incidence throughout the civilised world. Public opinion to-day is clamouring for an outlet and demanding that this problem shall be solved, that this problem shall be tackled, and some more equitable basis as between man and man or employer and employee shall be laid down.

There is nothing fundamentally wrong in that; there is nothing fundamentally vicious in the principle, and it has everything to commend it by reason of the fact that anybody—no matter what class of politics he may espouse—should be convinced that the system of production which now exists has a good deal to condemn it, and it is necessary that we should look at the immediate present and try to find some solution of this problem. Hon. members opposite, during the progress of this debate, have condemned this proposed legislation, and have stated that it is developing along the lines of experimental legislation, and will not be to the best advantage of the State generally. If conservative argument of this nature had been allowed to stand, what would have been the position to-day? Every reform naturally brought certain individuals into the public gaze by virtue of their opposition to the proposed reform. As an example, it was stated in America that, if they abolished slavery, America would be bankrupt so far as its economic conditions were concerned. That statement was not justified. So we go on right throughout the whole gamut of industrial legislation. We find that, whenever a step has had to be taken which would, perhaps, tend to improve the conditions of the workers there has always been a retrogressive element in the community which has said, "This means stagnation or ruin. It means that the community will not progress and will go back. The effect is vicious, and the application wrong." Those who oppose progressive legislation apparently are content to stand where we stand to-day. We on this side all admit that there is something radically wrong with the system which has evolved the conditions that are being seen to-day, and therefore it is safe to assume that the best men in our community both in ecclesiastical and secular circles are striving to solve a problem which is one of the greatest problems we have.

Whether this Bill will tend to solve it or not may be open to question; whether it will make an effort to solve it or not is another consideration. We believe that it will have some influence in the direction it is intended to influence. Hon. members opposite have suggested that this is another communistic doctrine that is being laid down by the Government. We have heard a good deal of discussion on communism. I was particularly struck by a little rhyme setting forth the "Communistic Creed," which appeared in a recent publication of a London paper. It serves to show that, not only in Queensland or Australia, but throughout the whole world, influences are at work to divert the legitimate thought of public opinion in its favourable glances towards progressive and democratic legislation to a reactionary class, who do not stand for progress. The jingle runs—

"We don't believe in Governments;

We don't believe in law;

We don't believe in any God

Or things we never saw;

We don't object to robbery;

Murder we don't condemn;

If rich men lose their goods or lives,

So much the worse for them."

The merest child who will give any consideration to the problems that surround politics will know that an enunciation like that is not worth the paper it is written on

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or the effort it cost to produce it. Yet we find publications of that kind purporting to be a statement of the policy of the Labour party. It is very significant as to the trend of events. I realise that there are a good many difficulties ahead of us so far as the application of this Bill is concerned. It might be argued that if an unemployment scheme is controlled by the State it will attract workers from other States where no such scheme exists. We recognise that there is some force in an argument of that nature, but by the six months residential clause that is laid down a good deal of the sting is taken out of that argument, because after all I do not think that people will come and settle in this State and complete six months' residence and contribute to the scheme merely for the purpose of falling within the ambit of its benefits. At this juncture it is essential that some State should give some lead to this question and try and evolve some practical manner of dealing with the unemployment problem. I understand that the Federal Government have discharged about 800 men from the Cockatoo Docks within the last few days. While they are discharging those men they are not making any provision for their reabsorption or for their keep and maintenance. While we are a constructive Government and while we have in opposition a destructive Government our attempt in this measure to introduce legislation to overcome the difficulty will meet with opposition.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Do you say that we are a destructive Government?

Mr. BULCOCK: Hon. members opposite do not form a Government.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We are a Government in embryo.

Mr. BULCOCK: The embryo does not always develop. It has been stated that this Bill is experimental legislation. In many countries in the world unemployed workers' insurance is an established fact, and so far as I can gather from my knowledge and from reading, the unemployed insurance in Germany, where it has attained its maximum degree of efficiency, commands the respect of all parties in the country. The German

people would not be without the [8.30 p.m.] provision of unemployment insurance which exists in their midst to-day. I recognise that one of the great difficulties in the successful application of this scheme is that it is going to be confined to the State rather than be a Commonwealth measure. I believe the time will come when we shall see a measure like this, or perhaps a better measure than this—because as time goes on those who frame new Bills will benefit by the experience of those who have been administering this measure, and it is safe to assume that with the advent of a Labour Government in the Federal arena—I think that is no very remote possibility—this will be one of the matters that they must tackle. It is essentially a Federal matter, but, while the Federal Government will not give satisfactory consideration to the needs of the unemployed in the Commonwealth, it becomes the duty of the State to take up the gauntlet or accept the burden and do what it can for those who unfortunately are unable to get a livelihood. The evils caused by low wages would be less if work was regular. The system under which our wages are

calculated takes no heed of the fact that a man may not be in work next week; it only provides for the working period. Modern industry only pays a man sufficient to maintain himself during the time he is working in that industry, and consequently it becomes necessary, from my point of view at least, that industry should be responsible for the maintenance of those who are displaced in periods of industrial slackness or economic depression.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Would you propose classifying the industries?

Mr. BULCOCK: I recognise that every industry has problems that are peculiar to that industry, and, therefore, the application of one broad principle may not give us the best results, and we may evolve out of this an efficient scheme whereby the industries will have their own industrial councils which will function along the lines that certain unions are functioning along in England and other parts of the world. That is an argument that must appeal to anybody who has given any consideration to this matter, because the worker who is in constant employment would not feel so enthusiastic about this scheme as the seasonal worker who is not in constant employment, whose danger or risk is greater than the danger or risk of the individual who, provided he conducts himself in a certain manner, has continuity of employment. Therefore, we must evolve a scheme where every industry will be responsible for its own particular problems, and the main problem will be the sustenance of the unemployed in that industry. There are certain factors to consider so far as the question of unemployment is concerned. The individual employs another individual, or the capitalist employs a group of individuals under certain conditions. The conditions that must exist to secure employment are convenience, goodwill, and solvency. Convenience means that an individual will be employed during the shearing season or sugar season, or any other season, and then he is cast off. Goodwill and solvency have a tendency in the same direction. A Government cannot create these three conditions which are necessary for the continuous employment of an individual; but it can strive to regulate the incidence of these conditions; and, when convenience does not exist, it should be the function of a Government to establish a convenience in some direction by causing other work to be undertaken, such as is provided for in this Bill. We all recognise the acute privation that every individual who is involuntarily unemployed encounters, and any Government that is game to tackle that problem in an effort to find a solution, whether that solution is satisfactorily found or not, is worthy of commendation. We must recognise that the whole community shares the responsibility so far as the unemployed individual is concerned. We have been slow to recognise that the whole community must accept that responsibility; but leaders of social thought to-day are of opinion that it is a function of the whole community, and not a function that should fall on any given section of the community, because we are all interested in the material well-being of the community, and, therefore, must also be interested in any want of prosperity that may exist. The worker under our present system does not obtain a full return for the labour that he gives. Therefore, when he

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is thrown out of employment, no matter how frugal he may be, it is obviously impossible for him to continue to support his wife and family, and, in some cases, even himself, without some outside assistance. It has been argued that the employee should put something away for a rainy day—that the employee should put something away against unemployment.

Several hon. members indulging in conversation in loud tones,

The DEPUTY SPEAKER said: Order! I appeal to hon members not to conduct their conversation in loud tones.

Mr. BULCOCK: Owing to the incidence of the basic wage, and the fact that the individual receiving that basic wage requires it all to live from day to day, it is obviously impossible that that worker shall be able to put anything away for a rainy day. So here is another argument in favour of establishing a fund whereby the worker, the State, and the employer shall all contribute towards creating that security which is essential for the well-being of the community as expressed through the desires of every individual worker in the community. It is obvious, too, recognising as we do on this side of the House the economic evils under which we labour, that this measure is not a means of eliminating the social evils that exist, but is a means of affording relief from the evils that we recognise are rampant in our community, and is another step along that road of evolution which we believe will eventually lead to a better understanding between each and every section of the community. The individual, as an individual, has very little control over the main causes of unemployment. There are certain factors that he has control over, such as strikes, and so on. But the big causes of unemployment, such as industrial crises, war, fire, and droughts, and incidents of a like nature, he cannot control nor can he foretell. Therefore, recognising as we do that the well-being of the individual is imperative for the well-being of the community, it is obvious, since the individual cannot foretell these incidents, that a fund should be created so that, when these incidents occur over which nobody has any control in many cases, the unfortunate individual who is thrown out of work shall be able to gain some benefit to enable him to struggle along. We recognise that there are many factors which cause unemployment, and we know that the path of social evolution is strewn with innocent victims. We all recognise that, and I think we must all admit that, if we can do anything to lighten the burden and help some of those who may otherwise fall by the wayside on account of the industrial conditions under which they are living, we shall be doing no more than our duty. The Act which is in operation in the State of New York provides that the maintenance of workers during periods of slackness shall be defrayed out of the funds which are accumulated during periods of industrial prosperity. I think that is a basis upon which we can argue, and a statement that we on this side can endorse. In periods of prosperity provision should be made for the workers who are displaced during periods of slackness. With our haphazard "Come and go as you please" system, no such provision is made, and the time is overripe when some such provision should be made, so that those who give

the best that they have in times of industrial prosperity should be safeguarded against privation when circumstances intervene over which they have no control. If workers are indispensable to industry, it is clear that they should be maintained during the periods of idleness that I have indicated. Mr. W. H. Beveridge, whom I quoted a few moments ago, says—

"The problem of unemployment in a very special sense is at the root of most of the social problems that we encounter to-day."

It is at the root of most of our social problems. I have never heard of any Conservative Government making any attempt to introduce a Bill to make provision for unemployed workers; they have always rested on the progressive spirit and the progressive element associated with politics. We may, therefore, say that it is the radical section which has recognised this evil, and made an effort to overcome it, in opposition to the conservative elements, which have been content to acquiesce in a system that is evil, iniquitous, unjust, and unfair. Unemployment is essentially a problem of industry; it is not a problem of character. It is all very well to blame individuals, and say that they will gravitate here, and that some individuals will take advantage of this scheme. Those individuals are few and far between. We have to consider the problem in its relation to industry and industry in its relation to this problem. We can eliminate the character of the individual almost entirely. Going a little bit further, Mr. Beveridge says—

"An individual is not self-supporting unless he is earning an ample sufficiency for life."

How many individuals are there in our community to-day whose earnings constitute a sufficiency for life, even if an individual is continued in permanent employment during the whole of his active working life? There are very few individuals who can make the provision which is necessary for their old age. They have their funds eaten up, unfortunately, by recurring cycles of unemployment. A Bill of this nature, providing as it does for certain individuals getting certain benefits if they cannot work, will enable them to conserve their frugal savings, so that, when the twilight of their lives comes, they may have some little standby which will help them to spend their remaining days with a modicum of comfort, instead of being held up as objects of charity and being exposed to all the hardships that charity entails amongst people such as we have in Australia, who are proud and do not care to be the recipients of charity.

I have been discussing at some length the question of wages. At the present time the pastoral industry, so far as the sheep branch of it is concerned, is passing through an era of prosperity. This morning's paper informed us of advances up to 15 per cent. on the prices received at the previous sales. Those advances represent what is probably a stable condition of the market. Those individuals who said a few months ago that, owing to the depreciation of their currencies, some of the Central powers in Europe would not be buying in our market have had their calculations rudely upset by the fact that yesterday German buyers were operating here fairly extensively on our wool clip, and some extraordinarily high prices were realised.

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That is one side of the equation. Let us look at the other side of the equation—the human equation—the equation which probably means more to us as a community, seeing that we really do honestly profess to take into account the claims of individuals as against the mere making of money. This is a record of an actual shed hand, showing his year's earnings up to the present. He started at Gundare, and earned £9. That cut out on 10th March. On 20th March, after a period of ten days' idleness, he went to Tocal and earned £24 15s. there. He left Tocal on 26th April, and did not succeed in getting another shed until 1st June at Malvern Hills. That shed only lasted till 24th June, and he earned there £16 17s. 6d. He left on 24th June and went to Wellshot on 5th July. That cut out on 17th August, and he earned £23 10s. there. He earned £78 2s. 6d. altogether and his keep during the period he was working. The expenses that he incurred in getting that amount were £13 4s. 3d. That individual had to pay board between the different sheds. When he was paying the board between the sheds his money was going out and nothing was coming in. Taking the expenses off the earnings, this individual found that for nine months' work he only showed a total profit of £33 3s. 3d. That man was a fortunate individual by reason of the fact that he got several sheds. I have got a volume of correspondence on this matter, and could quote cases where individuals have only had one shed, and have carried their swags 200 or 300 miles in order to get that one shed. Who would say that that individual, when you come to see the amount of money made as the result of his labour and participation in the preparation of the clip, should not receive more than £33 3s. 3d. for nine months' work? The shearing season has now terminated, and there is practically no opportunity of getting a further shed during the year.

Mr. EDWARDS: Surely, he can do something else?

Mr. BULCOCK: I will come to that in a moment. That individual is more or less fortunate. I will give you the case of another individual who has spent this year shed-chasing for these results: He went to Logan Downs. He was there four weeks at £4 10s. a week, which made £18. He then returned to Blackall, where his home is.

Mr. VOWLES: Was he a rouseabout?

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes. The fare to Blackall was £1 7s. Who will say that he was not justified in returning to Blackall, where his wife and family were? The train fare cost him £1 7s., and there was 17s. for car fare to get back to Blackall.

Mr. EDWARDS: He was on holiday, then.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is the attitude you adopt to an individual who cannot get work. This individual, who earned £18, had to spend £5 4s. in order to get that work. Who will say that he was well paid? He was out for five weeks when he got back to Blackall. Then he went back to the Peak Downs district and earned £12, but his expenses in earning that money amounted to £3 9s. He was then out of work for four weeks, and returned to Blackall. He then went to Barcaldine Downs for six weeks, and earned £27, but his total expenses in fares for this latter job amounted to £2 11s. 6d. He was out of work for a week, and then went to

Vindex, where he earned £22 1s. His expenses were £3 18s. 3d. He was out of work for six weeks, and then went for two weeks to Wolfgang, where he earned £3 9s. clear. He was out of work for two weeks, and then he wrote me, and in his letter he says, "I am hanged if I know where I am going to get another shed."

Mr. J. JONES: He is not as badly off as some of the selectors.

Mr. BULCOCK: This man has a wife and family to support. Who can say that he was adequately paid, and that he should be able to make provision for the period when he is idle? It would be impossible for him to make provision. A more scientific organisation of labour is one of the essentials that is required in our community to-day. I was talking to an individual in the House this morning and I said, "Well, Jack, how are things going?" He said, "I have had a few sheds, but I don't know where I am going to get the next shed." He was at Weelamurra, in the Cunnamulla district, and then went to La Plata. He travelled a distance of 1,500 miles. He then went to Blackall, then afterwards to Thornleigh. Another team of men went to Noondoo, and afterwards to Gordon Downs. These men would have to exercise the utmost frugality to carry them over the periods of unemployment.

Mr. VOWLES: It is simply lack of system.

Mr. BULCOCK: It is a lack of system. The employers in the pastoral industry are responsible for the perpetuation of this system, and they are a good deal to blame themselves so far as this question is concerned. They have always refused to organise the local labour, but prefer to get their labour from various parts of the State. I have discussed this question with them at different times, and, so far as I could ascertain, their object seems to be to keep men poor, so that, in the event of industrial trouble, they will not have the sinews of war.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is nonsense.

Mr. BULCOCK: It is all very well to say it is nonsense.

Mr. EDWARDS: You are always preaching class hatred.

Mr. BULCOCK: Everybody knows that I am talking common sense. We know that everyone engaged in the pastoral industry to-day, more particularly the shearers and shed hands, are poor men, and it takes them all their time to earn their livelihood and pay the excessive overhead costs; yet the pastoralists go into the Arbitration Court and say the wages are too high and should be reduced. We had Justice Powers in the Federal Arbitration Court reducing the wages of these individuals, although some of them were only able to earn £30 over and above their expenses in one year in the most prosperous industry in Australia to-day. The hon. member for Nanango asks if the shearers and shed hands cannot find some other class of employment? The fact remains that men do not carry their swags just for the fun of it. Many of them are in work for a few weeks, and then they have to carry their swags and go and look for work. These men are willing to work, but they cannot get work. The question that the hon. gentleman raises about getting work in other capacities does not hold water at all; but under this measure works may be undertaken to absorb these individuals who, having served the

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bosses' pleasure, are cast out on to the industrial ash heap. This not only applies to the shearers but to the shed hands and station hands—they are in exactly the same position. They may get a fortnight's work in one place, and then they have to go to another station. How can they make provision for periods of unemployment? Yet that they should do so was brought forward as an argument in this Chamber. The men engaged in the pastoral areas are not earning an effective wage to enable them to pay the big overhead expenses in the direction of travelling.

With regard to the labour farms which it is proposed to establish under this scheme for those who are out of work, I suppose that hon. members opposite will say that certain individuals carry their swags because they like it, and because they are fond of travelling. The hon. member for Nanango says they are having a holiday. If those men were more fortunately circumstanced, and were born with a silver spoon in their mouth, if they had been born in the lap of luxury, then, instead of carrying their swags on the Flinders, the Thomson, or the Barcoo, they would probably be globe-trotters and be hailed as men of the world, and as experienced, superior, God-given creatures, who enlarge their views of human nature while travelling all over the world. They might be a type of individual more fortunately circumstanced than the man who has to carry a swag. They might be globe-trotters, such as certain hon. members opposite may aspire to be.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You are not referring to the late Secretary for Railways are you?

Mr. BULCOCK: Is he a globe-trotter? I understand that he journeyed home for the well-being of the State, and in that capacity he did something for the well-being of the State and the department that he was administering at that particular time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I listened with considerable interest to the earlier remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo. In the early stage of his speech his remarks were well thought out, and showed that he went to some trouble, but in the latter part of his speech he developed into soap-box oratory, which, I suppose, is pardonable under the circumstances. The hon. gentleman is a typical example of the theory which permeates hon. gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches. Regarding his speech, I want to draw a clear distinction between the arguments of both sides of the House. The Government members have adopted the theoretical standpoint all through the debate. The Opposition members, 90 per cent. of whom are employers of labour, and who nevertheless are sympathetic towards the worker and his problems, approach this question from the viewpoint of the practical man and the practical employer. There is an old adage which says, "An ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory." That applies to-day just as forcibly as it did when the axiom was first propounded. We want to see this problem solved, and we want to do all we can to solve it; but we are not going to be drawn off the track by a lot of red-herring arguments, like those used by hon. members opposite. That is not going to be a solution of the problem.

We had an Unemployed Workers Bill before the House three years back. The Premier made a notable speech on that occasion. In my opinion, if I may say so, it was the best speech I ever heard him make. It was a humanitarian speech, and his speech was well marshalled and well delivered. In spite of the belief which permeated him at that time, he finds to-day that the doctrines which were embodied in that measure are impracticable, and they have been dropped. It shows that the Legislative Council, which has been wiped out by hon. members opposite, were sound in their views when they prevented that measure from being placed on the statute-book, because the Premier himself to-day admits that the measure was impracticable. The hon. member for Toowoomba—that mass of wisdom, who gives us so much of his views in this House—said after the measure was turned down by the Legislative Council that it was not a proper one and that it was not practicable. I must plead for that Legislative Council, which in those days dissected that measure thoroughly, and say that their deductions were sound, because they are now supported by the Premier of this State.

Now the unemployment which occurs throughout the world in a more or less acute degree depends on three causes. One is the great economic upheaval [9 p.m.] with which the world is being troubled to-day. The second is the natural exigencies surrounding our primary production. The third is the question of the good or bad government of the State affected.

Every country is more or less affected by the economic upheaval which we have unfortunately gone through during the past few years, and it is idle to deny it; but this we must admit—that of all parts of the world Queensland has suffered less than the great majority. We certainly had a tremendous loss of life and limb and maimed condition among the returning men, which we all deplore; but we are talking about the economic side of the question, and I say that very few parts of the world came out so unscathed as did Queensland. Therefore, it is necessary to seek for an explanation of the present position elsewhere.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you not take into consideration the slump in the metal market?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes, but it is not so pronounced as hon. members would have us believe. There is not sufficient difference in the price now and the price before the war to justify the stagnation that exists in the metal world in Queensland to-day. Another point is, that the natural exigencies surrounding production in Queensland are such as to provide an argument in favour of this Bill, because we have here industries—such as the sugar industry, the meat industry, and so forth—which play a very important part in the production in Queensland, and which need and consume labour only for a limited portion of the year, so that it stands to reason that some kind of unemployment must exist for the periods during which they are not in active operation. But due consideration is given to that fact by the Arbitration Court—which has been established by hon. members opposite—which gives full weight to the fact and fixes such wages as compensate the workers for the slack season. If the worker is not sufficiently

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thrifty when in work to put enough aside to keep him in the days of scarcity of employment, he is largely responsible for his own condition. I admit that even in those seasonal industries there is not regular employment. We have times, such as those existing to-day, when the meatworks are working for only a fraction of the time during which they run under ordinary conditions, and I admit that a measure of this description would be helpful in such a case. Now as practical men—and I say that without any feeling—who are in the whirlpool of industrial development and industrial trouble, hon. members opposite must give a fair amount of consideration to the arguments which we advance. We give them credit for believing in the truth of what they say in support of their contentions; but hon. members who listened to the speech of the hon. member for Barcoo could have had but one impression left on their minds—that is, that this is merely a palliative and is not a solution of the problem, as the Minister would have us believe. It is merely playing with a great problem; but we need to get to the root of the evil and find out what is causing so much unemployment in a State like Queensland, which has only one person per square mile, and has untold resources only waiting for development. Therefore, we contend that these are days which call for practical application of relief rather than theory, and it is in that spirit that we advance our arguments.

What are these troubles that are causing unemployment? One thing is the war on the capitalist which has proceeded ever since I have been here. The one thing that has been dinned into my ears in this House morning, noon, and night, has been that the capitalistic system is a failure—that the capitalist is to be rooted out of our midst, unless he has money to invest in State loans or war bonds—for hon. members opposite do not appreciate as they ought that that is the last investment which they ought to encourage. We have in Queensland untold possibilities for the investment of capital, but we so harass people with money or with savings that we drive them into channels beyond the touch of grasping Governments, such as we see opposite. And so the capital taken from the channels of industry is invested where we cannot even touch it for the purposes of consolidated revenue. We cannot tax it, and, therefore, Queensland's resources from a taxation point of view are being depleted to an extent which I do not think the majority of us really realise at the present moment.

Another point on which I wish to touch is the question—"Who are the capitalists against whom all this abuse is being hurled"? Hon. members opposite are continually trotting out statistics about the Commonwealth Savings Bank, and so forth. We find that out of, approximately, 5,500,000 people in Australia over 3,500,000 have accounts in the Savings Banks, and that the average deposit is about £46. What becomes of that money? The bank does not bury it. It lends it. What for? What is the Commonwealth Bank doing with the £14,000,000 which it got from the Queensland Savings Bank? It is lending some out for the development of industry. A lot of it is being used in the development of the city of Brisbane, in laying concrete roadways and improving the city generally. Those are the capital-

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ists' savings. The money of those 3,500,000 people, who have put it aside to get interest on it, is being used for the development of the State. I admit that there are men who have an undue portion of accumulated capital, but these men are but few. Take the industries which are being financed by the Commonwealth Bank. What is the Commonwealth Bank but a channel through which the thrifty can get a reasonable amount of remuneration for their deposits, and by which industry in turn can be supported in a reasonable and safe way? These are the capitalists against whom hon. members opposite rail, and it is this warfare on the thrifty, who wish to put their savings beyond the reach of the Government and their supporters, which is sucking the very life blood from industry, and it is because of that that there is a large amount of unemployment in Queensland to-day.

I pass on to another phase of the trouble—that is, the hatred of the employer which we hear expressed so frequently. Cannot hon. members opposite understand that, so long as there is this bitter animosity aggravated by them, there will always be unemployment? It seems to be their very business to keep alive the antagonism between the two factions. Their life-blood depends upon it. It was their organising ability and their capacity to create disturbance which first of all gave them that prominence in the industrial ranks which later put them into Parliament. Therefore we cannot expect anything else from hon. members opposite. It is pitiable to find these gentlemen making it their business to keep alive that hatred and distrust between the two sections of production. I contend that, so long as that theory prevails, so long will unemployment exist in an aggravated form. If you permit the employer and employee to solve these problems co-operatively, instead of continual disturbance in the workshop, you will find one of the quickest solutions of this unemployment problem. I wonder if hon. members opposite would for once forget that they are industrial agitators. I do not say that in any offensive sense. Reasonable agitation is justifiable. Can they not forget it and, acting as private individuals, go into some of the properly conducted workshops in Brisbane. There they will see none of this discontent if they are only left alone. It is the business of hon. members opposite to stir up strife continually to such an extent that we find men arguing with themselves. "Why should we go into industry? Why should we spend more money in developing our resources? Let us close up, and put what little savings we have into some channel beyond the worries and troubles of industrial activity."

I pass on to the question of the Arbitration Court. I have always argued, and I stand for it to-day, that the Arbitration Court in Queensland has been largely responsible for a lot of the unemployment which exists to-day. In all fairness, I admit that there has not been so much industrial disturbance since the Arbitration Court was established; but it has helped to destroy that happiness and contentment which should exist between the two sections of production. It has created a search for points one against the other, which can have only one effect, and that is the destruction of co-operation and confidence one with the other.

Another point is, if the unemployed that we have in Queensland to-day had been more skilled than they are, there would be far less unemployment. There is no surplus of skilled labour in Queensland—there is a great dearth of it. The Minister, when speaking on the Estimates the other day, said that the Department of Public Works found difficulty in obtaining skilled labour locally to undertake work on the buildings under his supervision—a clear admission of the fact of which we are all aware, that to-day there is a great dearth of skilled labour in Queensland. We have a surplus of unskilled labour. If you ask an unemployed man what is his particular line of business, he says, "Labourer." I do not say that disparagingly.

Mr. COLLINS: You do say it disparagingly; you sneer at them.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member is the last man to talk about sneering. But I am not going to be dragged off the path by the unruly member for Bowen.

Mr. COLLINS: You are an aristocratic boaster.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Aristocratic? Well, I do not haunt the Queensland Club, anyhow. When I do, I shall, like the hon. member for Bowen, lay some claim to aristocracy. The point is that there are too many men unemployed to-day who are labourers. Had these men been properly handled, they could have been made bricklayers, carpenters, or some other kind of skilled tradesmen, who could have helped themselves to get out of the rut they are in. But these hon. members opposite, by their method of refusing to reward skill by paying rates of wages which do not encourage men to become skilled in industry, are gradually creating in our midst a mass of workers who have no trade at their fingers' ends; and, while that exists, we shall have unemployment.

Mr. RIORDAN: That position would not arise in seven years.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It has arisen in seven years.

Mr. RIORDAN: It has not.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Pardon me, it has—that is the trouble. Until that is cured, we shall have an aggravation of this condition.

Another point is that we have, unfortunately—perhaps not so much to-day, although there are evidences of it in other States—being preached that "go-slow" doctrine which has helped to disturb industry. These gentlemen who question its existence will be interested in this paragraph which appeared in the "Telegraph" last week—

"Mr. G. Waite, assistant secretary of the United Labourers' Union, issued an appeal to the Trades Hall unions yesterday, urging them to have nothing whatever to do with the go-slow scheme formulated by the New South Wales Labour Council.

"The cables," added Mr. Waite, "state than an influential commission has left London for Australia, with a view to starting the cotton industry here on a vast scale, to employ thousands. The council of action has already, at

long range, fired the go-slow bomb at investors' capital. Is it not time that a defence league was formed on a non-party basis, comprising citizens of all sections who are against the sweating and speeding up of toiling men and women, as well as against the drones' slogan of go-slow fanaticism. The go-slow system will pull down our white Australia to the level of an aboriginal camp out in the mulga scrub."

That is the utterance of a Labour official who has seen the light. As he points out, while that system prevails, you are firing a shot at industry, at the further development of our resources, and at our manufacturing possibilities.

Another point which I am going to touch upon, and which I know is a very tender one with hon. members opposite, is this preference to unionists stunt. If hon. members opposite and the unions they represent really understood their obligations they would see that every man who belonged to a union was efficient, reliable, and in every sense a workman. Then preference to unionists would not require any bolstering up by any Arbitration Court. When an employer wanted an efficient workman he would naturally go to the union for him, and he would demand that that man should be a member of the union before he gave him a job. Now, preference to unionists is used simply as a hammer to establish hon. members opposite. In the old days of trade guilds it was an honour to belong to a union. The union made it its business not to have in its ranks any man who was other than an efficient and honourable man. To-day, unfortunately, that is passed. I make to these gentlemen the suggestion that, if they are really sincere in their desire to kill the unemployment problem, they should see that the unions they represent, and in which they play so prominent a part, undertake to see that their men are skilled men, that they are reliable men, so that preference to unionists will not require a sledge hammer to have it adopted; but every man who wants efficient service rendered will go to a union as a natural consequence to secure the labour he requires.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That is rubbish.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We expect the hon. member for Gympie to say a thing like that. He does not understand the question. Probably there are men opposite who will have the comprehension to gather what I am trying to convey.

Another point is, how can we expect to engage in industry and develop our businesses whilst harassing taxation exists such as that which we are experiencing to-day? Only this morning we had the super tax re-enacted—a £330,000 imposition upon industry, introduced originally as a war measure. The war has long gone by, but the Government are not going to let go their hold upon any revenue. That further imposition on industry is going to be made so as to keep alive this extravagant, spendthrift Government. While that lasts it will aggravate industry and aggravate the unemployment problem.

Another question is that of State enterprise. How can you expect private employers to go ahead and develop their businesses—how can you expect men to come here and establish business when the State competes actively with them? The State cannot

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compete on a sound basis with private enterprises. The Government bolster up their enterprises by all kinds of barbed-wire entanglements—by removing themselves from taxation and other obligations—but in spite of that they fail, and must fail. So long as the Government make it their business to force the State into these activities instead of looking for private enterprise to find an outlet for labour, then so long must they expect this interruption in the employment of the workers of Queensland.

There is another topic which is very unsavoury for the Government. On the one hand they are demanding that employers shall find work for every worker in Queensland, and on the other hand they repudiate the obligations that they enter into with industry in Queensland. How can they expect to assimilate those things? One is oil and the other is water, and you cannot mix them. Until the Government learn a lesson on business morality in regard to carrying out their obligations, we shall have this interruption in our industrial development. I want to quote a few remarks made by the president of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce. That gentleman has been elected by the commercial men of this city as representative of commercial enterprise from the employers' point of view. He states—

“The year under review has been for business men a very trying one, more so for us in Queensland owing to the peculiar local conditions, which, happily for them, do not exist in other communities in Australia.”

We all know what he refers to. He means that the commercial community of Brisbane cannot be expected to expand in the way it should whilst it is being harassed on every hand by the Government and their methods. Let me refer to a few details in this Bill. So far as my memory serves me, the Bill introduced three years ago provided that an employer had to have more than five employees before he came within the scope of that Bill. But, so far as I can understand, there is no such limit in this Bill. A man who has one or more employees will come within the ambit of this Bill. It will embrace farmers, all the men on the land, and all small employers.

Mr. W. COOPER: The hon. gentleman is wrong.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Will the hon. gentleman point out where I am wrong?

Mr. W. COOPER: The Bill will only affect those who are covered by Arbitration Court awards.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: So far as I read the Bill, that is not so. I would like to ask the Minister, by way of interjection, if every employer of labour in Queensland will not come within the ambit of the Bill?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Only the employers of labour who are working under an Arbitration Court award.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The previous Bill provided that only the employers should contribute to the upkeep of the fund; but in this Bill we have an alteration which is highly desirable, and which divides the burden over three distinct heads. One-third is to be contributed by the Government, one-third by the employers, and one-third by the employees. That provision is spoiled when

it is provided that any increase in contributions is to be made on the following basis— one-half by the employers, one-quarter by the employees, and one-quarter by the Government. Why the differentiation? Why should the basis of the employers' contribution be altered from one-third to one-half when the original fund is exhausted? Does that not create very strong distrust immediately in people's minds, that the original contributions on the basis of one-third each as a minimum will not meet the exigencies of the situation, and that subsequent contributions by employers will have to be increased to one-half? I hope that the Minister will give us some enlightenment on that point.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will do that in Committee.

At 9.25 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Under the old Bill employers had an alternative of finding work or contributing cash. That alternative is not contained in this Bill. The disappearance of that provision brings me to a very important point. The Government can now insist on the employer doing certain work whether the employer wishes to do it or not. When I raised the question when the last Bill was before the House, I was met with the argument that the employer had the alternative of contributing cash or undertaking work. If he contributed cash in Government debentures, there was a get-out, and he had an investment which would return him approximately 6 per cent. To-day he has no get-out, and he can be forced by the Unemployment Council or the Minister to undertake certain developmental works which may be to the detriment of his business, because the time is unpropitious, and he has no get-out. The local authority has a get-out. It can show that, by reason of being forced to undertake the work at an unpropitious time, it will suffer a loss. The employer has no such relief. Whatever loss he may suffer by reason of being forced to create work he has to carry on his own shoulders. This means interference with the rights of employers, and, if the hon. gentleman thinks that the Government are going to assist industry or assist workers in that way, and they are anxious to find a solution of the unemployment difficulty, then I contend that this clause has to be deleted. Under the old Bill, contribution was fixed at £2 per employee for employees over the number of five; to-day there is no limit. Possibly the Minister will give us some idea as to what the cost will mean to employers of labour, because it is a very serious matter. The employers are sincerely anxious to play their part in connection with any economic and sound proposal that is going to help to alleviate the unemployment problem; but they must be assured that they are being fairly and honourably treated, and that they are not going to be singled out for unfair imposition, and they must have some idea as to what their liability will be. Under the Bill the local authorities can be called upon to undertake certain works, and they are expressly excluded from appealing to the ratepayers as to whether that work shall be undertaken or not. It is a second edition of what we are to receive under the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill. The tramway undertaking is going to be forced upon the people of Brisbane whether they wish it or whether they do not.

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During the last three months the Brisbane City Council had an opportunity of borrowing £2,000,000 at a very favourable rate of interest for resumption purposes in Adelaide street. The time was propitious for them to make those resumptions in view of certain improvements that owners were about to undertake, and which will naturally add to the cost of resumptions when they are effected. The condition which the manager of the Commonwealth Bank made in regard to the £2,000,000 was that there should be no appeal to the ratepayers.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Did the City Council or the Commonwealth Bank give you authority to make this statement?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Did the Primary Producers' Organisation give you authority to make public certain minutes you did a few weeks back?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Certainly.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am very surprised to hear it. What I am telling you now is correct in every detail. The £2,000,000 was offered to the City Council for the purpose of those resumptions for a favourable period at 5½ per cent. This money was to be borrowed in England, and the transaction was to go through the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, but, owing to the fact that this had to be speedily accomplished, the manager of the Commonwealth Bank made it a condition that there should be no poll of the ratepayers because it would mean delay and the opportunity would be lost, or some such equally valid reason. This question was placed before the Home Secretary and he agreed that so far as he was concerned, this appeal should be dispensed with. It was then passed on to the Premier, who in holy indignation said, "No. How dare they borrow this large sum of money without submitting it to a poll of the ratepayers?"

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are not giving the facts.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yet these gentlemen are forcing the trainways on the people of Brisbane without a poll, and are here forcing the local authorities to undertake certain work and incur certain obligations without a poll. Do the people of Queensland understand the hopeless inconsistency of hon. gentlemen opposite, who are swallowing their principles, who are chewing their words simply to retain office? It is our business to expose them; to let the people know, so that when they have the opportunity they will deprive them of the opportunity of further burdening the State of Queensland.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Home Secretary never agreed to that proposal.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Before dealing with the main principles in this important measure, I wish to deal for a few moments with some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Oxley. The other night I had the pleasure of reading the seventh volume of Grote's "History of Greece," which stated that in ancient Greece there existed a school of thought known by the name of "Sophists"; and the hon. gentleman has been giving us some of his sophistry this afternoon. That school of thought brought about the destruction of Greece by blocking measures not exactly on the lines of the Bill we are dealing with this afternoon, but

measures which dealt with progress. The hon. gentleman started off by saying that unemployment was a scourge. Will he say that the one Labour Government in the world to-day has brought about this scourge?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I say the Labour Government is a scourge.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member said unemployment is a scourge.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Your Government are responsible for it.

Mr. COLLINS: You say the Labour Government are responsible for the unemployment that exists to-day, not only in Queensland, but throughout the world. Will the hon. gentleman say that we could right the wrongs of centuries in the short space of seven years? He went on to say there were three main causes for unemployment. One was the economic upheaval. Does he think the Labour Government brought about the economic upheaval? Was not the economic upheaval brought about by men of the same school of thought as the hon. member for Oxley, who have been governing mankind for centuries? Of course, they brought about the war, and, if they had their way, they would bring about more wars and bring about more unemployment. Then he went on to say that another cause of unemployment was that the consideration which ought to be given to primary production has not been given to it. Everyone knows that no Government ever existed in the Commonwealth of Australia who have done so much to assist primary production as this Labour Government have done. That is No. 2 reason set aside. Now take No. 3. He said the Labour Government had something to do with unemployment. When he condemns the Government for bringing about unemployment he should realise that there are capitalistic Governments in the world under whom unemployment has been more rife than is the case under the Labour Government in Queensland. He admitted in the course of his speech that Queensland has suffered less than other countries. If he admits that Queensland has suffered less, it is owing to the fact that we have a Labour Government in Queensland, who are not responsible for the economic upheaval which exists in the world to-day. Then he went on to say that unemployment was caused by the fact that we are continually railing against the capitalist and the capitalistic system, and he pointed out that there were 5,500,000 people in the Commonwealth, of which 3,500,000 were depositors in the savings banks of the Commonwealth, and that the average amount of their deposits was £46 per head of the population, and he said these are the capitalists who are financing the loan that has been granted to the city council to carry on its work. Does the hon. gentleman think that that kind of sophistry is going down with the bulk of the intelligent people of Queensland—that 3,500,000 workers in the Commonwealth who have an average of £46 per head in the Commonwealth Bank are the capitalists of the Commonwealth? Does not the hon. gentleman know, as he ought to know as a student of modern developments in the Commonwealth, that there are over 12,000 persons in the Commonwealth each owning land of an unimproved value of over £5,000, or a total value of £178,000,000? That is more than

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the 3,500,000 depositors have got in the various savings banks of the Commonwealth. He was trying to make out that the capitalists of Australia were the 3,500,000 workers who have got the enormous sum of £46 per head to their credit. Something wonderful! You have to read another economic work in the library to get to know that the 3,500,000 people do not own the wealth of the Commonwealth, and the 3,500,000 people who own £46 per head on the average are not responsible for unemployment. What is the use of arguing that the legislation passed by this Labour Government is responsible for unemployment? Take Great Britain as an illustration. Great Britain is a country that has the accumulation of the wealth of centuries that has been robbed from the workers; and what do we find there, in a country that is not governed by Labour, but a country governed by men of a similar thought to hon. members opposite? What is the position there? A short time ago they had 2,000,000 unemployed, and they spent £63,000,000 in giving relief to unemployed in one year alone—not under a Labour Government, but under what they call the cream of the intelligence of Europe—men like the hon. member for Oxley. Men who come from Oxford, Cambridge, and the other universities of Britain are all represented in the British House of Commons, and a large percentage of them are lawyers, similar to the hon. member for Dalby, who leads the Country party, and, with all this intelligence, they could not solve the unemployed problem. They have not solved it yet. At any rate, we are deserving of some credit for introducing this Bill. We are making an attempt to solve it. Is it not better to attempt to do something than to do nothing at all? We, as students of economics, know what has brought about unemployment. Surely hon. members opposite will not deny that, in the evolution of industry and in the application of machinery to production—the work of our inventive faculties, which we have the right to use, and which represent the brains of man—unemployment has been brought about! All over the world to-day machines are doing work that men did formerly. Will the hon. member for Oxley say that the use of machinery is not one of the causes why there is less skilled labour to-day than there was in the days of his youth? We have less skilled labour to-day owing to the fact that machinery now does what it required skilled labour to do a few years ago. I make bold to assert that, if we are going to use this inventive faculty which we have the right to use—the brains of man—we shall have to shorten our working days. If we are not going to do that, what is the use of all this wonderful machinery and boasting about our brain power and the organisation of this machinery for the production of the commodities which are required for man? There is nothing worse than being out of work. What does the man who is out of work say? I know what it is from experience, for I have been out of work for six months at a time. Does not the unemployed man in Queensland and throughout the world say, "Give me work; I have the right to work and to live?" What has brought about that condition? Has it not been the evolution of industry, the development of our capitalistic system, which, with its big companies, its big combines and trusts, cares very little

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about the body or soul of man to-day? Not like the hon. member for Toombul, who a few years ago knew his workmen and came into contact with them. What do companies to-day care about the bodies and souls of men who are out of work, or who are working for them? They know nothing about them at all. It is owing to the results of that system that we have unemployment to-day. These people who are taking the profits from the results of the toil of these men are being asked to contribute under this Bill towards the cost of providing for insurance against unemployment.

I quite agree that the Bill introduced in 1919 by the then Treasurer, who is now Premier, was on more advanced lines than the Bill introduced to-day. But we met with the same kind of opposition in 1919 that we are meeting with to-day. No matter what we attempt to do we shall meet with that opposition. Everything we try to do is wrong. Why? Because it is in the interests of the mass of the people, and not in the interests of a few.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Because you are visionary, as you said last night.

Mr. COLLINS: All reformers have been considered visionaries. At any rate, I do not give the hon. member for Oxley credit for being a visionary; I look upon him as a real Conservative. He wants to stand still; he does not realise the force of evolution in the different countries of the world.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member for Brisbane said that I was progressive the other day.

Mr. COLLINS: If we admit that changes should take place in connection with the machinery of production, what manufacturer to-day will keep an old, obsolete machine in his factory instead of getting a more modern one? We are dealing to-day with modern man. The modern man is asking, and rightly so too, what he is on this earth for. Is it merely to be a wealth-producer for men like the hon. member for Toowoong and other hon. members opposite, or to produce for himself? Coming back to the Bill and to the speech of the hon. member for Oxley, that hon. member said, "We are practical men." I have a little quotation here from "Everybody's Magazine"—

"In a world of practical men, thousands of babies are badly born, and thousands die of starvation, bad air, and inattention.

"In a world of practical men, hundreds of thousands receive no education worth the name. There aren't even enough school buildings for children, let alone teachers, let alone competent teachers.

"In a world of practical men, several million children are prepared for their life-work in sweatshops and factories. I will not insist here on the fantastic notion that every child should be happy.

"In a world of practical men, hundreds of thousands of mothers devote themselves to the establishment of homes by working all day in factories and stores. This is the practical way of promoting the efficiency of the next generation. There are also hundreds of thousands of mothers who are enabled to teach their children frugality and perseverance by turning the parlour into a workshop.

"In a world of practical men, thousands die of overwork, or starve for lack of work.

"In a world of practical men, there are half-a-million people in lunatic asylums.

"In a world of practical men, the gaols are crowded.

"In a world of practical men, immense quantities of food are poisoned.

"In a world of practical men, politics is bought and sold.

"In a world of practical men, the cost of living is exorbitant.

"In a world of practical men, infants and idiots can inherit millions.

"In a world of practical men, natural resources are wasted.

"In a world of practical men, nations go to war.

"In a world of practical men, there is a panic about once every ten years.

"In a world of practical men, the strike and the lockout, the boycott and the black list are in constant use.

"In a world of practical men, some are too poor and some are too rich.

"In a world of practical men, thought is hired, and news is manufactured.

"And, above all, in a world of practical men, no remedies are proposed."

The hon. member for Oxley said, "We are practical men." Of course, they are.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will meet you in the Queensland Club and we will discuss it. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: In a world of practical men, as this writer points out, they propose no remedies for unemployment, but we on this side have proposed a remedy for it. The world has been governed by practical men of the type of the hon. member for Oxley. It is a very poor type indeed. The hon. member sneers at labour, and says that, owing to the fact that we have not got sufficient skilled men, we are at a disadvantage. He says that most of the men who are out of work are labourers. What does the hon. member mean by it?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I told you what I meant.

Mr. COLLINS: Is the hon. member an artisan himself? Is he a mechanic? Did he go through the mill as a mechanic or even as a labourer? I understand he is one of those men who have lived upon the labour of the people. These are the men who tell us how to be practical, and how to solve the unemployment problem.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Like the hon. member for Oxley does, by employing men.

Mr. COLLINS: Did the hon. member ever read any work on economics, which points out that it is the labourers who employ him, and not he who employs the labourers? He only gives them so much a day, after the workers have produced twice that amount. That is one of the causes of unemployment. As I have said on more than one occasion, we are going step by step to our goal, and, so long as we have the confidence of the people outside, we shall go towards that goal, knowing that we are on the right track. It may take a long time for us to reach it, but I am satisfied that the people of Queensland have confidence in us, and by the introduction of this measure they will have still more confidence in us.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): If there was ever a forcible illustration of want of capacity on the part of the present Administration, it is furnished by the measure that is now before us. We have a Government controlling for the past seven years one of the finest countries in the world and capable of producing everything in the shape of agricultural products, and that is rich in minerals; yet, after seven years of office the Government come along with a measure of this kind. The measure is certainly lacking in statesmanship, because it is going to accentuate the very evil it is designed to cope with. Hon. members opposite have been talking about progress. They said, referring to previous repressive measures, "In 1919 you said exactly the same thing, and in 1917 you said the same thing." Yes, we gave warnings then, and those warnings have been borne out. In proof of what I have mentioned, I find that in 1914 there were more factories in Queensland and more employees in those factories than there are in 1922.

I find that in 1914 Queensland had 1,796 factories employing 43,282 hands. In 1920, there were 1,795 factories, less in number as compared with 1914, employing 43,195 hands, again less in number. If we take the agricultural areas, we find that in 1914 Queensland had under the plough 792,568 acres, and in 1920 there were 773,497 acres under cultivation. Does not that show that there is something wrong in the State? Does it not show that every word of warning we uttered in 1917, and every word of warning we uttered in 1919, has been justified? You will find if this Bill becomes law—

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It will become law, all right.

Mr. SWAYNE: Then there will be more stagnation in the State, and, if anything, there will be retrogression. Is it right that a young country like Queensland should stand still in regard to its principal industries? We have fewer factories and fewer employees than we had six years ago, and we have very little more land under cultivation. If it were not for the action taken by the Denham Government in the erection of new sugar-mills in the North, and the agreement introduced by the Commonwealth Nationalist Government fixing the price of sugar, the position agriculturally would be infinitely worse. That alone has proved that this is not the time for the further persecution of those who have brought their money to Queensland to invest in industrial enterprises. The same applies to those amongst ourselves who have been thrifty and saving, but who under the Bill will have to provide work for others at a loss probably to themselves. Clause 4 is nothing more or less than an attack upon everyone with enterprise and energy. I could not help being struck with the hypocrisy of the Minister in charge of the Bill in moving the second reading.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: The Minister spoke of the need of so arranging employment that it would be plentiful during the slack season, when public works would be carried out. He inferred that these works would slacken off during the busy time. I remember that there was a proposal to build a railway line in my district. It could have been started in March of last year, if the promises had been carried out. That was the slack season. But the railway was not started until May,

Mr. Swayne.]

just at the commencement of the busy time. The work on the railway was kept on during the busy time until February of this year, when there was a lot of unemployment about, and hundreds of men were out of work. The railway work was then shut down, and no work was done until July, when the work was started again just at the busy time in connection with the sugar season. That is not carrying out the greater activity in times of slackness to which the hon. gentleman referred. As a matter of fact, it was just the reverse. That was the reason that I made the remark concerning the Minister, and I think I was amply justified in doing so. With the exception of a few of the earlier clauses dealing with insurance, the Bill is a constant attack on the employers right through. I know I would be out of order in referring to the different clauses, but there is a provision for the appointment of an Unemployment Council, which is a political body. The president of the Council should have the status of a judge, independent of all politics. Look at the opportunity for buying votes that such a body offers. There is only one employers' representative on it. There is one union representative, who will look after the employees' interests, and you cannot blame him for that. The other three are more or less connected with politics through being Government officials. To commence with, the gentleman presiding should be independent of politics, like a judge or anyone occupying a similar position. If we take clause by clause we shall find that all the criticisms that have been levelled by the Opposition are justified. In clause 7 there are all sorts of possibilities. It gives power to the Unemployment Council to say to a farmer that he shall plough his land, quite irrespective of whether his financial position is suitable or not. He will be told to employ a certain class of labour and to carry out certain work in order to absorb labour in that district, quite irrespective of the merits of the case, or whether he is able to carry on that work or not. Again, in engineering workshops or a building contract outside, persons have the right to dictate to the management, and say what should be done and what should not be done. I have already shown how the number of factories has increased in Queensland since the present Government came into power. And let me say in connection with that matter that it cannot be said that a decrease in employment has occurred in the other States. The figures for Victoria, New South Wales, and the neighbouring States show that in all four respects—output, number of factories, number of employees, and acreage under plough—there is an increase, as compared with a decrease in Queensland. This shows that this is not the time to discourage enterprise.

Dealing with the other provisions of the Bill, we find that in clause 9 another penalty is imposed upon those who because of their saving and industry have placed themselves in the position of owning a piece of land. By Order in Council a local authority may be required to commence and carry out such works as the Governor in Council pleases, quite irrespective of whether the local authority considers them to be in the interests of the ratepayers or not. Those considerations do not enter into the question. It is simply a matter of providing work, although it may be quite unnecessary from their point of view. Whilst I am on the subject of

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

forcing local authorities to carry out works which they do not want to undertake, I would like to point out what happened in Mackay not long ago, because it clearly indicates what may happen if such plenary powers are vested in the Governor in Council. So far from carrying out the railway work in my district on the lines laid down by the Minister in his speech this afternoon—that is, in the slack time—instructions went forth that no labour was to be employed before the middle of March. On the other hand the Mackay Harbour Board were informed that a loan of £20,000 was available if they were prepared to start taking that money at once. The fact of the matter was that the Railway Department was faced with an award compelling almost constant payment during a heavy wet season and the Government could not do anything further on the railways, but they tried to force the Harbour Board to do their work during that time. Of course, they had not legal power to do it, but under this Bill they will have legal power, and what happened at Mackay shows what we may expect. They tried to bring pressure to bear on the Board to induce them to spend that money during a time of the year when the chances were that the men would not be able to work half the time for which they were paid. At any rate, those were the reasons why the loan was refused.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are sure about that?

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes. The loan was offered to the Mackay Harbour Board and the suggestion was made—it was no more than a suggestion—that the work should be undertaken at once.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who gave you the railway to Mackay?

Mr. SWAYNE: The railway was initiated by a previous Government. I also notice that under cover of this Bill it is proposed to bring pressure to bear on the workers to join the unions. I have already pointed out over and over again that they are political, and that it is entirely wrong to make it a condition of a man's liberty to earn his livelihood that he shall contribute to the funds of a political body. Yet that principle is introduced into the Bill.

Then there is in the Bill another of those dragnet provisions to which we have been so accustomed in the measures of the present Government, giving them power to commandeer anything they think fit to take. In clause 20 we find further objectionable provisions.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now dealing with the details of the Bill, which should be dealt with in Committee.

Mr. SWAYNE: I understood that I was allowed to refer briefly to the provisions of the Bill. I am not reading the clauses word for word.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will be in order in debating the principles of the Bill, but he will not be in order in discussing the Bill in detail.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think previous speakers have been allowed to refer incidentally to the clauses.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have informed the hon. member that he will be in order in debating the principles of the Bill.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think that I am confining myself to the principles that are involved.

I was just getting on to the fact that the Bill lays down that the amount required for its operation shall be furnished in the proportion of one-third by each of the three contributors. That is only to a small limit. If anything extra is required, one-half has to be found by the employers. We are going to legislate the employer out of existence.

In one place a penalty of £100 is provided, and in another a penalty of £20. Who is going to invest his money in a country where such risks prevail?

At question time this afternoon I asked the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill for certain information in regard to this measure. Seeing that he was not able to supply me with that information, the only conclusion that I can come to is that this Bill has been ill-considered, and has been introduced in a hurry—evidently as a sop to certain interests on the Government side of the House. I asked the hon. gentleman if he could tell us the number of employers in Queensland, the total amount paid yearly in wages to employees who would come under this Bill, and the average number of unemployed in each year? I contend that he ought to have been possessed of that information. Before he can correctly gauge the amount of money that will be required to finance such an Act, it is necessary that he should make himself acquainted with those figures. On his own admission, he was utterly ignorant of those relevant particulars.

Before I resume my seat, I would like to refer to the fact that in some of our seasonal industries the rates of wages are already such as to provide for a certain amount of unemployment. I have here the Sugar Workers' Award of 1919, contained in the "Australian Sugar Journal." I find that Mr. Justice McCawley made an award for piecework, enabling the average employee to earn £1 5s. per day. At page 228 he says—

"Twenty-five shillings per day is a substantial wage, enabling the cutter in a good season to make in the neighbourhood of £200 for six months' work."

Why should the employer have to contribute to carry the workers over a slack season when he has already paid them £7 10s. per week for their work? This Bill will have a boomerang effect, and will react to the detriment of the employees. When the court is approached, the employers will be perfectly justified in arguing that, as the slack season is provided for under the Bill, there is no need to fix wages to meet those circumstances. This Bill is not going to do any good to the employee, and anyone who looks at the position in a broad-minded way must recognise that the industries in Queensland to-day are stagnating and that the Government will be simply making the conditions worse. The very people whom they say they are out to assist will by and by turn round and curse them for introducing this Bill.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): The Government have followed their usual practice of adroitly inserting in the Bill certain provisions that were suggested by the Opposition when the last Bill was before the House. It is only by such methods that they think they will be able to gain support and will be able to "gag" the Opposition under certain circumstances. The time is opportune to do something in regard to this social evil of unemployment. Nearly every other social

question has been attended to somehow, but nothing has been done so far as unemployment is concerned. I have looked up the report of the Premiers' Conference which was held on 12th May, 1915, when the Hon. T. O'Sullivan was Attorney-General in the Denham Administration. After there had been a debate, certain resolutions were passed. Such an insurance scheme as is proposed in the Bill should not be limited to any one State of the Commonwealth. I think it should be a federal matter. It is provided for under the Federal Constitution, and the matter has not been overlooked by the Nationalist Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes. He has made inquiries from all parts of the world. If it had not been for the war, this national insurance scheme would have been law to-day in the Commonwealth. It was recognised that it would be unfair to bring it in in any one State of the Commonwealth, as it would encourage an undesirable element to come to this State and would affect industry. That resolution reads—

"That, in the opinion of this conference, it is desirable to introduce a scheme of national insurance against unemployment on the basis of Part II. of the British National Insurance Act of 1911."

The second resolution reads—

"That legislation on this subject should be Federal and uniform amongst the States."

They were not bringing this forward for window-dressing before an election, like this Government are doing. They desired to seek a proper solution of this industrial evil. There was no bickering and no introducing communistic clauses in a Bill which concerns insurance against unemployment. That resolution was resolved in the affirmative. Sir Alexander Peacock, the Premier of Victoria, who was present, moved this resolution—

"That the Attorney-General of Queensland forthwith prepare a Bill for submission to the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth and of the States."

That resolution was resolved in the affirmative, too.

Mr. RIORDAN: That was as far as they got with it.

Mr. KERR: That was as far as they got with it, for the simple reason that immediately afterwards a Labour Administration came into power in Queensland, and nothing further was ever heard of it until a week or so ago. Had the Denham Administration or the Nationalists or Liberals remained in power, unemployed insurance would have been the law to-day, and we would not have been discussing this matter to-night. The Prime Minister of Australia has had the matter in hand. We know that the State Government of Queensland were handling the old-age pensions here, but the Commonwealth Government came in and took over the administration of those pensions. Even if this Bill becomes law, the probabilities are that in the next year or so it will become a Federal matter; and, from what I can see, the quicker the Federal authorities take this over and make it a national scheme, the better it will be for Queensland and for the finances of Queensland. In the British Act of 1911 a list of insured trades is set out in the schedule which includes building trades, shipbuilding, machinery, engineering, etc.

Mr. Kerr.]

I want to make it quite clear that social insurance in the wider sense should include sickness. Insurance for sickness should come before insurance for unemployment. It is calculated that, on the average, one in every five workers in the State is absent through illness some time or another. The only solution for that difficulty is by payments to friendly societies so that, when they are out of work through illness, they will receive sick pay. This is one of the hardships which cause trouble to a married man with children. Before unemployment insurance is thought of, we should cater for the decent men in the community who are in regular employment, and who have wives and children. It is better to cater for that part of the community than to cater for wasters and for some who are loafers. (Government dissent.) If hon. members opposite want any further information, they can go down to the wharves, where men are playing "two-up" outside the gates. Returned soldiers cannot get a job there—"Dagos" can get a job before them.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will deal with the Bill.

Mr. KERR: I will deal with the Bill. It is better for us to attend to the more settled parts of the community by providing insurance against sickness in preference to providing unemployment doles for men who are not of the same calibre.

Mr. DASH: If you talked like that to the workers they would soon turn you down.

Mr. KERR: I spoke to 200 of them the other night, and there was no one at the meeting who had a good word to say for this Government.

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

Mr. KERR: It is hardly realised that in Queensland we are paying to a section of the community in regard to social matters the sum of over £4,500,000. I am referring to the amount spent in relief, State children, hospitals, friendly societies, and the like. That amount includes old-age pensions, and it is a tremendous amount for Queensland to carry.

The PREMIER: Just round off your remarks. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: I suppose the Premier will do so in a minute. I have read a good deal about social insurance in various parts of the world, and also the reports of various Labour Congresses since 1889. There seems to be a difficulty to be overcome in regard to this experimental legislation. It is agreed by all authorities that this sort of legislation is only in its experimental stage.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That the question be now put."

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the House divided:—

In division,

The PREMIER: I declare that, in addition to voting in my own right, I vote for the "Ayes" as proxy for Mr. McCormack.

[Mr. Kerr.

	AYES, 33.	
Mr. Barber		Mr. Kirwan
" Brennan		" Land
" Bulcock		" Lacombe
" Collins		" McCormack (Proxy)
" Conroy		" Mullan
" Cooper, F. A.		" Payne
" Cooper, W.		" Pease
" Coyne		" Riordan
" Dash		" Ryan
" Dunstan		" Smith
" Ferricks		" Stopford
" Foley		" Theodore
" Gilday		" Weir
" Gledson		" Wellington
" Hartley		" Wilson
" Huxham		" Winstanley
" Jones, A. J.		
Tellers: Mr. Conroy and Mr. Dunstan		

	NOES, 32.	
Mr. Appel		Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.		" King
" Barnes, W. H.		" Logan
" Bebbington		" Macgregor
" Brand		" Maxwell
" Cattermull		" Moore
" Clayton		" Nott
" Corser		" Peterson
" Costello		" Petrie
" Deacon		" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Edwards		" Roberts, T. R.
" Elphinstone		" Swayne
" Fletcher		" Taylor
" Fry		" Vowles
" Green		" Walker
" Jones, J.		" Warren
Tellers: Mr. Cattermull and Mr. Peterson		
Resolved in the affirmative.		

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (*Mr. Smith's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

In division,

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I declare that, in addition to voting in my own right, I vote for the "Ayes" as proxy for Mr. McCormack.

	AYES, 33.	
Mr. Barber		Mr. Kirwan
" Brennan		" Land
" Bulcock		" Lacombe
" Collins		" McCormack (Proxy)
" Conroy		" Mullan
" Cooper, F. A.		" Payne
" Cooper, W.		" Pease
" Coyne		" Riordan
" Dash		" Ryan
" Dunstan		" Smith
" Ferricks		" Stopford
" Foley		" Theodore
" Gilday		" Weir
" Gledson		" Wellington
" Hartley		" Wilson
" Huxham		" Winstanley
" Jones, A. J.		
Tellers: Mr. Pease and Mr. Riordan.		

	NOES, 32.	
Mr. Appel		Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.		" King
" Barnes, W. H.		" Logan
" Bebbington		" Macgregor
" Brand		" Maxwell
" Cattermull		" Moore
" Clayton		" Nott
" Corser		" Peterson
" Costello		" Petrie
" Deacon		" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Edwards		" Roberts, T. R.
" Elphinstone		" Swayne
" Fletcher		" Taylor
" Fry		" Vowles
" Green		" Walker
" Jones, J.		" Warren
Tellers: Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Logan.		
Resolved in the affirmative.		

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow. The House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.