

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 1922**

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TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER, 1922.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT AMENDMENT ACT OF 1921 REPEAL BILL.

INITIATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): 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 repeal the Legislative Assembly Act Amendment Act of 1921.”

Question put and passed.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

INITIATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): 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 alteration of the names of certain electoral districts.”

Question put and passed.

MACKAY, MARYBOROUGH, AND ROCKHAMPTON SHOW GROUNDS MORTGAGES BILL.

INITIATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): 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 enable the trustees of certain parcels of land in the city of Mackay, in the city of Maryborough, and in the city of Rockhampton, respectively, used for the purposes of show grounds by agricultural societies established in those localities respectively, to mortgage the said land and to devote the moneys so raised to making permanent improvements on the said land, and that the said Bill be introduced and dealt with in all its stages as a public Bill.”

Question put and passed.

WATER POWER BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION BILL

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

*Hon. J. Huxham.]*

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT AMENDMENT ACT OF 1921 REPEAL BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to repeal the Legislative Assembly Act Amendment Act of 1921.”

On the second reading of the Bill I will submit reasons why it is necessary to repeal the Act which was passed last year. At this stage it is sufficient to say that it is necessary to repeal the Act because of subsequent legislation passed last session by the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The Bill will receive splendid support from this side. It will repeal what we consider one of the most discreditable pieces of legislation that we have had to deal with for quite a long time. We welcome the Bill.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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 ATTORNEY-GENERAL 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.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the alteration of the names of certain electoral districts.”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am very sorry that it is necessary to introduce this Bill at all. Unfortunately, under present conditions it is absolutely necessary that a Bill should be passed providing for an alteration in the names of the electoral districts, as the present position is altogether unsatisfactory. Under the redistribution several country districts have been disfranchised, and the present position has led to confusion in the Electoral Registrar's Department and confusion amongst the people outside. The electors do not seem to know whom to write to on electoral matters, and I hope that provision

[*Hon. J. Huxham.*

is made in the Bill to revert to the old names of electorates. The present names have no connection with the districts themselves and have no towns of the name of the electorate in the electorate, and that makes the position most absurd. I trust that in this Bill the names will be such that people will know what electorate they are in. I am very sorry that the Minister thought it necessary to instruct the police to transfer names from the present rolls. This has only led to confusion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The transfer of names will make no difference.

Mr. MOORE: The electors have been informed that they have been transferred to the new electorates, and they are in a quandary as to which electorate they are in. It is a pity that there was such haste in making the people enrol for the new electorates.

The PREMIER: You complained because there was not a redistribution of seats, and now you complain because there has been a redistribution.

Mr. MOORE: We complain of the way in which it has been done. The whole thing shows a want of foresight in the formation of the new electorates.

The PREMIER: It was done under the provisions of the Act passed by your Government.

Mr. MOORE: It is no excuse at all to say that it was done under an Act passed by some other Government. The Government should have recognised that there would be some difficulty in renaming the new electorates which were to be formed, and proper provision should have been made in that direction.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I think that the Minister should give us a little more information about the Bill at this stage. He has practically given us no details.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give you full information on the second reading stage to-morrow. You will have the Bill before you directly.

Mr. MORGAN: This is the proper stage to ask for information, as we might wish to move an amendment in order to widen the scope of the Bill. We are not going to sit still and let the Minister move this resolution without giving us any information. It is due to the Minister to treat the Opposition as they should be treated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give any explanation you may want on the second reading.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I would like more information to be given at this stage about the measure. The House and the country have been misled. The Premier inferred that the redistribution had taken place under an Act passed by the Denham Government. That is quite true, but the Government should be able to remedy injustices in legislation passed by previous Governments. Under the redistribution the Government have gone as far as they possibly can to disfranchise country districts. They have not even given the limit allowed by the Principal Act; everything has been done to cut out the country electorates.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to start a debate on redistribution. This Bill deals with the

renaming of certain electorates, and I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to that question.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Had it not been for redistribution taking place, there would have been no need for this Bill, and it would not have been necessary to rename electorates. I shall have more to say on the second reading. We certainly want further information.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will give you full information on the second reading.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The Premier has stated that a demand was made by the public for redistribution, and I am prepared to admit that such was the case; but, when the alteration was made, what was there to prevent the Government bringing in a Bill for renaming the electorates last session? The electorate of Logan is very worthily represented by Mr. King.

Mr. KING: Hear, hear! (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am sure the House will endorse that statement. But what is the position? I have people coming to me from the hon. member's electorate asking me if I am not the member for Logan. I have no desire to jump the seat of the hon. member for Logan, but my own electorate has been called Logan. I, with others, have been absolutely in the dark as to what is being done in connection with the matter. There was nothing to prevent the Government renaming the electorates at the time they made the redistribution of seats, making it a uniform business; but, instead of that, confusion has reigned supreme. The Premier interjected, when the hon. member for Aubigny was speaking, that the redistribution was on the basis of the Electoral Districts Act passed by the Liberal Government. That is not so.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: No one knows that better than the hon. member for Albert.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Albert will admit that the last section of the Act which his Government passed provided for further redistribution.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am prepared to admit that in that regard it is so, but not in the apportionment. Let me say one other thing—you will probably rule me out of order, Mr. Kirwan—any Government which introduces a Redistribution of Seats Bill ought to go to the country as soon as the redistribution is made.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Bulimba. When the redistribution scheme was before the House it was pointed out by the hon. member for Merthyr that the redistribution must of necessity be followed by a Bill to alter the names of the electorates. I thought the Government would have taken notice of the remarks of that hon. member, and have introduced a Bill forthwith, instead of leaving it to a later stage. The suggestion of the hon. member for Merthyr ought to have been accepted.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

MACKAY, MARYBOROUGH, AND ROCKHAMPTON SHOW GROUNDS MORTGAGES BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to enable the trustees of certain parcels of land in the city of Mackay, in the city of Maryborough, and in the city of Rockhampton, respectively, used for the purposes of show grounds by agricultural societies established in those localities respectively, to mortgage the said land and to devote the moneys so raised to making permanent improvements on the said land, and that the said Bill be introduced and dealt with in all its stages as a public Bill.”

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I suggest to the Minister that it would be advisable to bring in a general Bill. We should have one Bill to deal with all these institutions and allow them to mortgage the land under their control. It would save a lot of time then, and we would not have to waste so much time dealing with each Bill separately.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have made an improvement in this case, because we have grouped three of them. We never refuse a reasonable request.

Mr. MORGAN: It would be much better to have a general Act, so that all societies throughout Queensland could conduct their operations under it, with the permission of the Minister.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will bear that suggestion in mind when I am next dealing with the matter.

Mr. MORGAN: Such societies should have the powers given by this Bill without the necessity of coming to the Minister for special legislation.

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 ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

*Hon. J. Mullan.]*

## MATERNITY BILL.

## SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): It falls to my lot to move the second reading of this Bill, the title of which is—

“A Bill to make better provision for the establishment and maintenance of maternity hospitals and baby clinics, and for other ancillary purposes.”

The credit for the introduction of this measure, apart from the fact that it accords with the general principles of the humanitarian Labour movement, rightly belongs to the present Home Secretary, together with another Bill, the second reading of which I shall have the opportunity of moving at a later stage—that is, the Health Acts Amendment Bill. It goes without saying that this Bill has the whole-hearted support of every member on this side of the House, and I hope it will gain the approval of every member of the House. Certainly it will have the blessing of the mothers of the children born and yet to be born in this State. Although it is not as contentious as many other Bills are with which we deal in this Chamber, it is none the less important. Placed in the category of humanitarian legislation, the introduction of which is characteristic of this Government and the party with which I am associated, it is a most highly important Bill. Judged from the standpoint of humanitarian legislation, many other Bills fade into insignificance when compared with it. What Bill can be more important for hon. members to consider than one which aims at decreasing the death rate of the mothers and children of this State, which aims at minimising the risk during the critical period of [11.30 a.m.] childbirth, which aims at increasing the birth rate, and making it easier for mothers to bear children? This Bill, in my opinion, will increase our natural population. I believe that it will help to increase settlement, by making the facilities greater in outback places. It has for its object the training of mothers and the care of little children. I emphasise the fact that no Bill, judged from that humanitarian standpoint, could possibly be more important. I anticipate being taken to task for expressing these sentiments, because, when the State Children Department was under discussion in this House a few days ago, I stated that every child born in the State was an asset to the State, and that it was the duty of the State to see that that child had an opportunity of being properly fed, clothed, and educated, and given a chance in life; and, to my surprise, the following day one of the leading newspapers was responsible for publishing this statement—

“If sickly, deformed, vicious, and feeble-minded children are assets to the State, and if the so-very-generous department recognises them to be so, and if the taxpayers and the more practical and level-headed portion of the community consent to the Jones formula, there is going to be a crash on this continent much sooner than even the Japanese think.”

Can you imagine any sentiment more callous? Could anything be more heartlessly expressed? I deny that the children of the poor are deformed, vicious, and weak-minded. The Government do not regret, nor do they

[Hon. A. J. Jones,

apologise for, the money they have spent in protecting the lives and taking into their care the children who are looked after by the State Children Department.

Mr. CORSER: Who made that statement?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was made in the “*Courier*.” The Government have heard the cry of the little children, since they have been in office. I think that has been expressed very ably in the lines of Mrs. Browning—

“Do you hear the children weeping, Oh,  
my brothers,  
Ere their sorrow comes with years?  
They are leaning their young heads  
against their mothers,  
And that cannot stop their tears.  
The young lambs are bleating in the  
meadows,  
The young birds are chirping in the  
nest;  
The young fawns are playing with the  
shadows;  
The young flowers are blowing towards  
the West;  
But the young, young children, Oh, my  
brothers,  
They are weeping bitterly:  
They are weeping in the playtime of the  
others  
In the country of the free.”

Mr. MORGAN: You should learn that off by heart.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a beautiful sentiment, and I did not care to trust to my memory. I recognise that the hon. member who interjects cannot appreciate properly that sentiment; probably he does not appreciate the expressions of some of our great poets. Many children are born in this State without the aid of medical care and skill, or qualified nursing. Especially were the children of the early pioneers so born, and many valuable lives, sad to say, have been lost. In my opinion, there is nothing so sad as the death of a mother in giving birth to her child; the loss of the mother is always most keenly felt. This Bill is aimed at making it less dangerous, less risky for the mothers, especially the mothers in the bush. Provision is made for the treatment, care, and nursing of mothers and infants in the remote places. When the hon. member for Albert was speaking on the introduction of this measure he said that it would encourage settlement in the remote places.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It will certainly make it more attractive for people to settle in remote places. My sympathy, and the sympathy of this Government, is always manifested along the lines of encouraging the people who pioneer—the people who go outback and blaze the track. At the expense of wearing the House I would like to quote some verses by George Essex Evans, in his beautiful poem, “The Women of the West”—

“They left the vine-wreathed cottage and  
the mansion on the hill,  
The houses in the busy streets where life  
is never still,  
The pleasures of the city, and the friends  
they cherished best:  
For love they faced the wilderness—  
women of the West.”

In the slab-built, zinc-covered homestead of some lately taken run,  
 In the tent beside the bankment of a railway just begun,  
 In the huts of new selections, in the camps of man's unrest;  
 On the frontiers of the Nation—live the women of the West."

Then he goes on—

"And there are hours men cannot soothe,  
 and words men cannot say,  
 The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away."

And he concludes—

"While men have hearts to do and dare,  
 And yet o'er all the rest  
 The hearts that make the Nation are  
 The Women of the West."

Mr. MORGAN: I quite agree with that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think it is a fine sentiment, expressed in beautiful language. Hon. members, by following the Bill very closely, will observe that it makes provision for the constitution of districts. We may establish in one district more than one maternity home. Clause 5 of the Bill authorises the Governor in Council to establish within a district maternity hospitals for the reception, care, and treatment of midwifery cases; hospitals for the treatment of diseases peculiar to women; ante-natal and baby clinics; training schools for nurses in midwifery, in diseases peculiar to women, and in matters ante-natal and post-natal relating to motherhood and infant life; and to equip, manage, maintain, and control the same. There are four baby clinics established in Brisbane which combine the functions of ante-natal and baby clinics—though the latter function, so far, is the greater part of their particular work. These are State institutions. It is the intention of the Government to extend baby clinics to other towns. Of course, it is impracticable and not economical to establish a baby clinic in every small town in the State. We have to begin somewhere. This Government began in Brisbane. We have four clinics in Brisbane, and we intend to establish clinics in other towns where they are necessary. A new clinic, costing about £2,500, will be established in Fortitude Valley. It became necessary to build that clinic because of the fact that we were evicted from or had to leave the premises we were occupying. The building will be erected as a baby clinic, and will carry out the functions relating to ante-natal matters to which I have already referred. The average number per 1,000 of the children under one year who die in the Commonwealth is about seventy-seven in the metropolitan areas and about sixty-three in other areas. The "Daily Mail" of the 18th instant had some figures relating to the matter, which figures I have verified. For last year the number of deaths under one year per 1,000 births registered for the various States were—

Western Australia ... ..	78.25
Tasmania ... ..	78.02
Victoria ... ..	72.55
South Australia ... ..	65.43
New South Wales ... ..	62.56
Queensland ... ..	54.16

It is gratifying to know, and it is a high compliment to our health authorities who control the baby clinics to find that the death rate is less than in any other State in the Commonwealth. In New Zealand I believe

they have no State institutions, but the work is carried on by private institutions, and, probably owing to the suitable climatic conditions in the Dominion, the death rate is even lower than in Queensland. As the scheme develops and trained nurses are available, the Home Secretary contemplates intimately co-ordinating the functions of ante-natal and baby clinic matters with maternity hospitals. We will not be able to attend to all the hospitals at once, but we have a sum of £200,000 available for the establishment of maternity hospitals throughout this State, and, in my opinion, first consideration should be given to the women of the bush and those living in remote places.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Government will appropriate a sum necessary to carry on this good work. There are 104 hospitals in this State, and we propose—although the work cannot be undertaken at once—to establish at least sixty to sixty-five maternity hospitals in Queensland. We already have plans made, and estimates of the cost arrived at, in connection with these hospitals. That has not been done for purposes of argument in this Chamber, but for immediate action so that we can carry out this policy. I regret very much that, owing to a throat trouble, my voice is not strong enough this morning to enable me to explain all the details as clearly as I otherwise would. Although not expressed in so many words, I am of the opinion that this Bill is full of sympathy for the mothers of the nation to be and for the children of the coming generation. It is hoped that the Home Secretary will long be spared to realise the vast amount of good to humanity which will be accomplished by the Bill and which has been initiated by him and on whose behalf I have very much pleasure in moving—

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Hon. members on this side welcome the Bill, particularly the Country members, who have for a long time past urged the necessity for making better provision for maternity cases in the bush. The Minister expressed the greatest sympathy with the people in the outback portions of the State. After all, the necessity for this Bill has been brought more into prominence because of the conditions placed upon the settlers in the bush during the last few years.

Mr. COLLINS: You are going to spoil your speech now. You are small-minded.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of smallness of mind. If you impose excessive rates and heavy taxation, it takes away from the people in those places the opportunities of getting comforts for their womenfolk by sending them into the centres of civilisation to enable them to get all the comforts they are entitled to.

Mr. W. COOPER: Did they do it before?

Mr. MOORE: In many cases they did. There were some unfortunate cases where they were not able to. I welcome the Bill, because I think there is absolute necessity for a bush-nursing scheme throughout Queensland. The Health Acts Amendment Bill contains some very stringent provisions with regard to maternity homes and lying-in hospitals in the country. If those provisions are carried out in accordance with the strict

Mr. Moore.]

wording of the Act, they are going to impose a tremendous hardship on the people. We know perfectly well that women are placed in very unfortunate positions because it is difficult to estimate with mathematical precision the exact time of birth; and women have not sufficient time to get to centres of civilisation or the lying-in hospitals provided in country towns, and they have to take the next best thing. That is, they have to seek the assistance of people who, though not properly qualified, are able to alleviate suffering to a tremendous degree. We know that in administering the Health Act obstacles have been placed in the way of people keeping this class of home in various parts of the country. Unless the Government are in a position to find adequate nursing or hospital accommodation, it is a mistake that they should take away something—it is not a class of hospital that we altogether like—that is of assistance to women in extreme cases. We know perfectly well that the distances to be travelled in the country are very great, and that women, especially the women with young children, very often are unable to go away two or three weeks beforehand, as they should do. I certainly think a bush-nursing scheme is desirable to meet cases of that sort. I hope that the Government will subsidise the hospitals already existing, including private hospitals and lying-in hospitals, before going to the expense of building new hospitals to bring about a better state of efficiency.

One thing that particularly struck me in connection with the town-planning exhibition that was held in Brisbane two or three years ago was the baby clinics exhibit in charge of a nurse, and the great interest taken in it by the large number of people who attended the exhibition. It was an eye-opener to see the simple, inexpensive conveniences that were made out of everyday articles that people have in their own homes, such as kerosene cases and kerosene tins. Posters were put up informing people of the danger connected with flies and the pollution of milk, and the whole exhibit was most interesting and most instructive, and a tremendous amount of interest was taken in it. It has often struck me since what a good thing it would be if a similar exhibit were sent round the country districts and exhibited at agricultural shows so that the people attending those gatherings would have the same opportunity of seeing it as the people who attended the town-planning exhibition in Brisbane. There is a large number of people who do not understand the risk in connection with the rearing of babies. After all, the rearing of a first baby is really in the nature of an experiment, and it is a wonder how the unfortunate child ever grows to maturity at all; and if instruction could be given by means of an exhibit in different portions of the State, it would make for the health of these children.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The want of knowledge is the greatest danger of all.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman seemed to take the view that the low death rate among children in Queensland was partly due to the establishment of baby clinics. My idea is that the low death rate is due to the fact that we are in a more fortunate position than those in the Southern States, as we have not the same large number of people congregated in one city, like they have in Sydney and Melbourne. We know from statistics in connection with slums that the

death rate is much greater in congested centres of population. It is not a question so much of saving the life of the child as the giving of every assistance to the mothers in the country. The death rate in the country is not nearly so high as it is in the cities; but we should do everything possible to save the needless suffering that a large number of women have to go through because of the want of accommodation and suitable attendance when the time comes for the child to be born. If anything can be done—and I think it can be done under this scheme—to establish bush nursing, a great deal of good will eventuate. In cases where such a scheme cannot be established, assistance should be given to homes kept by women who have had considerable experience in this class of work, and in such cases stringent conditions under the Health Act should be relaxed. In my own electorate I know of hospitals that were of great benefit—I do not say that they were run by certificated nurses or that there was a medical man within a reasonable distance—that have had to close owing to the regulations under the Health Act. I quite admit that in the towns and in large centres of population it is well to administer the regulations as stringently as possible; but in some of the remote districts it is impossible to get registered nurses unless they are going to be subsidised, as there would not be sufficient work to keep them occupied, and the women already there who are carrying on these hospitals should be allowed to alleviate suffering to the best of their ability. These houses may not be all that is desired, but, to a certain extent, they have given a feeling of confidence to the people in remote places. In some of these places it is not possible to secure a medical man or a registered nurse in time, and we should give the women who have referred to an opportunity to do the best they can. The Bill will go a long way towards inducing people to settle in the country districts. One of the great objections in the past to people settling in remote places has been the fact that there was no competent nurse available in the district. We all know that this scheme will require a large staff, and that a large amount of travelling will have to be done to enable the nurses to get to the remote centres; and I am afraid there will be considerable difficulty before the scheme is put on an efficient basis. The bush nursing scheme at Stanthorpe has been remarkably successful and has been of the greatest comfort to the settlers in that district. I am perfectly sure that hon. members on this side of the House will assist the Minister in every possible way to pass this Bill, and will assist in every way they can to make it as effective and as complete as possible.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Upswich*): I am very pleased to be associated with a Government who have introduced such a Bill as this, and I was very pleased to hear that the deputy leader of the Opposition will assist the Government in establishing this nursing scheme.

Mr. MORGAN: It has been a long time coming.

Mr. GLEDSON: We have to make a start some time.

Mr. MORGAN: You are adopting our policy.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am not concerned as to whose policy I am adopting so long as it is going to do something for the good of the

[*Mr. Moore.*

people of Queensland. If it is going to do good, we should be prepared to do all we can to put it into operation. Yesterday I heard a commercial traveller from Bendigo, Victoria, speaking in connection with children, and he said, "I have travelled from one end of Queensland to the other, and I am surprised at the want of knowledge on the part of the people in Victoria in regard to Queensland. Down there all you can hear is that they are a lot of Bolsheviks in Queensland." He did not know that I was a member of Parliament. He further said, "You have a motherhood in Queensland of whom any country ought to be proud." He said that there is a wrong impression on the part of the people in the Southern States. The mothers of Queensland were mothers that any country could be proud of. We ought to be prepared to do all we can as a

[12 noon] Parliament to bring this Bill into operation. I do not intend to take up much time in dealing with the matter. Most of us are agreed that this is a good Bill, which deserves the support of everyone who has the welfare of the mothers of Queensland at heart. As both the Minister and the deputy leader of the Opposition have stated, it is not only the event of maternity, but the days and weeks beforehand that we have to consider; and, if a home can be provided and a woman knows that she will have proper care and attention, it will remove a lot of worry and trouble from her mind, and give her a better chance than she would otherwise have. I want to point out what has been done in other countries of the world in this regard, to show that other countries have started to establish these hospitals. The "Australian Worker" of Wednesday, 13th September, contained this report regarding what is being done by the Russian Soviet Government—

"The amount of supplies given to mothers during the period before and after confinement is to be on the same basis as that given to those who are temporarily incapacitated from working—i.e., equal to average normal earnings. During the further period of nursing, the assistance given is to be equal to one-fourth of the foregoing.

"These principles have been maintained throughout, and in addition to these statutory grants, grants of baby-linen and other necessaries have been given to necessitous mothers. By a decree of 5th December, 1921, a grant, equal to one month's wages, is given to insured workers and wives of insured workers 'for the needs of newly-born children'—i.e., to cover the costs of baby-linen, etc. When the Maternity Welfare Department was formed in May, 1918, there were thirty-four local institutions for maternity and infants, chiefly in Petrograd and Moscow. At the end of 1921 there were 2,383 such institutions, comprising—

Maternity homes ... ..	167
Homes for infants under twelve months ... ..	256
Homes for infants under three years ... ..	214
Crèches ... ..	1,402
Clinics ... ..	216
Milk supply centres ... ..	118
Dairy farms and model centres ... ..	10

"The number of mothers in the homes was 5,179; of children, 193,560, apart from over 6,100 regularly attending the clinics and centres.

"The work of these institutions is on the same lines as in other countries, although naturally the equipment is poor and there have been constant complaints of the shortage of supplies and, more especially, of the inadequate number of trained nurses and doctors available.

"As in every other sphere, the economic situation during the last four years has greatly hindered the development of welfare work; but, in spite of all shortcomings, the fact remains that a network of institutions has been set up throughout the country, and that they are gradually being equipped and made more efficient.

"The lack of experienced staffs is being made good by systematic training courses, lasting from nine to twelve months, in the large centres; in Moscow alone over 1,000 nurses have completed their training. The students for these courses are selected on the recommendation of the women's sections in particular works, and when trained return to their own area. Courses are now in progress in twenty-nine provincial centres. In Moscow a course for training doctor specialists on children's ailments was also established in 1921 and eighty-one doctors have already completed the course and taken up posts in central and provincial institutions."

This is taken from "Russian Information and Review." It shows what is being done in other countries in connection with this matter; but to establish maternity homes only and stop at that will not be carrying the work as far as it should go. Unless we continue the training of nurses and doctors, we shall not have done the work we ought to have done. As the deputy leader of the Opposition said, it will be impossible to establish maternity homes in places that will touch all the outside centres; but it will be possible to train nurses, similar to the system of itinerant school teachers, who will be able to go about from centre to centre making a hospital their base. They will be able to go from home to home and give a course of instruction to prospective mothers to help them before the birth and also at the time and after the birth. I understand that it is proposed to do that under the Bill, and it will be a blessing to the motherhood of our country. I think that all hon. members will be glad they were in the House when this measure was passed.

Mr. TAYLOR (Hindson): When the Minister gave notice last week of his intention to introduce this Bill several hon. members on this side, including myself, congratulated the hon. gentleman. We have the Bill before us now, and it commends itself to the favourable consideration of members on both sides of the House. In regard to the establishment of maternity hospitals and the training of nurses in the far outback parts of the State, the Bill has not been introduced a day too soon. When the Minister gave notice of his intention to introduce the Bill mention was made of what the State owes to the women outback. We in the more populous centres of the State are certainly indebted to the courage, endurance, and patience of the women who accompany their husbands

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into the remote parts of Queensland and assist in the development of the State. The loneliness of the life and the fact that they are so remote from nurses and hospitals—more than 100 miles in many cases—is sufficient indication of the necessity for the establishment of maternity homes in those areas. We on this side of the Chamber welcome the Bill. We welcome any humanitarian legislation.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: We on this side stand for humanitarian principles just as much as any other section of the House, and we have shown our sympathy and support of such legislation on every possible occasion.

But there is a very great difference between what I call humanitarian legislation and subsidies for idleness; that is where we differ in this Chamber. In regard to any legislation which will assist the mothers of our State during a very trying period of their lives, we are out to give assistance wherever possible. I asked the Minister when he was introducing the Bill whether it contained a provision to enable those who were unable to pay the necessary fees to enter one of these institutions, and he said that it did. I see that such a provision is included in the Bill. Those who can pay will be expected to do so, but there will be no bar to anyone entering these maternity homes. Free nursing and attention will be given where required. The Minister also told us that the Government have plans and estimates prepared for about sixty-five maternity homes throughout the State. It is gratifying to know that. I should like some information as to what the cost of each institution will be. Seeing that the Minister intends to allocate £200,000 to this particular work, there should be nothing to prevent the Act becoming operative immediately it is passed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give you the information you ask for when we are in Committee.

Mr. TAYLOR: There should be no delay at all in carrying out the purposes of this measure and establishing the institutions as soon as possible. The Minister gave an assurance that a commencement would be made in the remote portions of the State, particularly those places where they have not got the necessary accommodation for our noble and splendid women. I call them noble and splendid women because they go out there and live under housing conditions which we would not tolerate in the city. In the city we want a bath every morning, and we are not satisfied unless we can have a nice enamel bath, with a big shower, and all the other comforts which the city provides. They do not get anything like those comforts in the remote portions of the State, and it is hard, especially on the women who are denied these things once they leave the city. We know many men and women who have gone out into the bush who have lived under poor housing conditions, and it is our duty to help them all we can. We on this side welcome the Bill, and hope it will become operative as soon as possible. We hope that the administration will be placed in most capable hands, so that there will be no waste of money. The £200,000 which the Minister mentioned will be required to cover the cost of this scheme will be drawn on for many years. I am sure the Bill

will have a speedy passage through the House, and will be supported by every hon. member.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I desire to congratulate the Minister for introducing this Bill, and particularly to congratulate the present Home Secretary for initiating this class of legislation. I regret very much that the deputy leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Aubigny, stated that it was due to the measures introduced by the Government that the womenfolk in the country districts are compelled to put up with hardships. It is not due to the legislation of this Government at all, because we know that in the past the women who have gone into the Western districts and country districts have always had to put up with hardships. They have suffered many discomforts ever since Queensland has had responsible government, and it is not due to this Government's legislation at all. We know from bitter experience that no Government prior to the present Government ever attempted to introduce legislation of this kind. It ill-becomes members of the Opposition to charge the Government with neglect in this matter, seeing that they themselves never attempted to place a similar measure on the statute-book. I consider this is one of the most humanitarian measures ever introduced in the State or Federal sphere. We know that the womenfolk in the outback places of Queensland have suffered through the inadequate accommodation provided for them. Prospective mothers have a right to expect the best attention that can be given to them; but we know that they do not always receive the best of attention at the most critical part of their lives. Nothing causes a woman more suffering than the inattention she receives at that period of her life. It is our duty to make the conditions such that a woman will know that she will have every comfort in the hospital, and also that she will go back better fitted, from a health point of view, to carry out her domestic duties, and again to become a mother when the time arrives.

There is a hospital in the town of Marburg where I live. Out of the 800 children who first saw the light of day in that hospital during the last nine years only three have died. There were only two deaths amongst the mothers, and those deaths occurred, not through any neglect at that particular time, but because the mothers were suffering from Bright's disease. In my opinion we should establish maternity homes in various places outside the city areas altogether, where the mothers may have ideal surroundings, and where they will get every care and attention. The doctor who is at Marburg is a most humane man and often refused to make a charge if he thought the mother and her husband were not in a position to pay. He would ask them to give him one penny, and then he would give them a clear receipt for the amount he usually charged for such accommodation. If a private medical practitioner can be so humane, the Government should also follow the same practice. Where prospective mothers and their husbands are unable to pay for their treatment in such maternity homes, they should not be asked to pay. The Government should make up for that by subsidising the institution. In other cases the medical men in attendance should also fix a fee for attendance on the

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mothers at a nominal cost. I would compel every medical practitioner to attend a prospective mother when called upon to do so. That may appear to be a drastic action, but it is necessary to take drastic action at such time because our native-born Queenslanders are the best asset we can get; and, if we can increase the population of Queensland by providing careful medical attention, the results will be amply justified. I hope the Minister who has the administration of the Act when it is passed will be sympathetic to the people in the country who are unable to help themselves. I am sure the Act will be administered from a humanitarian point of view.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I congratulate the Minister for introducing this Bill. This is a principle which has been advocated by the members of the Country party for a long time. The Minister should associate with the measure a telephone system so that women in country districts can get into communication with the doctor by telephone.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You did not consider the question of aeroplanes, did you?

Mr. CORSER: I did not know that the Bill was in the air. I hope that there is more in the Bill than that. I hope that the Home Secretary will soon be restored to his usual health and that he will reap the gratitude of many women in our country districts for this measure. The Minister in charge of the Bill has quoted some very appropriate lines from Essex Evans, one of our Queensland poets, on the hardships of our people in country districts and the great part they play in the development of Australia. Members on this side have on many occasions referred to the great disadvantages of the bush and the work that women have to perform in assisting to make the family income. Such women to a large extent disable themselves by the conditions under which they are compelled to live because of the poor remuneration of their husbands' labour. I think everyone will agree that we cannot give too much assistance to such women. The lack of assistance for the country woman often mitigates against her health and comfort, and the health and comfort of the child.

The Government not long ago instituted a system of baby clinics of which we have four or five in the cities, and the Minister stated to-day that a sum of £2,500 is being appropriated for the erection of a suitable building for the clinic in Fortitude Valley. That is all a matter of congratulation, but we must remind the Minister that we are providing these baby clinics in the cities where not only nurses but also doctors are available, whereas, up to the present time, we have neglected to afford such facilities in places where neither nurses nor doctors are available. We hope under this Bill to secure not only maternity hospitals but also a certain amount of assistance by providing nurses. We have in Queensland some of the finest nurses it is possible to get—women who have given up their lives to their work, and who are perfectly qualified and capable of managing any institution and who have continued that work very often for very small remuneration.

No doubt the Minister has at the back of his mind some alteration in the provision for the baby bonus. Whether he has made

any arrangement with the Commonwealth Government to work the two Acts in conjunction or not, I do not know; but probably there is some such idea at the back of his mind.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you think they are going to repeal the baby bonus?

Mr. CORSER: I do not say so: I am not a member of the Government. What was at the back of my mind was that perhaps the Minister had made some representations to the Commonwealth Government in that respect. I am sure he is not introducing the Bill without having some idea at the back of his mind with reference to the baby bonus of £5 for each child.

In this Bill we find provision for maternity hospitals and the treatment of diseases peculiar to women, and also for the education of nurses. My idea is that in a Bill like this we might provide for some system of education of young women who may not yet be mothers or even married women. There are too many of our women who are learning everything else except that which is useful from a domestic and health point of view. You see George street streaming with young women going to and from the Technical College, and every day and every night our streets are full of girls who attend the various institutions in the city; and only a few of those young women who will be the mothers of the future think of the serious side of life and what information they may gather that will be of assistance to them afterwards.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think ignorance is a very dangerous thing. They should be taught from early childhood.

Mr. CORSER: Yes. No doubt every member of Parliament has come into contact with very trying circumstances of young mothers, and I think a great amount of trouble could be avoided if young women were trained when they are capable of learning anything at all in the proper way of meeting the troubles which are likely to assail them before they become mothers. Some mothers do afford such education to their own daughters, but many do not care about it at all.

There is an impression in some parts of the world that every child should belong to the State. We know that in Russia, in some districts, every child becomes the property of the State. They are collected and belong to the State absolutely, without regard for their mothers. We do not want anything of that kind to obtain here. The love of a mother for her child must be maintained, and we must not allow anything to creep into this Bill or into its administration which will make any mother think that we are doing anything more than our duty to her, leaving her the full custody of her children and wiping out the idea that any such Russian doctrine is going to be tolerated here for one moment.

On this subject it is important to remember that we are in an unfortunate position. We have a young man earning £4 5s. a week and a young woman earning £3 10s. a week as a typist. They earn more as single individuals and have more money to spend than if they were married. If they marry, the young man's £4 5s. will have to provide for the joint home and for the young woman. That involves a great sacrifice on her part.

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with the result that many young women have to think very hard before they undertake marital obligations.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is a bit harder to work over a tub than over a typewriter. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: It is, and the thought of having to rear children on a limited income is likely to keep too many of our young women from undertaking married life. The husband cannot give her £3 a week to live on and keep the home in addition. Some day we must tackle that problem in our endeavour to build up a healthy and prosperous community and to bring up our children in the way they should go.

I am very pleased to see the provisions of the Bill. I understand that £150,000 is available from "Golden Casket" moneys for this scheme. The money will be spent in a very good direction. I hope it [12.30 p.m.] will bring benefit to our women in country districts, who are far away from any comforts, who have injured their lives and probably the lives of their children because of the hardships they have encountered in helping their husbands to make a living and keep from their properties pear and all sorts of pests—work which we ought to make possible of accomplishment without calling upon the women and children to do it.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): It is indeed pleasing to know that hon. members generally have given the Bill their benediction. No matter what our political views may be, one and all are sincerely desirous of seeing this measure realise the anticipations of the hon. gentleman whose name has been associated with its initiation. It is only fair to admit that this scheme has been suggested previously in this Chamber and advocated by more than one or two hon. members. Although I do not generally agree with the hon. member for Murilla, on this occasion I am prepared to say that his voice has been raised in this Chamber on more than one occasion in regard to the necessity of dealing with this very important matter. We do not realise the tremendous wastage that occurs in the infant life of this State, of the Commonwealth, or even of the United Kingdom. I went to the trouble of looking up some figures in connection with this important matter of maternity and infant life. To me they were startling. For instance, Professor D. A. Welsh, in delivering a lecture at a conference in Sydney, in 1917, was reported in the "Sydney Morning Herald" of 14th June, 1917, as having made this statement—

"You have doubtless read of an ancient custom in China of throwing the unwanted girl babies out to die. How dreadful! you say. What will you say of another country which badly needs all its babies, and yet exposes many thousands, boys and girls, indiscriminately, every year to certain death? Perhaps you think of the masses of China as steeped in barbarism. I ask you to spare a thought for another people steeped in worse than barbarism—steeped in ignorance and indifference."

One of the main considerations responsible for bringing this measure before us has been the necessity of not only giving some guarantee that the mother shall have every comfort

to enable her to bring about a safe delivery, but that the child, after it is born, shall have some guarantee that, during that most important and critical period of its life—the first twelve months—it shall have a better chance of living. Speaking on the question of the terrible mortality in infant life, Professor D. A. Welsh, quoting Sir Charles MacKellar, a well-known medical man, said—

"Throughout the two and a-half years of war, to the end of 1916, Australia has been losing her best men at the rate of twenty lives each day. During the same period she has been losing her infants, under one year, at the rate of twenty-five a day. Indeed, for the last twelve years, every hour has struck the death-knell of an infant. If we extend the figures to include children under five years of age, we find we are losing these little lives at the rate of thirty-five a day."

Summarised, that means that during the first two and a-half years of the war, there were 17,672 Australians killed, and during the same period there died at home under the age of five years—and no notice was taken of it—no less than 32,000 children. Hon. members will see, therefore, the necessity for dealing with this particular matter raised by the hon. member for Burnett, when he pointed out that not only was it advisable to establish maternity hospitals but that advantage should be taken of the period the mother spends in those hospitals to give her much needed instruction on not only the care but the rearing of her infant child. In that direction, the establishment of these hospitals will, no doubt, prove invaluable.

To get a further idea of the importance of this question, we have only to look at the figures for the United Kingdom. In the "Daily Mail" of 26th August, 1917, there appeared an article dealing with the question, in which it was pointed out that, during a period when Great Britain lost 75,000 men, or 2½ per cent. of her army, about 100,000 children died before they reached the age of twelve months.

I quote those figures to point out the necessity of taking advantage of the establishment of these maternity hospitals, not only to guarantee the mother full care, proper attention, and safe delivery, but at the same time to impress on mothers some of the necessary and rudimentary ideas in looking after and caring for their children. I trust that the Bill, when it is passed into law, will realise the anticipations of the gentleman whose name is associated with its introduction to this Chamber. I know of no object to which the money of the State could be devoted with better results than in the establishment of these maternity hospitals. I am sure it must be pleasing to the Acting Home Secretary to be able to convey to the Home Secretary knowledge of the unanimity with which the Bill was received, the praise bestowed upon it at its second reading, and the general good wishes that have been expressed by all sections of the House that the anticipations will be fully realised, and that a long-felt want—particularly in the western and far northern portions of the State—will be met, that satisfaction generally will be given, and that the State will have made a distinct move forward in the direction of tackling this very important problem—a move which will result in saving, not only the lives of mothers, but

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a large percentage of the infant life that now is lost, not only to the family circle, but to the State.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I would like, first of all, to express my regret that the Minister who introduced the Bill to-day is suffering from a bad cold. One knows how difficult it is to speak under conditions like that and do justice to one's self. It does not matter what our political views may be; in matters of this kind there always is a strong under-current of sympathy towards anyone who finds himself physically unable to tackle a job satisfactorily.

I think the Minister scarcely did himself justice in some of the criticisms which he made in connection with certain matters. In addressing one's self to the Bill, one is compelled, very largely, to go over the same ground as other speakers, because, to a very great extent, the scope of discussion is limited. There are two or three points, however, which will bear stressing. It does not matter who the man is or what he may have been in his early days—whether he was in affluent or difficult circumstances—there is not a man who is worthy the name of man who does not feel that he owes a good deal to the mother who gave him birth. I would not give very much for the man who did not feel that the kindest thoughts centred round the home of his early upbringing. I say that with all my heart. I believe that the attitude which has been adopted by the Government in connection with this Bill was largely the outcome of women themselves realising the necessity for something like this being done. They have taken the initiative, and rightly so. I think it is only right that members of Parliament should have their attention drawn to matters belonging peculiarly to women. There are many things that appeal to women as women more than they appeal to men as men. The women have taken the initiative and urged on the Government to do certain things—I am referring more particularly to baby clinics. No doubt the same influences have operated in regard to this Bill. It is satisfactory to those who have occupied positions in the Government of the State in days gone by, and who know a great deal of what is happening in the country, to see such action being taken. Some of us scarcely know what the development of the State owes to the self-sacrificing women of the State. I have moved about the State with members of this House, and I have been struck with what women will endure in order to assist their husbands in the upbringing of their family and in the development of their own homes. We should do everything we possibly can to assist women, not only in this direction, but we should in every way assist those who are in the country endeavouring to build up Australia and endeavouring to build up Queensland. Perhaps there is no State that requires the help of the women more than the State of Queensland. We have such a tremendous territory, and we have so many places widely separated, and that adds to the loneliness of a woman who is helping her husband to develop the country. In making provision for a period about which we all know—there is no need to be a woman to know it—we have only to look back to our past days to know how anxious we men have been at such a period and realising that we are all glad to do all that is humanly possible to assist those who are undergoing intense physical suffering. I

take it to that extent every person will feel glad that this action is being taken, and I am sure there will not be a discordant note in this House in that regard. If it is going to cost money, then we shall have to foot the bill. I would like to ask whether, in connection with the service to be rendered to mothers under the Bill, there will be any payments by the mothers from the baby bonus which they now receive, although I do not expect a reply to that question until we get into Committee. Some remarks were made by the Minister and by the hon. member for Ipswich that were not complimentary to members on this side. In introducing the Bill, the Minister spoke as though hon. members on this side had no sympathy whatever for the poor and needy. He quoted something that appeared in the "Courier" about the children of the poor being deformed, vicious, and weak minded. I am not going to plead for the "Courier"—it is able to look after itself. It has been claimed that hon. members opposite are at all times out to help the poor and the needy. I am not saying that they are not; but every man on this side is out just as much to help the poor and the needy as the Minister or the hon. member for Ipswich.

MR. HARTLEY: The hon. member is out to help the poor to get poorer.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is an interjection which is worthy of the hon. member.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: My experience of this life has been, broadly speaking, that most inspirations which go in the direction of helping the poor spring from another fountain, and that fountain is religion. Any man who has been influenced that way must feel that he has a duty to the poor. When this talk by hon. members opposite is trotted out presumably for electioneering purposes, it to some extent damns the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think that I said the hon. gentleman had no sympathy for the poor.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I readily accept any statement that the Minister may make; but it seemed to me that the Minister was playing on that string—that hon. members on this side did not care what happens to the poor. The hon. member for Ipswich quoted from an Australian paper linking us up with the Bolsheviks. We in Australia do not want Bolsheviks to show us the way. We are quite able to look after ourselves. The great principles of Christianity are such that we do not want Bolshevism.

MR. GLEDSON: Our humanity has not gone as far as they have yet.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I hope the Bill will have a very speedy passage through this Chamber, and that every hon. member will do what he can to assist the motherhood of the community.

MR. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): One cannot help being struck this morning with the very fine attitude adopted by hon. members on both sides in connection with this matter. I desire to congratulate the Minister who has introduced the Bill, and I also desire to congratulate the Home Secretary, who I understand has been largely responsible for having this measure brought before the House. In discussing this serious question, we must naturally take our minds back to

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the suffering by pioneering mothers of Australia before we were born, and before any legislation like this was brought forward in their interests. I am sure that many cases of suffering by mothers have been brought under the notice of the Minister.

I feel sure also that the hon. gentleman, if he has the administration of the Act, will see that the country people get all the assistance that they deserve in this connection. One can realise the terrible anxiety that mothers, particularly young mothers, go through in the bush, and we should do everything possible to relieve that anxiety. We must remember, too, that at the present time, in connection with our soldier settlements, we have a number of young mothers settling in the bush, and a scheme such as is proposed in this Bill should commend itself to every legislator in this State. One can remember hundreds of deplorable incidents happening in the bush. I have known of cases where young mothers have given birth to a child while on their way to a nursing home. The Minister and members on the Government side must realise that settlement in the country is increasing by leaps and bounds, and a number of new centres are being formed; and I hope that in a scheme such as is proposed every consideration will be given to country districts. This is a matter that should go hand in hand with education, so that everything possible will be done to see that children become healthy and strong in the interests of Australia. After all, the Australian baby is the best asset that we can have, and I hope this Bill, when it is passed, will receive the same sympathetic administration that it has received in this House. I hope the Home Secretary will give the people in the country all the assistance that is necessary; and if the scheme does cost a great deal of money, it will be money well spent. A scheme such as this will have a tendency to inspire a feeling of confidence in the minds of those intending to settle in the country, and mothers will be assured that they will have proper attention during the most critical period of their lives. The question of eliminating the difficulties under which the women in the country are suffering cannot be brought too prominently before the women in the cities, and it should be made known to them that there is safety in this regard, so that they will be induced to settle in our backblocks. I heartily congratulate the Minister on bringing in this Bill, and hope it will be administered in the same enthusiastic spirit in which it has been discussed here this morning.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I desire to congratulate the Government on introducing a measure of this kind, as the Bill is absolutely necessary in the interests of country districts. The Bill will do a lot of good, and will give the mothers in the country a feeling of security during the most trying period of their lives. I would like to know from the Minister how many hospitals he will be able to establish in the near future under this scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: About sixty.

Mr. RIORDAN: Those sixty hospitals will be of great assistance, and I hope it will not be long before they are operating. I also hope the Minister will see that the Bill is first put into operation in the more isolated districts instead of in the more populated centres. The hospital committees

will be able to render great assistance in the carrying out of this scheme, and I trust they will consider the advisableness of assisting people in the country districts far distant from established maternity wards, either by working in conjunction with the ambulance brigade or by providing transport for those who cannot afford heavy transport charges in these cases.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about free railway passes?

Mr. RIORDAN: Free railway passes could be given, and are given in these cases. On every occasion when I have appealed to the Home Secretary for assistance in the way of a railway pass, it has been forthcoming, and I am sure there will be no difficulty in that regard. This Bill

is a most important one to [2 p.m.] country members, as well as to other members of the Committee, and will, I feel sure, meet with the support of every hon. member. We all know the difficulties in the country for mothers in those districts, through lack of facilities. A Bill of this kind will, no doubt, give confidence. People who have travelled in our vast spaces must realise the loneliness of the lives of the women there. Travelling through Queensland—not along the railway lines, but in districts where transport is expensive—is difficult. While I have been a member of this House I have travelled, I suppose, over the most desolate part of Queensland, right down from Burketown, through Camooweal, Urundangie, and Boulia, and back into Winton. Nobody can realise until he has made a trip of that kind, or been through the electorate of the hon. member for Balonne, across from Cunnamulla to Mungindi, the difficulties and the trying time experienced by those who are expecting to be mothers. I hope that the hospital committees will make some provision for transport facilities to bring women in from remote districts to these maternity homes. The greatest worry at such times is as to how they are going to meet the expense, not of the hospital, but of reaching the hospital. Quite recently in the electorate of the hon. member for Mitchell it was necessary to send an aeroplane out to bring in a mother to the Longreach hospital. Had there not been an aeroplane in that district, the lives of both the mother and the child would have been lost. I think provision for transportation is very necessary. Then it is very essential that training should be provided for nurses. We know that trained nurses are far better than untrained nurses. We have had good work done by untrained maternity nurses in the country districts, and I have nothing whatever to say against them, because they have rendered the best assistance possible at times when it was impossible to get trained nurses. I hope the Minister, when putting trained women into the maternity homes, will give these women a chance of getting free access to the training school. They should be given every encouragement and assistance to pass their examinations and get certificates under this Bill. I hope the Government will appoint itinerant nurses to travel around the different districts, as a lot of good work can be done in this manner.

Mr. MORGAN: It is a most important thing to have itinerant nurses.

[*Mr. Edwards.*]

Mr. RIORDAN: It is a most important thing. When a nurse comes along at a certain time she can be a great comfort to a prospective mother, and, being trained, she will be able to give valuable advice. In fact, advice from a trained nurse at that particular time is much better than advice from a doctor. That is why I would like to see itinerant nurses stationed in various districts, and assistance given to them to get around the country without any trouble. I am glad the Government are going to defray the cost of erecting these hospitals and intend to subsidise them. I am glad the Government also intend to subsidise maternity wards. I hope that these hospitals will never go short, and will never have to depend on charity. The Government intend to erect sixty maternity hospitals, and this number will serve most of the country districts. I hope that work will be started in the country districts straight away, because that is where these institutions are most necessary. There are many decent maternity homes in the more thickly populated centres. They are all doing good work, and will continue to do so. It is a different proposition in the country, where it does not pay to run a private home, and they cannot be supported on charity alone. It is the duty of the Government to erect maternity homes and support them in a proper manner. I am glad to see that provision is made for every woman to enter a hospital if she is about to become a mother. No woman will be debarred from securing admission through inability to pay. It will be a great relief to many women to know that they can enter these homes without being called upon to pay. We know that, in the case of most families in country districts, at this particular time it is an important question for them to consider how they are going to meet the expense. In some districts the doctors have been unfair and unreasonable in their charges; but, speaking of the medical profession as a whole, I think they are pretty reasonable. In all classes and all sections of the community we find people who are ready to exploit others. It does not matter if there is an epidemic or any other trouble, there is always someone in some profession who tries to squeeze the last shilling out of the individual affected. I hope there will be no worries on the part of the women concerned in connection with this measure. There should be no trouble about getting a ticket to admit a woman into a maternity home. She should be allowed to go there as a right, although, of course, those who are in a position to pay should do so. And no doubt the Minister who administers the Act will attend to this matter. Women will enter the hospitals as a right, not worrying about payment but leaving that till afterwards. My experience of the people in the country districts generally is that they are prepared to do the fair thing in this respect and meet their obligations; but the red tape which sometimes binds up Government departments is embarrassing, not only to our women folk, but also to our men folk in the country. Getting into some Government offices sometimes is almost as difficult for the man from the country as it is for the criminal to get out of the Stewart's Creek or Boggo Road Gaols. We do not want anything of that kind under this Bill. I have seen some very sad experiences in my time in country districts. Mothers have lost their lives, and we have lost the lives of our young

immigrants because provision such as that which is made under the Bill was not at hand. I have a case in mind. We have no doctor or nurse at Forsayth, and the nearest nurse or doctor was 43 miles away. We had to get into touch with the construction engineer on the railway, but he wanted £43 guaranteed before he would allow a special train to be taken out of the shed.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Even in a case of life or death?

Mr. RIORDAN: Yes, but the workers in and around that town subscribed the sum in a very short time. The worst feature of the whole business was that, although the money had been subscribed for a special train, it was not run as a special train but a load of fourteen trucks of ore was hooked on and it took about three and a-half hours for it to get to its destination instead of two hours. People who have not been in country districts cannot realise that such things take place, but men who have travelled and battled round in country districts, as many members here have done, realise only too well that they do happen. I am sorry to say that, while I have been in Parliament, I have travelled this State away from railways, not at the expense of the State but at my own expense; and I think it would be a good idea if Parliament, in its wisdom, gave hon. members an opportunity of going into some of the country districts to see the distances which people have to travel to get to town. Travelling along over those vast stretches, even by motor-car, one feels lonely. Imagine then the lives of our women folk living in those districts, isolated even from telephone communication, cut off from everybody! Our Governments are not doing enough in this direction. Telephones will assist, but I am sorry to say that some of our Governments, in their madness for economy, have cut off telephone communication in some country districts. I refer, for instance, to the closing down of the telegraph station at Floraville, which kept many people within touch of a hospital and gave them a chance of getting out a nurse or doctor in case of illness. With telegraph communication they knew that in a very short time they could get into touch with the doctor and,—both travelling to meet each other—get his assistance in a day or two, whereas now it takes three weeks to a month to get any sort of medical attention.

It is a reflection on any Government for them to do away with our telephonic and telegraphic communication in country districts. (Hear, hear!) Going from Cunnamulla to Mungindi along big dry stretches it was a calamity to see the telephone lines being pulled down and communication taken away from the people who had settled in those districts. It is a reflection on any member who supports or stands by a Government who do that sort of thing. That is why I say that, as the National Government have taken away our telephonic and telegraphic communication, we should make provision for itinerant nurses and for getting women conveyed to hospitals during times of illness. I hope that before long that work will be continued. Without taking up a selfish attitude on this question, I say that that work should be proceeded with first in the districts which most badly need it. This Bill can be made one of the best Bills that has ever been placed on the statute-book of this or any other State by any Government if

*Mr. Riordan.]*

it is administered properly. I feel sure that, whoever the Minister may be, he will see that it is administered in the way in which it is intended that it shall be administered. I congratulate the Government on their wisdom in making provision for sixty of these maternity homes, and on behalf of the country people I thank them most sincerely for introducing a measure of this kind.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I certainly approve of the Bill. I support the remarks of the hon. member for Burke in regard to telephonic communication and the necessity for dealing first with places which are a great distance from settlement. From Winton to Boulia is a distance of about 250 miles. On that route there are three or four stopping-places for the coaches. To those stopping-places people come hundreds of miles to join up with the coach. I have seen people come 200 miles to the coach, then travel in the coach to Winton, a further distance of 200 miles, and then come down to civilisation for a holiday. That will give an idea of the difficulties under which these people are labouring. Neither the State Governments nor the Federal Governments have done their duty in the matter of extending telephonic facilities to those districts. Take the four stopping-places on that route between Boulia and Winton. At one place the chief shelter for the people consists of a few sheets of bark and iron, while there are about six tents in a row, fenced round with a bag fence. The people make themselves as comfortable as possible. It appears to me that, where there are no votes, no attention is given to the requirements of the people. The accommodation is not only inadequate at those stopping-places, but it is a menace to the travellers. Some men come down from the stations with, perhaps, £100 in their pockets. They start drinking in some of those shanties, and they do not get any further. It is the duty of the Government to provide places where people can stay safely and comfortably when travelling. There should be trained nurses and some kind of accommodation where passengers could stay when they go out to open up our Western country. All our legislation has been in favour of the single man. Everything is against the married man, especially the man with a family. If he wants to go on a holiday he is put to an enormous expense. It is very rarely that he can go for a holiday. Anything that tends to assist our families living out in the country and tends towards settlement in the country, I am sure will have the support of every hon. member. The condition of some people in the western country is undoubtedly deplorable. It is absolutely impossible for settlers in the far western country or workers who are working on these places for a weekly wage to get nurses and to pay for them. If they come down to the towns and pay the maternity expenses in the hospitals, then those expenses keep them poor, and they have no chance of getting their heads above water. The man with a family is practically carrying the burden of this State and he is always poor, and cannot get the necessary things that his family need, and that every white Australian ought to have.

The question of the subsidising of existing hospitals is not made clear in the Bill. I do not mean the hospitals that the Government take over, but hospitals such as the one referred to by the hon. member for Rosewood,

[*Mr. Riordan.*

who mentioned that at that hospital in his district about 200 babies were born per annum. That institution has been very carefully managed. I do not see why the Government should go to the expense of £1,000 or £2,000 in putting up buildings, when there are buildings already erected. I understand that it will cost nearly £1,000 to erect and furnish wards at existing hospitals sufficient to accommodate four beds.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It will cost more than that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I think that fact justifies the Minister in taking over the supervision of the existing maternity hospitals. The people at present in charge of those institutions can run them a great deal cheaper than the Government could run any new ward they might build. I would like to see the question of subsidies made clearer, so that anyone administering the Act will know perfectly well that the Government intend to take over the supervision of and subsidise the existing hospitals.

Let me now deal with the question of finance. The Department of Public Lands receives about £1,500,000 per annum from the country districts by way of rent.

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

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am dealing with the financial aspect of this proposal. That money is received as rents from lands in country districts, and I do not mind giving the Minister another plank of the Country party, which I hope he will carry into effect; that is, that 25 per cent. of the money received from those lands shall go back to the country districts.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that question.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am showing the Minister how he can provide funds for the administration of these hospitals. If that system were adopted, it would provide the necessary funds, because it would amount to about £300,000.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I venture to say that more than 25 per cent. of the rents is going back into the country now.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If that is so, so much the better; but I am afraid that the cities get hold of too much of that money, and that not sufficient goes back into country districts. That is one way of financing these hospitals without asking the cities to contribute. At the present time the city people are not contributing to the country hospitals at all. There is more money coming from the country—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: Are you in favour of the Bill, or against it?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Most decidedly, I am in favour of it. I am quite sure that the Minister will agree with me that, where people have to travel long distances to these hospitals, it would be only a fair thing, and a right thing, to grant them railway passes to the railway station nearest the hospital. If that were done, it would help settlement, and would take off some of the burdens which the married men with families have to bear.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Burcoo*): One cannot but feel grateful to be associated with a Government who are doing something in

the nature laid down in this Maternity Bill for the benefit primarily of the mothers in country districts. One hardly knows whether to condemn past Governments for their neglect to deal with this question or whether to congratulate the present Government, who, after all, are the first Government who have ever given serious consideration to this question. I feel that I should pay a tribute to the Home Secretary, more especially in his absence, by reason of the fact that it was he who evolved this scheme, proving conclusively that he has the welfare of the women in the isolated districts at heart. We recognise that the immigrant in the cradle is the most desirable immigrant that we can have. The child born in our community is worthy of the best attention and the greatest consideration that can be given to it, and in a country such as Queensland, where we require every individual, and where we must, for national preservation, eliminate as far as possible the infantile mortality that exists at the present time, it is obvious that we must pass a measure of this description.

A good deal has been said recently in this House about vision. I venture to say that no more magnificent vision was ever conceived, so far as the Western people—and more especially the Western women—are concerned, than the vision which gave rise to the Bill which we are discussing this afternoon. In the Western country at the present time doctors are few and far between; nurses holding a midwifery certificate are very rare, and many women are forced to adopt one of two courses. The first is to allow an unskilled woman to take charge of them, and that must be fraught always with a certain element of danger; and the other alternative is to go to one of the big centres of population where satisfactory medical attention may be obtained. The second alternative is very often prohibitive by reason of the fact that the individual cannot afford the necessary expenses that will be entailed by a journey of that nature.

Take, for instance, Blackall, on the Barcoo River, in my own electorate. Many women there go to Rockhampton and are confined there, but there are many others who would like to go to Rockhampton for the superior treatment they can get there, but [2.30 p.m.] are not able to go owing to financial considerations. Even if they did scrape up the money and went to Rockhampton, when they returned they would have to work off the liability incurred, which should never have been placed on their shoulders. These people in the West are perhaps doing more than the city people to develop the country. They have given up many of the refinements of civilisation; they have given up nearly all the comforts of civilisation; and it is on an occasion like this that we should show our appreciation for what they have done, and should do so in no uncertain manner.

In addition to maternity wards at the various hospitals, the Bill proposes the establishment of itinerant nurses. I would like to make a suggestion in this connection. Quite recently an aeroplane company has been formed in the Central-west, and its operations will extend from Charleville, which will be its southern base, to Cloncurry, which will be its northern base. Along that route there is a number of towns and a number of lan-

ing places. It would be a very reasonable thing to ask that the organisation which these people are perfecting should be used by the State in cases of urgency for the conveyance of patients from their homes, or from wherever they may be ill, to a place where they can receive the medical attention which will be provided under this Bill. It often happens that circumstances arise that a woman unexpectedly finds she is about to be confined. It has frequently come within my notice where women have not been able to get satisfactory medical attention on account of the urgency of the case. If we have an aeroplane service whereby a small aeroplane can be sent out to bring these individuals in to a hospital, or as an alternative to take out an itinerant nurse, who, I take it, would be equipped with a midwifery certificate, to attend to the case, we would prevent cases of mortality which might occur. Blackall, for instance, might be made a base, and Barcaldine would not be outside the cruising area of that base; and from Blackall Jericho also could be successfully worked to the advantage of the community. Such a system would also give a sense of security to the women in outback parts, which is sadly lacking at the present time.

A suggestion was made by the hon. member for Bulimba that it might be possible, under the provisions of the Bill, to confiscate the baby bonus. I cannot believe myself that the Government could be so heartless—I am tempted to say ruthless—as to attempt to confiscate the baby bonus from an individual who was unable to meet her hospital liabilities in any other manner. I cannot believe that the Government contemplate the application of such a principle. After all, if a person cannot meet her liabilities to the hospital, it is obvious that she will require the few pounds she gets from the Federal Government for other purposes for the benefit of her offspring. I cannot believe that the Home Secretary would contemplate such action. With other hon. members who have spoken, I am going to urge that isolated districts be given first consideration in the erection of these hospitals. (Hear, hear!) We are blazing a new track.

I would like to pay a little tribute to the hospital committee functioning in a little town named Tambo in my electorate. Before ever this scheme was mooted, the gentlemen comprising the hospital committee there got together and decided that they would erect a maternity ward in the town. A very laudable motive actuated them, and I am pleased that we are now going to take that responsibility out of their hands, and that the cost of the erection will be borne by the State instead of falling upon the individuals. People living in the closely settled districts frequently fail to realise the necessity for them to do the decent—the fraternal—thing by the people who, by their efforts, enable other people to live in the cities and enjoy the amenities of city life. We all recognise that everything possible should be done for the wellbeing of the Western woman for her protection against exploitation, whether that exploitation is in regard to her grocer's, butcher's, or medical bill. We must do the best we can to overcome that exploitation, and I believe that we shall overcome it in this measure. I do not think that any hon. member will raise any objection to the provisions of the Bill. I say, further, that in two or three years, when the maternity

*Mr. Bulcock.]*



wards are established and everything is functioning as it should do—when we are beginning to bring forth our trained and qualified nurses to take their places in the hospitals—it would be a bold Government which would contemplate doing away with these hospitals or withholding a subsidy that is legitimately due to the mothers of the future citizens of our State.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I am very pleased that the Acting Home Secretary has introduced this measure, which makes provision for maternity hospitals and also for baby clinics, and which has been received with sympathetic approval by hon. members generally. The Minister made a very nice second reading speech, but the inference could be drawn from his remarks that all humanitarian legislation was introduced by the present Government, and that we on this side of the House were not in sympathy with such legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not say that.

Mr. PETRIE: I am glad to get that assurance from the Minister. The hon. member for Brisbane gave credit to the hon. member for Mullilla for having been instrumental in bringing this matter forward at different times. There is no doubt that women in remote districts have to put up with a great deal of anxiety. It is wonderful what they have been able to go through in places far removed from access to hospitals and doctors. The Minister quoted some poetry from Mrs. Browning and Essex Evans's poem, "The Women of the West," showing what women have to put up with through want of good nursing or lack of hospitals. Women have also to put up with other disadvantages incidental to settlement on the land: I would like to quote a little poem on "The Woman on the Land," by "M.C.," Wangalpong—

"By the rule of Theodore,  
Wives and children by the score  
Slave and toil to keep food cheap;  
Little benefit they reap!

Cocky's baby loudly wails  
(Mother's milking at the bails);  
Poor, wee Johnny cries for bread  
(Wait until the calves are fed).

Little Mary minds the cows  
As they on the lucerne browse;  
Tiny Sue must take her turn  
At the handle of the churn.

When the separator's washed,  
Baby in the tub is splashed,  
Put to bed and told to laugh—  
Mother's off to help cut chaff.

Willie, hurrying home from school,  
Rushes to his milking stool.  
Milks as long as he can see;  
Learns his lessons after tea.

When the family is fed,  
Dishes washed, and bairns in bed,  
Mother gets her mending pile,  
Patching, darning by the mile.

Father scans the paper o'er  
For the price of dairy store;  
Says, to mother's sad surprise,  
'For our butter there's no rise.'

Really, Mr. Theodore,  
In your taxing there's a flaw.  
When will politicians learn  
Farmers should have what they earn?"

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[*Mr. Bulcock.*

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not know what this has got to do with the Maternity Bill. (Laughter.)

Mr. PETRIE: I am showing what the woman on the land has to put up with at the present time. I give every credit to the Home Secretary for having brought in such a measure. I am sure it meets with the approval of every member of the House. The National Council of Women and other women's organisations in Queensland have taken a great part in our political life of late years, and they have been responsible for a good deal of our humanitarian legislation. I refer to the legislation introduced by previous Governments and also by this Government. That was referred to by the hon. member for Bulimba in his remarks this morning. I can emphasise those remarks, because women understand the needs of women better than men do, and they understand what is necessary in connection with the protection of infant life. That also plays an important part in this matter. We have a number of maternity homes in existence at the present time, which are all doing good work. There is a maternity home at the Hamilton in my electorate run by the Salvation Army, and it receives a subsidy of £100 per annum from the Government. The matron told me the other day that single girls come there, and, after their babies are born, the Salvation Army keep the mother and the infant there for some considerable time. They do that in the interests of the infant. After all, it is our duty as legislators to see that every care is taken of the child, whether it is born illegitimately or not. Every child born in the State is an asset. Therefore for considerable periods these infants are looked after by the Salvation Army, for which they receive no assistance from the Government. The Roman Catholic authorities also conduct maternity homes in Brisbane, and I presume are treated in a similar manner. Now that we are passing legislation dealing with maternity homes, I suggest that some consideration should be given to the question of further subsidising the maternity homes I have referred to, particularly when they look after the infants for a considerable time. The hon. member for Barcoo referred to the necessity of establishing these homes in the isolated parts of the State, before the thickly populated centres were attended to. I quite agree with that.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Government have already given authority for the construction of one at Boulia.

Mr. PETRIE: I am very glad to hear it, because those are the places that should be looked after first. I am pleased to see that provision is made for the training of nurses. I am pleased to support the Bill, and hope that these institutions will be established as soon as the measure becomes operative.

Hon. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): The present Government claim to have a monopoly in all charitable and eleemosynary works, but these are matters which are attended to by every party which occupies the Treasury benches. As a matter of fact, we always have a healthy rivalry in these matters, and it is a good thing to let each Administration strive to out-rival its predecessors in the carrying out of works which are for the benefit of our common humanity. I can assure the Minister

that members on this side do not require the inspiration of poetry to lead us to give hearty support to this measure.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you never quote poetry?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do occasionally. Anyhow, we do not require inspiration of that kind on this side, because every member who resides in the country districts must realise the absolute necessity of establishing maternity homes. In many instances it is necessary for the expectant mother to receive attention gratis, but others do not care to accept charity. There are many who are prepared to pay, and who can afford to pay, and it would be a great convenience to them to have a maternity home near to where they reside. At present there are always difficulties in the country because of the lack of communication by road and in other ways, and that is why the establishment of these homes will be of great service in such districts. These hospitals are absolutely necessary, because this is a very important matter in the life of a woman. The hon. member for Barcoo spoke about the conditions in the West. We know that in the West decent accommodation is provided for men under the laws providing for their accommodation, but, unfortunately, the provision made for their wives and children is often of the most wretched description. Even if it were possible to provide the necessary medical and nursing attention, the accommodation available is unfit for the occupation of the mother at a time when, more than any other, cleanliness and quiet is absolutely essential.

I am glad to say, after an analysis of the measure, that I am satisfied that it fully conforms to the description given by the Minister when he introduced it. Provision is made for the assistance of hospitals already established, whereby maternity wards may be added, and that, to my mind, is a very excellent provision. But the provision which above all others commends itself to me is that which empowers the Governor in Council to make such provision as he deems expedient for the care, treatment, and nursing of mothers and infant life in remote places. It has been suggested that arrangements might be made for the conveyance, by means of aeroplanes, of expectant mothers to the centres of population. That may be very excellent in theory, but we all know that to carry it out in practice will be found in nine cases out of ten to be impossible. The provision for nursing and medical attention in remote places, I have no hesitation in saying, will increase the confidence of those people who tackle our problems on the land, for their absence, as I pointed out when speaking on this measure before, acts as a deterrent to those who otherwise would be prepared to undertake settlement and development of our State.

Provision is also made for the establishment of ante-natal and baby clinics in country districts. That is also one which must commend itself to every hon. member. The lack of knowledge on the part of a young mother as to the treatment of her infant has unquestionably, in many instances, without desire or intention on her part, led to the loss of the life of the child; and any provision which will give mothers the instruction necessary to the proper treatment of their infants is one which is as essential as any other in the measure.

I notice that the Government propose to bear the whole expense of the carrying out of the Act. It is provided—and other hon. members have mentioned this provision—that no person shall be refused the benefits of an institution by reason of inability to pay therefor. As I have already indicated, many patients refuse to take attention without paying, and I have no doubt that the Minister will probably have a scale of fees, so that those who desire to pay may do so in accordance with their means, without the fixation of any arbitrary fee, and so that, at the same time, others who are unable to pay—however undesirous they may be of being treated gratis—will not be called upon to contribute sums which would become a burden to them.

I take it that the provision of conveyances from localities not served by maternity hospitals to others more fortunately situated will also be taken into consideration. I am thankful to say that in most country places—certainly those with which I am associated—we have excellent ambulances, which have filled a want in a way which I have no hesitation in saying can hardly be appreciated. The value of our ambulance services in maternity cases cannot be overestimated, and I earnestly commend to the Minister the desirableness of fostering the establishment of ambulance centres where these hospitals may be established and where none exist at present. The establishment of a maternity hospital without the means of conveyance thereto might merely mean that in many instances the effect on the expectant mother might be very injurious.

Taking the provisions of the Bill as a whole, the measure comes within the terms of the speech of the Minister, and I have not the slightest doubt that it will receive the support of every hon. member. I am very pleased to be able to pay to members of the Government who then were in Opposition a compliment for the way in which they assisted to pass similar legislation which I introduced when I had the honour to be Home Secretary. I am very pleased to hear that it is proposed to establish sixty of these hospitals so soon as this measure becomes law. I hope the necessary funds—they will never be refused from this side of the House—will be found, not for sixty of them but for double that number, because they will be great blessings to our community, more especially to those sections of it which are remote from the centres of population.

MR. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The reception which this Bill has met with indicates very clearly how easy it is for us to agree when we meet on common ground. I am sure there is nothing so pleasing to hon. members as to find that they are able to work harmoniously on a measure on which they can all agree, especially after debates of a ruder and more contentious nature. The Bill itself will be welcomed, particularly by country members, because city mothers are not in view so much as the mothers who are doing pioneering work in the bush. It seems to me that we, more than any other people, have lived to witness vast strides in meeting the changes in conditions for which this Bill provides. Our time stands out in that connection [3 p.m.] when compared with any other period of time. It is true that we have arrived at this stage by degrees.

*Mr. G. P. Barnes.]*

Whilst some hon. members may claim that it has fallen to this Government to do this work, we have been gradually working along towards the realisation of these high ideals, and, if it is to the honour of this Government that they have introduced this measure, no one for a moment is going to grudge them the privilege which is theirs. I very heartily welcome the Bill, and congratulate the Government.

Some speeches delivered by the Home Secretary contain a very high conception of the needs of the people. But who is going to say that we have reached the end of what can be done in the interests of those who are doing pioneering work, or in meeting the needs of the young life of our community? It is our duty ever to be on the alert. I imagine that, when the need for work ceases, our occupation will entirely be gone. It would seem to me that one matter requiring very great consideration, if the best results are to be obtained, is that of transport. Wonderful service has been done by the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. It is essential that its work should be associated with that which the Government have in view in this particular direction. I am sure that the people in any district will establish a centre of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade if they realise the great benefits it confers and the conveniences it provides. Even in centres like Warwick wonderful service is being done. Whoever controls the working of this Act should see that it is associated with the work of the ambulance brigades. In addition to the fine service which would be rendered, a great deal of overlapping would be avoided. In some isolated places there would not be the same need for the establishment of maternity hospitals if quick transport were available. I know that the Warwick Brigade goes right to New South Wales to bring some cases to hospital. The liberality of the support accorded to the brigade in such cases is most manifest, and is really very inspiring. The principal idea, I believe, is to standardise the service, both as regards nursing and the general health of the children. The Minister should also standardise the buildings that are to be erected.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We intend to erect all concrete buildings.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am very glad to know that. We should have a certain method in view. By standardising and working to a plan, we shall not only ensure economy, but the building—especially if it is a concrete building—will be a lasting memorial of the good work that is being done, and it will advertise such work amongst those whom it is intended to serve. I am glad to be able to congratulate the Government on having introduced this measure. If it proves of benefit to the women and children of the land to the extent anticipated, added pleasure in the days to come will be afforded those who were responsible for its introduction.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I am pleased that this Bill has been introduced, as I have been advocating something of this sort for many years. At one time I was twitted by the present Minister, who said that I was foreshadowing the Government's policy. I make no apology for having advocated this, in season and out, ever since I have been in this Assembly. I have had wide experi-

ence in my electorate, which contains about 23,000 square miles. I was one of several members of the Country party who were responsible for having this included in the platform of the Country party on which we went to the country during the last election. I congratulate the Minister and the Government on placing on the statute-book another measure which originated from the policy of the Country party. In this and in other matters the existence of the Country party in this House has been justified.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was on the platform of the Labour party when you were a hard-shelled Tory sitting on this side of the House.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not wish to dispute the hon. gentleman's contention; but, if that is so, the Government have been a long time in placing it upon the statute-book. However, it is never too late to mend. I am pleased that at last the Government are going to show consideration for those who live in country districts.

Mr. COLLINS: Country districts are represented by hon. members sitting on this side of the House.

Mr. MORGAN: It is quite refreshing to see that men sitting on the opposite side who represent country electorates are at last getting away from Queen street, and advocating the needs of those who live in the country. We are pleased to know that in this particular matter members representing country interests who are supporters of the Government have come out of their shell, and are seeing that people who live in the country get a fair deal. The influence of the Country party has been responsible for the introduction of such a measure as this. It is because certain Labour candidates will have to oppose Country party candidates at the elections, when such Country party candidates will advocate this policy, that the Bill is now introduced. Hon. members opposite are claiming credit in every detail for this measure. While I support the Bill, I intend to move some amendments in Committee in order to improve the Bill, and I hope the Minister will see his way clear to accept them.

Hon. members opposite have advocated that the first consideration should be to those who live in the country. I would go further and suggest that the first consideration should be given to those living great distances from country towns. There are many towns in the country which have their own hospitals, resident doctors, nurses, and every convenience, and they also have private nursing institutions. The people in those towns can get the attention that they desire. The first consideration should be given to the people who live hundreds of miles away from those towns. We have in Queensland a religious body known as the Bush Brotherhood. This body confers great benefits on those people who live away from the towns and centres of population. I would urge that the Canadian system should be adopted in Queensland. Under that system there is established what is called a "shack." These "shacks" are established, not in the towns or on the railways, but at a point somewhere near the centre of settlements in a particular area. Those settlements may be 40 miles, 50 miles, or 100 miles away from a town. These places are inhabited by nurses, who are conveyed by a covered-in two-horse vehicle to places

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*]

where their assistance is required. The nurses are able to ride, and in many cases they jump on a horse and take along their little kit-bag 20 miles, 30 miles, or 40 miles, to a home as soon as they are informed that their assistance is required. No motor-car is sent out to remove the mother. There is no necessity for any aeroplane, or anything else for that purpose. The less journeying that a prospective mother has to do, whether by motor-car or any other vehicular conveyance, the better it is for her, and also for the child. The Canadian system could be established in portions of my electorate and of the electorate of the hon. member for Balonne, and other districts throughout Queensland. Nurses could be accommodated in those places, and they would be able to ride or drive any conveyance to the mother who required their assistance. By that means the nurses would be able to carry out their work at the place where it was needed. You would then be giving first attention to those who had gone out to do the pioneering work. The women have been more responsible for the development of the outlying districts of Queensland than the men. The men may go out for a time, but they would not remain unless they had their wives with them. It is the wife who makes the home comfortable for the husband. We should do all we possibly can to give the necessary attention to these matters. It should not be a matter of whether it is going to cost £10 for each child brought into the world in outlying districts. We should not consider whether it costs £10 in the outlying country districts and only £1 in the large cities and towns for each child to be brought into the world. It is the general opinion of this House, I feel sure, that the first consideration should be given to those people living in the remote portions of Queensland. The Canadian system could be very easily established in Queensland. In Canada they have the snow to contend with, thus making the hardship of the nurses so much greater; but the nurses in Canada are prepared to undertake those hardships. The conditions in Queensland are altogether more favourable.

I would like some information with regard to the granting of subsidy by the Government under this proposal. The Bill provides—

“In connection with any such hospital the capital cost of the purchase and erection, or other requirement of the necessary site and buildings, and all the necessary equipment thereof shall be defrayed by the Government; and, toward the annual cost of the maintenance, management, and upkeep of any such hospital, the Government may contribute such sums as are from time to time appropriated for the purpose.”

What does that mean? At the present time the Government grant a subsidy of £2 for every £1 collected by the hospitals. I do not oppose the desire of the Government to erect maternity wards in connection with existing hospitals in country districts, but I think it would be a good idea if the Government would subsidise those maternity wards on the same basis as the present hospitals are subsidised. I understand that the Government are defraying all the expenses in connection with the upkeep of baby clinics in the city. Why should there be any different policy with respect to baby clinics in country districts? Are they going

to place the country people on a different footing from those in the city?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The maternity wards erected in conjunction with existing hospitals will be subsidised on the same basis as the existing hospitals are subsidised.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not object to the Government paying the whole of the cost in connection with baby clinics in the city; but, if they are going to do that, the country people will be justified in asking that the Government defray the whole of the cost in connection with baby clinics in the country. I am opposed to the present system in connection with the assistance given to the Brisbane General Hospital. I do not think that the Government should bear the whole of the cost in connection with the Brisbane General Hospital, because that really means that the whole of the people of Queensland have to contribute to the upkeep of that institution. I am opposed to the Government defraying the whole cost of baby clinics in the large centres and at the same time only granting a subsidy on the basis of £2 for £1 for baby clinics in the country. The time has come when they ought to be placed on the same footing, and, if the Government cannot see their way clear to nationalise baby clinics in all portions of the State, then they have no right to nationalise baby clinics in any part of the State. I admit that the Government have to go step by step, and we in the country do not object to contributing towards the support of these hospitals if the people in the large centres of population likewise contribute. But we certainly think we shall be badly treated if we have to provide £1 for £2 while the people in the large centres get their baby clinics free of cost.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Baby clinics are different to maternity hospitals.

Mr. MORGAN: No doubt they go further, but it may be necessary to establish baby clinics in some parts of the country. However, I am not going to cavil at this measure. It is a step in the right direction and one that we have been looking for for many years. It will give an assurance to mothers who go into the country that they will receive attention at the moment when they require it, and I feel sure the Bill will have the general support of members on this side of the House.

I desire to say a word on behalf of the unregistered nurses who are doing good work in the country portions of Queensland. The authorities in dealing with these women are very unjust.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are getting on to the Health Act now.

Mr. MORGAN: I understand that, when this Bill is put into operation, the Government are likely to tighten up the restrictions under the Health Act and deprive these women of the opportunity of doing the good work they are performing at the present time. Up to the present there has been a certain amount of latitude.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: This is a matter concerning maternity homes and the attention it is necessary to give to women at the most critical period of their lives. The officials should be made aware of the fact that the people in the country recognise the good

*Mr. Morgan.* }

work these women have done, and we do not want them to be interfered with except in places where maternity homes are established. In many instances the people will still desire the services of these women. In the past they have saved the lives of hundreds of mothers and children, notwithstanding that they may not have passed an examination.

Mr. KIRWAN: They have done good work in the bush.

Mr. MORGAN: That is so, and very often the mothers have more confidence in these women than they have in many of the nurses who come down to Brisbane and pass examinations.

Mr. KIRWAN: They have had practical experience.

Mr. MORGAN: That is so, and, if this Bill is going to do anything to interfere with these women, it will be a blot on an otherwise good Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Neither this Bill nor the Health Act Amendment Bill will interfere with those women.

Mr. MORGAN: I make this appeal on behalf of those women.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are putting up an "Aunt Sally."

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all. Some hon. members on your side will agree with every word I say.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Ipswich read an extract from a paper in respect to the conditions prevailing in Russia, and I have here a book entitled "The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism," by Bertrand Russell, a gentleman who went to Russia with a delegation consisting of labourites to inquire into the conditions in that part of the world.

Mr. COLLINS: And a man the British Government put in prison during the war.

Mr. MORGAN: That shows that I am not quoting from a biased source, but from a source that is favourable to the hon. member. This is a quotation from the book in connection with child life in Russia—

"To begin with, it must be remembered that it is necessary to admit that children should be delivered up almost entirely to the State. Nominally, the mother still comes to see her child in these schools, but in actual fact the drafting of children to the country must intervene, and the whole temper of the authorities seemed to be directed towards breaking the link between mother and child."

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I allowed an hon. member to read an extract that was relative to the Bill, but the extract the hon. member is now reading has no relation to the Bill at all.

Mr. MORGAN: You must admit, Mr. Speaker, that it bears on the child life of Russia.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: It goes to show, in respect of the conditions prevailing in Russia, that the system adopted is the same as that which takes the poddy calf away from its mother, and it never sees its mother again. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

[Mr. Morgan.

Mr. MORGAN: I am very pleased that this Bill has been introduced, and I intend to give it my support. A few amendments may be necessary, and I feel sure the Minister will give those amendments every consideration. It is a Bill that has long been required, and is one which will have a beneficial effect in the country, and will assist in a way that nothing this Government or any other Government have done to induce people to settle in the bush.

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*): I am glad to bear the general approval expressed towards this measure. It is another proof that in all practical measures affecting the country the Government lead the way. The real success of this scheme to a large extent will depend upon the ambulance brigades throughout the State, through the facilities they give for transit from country districts far from railways into the towns where these homes will be established and where nursing homes are already in existence. The ambulance brigades will largely help to increase the activities of these homes, and to a large extent will assist in carrying them out in an effective manner. Therefore, I wish to emphasise the point I previously made that the ambulance brigades are worthy of further support from the State, particularly from the source from which the hospitals at present obtain a large amount of their funds, and I hope the Home Secretary in the future will take that fact into recognition and see that the ambulance brigades receive financial support from the funds of the State in order to make this scheme the success that we hope it will be.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): Like the hon. member for Gympie, I think that a great deal of the success of the bush nursing homes or hospitals will depend on the excellent work that can be done by the ambulance brigades. Those who live in the country districts know that the Ambulance Brigades travel very long distances to assist in all cases of illness and also render very valuable assistance when it is necessary for women to get to a hospital at a moment's notice. I trust, therefore, that the Home Department or the Minister who may be administering this Bill will appreciate the excellent work done by the ambulance brigades throughout the State, more especially in the country districts. It is wonderful what the ambulance brigades [3.30 p.m.] can do. I come from a district in which we have a lot of black-soil roads, and those who have the pleasure of travelling blacksoil roads after 2 or 3 inches of rain will know how bad they are to travel on. In spite of all weathers the ambulance brigades travel along those roads to assist cases of this kind. I hope that the Minister will recognise that the ambulance brigades deserve some assistance from the Government in this direction.

There is another important matter which I would like the Government to attend to in respect to these nursing homes. Very few people seem to recognise the importance of telephonic communication in outlying districts. Those of us who represent country districts find that it seems to be the attitude of the Postal Department to put obstacles in the way of people securing telephonic communication in outlying districts. I have been rather keen for many years about seeing some cheaper method of telephonic communication provided in country districts. I do not

mean that we should construct telephone lines in the larger centres of population on the lines I suggested in regard to country districts; but there should be common sense brought to bear in the construction of telephone lines, which should not cost from £80 to £100 a mile, as we are told they do at present. I urge upon the Government the desirability of their representing to the Commonwealth Government the necessity for telephonic communication being given in country districts to a far greater extent than it is at present. I would also like to have an assurance from the Minister that, until this scheme is put into operation to its full extent, nothing will be done to interfere with midwives operating at the present time in country districts.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I can give you that assurance.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I am glad of that, because some people say that only qualified nurses should be allowed to attend these cases. I know of many women in country districts who act as midwives, and I doubt very much whether many of the trained nurses know as much of the work as they do. They are the means of saving many women's lives in outlying districts. I am very glad to see the Government introducing a Bill of this nature. I hope that the time is not far distant when many of the outlying districts will be provided with a Government building where cases of this sort can be attended without women being called upon to travel long distances to get medical aid. I would like the Minister to give us the assurance that something will be done in regard to medical practitioners in our small country towns. Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide Universities are, I understand, turning out a large number of medical students, and the lack of medical practitioners is not as keenly felt now as it was fifteen or twenty years ago. It was then quite a common thing for a country town to give a guarantee to a medical man for a period of three, four, or five years if he would practise in that centre. If it should be necessary in districts which are far away from what one might call the ordinary amenities of civilisation, I hope that the Government will see their way clear in this connection to assist the residents in a newly settled district where the majority of the people are working hard in order to make a success of their undertakings, and where they, perhaps, meet with a drought the first year and find it difficult to pull round. When a medical man asks for a guarantee before going to such a place, I hope that the Government will help the people in regard to the guarantee to be given. The medical man is the first essential in a country district. The whole community feel safe if they know that there is a medical man within a reasonable distance, so that, in the event of illness, they can get medical attention without delay. I am very pleased the Bill has been introduced, and I will give it my support.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I am very pleased to hear the complimentary remarks made by Opposition members with regard to this measure.

Mr. MORGAN: This is our policy.

Mr. COLLINS: I am pleased to see them endorsing the Labour party's platform. I heard the hon. member for Murilla claim

that it was their platform. If it is the Country party's platform, all I can say is that they are following in our footsteps. The humanitarian legislation which we have passed from time to time is in accordance with our platform. I had better quote the plank of the platform so that hon. members opposite will know where this party is going—

“Nationalisation of hospitals and ambulances, the medical, chemical, dental, optical, and nursing professions, and allied services, and charitable institutions.”

Then further on—

“Establishment of State mothers and infants' homes, for the better protection of infant life.”

We are going step by step towards our goal. At the next Labour conference, which meets in Queensland, we shall have to consider the advisability of bringing our platform more up to date, seeing that we are placing so many of our planks on the statute-book. The reason why this measure has been delayed is because all reform rests upon finance. You cannot carry out reform without being able to finance it. We have to find the necessary means to finance this proposal. I was surprised at the hon. member for Warwick giving the Bill his blessing, because he must know that the scheme is going to be financed from the “Golden Casket” funds. The £200,000 mentioned by the Minister is, I take it, coming from that source.

Mr. MORGAN: He did not say so.

Mr. COLLINS: Personally, I have no objection, because it is going to do good to the country parts of Queensland. It is just as well to remind hon. members opposite that we represent the country parts of this State. The hon. member for Gregory represents an area larger than the whole of the Opposition put together. We represent the country parts of Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: I challenge that statement.

Mr. COLLINS: I represent a large country district; therefore, we can speak on behalf of the requirements of the country districts. We understand what pioneering means. I journeyed from time to time all over the Gulf country when I was organising—not in motor cars, but a large portion of it on foot. I know the conditions under which our country folk have to work and live. This Bill has my whole-hearted support, as it carries out our humanitarian platform. The hon. member for Ipswich made reference to Russia, and that was followed up by the hon. member for Murilla. I am one of those who believe that the Russian people can govern themselves.

I am not going to hurl insults against a great nation of 160,000,000 people. We know that they have got wonderful brain power there, and that they are a wonderful country, and they are well able to look after the infant life of their country. We are only commencing to look after the infant life of our country. As I said before, all reform rests on finance, and this scheme rests on the £200,000 which we are getting from the “Golden Casket.” If we did not have that money, then we would have to impose some special tax to carry out this proposal. You cannot carry out these reforms without providing the means for carrying them out.

*Mr. Collins.]*

Hon. members opposite are continually crying out against taxation. Perhaps that is one of the causes which have delayed the passage of this measure. At any rate, it has come at last, and let us hope it will accomplish all the good that is expected of it.

Mr. FRY (*Kuripā*): I would like to make a few observations on the measure, more particularly from the standpoint of a criticism of some of the things that surround the measure. We know that one of the basic foods required in connection with maternity homes is milk food. The supply of milk food is one of the things that has occupied the attention of this Chamber. We have an Act on our statute-book which restricts the operations of those engaged in dairying, with the object of seeing that pure milk is supplied to the people.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman will be in order in dealing with that matter in the Health Act Amendment Bill, but not on this Bill.

Mr. FRY: I realise that it is a subject which can also be dealt with on the Health Act Amendment Bill, but I think it is also applicable here, in view of the fact that there has been such a lot of discussion concerning the Bill and the women it will benefit. Members on the Opposition side are in accord with anything that is going to make the conditions of life brighter and better for everyone on an occasion which might be termed the holiest of occasions—that is, when a new being comes into the world. We should make the surroundings such as befit the occasion, so that, when a bright soul enters the world which may some day become one of our leading men—probably a man who will sway the nation and perhaps sway the world—the conditions should be such as befit even a king in the making. Whilst the Government have been endeavouring to convince us that they have the welfare of these children at heart, they have really in actual fact been parties to waiving the provisions of the Health Act so as to allow of the pollution of the milk that is supplied to the baby clinics.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: I have in my hand authority for what I am saying.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may deal with that subject on the Health Act Amendment Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a terrible indictment of the farmer.

Mr. FRY: It is not an indictment of the farmer; it is an indictment of the Government. The farmer is a clean-living man, but the Government override Acts of Parliament in order to catch votes at election time, and they ought to be reprimanded in cases where they have shown leniency to certain men as compared with others.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: When we were speaking about the baby clinics a few days ago, I said that it was part of the scheme that the Nationalist party laid before the House, but it was not acted upon. Members on the Opposition side are fair-minded men, and they are just as conversant with the affairs of the State and with home life as any member sitting on the other side of the House. The men who sit on the Opposition side are the men who have blazed the track in Queensland.

[*Mr. Collins.*

They are the men who pioneered the country, and they have had sufficient experience to allow them to judge what is best; so they have a right to raise their voice in praise of this motion. However, Mr. Speaker, I will take your advice and deal with this matter when the Health Act Amendment Bill comes before the House, and I hope my remarks will have the effect of bringing the Government to explain some of the dubious measures which they are administering.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Before the second reading has passed I would like to say that the provisions contained in this Bill and the purposes outlined here have been poached from the programme of the Nationalist party. (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! The Bill before the House is a simple Bill to deal with "the establishment and maintenance of maternity hospitals and baby clinics." The speeches of hon. members are becoming largely a repetition of what has been said by previous speakers. I have no desire to curb discussion, but I hope the hon. member will not pursue that line of argument.

Mr. KERR: I do not intend to repeat anything that has been said in this Chamber. All the same, I intend to go about it in my own way. I repeat the assertion which I have just made, that the Government have seen fit on this occasion to poach on the preserves of the Nationalist party.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That is certainly a joke.

Mr. KERR: For the information of the hon. gentleman, I will read out a short extract from the Nationalist party's programme on which we went to the electors at the last election. There is no gainsaying the fact that this is part of the Nationalist party's programme—

"(c) The establishment of nursing homes and a staff of maternity nurses for the purpose of visiting places distant from nursing homes.

"(d) Extension of baby clinics."

That has been on the Nationalist programme for some time. It is something that we have advocated on a number of occasions in this House, because it is legislation that has been wanted for some considerable time.

Dealing with the principles of the Bill, I see that clause 8 states that all the expenses of carrying the Act into execution shall be paid out of moneys to be appropriated by Parliament. If the money to carry out this Bill is obtained from the "Golden Casket" funds, amounting to £150,000, that money must first of all be paid into the consolidated revenue, and then it will be appropriated by Parliament. I understood from the Home Secretary some time ago that that money would be utilised for this purpose, and that it would be appropriated by Parliament. We shall have an opportunity of finding out from the Estimates if that clause is correct, and if it is going to call on the revenue of the State for a considerable amount of money. If there is something wrong in that connection, it should be remedied.

I want to handle just for a moment the question of buildings under this Bill. I hope that the policy that the Government will follow will be a sound one and that which was followed by the previous Administration under similar circumstances. To back up my

argument, I might quote the fact that in seven years the amount spent by this Government from loan funds on school buildings was £1,294,611.

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

Mr. KERR: My remarks are connected with the Bill. It is proposed to erect buildings under the measure out of revenue or loan money, and I am pointing out that it would be a good principle to use revenue for the erection of these buildings, for the simple reason that they will not be of a directly productive nature. I agree that bringing a child into the world and keeping it healthy is a work of a productive nature, but it is not productive from a financial standpoint; and, if we are to add the expense of these buildings to our public debt, the interest is going to be considerably increased without any hope of return.

I would also like to know whether the £5 baby bonus is to be utilised in these institutions.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is a Federal grant.

Mr. KERR: That is certainly correct; but I understand the Government are going to charge people who can pay, and I am wondering whether the Minister will give an assurance that the person who cannot afford to pay will be called upon to hand over the £5 baby bonus.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is provided for in clause 7.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not now dealing with the principles of the Bill.

Mr. KERR: Clause 7 reads—

“Provided that no person shall be refused the benefits of an institution by reason of inability to pay therefor.”

That brings me to the point whether it is proposed to claim the Commonwealth maternity allowance. I take it that is not the intention of the framers of the Bill. I have here the Federal “Hansard,” but I will not weary the House by reading it. It was made plain, however, that the grant of £5 was made to enable the mother to buy necessaries and get medical and other attention.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you think this Bill should relieve the Commonwealth?

Mr. KERR: Whether it should is another matter. I know a proposal is before the Federal Parliament to make a reduction of the allowance in the case of persons drawing a certain salary, but that does not enter into our consideration of this Bill. It is interesting to know that in 1921 some 300 more claims for the maternity allowance were made than there were births in Queensland.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: It shows that not only the poor take advantage of the maternity allowance, but that every person, rich or poor, has submitted her claim for the payment, not as charity, but as a right. I think something should be included in this Bill to disqualify certain persons from taking advantage of the Bill. Many persons will say that is objectionable, but it is provided in the Bill that people who can pay shall do so, although it does not lay down a maximum income

beyond which persons will not be able to receive free treatment under the measure. I think the Minister will be well advised to insert a clause to that effect. We know that rich people are putting their children into the Children's Hospital without paying anything like what it costs to maintain them there. The same thing applies to the General Hospital, and the same thing will apply to the maternity hospitals, and I am adverse to the State being called upon to support the children of people who have money to maintain them.

I am very pleased indeed to see the introduction of such a very necessary social insurance, as it were, and I am very pleased to see that the Government have seen fit to exclude the throwing of any responsibility on the local authorities—a principle which the Opposition condemned on another Bill which was before us.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This is a very important matter, and one from which great benefits can come. It is contended by members of every party that it is one of the planks of its platform. I have heard hon. members on the Government side assert that it has been in their platform for many years. Certainly it is one of the planks of the Country party platform, and consequently one of those provisions which we are anxious to see put into effect. I would point out that the principles of the Bill will become operative only in such districts of the State as may be proclaimed by the Governor in Council for the purposes of the measure, so that it will not be of general application. Notwithstanding that the Government, as part of their policy, may offer these advantages to women and children, the essential point is that up to date the only efforts which have been made in this direction have been by the establishment of baby clinics in the cities, and that during all the years they have been in power the Government have not sought to pass legislation to give them power to do anything of this kind in the country.

Mr. DASH: What did your party do?

Mr. VOWLES: That is the same old cry. After seven years they are putting into operation their own platform—at least, so they say. I should say, however, that there seems to be a desire on the part of the Government to take as many good things out of the platform of this party as they can. They have taken many good things this session, and this is not the least.

The Bill, as I have said, makes provision for the establishment of maternity hospitals and baby clinics in the future in districts where the Act may be proclaimed. It makes

[4 p.m.] provision, too, for the appointment by the Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, of such medical officers, medical inspectors, nurses, and other officers as are required for the effectual execution of this Act. It also authorises the Minister to call upon officers in other departments to do whatever work is required in connection with inspection or valuation, or the preparation of plans, specifications, or estimates of proposed buildings. Then it says—

“The Governor in Council may from time to time establish in such place or places as may be deemed expedient

*Mr. Vowles.]*



within a district, whether in association with and as part of a hospital established by the Government or the management whereof has been assumed by the Government or otherwise—

- (a) Maternity hospitals for the reception, care, and treatment of midwifery cases;
- (b) Hospitals for the treatment of diseases peculiar to women;
- (c) Ante-natal and baby clinics;
- (d) Training schools for nurses in midwifery, in diseases peculiar to women, and in matters ante-natal and post-natal relating to motherhood and infant life;

and may equip, manage, maintain, and control the same."

It provides specially that the Governor in Council may make such provision as he deems expedient for the care, treatment, and nursing of mothers and infant life in remote places. That is very indefinite. I would like to know what it really means. So far as I can see, there can be no hard-and-fast rule; every case will have to be dealt with on its merits.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so.

Mr. VOWLES: In many places there are no qualified nurses; the further you go out the further away you get from qualified nurses and medical men. In those instances greater hardships occur than would occur under other conditions. The facts have to be faced as they present themselves. When an infant is about to be born, very often the mother has very little saved, and she has to make the best of the situation. Existing hospitals may use their present premises, or they may provide further buildings, and the cost of these is to be borne out of the fund or defrayed by the Government. Then provision is made in regard to the money necessary to meet the cost of maintenance, management, and upkeep of any such hospital, in regard to which it says that the Government may contribute such sums as are from time to time appropriated for the purpose.

I quite agree with the last speaker on the question of the money being furnished by means of the "Golden Casket." That is not the spirit of the Bill. We were told a few minutes ago that, had it not been for the "Golden Casket," it would not have been possible for the Government to give these advantages to people in remote places. The Bill distinctly tells us that whatever moneys are required for the operation of this Act are to be found by Parliament. I do not see how Parliament can appropriate money which has been raised by the "Golden Casket."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Where is the "Golden Casket" mentioned in this Bill?

Mr. VOWLES: It is not mentioned, but a good deal has been said about it by hon. members on the Government side. In reply to a question by me, one Government member said that were it not for the "Golden Casket" it would not be possible for the Government to give these considerations to the people in the country. The hon. member for Bowen said that. I point out that there is no provision for the use of any moneys except those appropriated by Parliament. I can understand that it would be possible for these moneys to be given to hospital committees in the form of a grant for the purpose

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of the buildings themselves, but the cost of upkeep must be defrayed out of the funds appropriated by Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so.

Mr. VOWLES: The Bill is indefinite regarding the rate of subsidy. If country hospitals are going to be asked to undertake the use of their own buildings or the creation of additional buildings for this purpose, it would be wise to let them know definitely what the subsidy is to be. Two pounds for one is the usual subsidy for hospitals. The Minister may say that, under those conditions, the public are asked to find a large proportion of the cost of the building of a hospital, but in regard to additions or new buildings the whole of it will be found by the Government. It would be better if, instead of saying that the Government will contribute such sums as are from time to time appropriated for the purpose, the rate of subsidy were definitely stated. The committees of the institutions would then know exactly what they were doing.

This is a Bill for which I wish a speedy passage. So far as I can see, it is a very desirable measure, regarding which we are all in agreement.

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

#### COMMITTEE.

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

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

Clause 2—"Interpretation"—put and passed.

Clause 3—"Constitution of districts"—put and passed.

Clause 4—"Appointment of officers"—

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (East Toowoomba): Do these appointments relate to hospitals which are already in existence?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—"Establishment by Government of hospitals, &c."—

Mr. BEBBINGTON (Drayton): I have an amendment to move to this clause which I am quite sure the Minister will accept. The Bill may provide for the granting of a subsidy to existing hospitals, but it does not make it plain. I beg to move the insertion, on line 31, after the word "Government," of the following words:—

"or by the granting of a subsidy."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, Paddington): The amendment is quite unnecessary. I ask the hon. member to read subclause (4) of clause 6, which says—

"In connection with any such hospital the capital cost of the purchase and erection or other acquirement of the necessary site and buildings and all necessary equipment thereof shall be defrayed by the Government; and toward the annual cost of the maintenance, management, and upkeep of any such hospital the Government may contribute such sums as are from time to time appropriated for the purpose."

The amendment would add to the Bill something which is not necessary, and which does not make it any better.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 5 put and passed.

Clause 6—“*Establishment of maternity hospitals by committees*”--

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I beg to move the insertion in subclause (4), line 20, page 3, after the word “Government,” of the words “from the consolidated revenue of the State.”

When I was speaking on the second reading of the Bill I was prevented from referring to the fact that certain buildings of a non-productive nature were being erected out of loan money. That has been more especially the case during the last seven years. During that period a sum of £1,234,000 was expended from loan funds, and £726,000 was expended from revenue. In previous years several million pounds were spent from revenue, and a very small sum was spent from loan funds. I think the time is now opportune to prevent the establishment of such buildings as will be necessary under this Bill from being carried out by loan money. Loan money should only be spent on productive works. The revenue should bear the burden of erecting these buildings. The Government should be compelled to live within their means, and they will not live within their means if they are going to meet revenue commitments out of loan money. That is my reason for moving the amendment.

The PREMIER: It is a very unwise restriction.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I do not propose to accept the amendment. The hon. gentleman spoke at some length on the second reading of the Bill without advancing any argument in favour of the amendment. It would be foolish to restrict the operations of the Act by such an amendment. I am not going to argue the point with the hon. gentleman. I regard the amendment as somewhat of an obstructive character. The hon. gentleman himself described the Bill as a perfect measure, therefore, why hamper it with this amendment? I do not propose to accept an amendment to restrict the Bill in its operations with respect to such a worthy object.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I expressed my agreement with the Bill. My amendment is not obstructive at all. The remark by the Minister is quite unjustified, and I am not going to be accused of obstructing this Bill. Instead of speaking on the second reading for my full time of forty minutes, I took only seven or eight minutes.

The PREMIER: That is a novelty.

Mr. KERR: I am not going to be accused of obstructing the Bill. I have moved the amendment to protect the State against the Government. Loan money should not be invested in such a way as to increase the interest payments on our public debt. The time is ripe when we should cease expenditure for such works as these from loan money.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give you an assurance that no loan money will be used in connection with this work. Will that do?.

Mr. KERR: If the Minister is prepared to do that, he should accept the amendment. It is merely a protection clause.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member is trying to strangle the Bill and make it inoperative.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*) put and negatived.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I would ask the Minister how the Government intend to finance or subsidise the various hospitals conducting maternity wards. I would like to direct his attention to a hospital which did not participate in the distribution of “Golden Casket” funds, because it was in a good financial position. I refer to the Boonah Hospital. That hospital was penalised because its finances were kept in a sound condition. The Home Secretary, in reply to an application for participation in the funds, stated under date 30th August, 1922—

“Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that the distribution of the first moiety of the proceeds of the ‘Golden Casket’ Art Union for the current financial year has been made, the hospitals participating in the distribution being those which are in a weak financial position. Your hospital’s financial position is such that assistance from the ‘Golden Casket’ funds for the current year is deemed not to be required, and for that reason your hospital has not been included in this year’s distribution.”

That is not a fair proposition at all. That hospital was penalised because it had an energetic hospital committee who had made provision for the future. The money from the “Golden Casket” funds could have been used in extending the hospital, and in erecting additions which are very badly needed. The committee have carried on in a prudent way, at all times meeting the needs of the district; but they have not been able to recommend certain improvements, because they would seriously affect their financial position. For carrying on in a prudent way they have been penalised. Is this sort of thing going to continue? If it is, there will be no inducement for any hospital committee to be energetic and collect funds. If they do, they will be penalised. It would be very much better for them to expend their funds in erecting the necessary improvements, for then they could claim some share of the “Golden Casket” funds. I hope the Minister will give an assurance that the hospital will not be so treated in the future.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I understand that the Home Secretary, in the first place, distributed the “Golden Casket” funds on a maintenance cost basis. Some of the hospitals received fairly good sums. When the most recent distributions were made it was thought that some hospitals had more money than they required for this year, and the method of distribution adopted was by giving money to those hospitals that were most in need of it. Probably the Home Secretary’s first distribution was the more just. The hospital mentioned by the hon. gentleman was not the only one singled out. It was not singled out and penalised.

Mr. BELL: The Home Secretary said that all hospitals would participate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: So they did. Until the recent distributions that hospital received its share of the funds on a maintenance cost basis.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I move the omission, on lines 23 and 24, page 3, of the words—

“May contribute such sums as are from time to time appropriated for the purpose.”

*Mr. Morgan.]*

with a view to inserting the words—

“ Shall contribute two pounds for each one pound subscribed by local subscriptions.”

We have that principle in force with respect to our local hospitals which have not been nationalised by the Government, and a similar provision should operate in connection with maternity hospitals. It would be quite unfair for the Government to grant £2 for each £1 subscribed towards the maintenance of general hospitals, and then erect a maternity ward and only subsidise it to the extent of one-half or one-third of the upkeep, and, where the people happen to be charitably disposed, to donate nothing at all.

The PREMIER: Some hospitals may be entitled to a greater subsidy than others. A hospital which is established in a district where there is only a sparse population may require a greater rate of subsidy than other hospitals.

Mr. MORGAN: There are only two just ways of financing hospitals. One is by nationalising all hospitals and making them a charge on the consolidated revenue; the other is by contributing a certain proportion, according to the amount subscribed locally. It is not a right thing that people who are charitably disposed and recognise their responsibilities towards those in distress should be penalised by another section of the community who neglect their duty.

The PREMIER: Even members on your own side have advocated commencing in far distant places. That is quite right, and the hospitals in those places will require more assistance than others.

Mr. MORGAN: The records will show that country hospitals in the far distant places are financial. They have never gone to the Government, like the city hospitals, and asked the Government to take them over. All the hospitals in my electorate are financial; because the country people are more charitably disposed than the people in the city. The people in the city consider it to be the duty of the Government to finance these institutions. When they are in a bad way, along comes a deputation to the Minister pleading poverty, and saying, “We are not able to meet our responsibilities, and, unless you take over the hospital, we will have to close it up.” No man will allow a hospital to be closed up and the sick be forced to go without medical attention. No Government will permit a hospital to be closed up. As a matter of policy, the Government, no matter what Government it might be, would be forced to grant assistance to such an institution. I am one of those who believe in helping those who help themselves. I do not believe in encouraging people to impose on the Government or on any section of the community. At present the clause leaves it open to too much political control. There may be some hospital which is financially embarrassed, and, if an appeal is made to the Minister on the eve of an election, in order to secure a certain amount of kudos for their political candidate, the Government are likely to use the consolidated revenue for the purpose of assisting the hospital, when they are not justly entitled to do so. I hope the Minister will see the justice of my amendment, and accept it. It is placing a certain amount of responsibility on the local people, and we

[Mr. Morgan.

should place a certain amount of responsibility on the local people. Speaking from a country point of view, I say we are prepared to shoulder our share of the responsibility. We do not want to be continually spoon-fed by the Government. This is a very liberal Bill, as it provides for the erection and furnishing of maternity wards at the cost of the State. That is fair, because it gives the same assistance to the country districts as it does to the towns; but it is not right to say that the upkeep of baby clinics or maternity homes in the city shall be paid for out of consolidated revenue, and that in country districts, where the people are more charitably disposed, the Government shall only contribute one-quarter of the cost of upkeep. The Government should be prepared to treat all sections of the community alike.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I do not propose to accept the amendment.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 30th August, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the sitting.

#### QUESTIONS.

##### CIRCULAR ISSUED BY ACTING SECRETARY TO PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“ Does he consider the following statement, contained in a printed circular issued by Mr. J. F. McCaffrey, acting secretary to the Provisional Council of Agriculture, viz:—

Your centre should have a voice in the election of councillors, because all primary producers will be subject to the provisions of the Act, whether members of a Registered Local Producers' Association or not—

to be in accordance with his own statement made in this House regarding the Bill on 26th July, 1922, viz:—

There is no compulsion for anyone to come under the Bill?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

“ Not exactly; but surely the honourable gentleman does not expect me to scrutinise every line written by the secretary to the Provisional Council. Further, it should be obvious to the most indifferent Queenslander that, while there is no compulsion under the Act, the action of this organisation must vitally affect every primary producer in the State, hence the secretary's advice. The hostility of the honourable gentleman to the scheme suggests the idea that he must be in the pay of the middleman.”

TRANSFER OF COMMONWEALTH FLOUR MILLING COMPANY'S BUSINESS TO BRISBANE; EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF WHEAT.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Has he seen the Press reports of the intention of the Commonwealth Flour Milling Company to transfer the greater portion of its milling business to Brisbane, and that the Warwick Farmers' Co-operative Milling Company are considering the establishment of a Co-operative Farmers' Mill in Brisbane?"

"2. As it is asserted that the policy of the Queensland Wheat Pool is accountable for the change of location, and as such centralising of milling in the city of Brisbane tends to further deplete the population of our country districts, will he immediately bring this matter before the Agricultural Council for their consideration?"

"3. What amount of wheat has been exported overseas from the 1st January, 1922, to the present date?"

"4. What amount of wheat has been imported into Queensland during the same period?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. 975,595 bushels.

"4. No wheat has been imported from overseas. No record is kept of wheat brought from Southern States, and to ascertain the quantity manifests for that period will have to be searched."

IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED SINCE 1ST JANUARY.

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

"1. What is the total number of immigrants who have entered Queensland during the six months commencing 1st January last?"

"2. Of this number, how many were agriculturists or intending to embark in agricultural operations in Queensland?"

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

"1. 764.

"2. Nearly all."

CONSTITUTION OF BOARD FOR INKERMAN IRRIGATION AREA.

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

"1. Was the Inkerman Irrigation Area established under the Water Conservation and Utilisation Act of 1910, as stated by the Auditor-General?"

"2. As the Act provides for four modes of appointing a Board—

(a) By the appointment of a local authority or a water authority having jurisdiction within the area to be the Water Supply Board;

(b) By the appointment of the members of the Board by the Governor in Council;

(c) By the election of the members of the Board by the ratepayers within the area?

(d) By the election of some members of the Board and the appointment of others—

will he say under which of these modes the Inkerman Water Board was appointed?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. The Board consists of three members, two of whom are elected by the ratepayers and one appointed by the Governor in Council."

CONTROL AND CURRICULUM OF WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Referring to the increase in the vote for the Workers' Educational Association from £1,700 to £3,000, and his statement appearing in the 'Courier' of 22nd September, 1922—'That the Workers' Educational Association was really controlled by the Senate of the University of Queensland'—is it a fact that the last annual report of the director of this association contains the following passage:—

Our relation to the trade union and Labour movement has, during the past year, shown a slight improvement, the number of affiliated organisations having increased from fifteen to nineteen?"

"2. Is 'Marxian Economics' one of the subjects taught under the auspices of this association?"

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

"1. No report of the nature indicated was issued by the Director of the Workers' Educational Association. I understand, however, that such a statement did appear in the last annual report issued by the council of that association.

"2. Yes, this is the general title under which all schools of economic theory are explained."

ADVERTISING STATE RESOURCES IN "DAILY STANDARD."

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS asked the Premier—

"1. Is the paragraph appearing in the issue of the 'Daily Standard' of 22nd September, headed—

"QUEENSLAND'S WONDERFUL POSSIBILITIES.

"A LAND OF PROMISE FOR INTENDING SETTLERS.

"Millions of new arrivals wanted to develop her marvellously rich areas.

charged as an advertisement?"

"2. If so charged, what is the cost?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. £7 10s."

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

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*), without notice, asked Mr. Bell (*Passifern*)—

"1. Was he in the Sydney Domain on Sunday, 17th instant, when a Mr. W. N. Gillies is reported to have addressed a large meeting in that place? Is the Mr. Gillies referred to the same person as the Secretary for Agriculture of this State?"

"2. Did Mr. Gillies really have the audacity to criticise the action of the Fuller Government in reducing the wages of the workers of New South Wales?"

Mr. BELL (*Passifern*) replied—

"1. Yes, our Mr. Gillies addressed a meeting there on that occasion, but it was very poorly attended and very little interest was displayed in the proceedings. He was amongst the usual crowd of speakers usually assembled at that place, including Communists, I.W.W.'s, and preachers of similar absurd and fantastic doctrines.

"2. Yes, he had the astounding audacity to do so, even in face of the fact that he himself had only recently taken a prominent part in reducing the wages of the workers of this State and depriving State employees of the right of access to the Arbitration Court."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: What were you doing there? (Opposition laughter.)

#### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windzor*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"When are hon. members likely to receive the Auditor-General's report?"

The PREMIER replied—

"I am not able to answer the question offhand, but I will make inquiries and inform the hon. member to-morrow."

#### SERUM TO REMEDY CONTAGIOUS ABORTION IN CATTLE.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Has his attention been drawn to the reported discovery by an English veterinarian of a serum to remedy contagious abortion, and will he investigate the claim and, if possible, secure a supply in order to assist dairymen whose cattle may be visited with an attack of this disease?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

"My attention has not been drawn to the article in question, but I thank the hon. member for calling my attention to it and I will certainly make full inquiries."

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): I desire to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for South Brisbane be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[*Mr. Ferricks.*]

Mr. FERRICKS: On Friday night last, when speaking on the amendment I moved in connection with the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill, it appeared to me that the leader of the Opposition was launching random statements with the idea of endeavouring to build up a case from the replies made in the way of affirmation or denial. Amongst other inaccuracies, the leader of the Opposition said that the Premier had shown opposition to the amendment which I moved. So far from that being true, the Premier actually assisted me in gaining the declaration of the Committee regarding the removal of the embargo from the men who have been victimised by the Brisbane Tramways Company during the past ten years. The hon. gentleman also said that I had gone behind the backs of the members of this party and sprung the amendment on the second reading of the Bill. That statement is also not in accordance with fact. Every member of the party whom I consulted was quite agreeable to the amendment being inserted.

Mr. VOWLES: That was after the Bill was introduced.

Mr. FERRICKS: It was before the Bill was introduced. I mention that in fairness to myself and to the members of this party.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: You only consulted some members of the party.

#### ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor conveying His Excellency's assent to the following Bills:—

Primary Products Pools Bill;  
British Imperial Oil Company's Tramways and Works Bill;  
Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Acts Amendment Bill; and  
Fruit Cases Acts Amendment Bill.

#### PAPER.

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

Report of the Agent-General of Queensland for the year 1921.

#### MATERNITY BILL.

##### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 6—"Establishment of maternity hospitals by committees"—on which Mr. Morgan (*Murilla*) had moved the omission, on lines 23 and 24, page 3, of the words—

"may contribute such sums as are from time to time appropriated for the purpose,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"shall contribute two pounds for each one pound subscribed by local subscriptions"—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I would like the Minister to give some reason why he is not going to accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I do not propose to accept the amendment, as we want to have a free hand in the matter of subsidy. There may be some places where a greater subsidy

than £2 for £1 will be required. We intend to start in places where we shall have to bear the whole of the cost for some time, and I cannot accept the amendment for that reason. There may be other places more fortunately situated where a subsidy of £1 for £1 will be sufficient, or where even less will be required. I ask the hon. member to leave the Bill free in this matter and give it a trial on the lines I have suggested.

Amendment (Mr. Morgan) put and negatived.

Clause 6 put and passed.

Clause 7—"Power to make regulations"—put and passed.

Clause 8—"Expenses to be paid out of moneys appropriated"—

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I recollect that a few months ago the Home Secretary made a definite statement which was published in the papers that the bush-nursing scheme was going to be paid for out of the proceeds of the "Golden Casket," and I would like to know how, in that case, the money is going to be appropriated by Parliament. The Minister, by interjection, stated that he did not say that the scheme was to be paid for by such proceeds, but hon. members behind him made no mistake about it, and we might just as well know where we are.

Clause 8 put and passed.

Clause 9—"Annual report"—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 to-morrow.

## LAND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

### INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Land Acts, 1910 to 1920, the Closer Settlement Acts, 1906-1917, the Jimbour Selections Act of 1919, and the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Acts, 1917 to 1920, in certain particulars."

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It may be desirable to introduce this Bill, but it might also be desirable to amend the Land Acts in many ways, and I think we should have more information as to these proposed alterations before we agree to the motion, otherwise the Opposition will be forced to move the deletion of the words "in certain particulars." It might, for instance, be very desirable to do away with the embargo on freehold tenure.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will not be in order in discussing such details at this stage.

Mr. VOWLES: I want to move the deletion of these words, otherwise we shall not be able to propose the amendments we desire.

The SPEAKER: This is only a formal stage. The hon. member can move that amendment in Committee.

Question put and passed.

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Land Acts, 1910 to 1920, the Closer Settlement Acts, 1906-1917, the Jimbour Selections Act of 1919, and the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Acts, 1917 to 1920, in certain particulars."

I may inform the leader of the Opposition that the object of this Bill is to remove a number of anomalies which have been disclosed in our present Land Acts, and which occur in all Acts of Parliament. One of the objects of the Bill is to expedite the occupation of land. We also wish to give the Land Court authority to publish a calendar of its work for the year, as the Supreme Court does now. The Jimbour Selections Act of 1919 has served its purpose, full advantage having been taken of it; and, now that the necessity for its existence does not exist, it is proposed to repeal it. It is also intended to validate certain acts of the Minister in affording relief to tenants of the Crown throughout the State without statutory authority.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): The Minister might have gone further than he has done. How often have we complained on this side of the House about that compulsory 10 per cent. penalty, and how often has the Minister told us that he has no option in the matter—that it is a statutory penalty and he must impose it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have reduced it in some cases, and I want the House to validate what I have done. While the law stands as it is, I must take each case on its merits.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman has dealt with certain cases, and he wants us to validate his action. We want to alter the law so that he will have a general power of discriminating in regard to the [5 p.m.] imposition of this penalty. When the Act came into existence it was not intended that it should be a hard and fast rule that a 10 per cent. penalty should be imposed, particularly when forfeiture took place under adverse circumstances. It is all right to impose a penalty on a man who can pay and will not pay, but you would not expect a pawnbroker to charge 10 per cent. if a man were not able to pay.

One of the things which has retarded our progress in soldier settlement a good deal has been the fact that the soldier has been in a worse position than the civilian, in that he has to hold his land for ten years before he can sell, except to another soldier. Very often you find that a man starts on a soldier settlement with the best intentions. After he has been there for some considerable time it is recognised by the supervisor of the settlement and by his own comrades that he has not been intended by nature for that class of work. He has received a loan, portion of which has been sunk in improvements and portion in wages. Nevertheless there is a liability, and the man is disinclined to carry out his contract with the Crown. The result is that the security of the Crown is being prejudiced, and the advance which was made is being lost. In many cases a good deal of it could be saved were power given to

*Mr. Vowles.]*

that man to sell when he had the opportunity. There is too big a restriction placed on him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't you think it is a fair thing that the Government should realise whatever can be realised?

Mr. VOWLES: A civilian can transfer in five years, but a soldier has to be there ten years before he can sell to other than another soldier. Many opportunities of disposing of the land are lost as a result.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The only opportunities that are lost are opportunities for trafficking in land, and that is what we want to prevent.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not agree with that. I come in contact with the practical side of the business, and I know that many soldiers miss the opportunity of selling their land merely because of the fact that they cannot get another soldier to take it up. Had they the opportunity of selling to anyone, they would be able to get out with some of their money, and the loan would be protected. The Land Acts do not permit of land being selected under a freehold title, and they prohibit the sale of land of which the freehold may be obtained. I think the time has arrived, if we are to do any good towards developing Queensland and making land settlement attractive, when we should ask the Government to consider whether they should not revise their platform in respect of land tenure. You cannot expect people to come here under a form of tenure which is less attractive than that which operates in other States. Our desire is to get immigration, and to secure capital which will create employment. If our land laws are not as good as those of the other States, I do not see how we can expect people to come here. I do not propose to move the deletion of the words "in certain particulars," but I will content myself with the references I have made. I do not want to waste time in beating the air, because I do not suppose such an amendment would be accepted. This is the time when we should suggest amendments, and I am taking advantage of this opportunity to place them before the Minister.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): After the many years' experience we have had of the present land laws, it must be recognised that the time has arrived when there should be an alteration of the policy of the Government. The Minister in charge of the Lands Department, who has had a certain amount of practical experience, must admit that the Act is not in accordance with our requirements, nor will it enable us to settle the lands of Queensland. Land settlement is the most important matter with which we have to deal to ensure the future development of the State. I think that our conditions should be much more attractive than those operating in any other part of Australia. Unfortunately they are not. We have the land; we have the facilities; we have a large mileage of railway; we have country opened up; but unfortunately we have not the people to settle those lands, because our land conditions are not attractive enough. There is no reason why we should not have double or treble our present population. We, as sensible men, are sent here to do the best we can for the State. We must ask ourselves why it is that the people are not coming to Queensland to settle on the land.

[*Mr. Vowles.*

We must also ask ourselves why it is that the people of Queensland are not going from the centres of population and settling upon the land; also, why it is that the people of Queensland are leaving the land and coming into the cities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why not ask those questions of Australia, not of Queensland alone?

Mr. MORGAN: Some of the States have not got the land to settle owing to the fact that it is already alienated, and, being settled in small areas, is put to the very best use. We must solve those three questions. With the Land Acts now in operation, we are not going to solve them. The time has come when we should go fully into our land laws with a view to bringing about a better state of affairs. I would like to see an amendment moved for the deletion of those words "in certain particulars," if only for the purpose of placing it on record that we are attempting to get placed upon the statute-book a plank of the Country party's platform. The Premier has adopted many of the planks of the Country party. He has adopted our policy in regard to the organisation of the farmers, and we had to-day a Bill which adopts our policy in respect to the treatment of the sick and distressed in country areas. Why not go still further and adopt the Country party's policy with respect to land tenure? The Government might take the wind out of our sails if they did that. For the good of Queensland generally we should endeavour to bring about an alteration of the land laws. I understood from the Minister's explanation that one of his reasons for bringing about an alteration is that he may make legal reductions in, or totally abolish, certain penalties imposed upon settlers who are in distress. I know that the Minister has taken that action. I am pleased that he has looked upon those cases in a sympathetic manner, and has realised that the distress has been caused by circumstances over which the men have had no control. I am prepared to assist him to make legal the action he has taken. For some considerable time I have pointed out that, during periods of depression, the section which provides that the Minister must impose a 10 per cent. penalty on these people is cruel and unjust in its operation. It is what you would expect from a Jew who extorts a large amount of interest from the poor, unfortunate person who gets into his grip, and is not able to pay the amount due under the contract. I admit that in certain cases the Minister has acted in a liberal manner, and he has every justification for asking this House to legalise his actions in that direction. I would like to see the Act amended so that Ministers at all times could meet those in distress. The 10 per cent. penalty is all right in the case of those who can afford to pay their rent, but who, by not paying, are making use of the money of the Government. That section might bring them to book.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was the object of the section.

Mr. MORGAN: I moved for a reduction by 5 per cent., but I was told by Mr. Denham that the penalty would have to be higher than the bank rate of interest, which at that time was about 7 per cent., so as to prevent people making use of Government money at 5 per cent., instead of borrowing from a bank at 7 per cent. I also think that the Minister should have had discretionary

power to meet cases of distress. It must be admitted that cattle men to-day are making considerable losses. Some of them have been actually ruined and have left their homes; others are being carried on from day to day by the banks, who have restricted their spending power, and have told them that they must not employ one man on the property because their overdrafts are too great; and the prospects are not bright. That not only means unemployment, but it means that the men cannot pay their rental. The rentals imposed by the Land Court are very excessive. They are fixed for a period of seven years, which decision is arrived at on the facts submitted for the previous seven years, during which time probably excellent profits were made. We have our cycles of seasons. Almost every ten years we have our drought periods. The Act should be amended to relieve the unfortunate settlers during periods of depression. The individual has no control over such depression. He has not been a loafer; he has not come to the city to waste his money; and he has not been responsible for his property not being a payable proposition at such times. The conditions are due to drought or depression of the markets. If the rental of a cattle property is, say, 50s. per square mile, the Minister should have power to reduce that by one-half or more, as he thinks desirable, during a period of depression. Since 1914 we have not had what you could call one full good year. I do not blame the Labour Government for that.

Mr. STOPFORD: You are very generous.

Mr. MORGAN: But it is a strange coincidence that the bad times should start when the Labour party took control. The lot of the men on the land has been difficult ever since the Government came into power. I do not know whether Providence\* has been helping in any way. I am not referring to the sheep men; they are in a very different position from cattle men. The Minister is a practical man, and knows all about droughts and the periods of depression which obtain in some districts, and he knows the conditions that some of his friends who live in those districts have to put up with. He knows that there should be some power to enable him to remit or reduce rents to assist people during periods of drought and depression. I am sorry that the Bill is only intended to amend the Act in the special directions referred to by the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The time is over-ripe for consolidating the Land Act.

Mr. MORGAN: That is what I am contending. We have been session after session since 1910 tinkering with the Act here and tinkering with it there, and making small amendments to suit the party in power for the time being. That has done no good. The whole of the land laws should be consolidated this session. If we wait until next session, it will mean a year lost, and a year wasted in land settlement in Queensland is a very serious thing. I look forward to the time when, under different conditions and under a different Government, we shall have more liberal land laws, which will cause a rush of people from the other States and other parts of the world, the same as we had during the years 1907, 1908, and 1909, when people flocked from all parts of the world to select land in Queensland. They did that because the conditions here were

better than those in any other part of Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They did so because more sheep country was made available than has been made since.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister should make the conditions attractive, and give the land away if necessary. People should be given a block of land on which they can make a living under certain conditions. There should not be any bargaining as to what the rental should be. We have our feeders to the railways, and, if the people are able to make a living, that will mean more revenue in the way of railway freights and income taxation. If a man on the land is not able to earn sufficient income to be taxable, he should not be called upon to pay any rental to the Government, and should be assisted. Until all the conditions are made very much brighter, we shall not get people to go on the land. We want to make the conditions such that people will leave other avocations for the purpose of settling on the land. I am very sorry that the Minister is not bringing in a consolidating Land Bill so that we can go into these matters in detail and bring about a better system of land settlement. I hope the Government and the Labour party will alter their policy and proclaim that they are in favour of giving a man the freehold of a living area, whatever that area may be. I trust that the Government will come down from the clouds and recognise the fact that, until they introduce a Bill that will enable a man to hold a living area as freehold, they are not going to get the lands of Queensland settled as they should be settled, and the State is not going to make the progress it should make.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am sorry that the Minister has not seen fit to introduce a more comprehensive measure, and one containing the amendment that has been suggested by members of the Opposition from time to time. The Land Act is one of the most important Acts on our statute-book. Probably it is second to none on the statute-book, and there are many amendments that are desired. I refer particularly to an amendment making freehold optional. I would like also to refer to the injustice of the 10 per cent. fine for the late payment of rent, and the provision under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act which provides that a soldier must live on his selection ten years before he is permitted to sell it to anyone other than a soldier. Men take up land with all sorts of hopes, and, when those hopes have been dashed to the ground, there is no reason why they should not have a chance of getting out to the best advantage. I do not want to make possible a system of dealing in lands, but the conditions applying to soldier settlements should not be more stringent than those applying to the ordinary settler. If the Government would give to every soldier settler the freehold of his land, they would be doing something that would be of benefit to the State, and it is the least they should do. I would also like to see an amendment brought in to make some better provision for the valuation of grazing selections. I do not know that the Land Court is providing all that is essential for the successful carrying out of rural occupations. There seems to be some alteration required to enable the assessors or valuers to arrive at the true carrying capacity of a selection. It seems

*Mr. Corser.]*



to me that the assessing commissioners recommend an increase on every occasion, although sometimes there is a deterioration in the carrying capacity of the property. A selector may ringbark his grazing selection, and, as a result, it becomes heavily infested with undergrowth, and he finds that it should not have been ringbarked. Yet, when the next reappraisal period comes round, an increase is made in his rental. The assessing rangers should qualify in some way or another. At the present time in the administration of the Land Court it looks as though a bloodhound had been put on the grazing selectors to extract the last penny out of them, and small people who only have a living area are being victimised. We should give some surety of tenure in connection with those selections that are not likely to be required for other purposes, in order to enable the selectors to borrow money and improve their holdings.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): There are many sections in the Land Act that we would like to see amended, but the words "in certain particulars" in the motion will prevent that being done. I notice that it is proposed to amend the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, and I wish to refer to one feature of that Act. The leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Burnett also referred to the matter. It concerns certain soldier settlers in my electorate, and I know that great hardships are being suffered in two or three cases. I would like to ask the Minister if it will be possible to insert in the Bill some provision which will permit the soldier, under certain circumstances, to sell his block to a private citizen when there is no soldier available to purchase it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Surely you do not propose that as a general principle?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do, under certain circumstances, and at the Minister's discretion. The Act is too rigid at present. I know of very genuine cases where it would be in the interests of the State, and in the interests of the soldiers, if they could sell their selections. I brought a case under the notice of the Minister where the settler was not physically capable of developing the land. The Minister told me that the Act would not permit him to give the case any consideration. That soldier is not making a living, and never will make a living, because he is not strong enough; but his ill-health is not sufficient to enable him to get a medical certificate. He can make a very good sale to a private citizen, but he cannot get a soldier to take up his block. Under the circumstances, he should have that right. It seems to me to be wrong that he should be compelled to hold that land for ten years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does it not occur to you that he has no right to sell a thing that does not belong to him?

Mr. FLETCHER: He has borrowed a certain amount of money and spent it on improvements, and he has put in two or three years' work, and, if he can sell it at a slightly enhanced value to recoup him for his improvements, he should be permitted to do so. I ask the Minister to do something to remedy that difficulty in the Act. It must be general throughout the State, because the two hon. members who have already spoken have referred to it, and no

doubt they know of special instances where injustices have occurred. It is a great hardship to those men, and it was never intended that they should be harshly treated.

Mr. J. JONES (*Kennedy*): This is a Bill which proposes to amend the Land Act, and I think it is a great pity that we do not amend the Land Act altogether, as I contend that under our present system of land tenure there is no inducement for people to take up land. Take, for example, a [5.30 p.m.] selection thrown open on a twenty-one years' lease. For the first portion of the twenty-one years the rent is fixed at £1 a mile, but that is only for a period of seven years. The selector therefore has only got a lease for seven years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. J. JONES: The Government can raise the rent as much as they like. No man knows what his rent is going to be. The time is coming when we shall have to give men who take up land some idea of what their liabilities will be in the future. At the present time we are asking a man to go out and build a home on a seven years' lease. The thing is ridiculous. If a man has a freehold allotment in town, he can put all his work and money into it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but he is rated.

Mr. J. JONES: So is the man outside rated, and is "repudiated" too. We shall have to make our land laws more liberal. For instance, a selector takes up a dry block of land which will carry five head of cattle to the square mile, and, through the expenditure of labour and capital, he increases the carrying capacity to ten head to the mile, and then the Land Court penalises him for doing it. That is the silliest kind of legislation I ever heard of. We ought to reward a man for improving the national estate. Any man who goes out on the land and discovers water on his holding has not only increased the value of it to himself, but has also increased the value of the national estate: yet this silly-brained legislation penalises him.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member is not reflecting on members of the Committee in that way. (Laughter.)

Mr. J. JONES: Certainly not. (Laughter.) These men should not be penalised in this way. A man takes up land and makes it valuable, and in seven years the Government can come along and double or treble his rent. He has no guarantee as to what his liability is going to be. We should give the man who takes up land an idea of what his liability is going to be for the full term of his lease, just in the same way as the 50 per cent. limitation of rent was given to pastoral lessees, which was sensible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the Land Court gave him a reduction, what would you say in that case?

Mr. J. JONES: The Land Court has not done it yet. (Opposition laughter.) I have asked the House to pass legislation to reduce the rents. I appealed here last year for sympathy towards small men up North who could not pay their rents, and I was told by the Minister that he could not do anything, as the rent was fixed by statute. Evidently my eloquence has had some effect in the House, because I notice the Minister has been

[*Mr. Corser.*]

giving a fair amount of relief, and I thank him for it—(laughter)—but I think it should be done by legislation.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

#### FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrigo*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

#### IRRIGATION BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): In moving the second reading of this Irrigation Bill, I do not intend to deal with the proposal in great detail. I think hon. members are aware that the Bill is brought in for the purpose of authorizing the Government to go on with the preliminary work of investigation in connection with the Dawson Valley scheme, and also to provide machinery for the proper control of schemes of that kind. The Dawson Valley scheme has loomed largely for the last two or three years in Queensland as a highly promising irrigation proposal, and I think it has met with the support of hon. members on both sides of the House. It has been discussed in this Chamber on a number of occasions. Hon. members took the opportunity of discussing it on the Address in Reply and the Financial Statement, and again last week in connection with the proposed railway from Baralaba to Castle Creek. Listening to the debates on those occasions has confirmed me in the opinion that hon. members look favourably upon that irrigation scheme, and agree that it is necessary that proper machinery be secured for that scheme, which is likely to develop into a very large undertaking. The question of irrigation carried on on a large scale cannot be made a side line in connection with the existing Water Supply Department, but must be made an expert business under the control of experts, who are properly trained in the study of irrigation questions and are able therefore properly to manage an enterprise of that kind. The Bill therefore makes the necessary provision to establish irrigation schemes, and provides for the requisite control, management, organisation, and everything that is necessary for the purpose of controlling irrigation proposals. It provides for the appointment of a Commissioner, who will have power and authority to manage the business, and it also provides—and this is the principal element in the Bill—that, before any irrigation undertaking is established or before authority is given to launch such an undertaking, the proposal must come before Parliament, and a resolution in favour of it be carried by Parliament. The Bill sets that out. Parliament shall determine all undertakings of this kind. I think that is very necessary. Under the Bill the Commissioner will be obliged to furnish to Parliament comprehensive information dealing with the scheme for which approval

is sought. The report must contain particulars of the scheme; it must define the boundaries of the area that will be comprised within the scheme; there must be a description of the proposed works contained in the report, an estimate of the cost of the work, and an estimate of the annual revenue which is likely to be derived. A statement regarding the quantity of water available for irrigation purposes, and regarding the quality of land comprehended in the scheme, must also be supplied. This report must be furnished to Parliament by the Commissioner, and it must be accompanied by plans, section, and book of reference, and such other documents as will throw light on the proposal. That will enable Parliament to understand any individual proposal which is brought forward before giving approval to the establishment of the scheme. Of course, in addition to that, it will be necessary, as it is now in regard to railway construction, to appropriate annually the money which is to be made available to the Commissioner, so that Parliament is given complete control over all proposals.

I am seeking authority to enable the Commissioner, after the Bill becomes law, to make a start with the preliminary work on the Dawson Valley. This is not contained in the Bill, and it will therefore be necessary for me to have an amendment accepted in Committee to give this authority. I might also inform the House that investigations, the collection of data, and surveys have been going on in the Dawson Valley for the last two and a-half years or more.

The surveyors are practically able to survey all the area above the site of the dam, and the area which will be inundated when the dam is completed; and a contour survey of the land below the dam is now far advanced and has been going on for the last two years. A great amount of information has been collected in connection with the scheme. As a consequence of the progress that has been made, favourable reports in regard to the scheme have been received. The Government took the initiative some months ago and appointed a man who was well qualified to undertake this class of work. Naturally, we have to look outside Queensland to get a man with the greatest experience to take the matter in hand. It is too big a matter for the Water Supply Department to handle. The experts of that department have been wholly confined to town water supply and artesian supplies and supplies of that kind.

Mr. FLETCHER: What will be the title of the man you have appointed?

The TREASURER: Mr. Partridge has been appointed as Acting Commissioner. He has not been appointed for any lengthened period. He has been appointed to undertake duties in connection with the scheme, but it will be necessary for applications to be called under the Act for the position of Commissioner.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Could you not have progress reports issued?

The TREASURER: I am just leading up to that, if the hon. gentleman will allow me. When the Bill is passed it will be necessary to call applications for the position of Commissioner. The position is at present being held by Mr. Partridge, and if he fills all the requirements, no doubt he will be an applicant. By the time applications are called for

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*

Mr. Partridge will have had some experience in these matters. At any rate, he comes to Queensland with very satisfactory testimonials and references. He has had a varied and wide experience in the Southern States. He was engaged on the irrigation schemes on the Murray and also in connection with the irrigation scheme at Yanco in New South Wales. He has also had experience in India and other parts of the world. We are fortunate in having secured the services of a man so well qualified.

Mr. MOORE: Has he had experience in building irrigation works or in using water?

The TREASURER: He is an engineer and an irrigation expert. He has had experience of actual construction and actual business management in connection with irrigation schemes. His last position in Victoria was one of actual business management and the reorganisation of one of the very successful schemes down there. As it was the intention of the Government to introduce this Bill no lengthened term of appointment was entered into with Mr. Partridge. After the Bill is passed applications will be called for the position of Commissioner. Mr. Partridge will be an applicant, and, if his experience and his work justify his appointment, no doubt he will get the appointment. I do not want to mislead the House in regard to that matter. We were fortunate in having the services of Mr. Partridge to advise in the preparation of this legislation, so that we shall not make the mistakes that were made in the past in the other States. Queensland does not want to be behind the other States in her irrigation activities, so we shall benefit by the experience of the irrigation areas of the other States. Mr. Partridge has been engaged in studying the Dawson Valley scheme. A lot of data was available in Brisbane, and he has also been engaged for some time in the Dawson Valley itself going into the matter with the engineers and surveyors at work there. As a consequence of a preliminary investigation made by him, it was thought it would be wise for Parliament to go on with one of the preliminary schemes in connection with that river. For this purpose a site in the region of Castle Creek has been selected. The area is contiguous to the irrigable lands which form part and parcel of the whole scheme. It is thought a preliminary scheme can be carried on there with the aid of a pumping plant. This will pump a sufficient quantity of water to irrigate 5,000 acres. The pump will be kept at work pending the construction of the larger works. The starting of the small scheme will offer many benefits, as it will enable the parties controlling the big scheme to observe the best means by which the land can be utilised for the production of crops, and it will enable a good area of land to be brought into use pending the development of the larger scheme.

As this is only a preliminary part of the scheme, to be carried out almost immediately, it will be desirable next year, or in some future session, to get parliamentary authority to commence the scheme. When the Bill gets into Committee I shall submit an amendment to enable us to get on with the preliminary scheme, limiting the expenditure to a definite amount.

The Dawson River scheme is not mentioned in the Bill. The Bill is a comprehensive

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measure dealing with irrigation, and may deal with more than one scheme.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Mount Edwards scheme?

The TREASURER: The Mount Edwards scheme could come within the ambit of this Bill. Any scheme may be brought in under this Bill, and Parliament can appropriate money for the purpose. Perhaps I ought to say in regard to the Dawson Valley scheme that there is sufficient information collected to enable us to take a very sanguine view of the future of that scheme. Mr. Partridge, after his recent visit to the Dawson River, is well satisfied that the scheme will not let the State down. It has all the potential advantages of a very successful scheme. It is possible to store a large quantity of water at a comparatively moderate expenditure. The site of the dam has all the natural features required for the accumulation and storage of water, which will not be very far distant from the land to be irrigated. The whole of the land embodied in the scheme and coming within the influence of the scheme will be served by gravitation from the storage supply. The irrigable land is very extensive. It is of high-class quality, and there will be more land than there is water to supply, so there is no deficiency of irrigable land. Looking at it from the point of view of soil analysis, location, distance from ports, and everything else, it should result in a highly successful irrigation scheme.

Mr. MORGAN: What tests have you made to prove that?

The TREASURER: Soil analysis for one.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not sufficient.

The TREASURER: What do you suggest?

Mr. MORGAN: A certain area ought to have been tried with water.

The TREASURER: Certain areas have been tried with water. Experiments have been made in a small way along the Dawson Valley. Most of the land in that area has been used for grazing purposes for years, and practically the only agriculture that has been carried on there is in the small plots at the different stations. The success of these small plots shows the remarkable productivity of the land. I travelled through that country with His Excellency the Governor, and we saw growing there cabbage, cauliflower, citrus fruits, and lucerne. It all showed the fertility and productivity of the soil.

Mr. MORGAN: The land may grow that and yet not be suitable for irrigation.

The TREASURER: The analyses of the soils show that they contain a good amount of plant food, and, in comparison with the soils at Yanco and along the Murray River, the Dawson River soils show out favourably. The elements of fertility are superior in the case of the Dawson, while the mechanical structure of the soil is vastly superior. The soil is of a sandy quality, and contains the necessary proportion of fine and coarse gravel to make it a fine naturally-drained soil, which makes it suitable for irrigation purposes. Mr. Partridge informed me that he was quite well satisfied with the suitability of the soil as an irrigation proposition. I would like to make it plain to hon. members that I am not asking the House by means of this Bill to give authority for the Dawson Valley scheme, because it is admitted that to bring

that scheme to its full development—construct the large dams, the main and subsidiary channels, and the various other works which will be necessary—may cost £2,000,000. I am not asking the House to commit itself to an expenditure of that magnitude on this occasion. When the scheme is fully designed and all information touching every possible aspect of it is ready, a resolution will be submitted to Parliament, and all that information will be made available. All I am asking for now is authority for the Government to go on with the preliminary work and the development of the small scheme at Castle Creek, which we hope will be a demonstration of the certainty of success of the whole scheme.

Mr. FLETCHER: When do you think you will have information about the result of the small scheme?

The TREASURER: That will be available in the course of a few months after the work is taken in hand, because it involves the construction of only a small, inexpensive dam. I think it will be only about 21 feet high at what they call Rocky Bar, and it will subsequently furnish what is known as the diversion weir, but in the meantime it can be used to give a pumping supply for 5,000 acres of land. When the water is stored subsequently by the construction of the Nathan Dam, it will be supplied to the irrigable land, at any rate to a large extent, by gravitation. In the meantime the cost will be moderate, and 5,000 acres of land can be brought into use, and a very valuable test of the whole scheme can be made.

I do not know that I need say much more. I and the Acting Commissioner recognise fully the possibilities of storing an enormous quantity of water. Nobody can doubt the extent of the irrigable land, the fertility of the soil, or the natural conditions in many other directions; but the question may present itself: What is to be produced? That is a matter that will have to engage the closest attention of the Commissioner before he makes a definite recommendation to Parliament. That I consider to be a question of outstanding importance. Suppose that an area of 1,000 acres is irrigable under the scheme, what will it produce? There is no doubt that the land will produce an enormous quantity of any kind of produce, and, judging by the experience of irrigation areas on the Murray River, where small holdings are capable of supporting a man and his family, it will furnish means for very extensive settlement. But before we can ask intending settlers to go on the land we want to be able to advise them as to what to produce. No doubt, in some cases the areas will have to be apportioned, so that some portions may be set apart for the production of certain crops and other portions for the production of other crops. At any rate, we are assured that the soil is suitable for the production of any kind of fodder crop or those fruits which have been produced on irrigable areas in the rest of Australia, and of any kind of cereal or lucerne, as well as any of the leguminous crops; therefore the range of possibilities is so great that we need not fear that the whole of the land will not be successfully and profitably used. But I am not asking the House, on that general statement, to commit itself to the whole scheme. I ask the House to give authority to allow the Commissioner to go on with the work, and

next year, when the reports and designs are ready, the House will be asked to consider the question of authorising the construction and establishment of the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme. With these remarks, I beg to move—

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

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Have you any plans and specifications ready?

The TREASURER: The plans and specifications will be submitted to Parliament.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A lot of the Bacchus Marsh country costs £10 to £15 an acre to water.

The TREASURER: I have already mentioned that almost the whole of this irrigation area will be served by gravitation. It has just been generally surveyed.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): We are asked to agree to the second reading of 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”; and under that Bill we are asked to accept something that is part and parcel of the Dawson Valley scheme, or, at any rate, to give authority to go on with something which will be in the nature of a trial as part of the general scheme.

The TREASURER: To give the Commissioner power to do it.

Mr. VOWLES: I recollect other similar proposals which have been mentioned on previous occasions. I remember a request from the Balonne shire asking me to accompany the Premier to inspect the site of a dam on the Condamine River, but I have heard nothing further of it, although I understand a lot of money has been expended.

Mr. COSTELLO: And the Severn River.

The TREASURER: It has been surveyed.

Mr. VOWLES: That work has been going on for years. I can quite understand that it is very necessary, but we really ought to get some reports as to whether there is a possibility of a successful result, because it seems to me that these schemes are adopted just according to circumstances. It was all very well so far as the Balonne area was concerned, and a good deal of capital was made out of it. I do not know how many years the Government have had parties of surveyors out, throughout the Dalby electorate from Cecil Plains to Warwick. Goodness knows what the expense has been, but we never seem to get any further with it.

The TREASURER: I got a report only last week on that. That was stream gauging.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that it has been going on for some years past.

The TREASURER: I think the hon. member is quoting an extreme case.

Mr. VOWLES: At any rate, it was all part and parcel of a scheme of irrigation, and nothing has been done for the expenditure of the money, in the sense that we have not got a report. However, I only say that in passing. If we are going to have this big expenditure of money on the dam and other works, and also the expenditure on the railway to which the House agreed, it is necessary that we should do something to

*Mr. Vowles.]*

make the area productive, and in order to do that we must have an irrigation scheme, and know whether it is likely to be a success in the future. At present we cannot possibly tell. We are agreeing to the appointment of a Commissioner at a large salary and with large powers, but there is one safeguard, in that he has to produce to this House at a later date sufficient evidence to justify any scheme being proceeded with. Nothing can be done by the Government or by him at the present time other than experimental work. That is the main principle of the Bill—the creation of the Commissioner. We are giving him very wide powers. In fact, we are giving him powers which I do not care about. When the area has been defined, it becomes a shire, under certain conditions, and the Commissioner becomes the local authority himself. It is provided in clause 7—

“When it is proposed to establish an irrigation undertaking and to constitute an irrigation area in relation thereto, the Commissioner shall forward to the Minister a report with respect to the proposed scheme.”

[7 p.m.]

Regarding irrigation areas, the Bill says—

“The Governor in Council may from time to time by Order in Council—

- (i.) Constitute any defined part of Queensland wherein is located the whole or any part of any stream, lake, or other source of supply wherefrom or whereby water is or may be utilised for irrigation or other purposes under the powers contained in this Act, an irrigation area under such name as is declared by the order;
- (ii.) Unite two or more areas into one area;
- (iii.) Divide an area into two or more areas;
- (iv.) Alter the boundaries of an area by including in an area part of another area and excluding it from the latter;
- (v.) Include in an area an outlying district;
- (vi.) Abolish an area;
- (vii.) Adjust any financial or other matters in his opinion requiring adjustment by reason of any order.”

It seems to me that the creation of a shire and making the Commissioner the authority is going to impose a pretty heavy burden on the settlers.

The TREASURER: The Commissioner must construct roads; roads are essential.

Mr. VOWLES: You are going to abolish the local authorities altogether and give the Commissioner very large powers.

The TREASURER: It may be necessary to create a shire within the area. In the first place, roads have to be constructed, and there is no authority.

Mr. VOWLES: That requires amendment; there is no provision made for it now. The Bill says—

“Forthwith upon the constitution of an irrigation area, that area shall be constituted a shire within the meaning of the Local Authorities Act by the Governor in Council by an order.

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“Thereupon the land comprised in such shire shall be excluded from the area or areas of the local authority or local authorities in which it was formerly included; and every local authority formerly having any jurisdiction over any such land comprised within such shire shall cease to have or exercise any such jurisdiction.

“Notwithstanding anything contained in the Local Authorities Act, the Commissioner shall constitute and for all purposes be deemed to be the council of such shire and a local authority within the meaning of the Local Authorities Act, and, subject to the Minister, shall have and be entitled to, and may exercise such and so many of the powers, authorities, jurisdiction, and immunities of a local authority under the Local Authorities Act, including the power to make, levy, and recover rates on land, as are declared by the Governor in Council by an order or orders.”

That puts the Commissioner in a very remarkable position. While assuming all the functions of a local authority, we have not the remedies against him that there are against a local authority.

The TREASURER: It is the same with regard to the South Johnstone sugar works area; there is no shire within the area.

Mr. VOWLES: I think the position is very different. In Part II. of the schedule we are asked to give the Commissioner powers which are far in excess of anything that the local authorities have. We are putting him in a very autocratic position—giving him the power to decide what crops are to be grown and the quantity of such crops, the power to compel people to do as he bids, the right to direct them to make improvements, power even in regard to the slaughtering of meat. Then here is something new—

“Prescribing and regulating the registration of entire stock in the area, and prohibiting the introduction into or retention in the area of any such stock, which, after report by an authorised officer, the Commissioner deems to be inferior; prescribing registration fees.

“Prescribing and regulating the furnishing by occupiers of returns giving—

- (i.) The numbers and description of their stock; and
- (ii.) The area of their cultivated land, description of the trees, vines, crops, and the cultivation thereon, and the yields per acre from the same.”

That is altogether new, and does not apply to any other portion of the State. Why it should apply to a particular case I am at a loss to know. Clause 15 provides—

“The Governor in Council may, at any time, by order, vest in fee-simple in the Commissioner any Crown land to be used for the purposes of any undertaking.”

I do not know whether “undertaking” means portion of the buildings in connection with the scheme or part of the area. We give the Commissioner power to transmit lands to his tenants—after all, they are his tenants. He has power to acquire Crown land and deal with it so far as his tenants are concerned. I would like the Treasurer

to explain the real meaning of clause 15, and of the words "any undertaking."

The TREASURER: Reference is made to it in clause 7.

Mr. VOWLES: Is it the intention to grant freehold?

The TREASURER: The tenure under this scheme will be leasehold tenure.

Mr. VOWLES: The Bill subsequently refers to leasehold and land acquired by the Crown. It also provides the method of dealing with that land. I am in agreement with the general scheme, but I cannot say that I am in agreement with the whole of the details. It is necessary to have a comprehensive scheme, but it seems to me that we are giving very large powers to the Commissioner and also to the secretary in case of the Commissioner's absence. The Commissioner will have greater functions than local authorities, which makes me think that it would be far better if we had more than one Commissioner. We could then have divided authority instead of autocratic authority. We do not know who the Commissioner is going to be. One name has been suggested as the possible Commissioner, and, no doubt, we have a good deal of confidence in that gentleman. In some cases we are really delegating to him the power of Parliament. We are asked to sanction the basis of those powers by putting them in the form of regulations. To my mind this scheme means nationalisation. You are placing an autocrat in charge with very large powers, and the tenants will be at his mercy, even with regard to the water that they are to use from time to time and as to how they are to use the land. It seems that it should not be the function of a Government to give such large powers without placing very ample restrictions on them. I approve of the principle of the Bill, but the details should furnish ample scope for criticism.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): In dealing with the subject of irrigation, any one who has any knowledge at all of the conditions which prevail in our western country and in a very considerable area of the State must recognise that one of the great drawbacks to the prosperity of the State, and one of the things that is "hitting us to leg" nearly every year, is the lack of water. Although we have had in some years what we would call a moderately good rainfall, yet during a number of years various parts of the State have suffered very considerably from drought. If it were possible to tabulate the stock losses and crop losses that have occurred in Queensland during the last fifteen or twenty years through drought conditions, I suppose the value would run into millions of pounds. I take it that the object of the Bill is, as far as we possibly can, to provide a comprehensive measure covering the whole of the State, so that we shall be able in some degree at least to minimise the terrible losses which we have suffered in years gone by from droughts. The Bill we are considering is certainly a very comprehensive measure, and I do not think it has come any too soon. For years past, hon. members have got up in this Chamber, time and time again, and spoken in favour of water conservation and irrigation. Just to what extent we shall be able to carry out irrigation schemes we cannot tell at the present time. Unfortunately, we have not the streams which some of the

other States have, and our work in connection with irrigation must of necessity be somewhat limited. At the same time, we should not allow ourselves to be "hit to leg" the way we have been during past years when drought conditions prevailed. It is not many years since you could reckon with a certainty in Queensland on having a regular wet season. That was the normal condition of affairs throughout Queensland twenty or twenty-five years ago.

Mr. KIRWAN: We used to have plenty of rain every February.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, and as a result of those rains coming at that particular season of the year we were generally assured of a fairly good season; but now to get a wet season is becoming the exception. The normal condition of affairs in Queensland over a tremendous area of the State is drought or dry conditions. As far as we can we want to overcome that state of affairs and minimise the losses as much as possible.

The Commissioner is given very wide and extensive powers under this Bill. I am a great believer in giving wide powers to the man at the head of affairs if he is a good man. I do not believe in hobbling a man who can do his job, and one of the reasons why success has not been more frequent in connection with big undertakings in the past has been that the man in charge, although he knew his job, was fettered and hampered by others who were associated with him and his work. I certainly believe in paying a man a good salary. According to the Bill, we are going to pay the Commissioner a salary of £2,000 a year. If we can get a good man, he should be worth every penny of it.

Mr. KIRWAN: He will be the Queensland Moses all right.

Mr. TAYLOR: If we can get a man to come along with a wand and strike the rock and bring forth water in the desert, like Moses did of old, he will be worth a lot more than £2,000 a year. One scheme in particular was mentioned by the Premier—the Dawson River scheme. According to the various reports we have had in connection with that scheme, it seems to be one which will be of the very greatest benefit to Central Queensland. I understand that Mr. Partridge, who has been appointed by the Government to report upon that scheme, recommends that a small portion of it, sufficient to irrigate about 5,000 acres, shall be gone on with at the earliest possible opportunity. I have no doubt that Mr. Partridge has given reasons for his recommendation, and I should be prepared to accept his recommendation; but one of the difficulties we are always faced with in connection with estimates of experts is that we get their estimate of cost with regard to big public works of all kinds, and, unfortunately, we find when we start the work that, not only are the estimates tens of thousands of pounds out, but in some cases £200,000 or £300,000 out. I certainly think there is something wrong when men who are supposed to know the particular work they are engaged in place an estimate of cost before Parliament in regard to a certain work, and sometimes are £200,000 or £300,000 out in their estimate. In irrigation works such as this, most of the work will be on the surface and fairly well revealed. We can understand that in connection with the work

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being carried out for the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board in Brisbane the greater part of the money has to be spent in tunnelling and sewers at varying depths underground, and it is a very difficult matter for the experts to assess the cost of the work. They have a fair knowledge of the work, but they have not the exact and complete knowledge on which to furnish an accurate estimate, and hence they are often considerably out in their estimates. I trust that in connection with this proposal and all other irrigation works the Government and the Minister will be careful to impress upon the men who have the responsibility of recommending to Parliament that certain irrigation work shall be carried out the necessity of using every care to see that their estimates are within a reasonable amount of what the total cost is likely to be. Of course, untoward circumstances, for which the expert is not responsible, may occur to alter the estimate; but, by and large, it seems to me that in the preparation of estimates very much greater care should be taken and better judgment shown than has been the case in connection with many estimates which have been furnished from time to time in regard to public works.

The Premier mentioned the matter of crops of various kinds which could be grown on these areas. One of the most important things we have to consider in connection with an irrigation scheme is what crops shall be grown. We do not want to grow crops of which there is a superabundance in the State. The requirements of the State in regard to a number of kinds of produce are amply supplied at present. If we can find out the crops which will grow on these irrigated area, which we shall be able to supply to markets requiring them, we should direct our activities in that direction, and see that crops are not grown of which there is a plethora in the State at the present time. We know the difficulty we have had during the last year or two with regard to fruit in particular. The people who have grown those crops have lost money; and we want to cut that out and obviate the loss, if it is possible to do so. I do not know whether the Commissioner is altogether the best man to advise in that direction, but he has that power. He has also the power—I do not know whether he would really possess the qualifications necessary—to go on to an area and destroy everything on it—fruit trees, vines, crops, fruitcases, and a lot of things which are enumerated in the Bill, if he thinks they are in any way noxious to the whole settlement. I do not think the Commissioner should have that power, and I do not know whether he is the best man to exercise power in that particular direction. I believe in giving him all the power possible to make the undertaking a success, but in some directions the curtailment of that power may be found necessary.

With regard to other irrigation schemes mentioned in this Chamber, there is the Mount Edwards scheme for one. I hope the Government will not lose sight of that scheme. It only wants irrigation to complete the success of the people engaged in agricultural operations there. I hope the Mount Edwards scheme will come under the consideration of the Government, and, if possible, that they will provide the necessary water to irrigate that country. There are a number of areas in our State which will

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lend themselves to schemes such as we are considering to-night. The Bill is late in coming along, but it is none the less welcome for that. I think everyone in this Chamber, no matter what party he belongs to, should welcome anything in the direction of providing the water which is so absolutely necessary for the development of the areas and the maintenance of the people in the dry areas of the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I am afraid that I must disagree with other hon. members this evening. With all due deference to the Premier, I do not think that irrigation is a thing that the State wants at present, principally because of the expense. At present we are suffering from extreme taxation and the high cost of living. The people are looking for something that will reduce taxation and that will reduce the cost of living, but this Bill is just going the other way. There is no chance of reducing taxation for ten or twenty years with a Bill of this kind. This will increase it at first, although it may be a success in the future. We cannot afford any irrigation schemes at present. There are many things we would like but which we cannot afford. We have heard a lot about good roads in country districts, which we would like very much, but if we have to spend £3,000 or £4,000 per mile in making good roads, we shall be placing a burden on the people of the country that they will never be able to carry. No doubt irrigation works are very desirable, but we cannot afford them. They will run into a cost of something like £5,000,000. The Premier estimates the cost of the Dawson Valley scheme at about £2,000,000; but he knows there is not a single irrigation scheme in Australia that has not cost three or four times the original estimate. Look at the big irrigation scheme in New South Wales, which is not a success yet. They had to write off £3,000,000, but the man on the land is still unable to pay the cost of the irrigation. There were great blunders in connection with the New South Wales scheme. I was there myself, and I saw where they allowed peach trees to grow for four years before they discovered that they were the wrong sort of trees for that area and should never have been planted. We might profit a good deal by the experience of others. What struck me most was this: When one got off the train at the railway station he saw a lovely circling drive with palms on both sides of it, so that he felt that to convert what was desert into a paradise like that was worth any cost, and that it was money well spent. Then one saw beautiful buildings and fell more in love with the place, and if he was a Government official he continued in love with it. But after a while, if he was working on the land, he would find that the lovely palatial residences and offices belonged to the officials, and that the men who were cultivating the land lived mostly in the tin huts on the flat. We do not want that kind of thing in Queensland. While the irrigation area was being designed and the channels were being cut, there were about a dozen motor-cars, and there were many men who had very nice jobs. They did not do too much and they got big wages and had a good time. Then the farmer came along and had to carry the burden, and he is loaded now with from £4 to £7 an acre water rates as a result of the splendid time the other class had during the five or six years while

the irrigation area was being laid out. There is no doubt that hundreds of men had a good time during that period; but can we do these things at a price that the man on the farm will not have to carry too heavy a burden or that the taxpayers will not have to foot the bill?

Mr. BRENNAN: You are a pessimist.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am speaking the truth, and I know what I am talking about. I am not like the hon. member.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am sure we all recognise the necessity for giving land to every man in Queensland who will use it; but I find that there are hundreds of thousands of acres of land along the coast with a very big rainfall and near railways which could be used, without going to the expense of spending £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 to make land available under a scheme which, from my point of view, is going to be a failure. I cannot see daylight through it, and I will tell you why. The farmers will certainly pay a water rate of £4 or £5 an acre, and that is just as much as you can make from an acre by growing wheat. Cereal crops will not carry an irrigation rate such as that, and, on the other hand, we have so much other land on which it will pay far better to grow wheat, if you can get a crop only every three years. It is absolutely out of the question to consider the growing of that kind of crop. The Treasurer should abandon the idea of growing on any irrigation area any crops which are used exclusively in Queensland. The only crops which can be grown are those which can be exported. The farmers on the Darling Downs, in the Lockyer district, and in the districts on the South Coast could grow three times the amount of stuff they are growing to-day if the market existed for it. What is the good, then, of spending £5,000,000 in providing an irrigation area on the Dawson River, hundreds of miles away from a market? It will be absolutely impossible for those men to compete in the markets of Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: You have no idea of progress.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Hundreds of tons of stuff come into our markets, and we could double it at any time if we needed it. It is no good advocating the settling of 500 or 600 more farmers to compete with those who are growing for the local market now. Before burdening the taxpayers, it has to be proved that that land will grow something which can be exported. The money which you would get from growing wheat would not pay the water rates. The farmers are sufficiently taxed now. It is no use increasing the taxation on the farmers in the South to put up works on the Dawson. In Queensland we know very little about the cost of such schemes. Unless you have land graded to a fairly good level, it is no good talking about irrigating it. On some of the irrigation areas in New South Wales from £10 to £15 an acre had to be spent on grading.

Mr. PETERSON: This land is naturally graded.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: So much the better. In a big area there is bound to be a fair

amount which will have to be graded. Only land which is of a sandy nature is fit for irrigation. You cannot irrigate black soil. If you poured water on black soil, it would set as hard as iron, and take three times the amount of cultivation. The lands down South which have been irrigated successfully have been lands of a sandy nature, or such as that at Bacebus Marsh, which has 16 to 18 feet of sandy loam from which to drain the water. They have the Melbourne market for their produce, and they get the very highest prices. They pay £1 an acre water rates, and they find that that is very heavy. So, if our works are going to cost from £3 to £5 an acre, it will be a very heavy burden. These are things about which we want to be careful. I have seen a good deal of the Dawson country. I have been from Westwood down through Banana and Taroom three or four times, and also on the Western line from Taroom. I do not know the exact spot where the dam is going to be built; but I know that a good deal of the land there is not fit for irrigation—it is heavy black soil. With very heavy rain, a lot of our Downs black soil sets into a hard cake, and you cannot grow crops on it. I hope that the Treasurer will make all possible inquiries before the State is committed to such an enormous expenditure. A great many professional men are going to get very good jobs out of this. Some of those men have been misled in comparing Queensland with other countries. You cannot judge the Dawson lands by the fruits grown in Victoria or New South Wales. A good deal of money will have to be spent on experiments before it will be found what crops can be grown. You can grow raisins or currants properly only where there is practically no rainfall. The land is irrigated just when they require it, and fine weather is necessary for the harvest. If the seasonal rains fell at the time of the harvesting of the fruits, they cannot be dried. It is no use shutting our eyes to the difficulties that exist. As this Bill does not really say that the things shall be done—the Treasurer says he has to wait for the Commissioner's report—I can see no harm in it. If it were intended to commit the State straightaway to an expenditure of £2,000,000, with the assurance of the expenditure of a further £3,000,000, I would vote against the Bill. That not being so, I shall vote for it.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I cordially support the second reading of this most important Bill. Ever since Queensland became a State I do not think that we have had before any Parliament such an important measure, destined so to increase land settlement. Despite what some hon. members may think of proposals of this nature, I have always realised that, as Queensland is so often afflicted with drought, notwithstanding the fact that she has magnificent soils, we have not been able to take the fullest advantage of those soils. It is no good nauseating the House by trying to prove what a valuable factor irrigation is; that is a foregone conclusion.

Other parts of the world have shown that irrigation is the salvation of the agricultural industry and of paramount importance. While I intend to support the measure, one may safely utter a note of warning. While it may be possible with such a brilliant irrigation scheme to induce hundreds or

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thousands of people to go on the Dawson Valley land, it must be remembered that it is not a bit of good having thousands of people on the land unless you have thousands more in the cities to consume the produce that they grow. Unless the Government keep that important aspect in mind, and unless they are determined not to be sidetracked by any city organisations which are determined to oppose an immigration policy, the irrigation scheme must be a failure. I have no doubt that the Government will select a gentleman to fill the position of Commissioner who will be a man of business acumen, and I believe that if he advises the Government to go on with the construction of the Dawson Valley scheme, it will meet with ultimate success. But that ultimate success cannot be achieved unless we have hand in hand with that scheme a great scheme for immigration to the cities from overseas. We talk about our oversea markets; but the oversea markets have failed us in our bad times. We have failed many times because of gluts on the other side of the world, and consequently the best market that Queensland has to-day is her own market. We should have a scheme collateral with this having for its object the increasing of the population of the city. The markets created by our own population will give the farmer a better chance through the scheme outlined in the Primary Producers' Organisation Act and other schemes akin to that, and he will be in a better position to obtain the full result of his labour without being dependent on markets on the other side of the world. Probably, in Committee, suggestions will be made to make things easier for those who intend to work on the irrigation areas. A great deal of the success depends primarily upon what the scheme is going to cost, and consequently great responsibilities rest upon the Government to see that under all the circumstances the work is done as cheaply as possible compatible with a fair deal for the men they are going to employ. They must see that they get the full value for their money, and that excessive cost will not be passed on to the settler. If you want a scheme to succeed, you must endeavour to get the water supply to the people at the cheapest possible rate. If that is done collateral with the expansion of the areas, I have no fear whatever for the scheme, and as years roll by we shall be able to look back and be proud of the Parliament which was instrumental in passing a measure of this nature.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): As the water to be stored in connection with the Dawson Valley scheme will be in my electorate, I am very much interested in this Bill. Every care should be taken to see that full value is received for the money expended. I quite agree with hon. members when they state that the success of the scheme depends very largely upon the cost of the water in the irrigation areas. I know it is possible for the cost to be so great that the amount obtained from a crop is not sufficient to leave any profit. If we are able to provide the people on the irrigable areas with water at a reasonable rate to enable them to produce a crop and have sufficient money for themselves, there can be no doubt about the success of the scheme. Take the irrigation area at Mildura. Perhaps there is no other land in Australia more suitable for irrigation purposes than that area. The Treasurer has stated that the land in the Dawson Valley is capable of growing all kinds of crops,

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fruit, etc., but that does not say that the land is suitable for irrigation purposes. I am quite sure that if water was put on the black soil of the Darling Downs it would do more injury than good. It would not cause that land to produce any more. Although some lands may be rich in vegetable matter and capable of growing all kinds of crops under natural conditions, it may not be suitable for irrigation purposes.

The TREASURER: You have to ascertain the correct mechanical construction of the soil.

Mr. MORGAN: The water has to percolate through the soil in the same way as a spoonful of water would percolate through a basin of sugar, eventually moistening the whole of that sugar. You might in some locality have exceptionally rich land capable of growing very good crops; yet, if you were to dig a hole and pour into that hole a bucketful of water, the water would remain there for a week or more without percolating through the soil. That land is not suitable for irrigation purposes. On the other hand, if you were to pour in a bucket of water and it was gradually absorbed, that land would be suitable for irrigation. If water was poured on land and the soil became crusty, it would be almost impossible to work it, and it would be absolutely useless for irrigation purposes. In the Mildura irrigation area there are limestones about the size of hens' eggs, and, when that land is irrigated two or three times a year, according to necessity, the water liberates a certain amount of lime, which acts as a fertiliser. That is one reason why irrigation is so successful in that area. I think the cost of water in Mildura is about 10s. a foot, and one foot of water two or three times a year is all that is necessary on that area. An acre of vines in Mildura will produce £75 or £80 worth of fruit. Under those conditions irrigation must be recognised as a payable proposition.

The TREASURER: I do not think it can be done so cheaply as that. I can give the hon. gentleman some official figures.

Mr. MORGAN: There might have been an increase in recent years. The climatic conditions at Mildura are suitable for irrigation. The average rainfall is about 8 inches to 10 inches per annum, and it does not matter whether rain falls in the locality or not. If rain falls during the drying period, it does more injury than good. I think the average rainfall in the Dawson Valley is from 26 inches to 28 inches per annum, and the rain falls during the part of the year when the fruit is ripe. The growing of fruits in the Dawson Valley for drying purposes would be out of the question. The only time the Mildura fruit crop is a failure is when it happens to rain during the picking season. The Dawson Valley lands will most likely be suitable for the growing of lucerne and other fodder crops, and if such crops are grown, combined with dairying, there would be no necessity to glut the market with those crops, as they can be fed to the dairy stock and the dairy produce exported. That would be much more profitable from the producers' point of view.

I would like to know from the Treasurer whether the Bill will give the Commissioner power to lock different rivers; that is to say, if he reports that it is advisable to lock the Condamine River, will he have power to do so? The locking of many rivers would be of

advantage from a domestic point of view, apart altogether from irrigation. In Victoria, several rivers are locked, not altogether for the purpose of irrigation, but in order to give the people a supply of water for stock and domestic purposes. In the Wimmera district water is taken by channels into the dry areas 150 to 200 miles away. It is taken nearly as far as Mildura. I would like to see a provision in this Bill giving the Commissioner power to prepare a scheme for the locking of the Condamine River. That is a work that is absolutely necessary. The Condamine River is one of the rivers in Queensland that would lend themselves to locking purposes. There should be a series of weirs from the head of that very fine river right down to the Queensland border. At the present time it is only a chain of waterholes during dry periods, and if a weir were erected every 20 or 25 miles, the channel would be full, and the farmers on the banks of the river who had areas suitable for irrigation could put in their own pumping plants and irrigate as they desired, and, in addition, they would be able to send their produce down by boat to the nearest railway station. That is a scheme that must be undertaken sooner or later, and the Commissioner who is to be appointed should have power to recommend such a scheme as that.

The TREASURER: So he has.

Mr. MORGAN: I am very pleased to hear that. I do not know Mr. Partridge personally, but what I have heard of him has been very favourable. I know he has been connected with some very important water schemes in Victoria and in other parts of Australia, and I understand he is an exceptionally good man. I hope he proves right up to expectations. All the same, I recognise that this Bill gives him very drastic powers—powers almost too great to be placed in the hands of any one man. In Victoria they have a board consisting of three Commissioners. I am not advocating that system here, but we are giving the Commissioner greater power than any man possesses under similar conditions in any part of Australia, if not in any part of the world.

The TREASURER: I think the hon. member is wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: Is the Bill drafted on the lines of the Acts in existence in the Southern States?

The TREASURER: We have followed the models of other States.

Mr. MORGAN: What other States—Victoria?

The TREASURER: Partly Victoria.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not think the Victorian Act gives the Commissioners the same drastic powers as are contained in this Bill.

The TREASURER: There is not the same necessity there.

Mr. MORGAN: I certainly think we are placing a very great responsibility on the Commissioner. We are giving him power to create areas, and he is responsible for all matters in those areas. He can take control, just as he desires, of the property of the people in the areas. He can dictate to them as to what they must grow, and he can take possession of the crops after they have been grown. He is practically a dictator.

I have had an opportunity of visiting the Dawson Valley, and I think it is eminently

suitable for the purpose of water conservation. I have been to Nathan Gorge, and I think nature intended that gorge to be the site of a great water storage scheme. When the dam is complete the water will be dammed back for a distance of about 36 miles from the gorge to the township of Taroom, and in certain places it will be 15 miles wide. It certainly will provide an immense quantity of water, and the Dawson is one of the rivers that do not run dry even during periods of drought. It has never been known to be absolutely dry, and during 1902 and in other drought times streams have broken out and the water runs faster than it does in normal times.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is not an argument for irrigation.

Mr. MORGAN: It means that water will never be short. Whether the water will be suitable for irrigation is a matter that will have to be taken into consideration.

The TREASURER: The water is perfectly suitable.

Mr. MORGAN: I am very pleased to know that. Certain waters, after being dammed for some time, draw certain chemicals from the soil which make the water unsuitable for irrigation. The water in the Condamine River in certain times of the year becomes hard, and if placed on the land it leaves a sort of residue, and it is not altogether suitable for irrigation. The same thing occurs in Victoria. The water in the Wimmera River in Victoria, when it was a running stream, was soft and fresh, but if it remained in the river for any length of time it became brackish and certainly was unsuitable for irrigation. The water in the Dawson River has to be proved and tested. It

[8 p.m.] is certainly very nice water, but owing to the fact that you are going to flood an enormous area of land, it is quite possible that the water will absorb certain chemicals from the land which will make it unsuitable from an irrigation point of view. I only point out these matters incidentally. I do not wish in any way to condemn the scheme, as I am one of those who believe that water conservation in Queensland will do an enormous amount of good. In Victoria millions of pounds have been spent in water conservation. I know that the Wimmera Water Trust alone borrowed and expended £2,000,000 in water conservation. Victoria has spent anything from £10,000,000 to £12,000,000 in water conservation. We have spent absolutely nothing in Queensland. We have not got a Minister connected with the Water Supply Department.

The TREASURER: We must make a start.

Mr. MORGAN: We have been going many years. Queensland is not altogether a young State. The Treasurer must admit that there is no State in Australia where it is more necessary to conserve water than in Queensland. I have travelled over a great many of the rivers and a great number of our natural storage basins, and in my opinion there is no place in Australia which lends itself more to water conservation than Queensland. We have the natural resources right along our rivers. We have timber growing there suitable for the construction of the weirs, and also the stone which is necessary for concrete construction. In Victoria they have to cart suitable material from a distance of many miles, because the particular localities do not provide the necessary material for the work.

*Mr. Morgan.*

In Queensland, along the Condamine and Dawson rivers and other rivers, you can get suitable timber for dam construction in the shape of wooden weirs. Of course, I recognise that concrete is coming into use, but weirs were constructed from timber in Victoria and lasted for forty or fifty years. I am going to support the Bill, generally speaking, but I think it is such an important Bill that we ought to be given some time to consider the whole of the matters pertaining to it. It should not be rushed through the House on the spur of the moment. I hope the Premier does not intend to put it through the Committee stage to-night.

The PREMIER: Certainly not, if Opposition members do not want that to be done.

Mr. MORGAN: In view of the fact that we have not another House now to point out any defects in a measure, we should be given time to go fully into the Bill. I thoroughly approve of the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme, which I think is going to do a remarkable amount of good. I believe that scheme will have an important effect on the climatic conditions of Central Queensland. The huge lake, 15 miles wide in places and 35 miles long, which will be formed will, in my opinion, so alter the climate as to do good, not only to that area, but to all parts of the State. The fact of having that water conserved in the form of an inland lake must do an enormous amount of good.

The TREASURER: You see that the Government can remove mountains and create lakes. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: Provided that full value is obtained for the money expended in this proposition and that economy is studied, the scheme will be satisfactory. Unfortunately, huge blunders are often made in these matters, which cost thousands and thousands of pounds, and then we are told by the Government that it is owing to no fault of theirs, but owing to the fault of some departmental officer. We should endeavour to prevent unnecessary expenditure. I am sorry that the railway from Juandah to Taroom has not been constructed. Had it not been turned down by the Public Works Commission, it would not only have been a branch of the connecting link between the Western and Central lines, which we so badly need, but it would have been useful for taking material right up to Nathan Gorge, and would have cheapened the cost of construction of the weir. The railway could even now be constructed from Juandah to Taroom. When the late Mr. Kidston was Premier, he proposed the construction of that line as a connection between the Western line and the Central line. It was not to be a spur line running from Miles to Taroom. That line was built, and bridges and other work were laid down as for a trunk line.

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

Mr. MORGAN: I am going to connect them up. Mr. Kidston's proposition was to connect the Dawson Valley with the Western line, and I hope the Government, in connection with this particular scheme, will see the wisdom of connecting up with the Western line. They will find that by building that line to Taroom they will be able to get material to Nathan Gorge to complete the weir, thereby cheapening the cost of construction by many thousands of pounds. It

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would not only cheapen the cost of construction, but also open up the area right around the huge lake which will be formed. Suitable farms will be available for cotton-growing. The suitability of the land round about the Dawson River for cotton-growing is recognised, and also the land around Taroom. The opening up of the land for cotton-growing will not interfere with the irrigation area in any way. Taroom is going to be one of the largest inland towns in Australia, as it is so situated that people will go there from all localities.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. I think the Government will be justified, in order to cheapen the cost of the erection of the weir on the Dawson River, in building the 40 odd miles of railway to Taroom.

At 8.10 p.m.,

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

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Considering the importance of irrigation to Queensland, I feel intensely disappointed that so little information has been forthcoming from the Treasurer in connection with this Bill. I quite anticipated that, when the hon. gentleman was submitting this proposal, we would have had a fund of information laid before us; but no man here can possibly accuse the Treasurer of having enlightened the House or the country to any very great extent regarding this proposal. I cannot imagine what the reasons may have been, because we know the hon. gentleman is capable of making out a good case. I believe that he has the material to place before the House, and that he could give us many facts which would be helpful to us and to the country in discussing the scheme. We have read a great deal in the papers regarding the Dawson Valley scheme. Twelve months or two years ago pamphlets were issued indicating the scheme which the Government had in view. That information was supplied almost at a moment's notice, and it referred to no end of schemes. Here we are entering upon the big scheme, and we have had one of the briefest speeches that has yet been made by the Treasurer.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is wrong. The Dawson Valley scheme is a different proposal to this altogether.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Treasurer referred to the Castle Creek scheme, which is part of the proposal to irrigate the Dawson Valley, and the hon. gentleman indicated that this was the modest beginning of the greater scheme to come later on. That was the opportunity for the Treasurer to enlighten the House and the country upon the whole scheme. In embarking upon this scheme we are going in for a huge expenditure. In the event of failure for want of money, or because the scheme is not economical, we might desire to stop the enterprise. Yet, as a matter of fact, this Bill commits us to the carrying out of a huge scheme, although the House is not in possession of the information it should have received from the Treasurer regarding the ideas of the Government. Some hon. members have spoken who are conversant with the locality, and we have read references made by His Excellency the Governor regarding the Dawson Valley. But we

should have had at first hand from the Treasurer a clear statement, so that we could fairly and legitimately criticise the proposal before us. The expenditure is going to be fairly considerable. We had a railway proposal before us the other day, and we are interested in knowing what the likely results of railway construction will be, and in what manner the people are to be settled. We know that we have £50,000,000 expended in various public works which are yielding only  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. We are adding to that expenditure, yet no word has fallen from the Treasurer that would indicate to the House that the money is going to be judiciously expended or that it will be remunerative to the country. The country is burdened to an alarming extent, and now we are having foisted on the State an expenditure like this, without being told what it is likely to produce in the way of settlement. I do not think we are treated as we should be treated in this matter. I consider this is one of the finest schemes that we have ever had suggested or placed before us. The hon. member for Murilla made reference to the inland lake which will be created. That may help the rainfall, but it is the people we want. The scheme, great and all as it is, must be accompanied by settlement to be completely successful; but we have had no idea from the Treasurer regarding the settlement of that area. Without that information, and with no provision for settling people, it is faulty, and no success may follow under it.

Mr. BRENNAN: In what way?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: To begin with, there is no idea of an immigration policy, which should go hand in hand with a scheme of this kind. The hon. member for Normanby put his finger upon things that should be done. The hon. member approved of the scheme, as I do. We have the land there, and we want the people. If we had the people, we could have secondary industries. That is why we want an immigration scheme, because all these things go hand in hand.

Mr. HARTLEY: What is the good of an immigration policy when you have a lot of people here now without land?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Hon. members opposite are afraid of immigration. The idea of the Government and their supporters is to take the surplus people from the other States in connection with great and grand national schemes that will be initiated practically with the passing of this Bill. The people we get from the other States are insufficient. Now is the psychological moment for the Government to take a look at things, and see that immigration goes hand in hand with this proposal. The Treasurer is prevented from doing the big things which must be in his mind. We must dissociate from this scheme all other things except the preparation of the land for settlement by the people, otherwise we are going to err to an extent that will be critical. We have spent two and a-half years in connection with surveys for this scheme. Why could we not have a progress report on it? The Treasurer is not giving us the information which we require in connection with this scheme. The brightest side of the scheme just now is that the Government are going to commence on a small portion of the work first, and no doubt the House will approve of entering upon that portion of the scheme. But I am disappointed in another

way. Various other schemes might have been entered upon; there is other land which has been proved again and again to be entirely suitable for irrigation. The hon. member for Murilla has referred to the Condamine River, and the hon. member for Toowoomba and I have referred to it time and again. Great opportunities are offered there for a scheme of a modest kind, and the soil is altogether suitable for the purpose. There could be a whole series of weirs from Killarney on the one hand to Condamine township on the other, and the aggregate would be a wonderful irrigation scheme. Why should it not be tried? It might not be carried out in one jump, but there is no more suitable place than on the lands among the hills of Killarney—lands perhaps among the richest in the State. I hope that matters of this kind will receive the attention of the Premier.

I hope that before the Bill passes the Premier will state boldly what his ideas are about immigration. It is no use playing with the thing, and telling us that 100 boys are coming to Queensland from England. If he is going to be bold and courageous in one direction, let him be bold and courageous in another. Hon. members on the other side have again and again endeavoured to point out how industries go hand in hand, and in the earlier part of the session we endeavoured to encourage secondary industries by relieving them of taxation; but the proposal was cried down on the other side. We need people on our land, for then we shall be perfectly safe in producing. The best customers we can have are the people of our own country. The surplus certainly can be exported, but first let us give earnest consideration to building up the industries of the country. Here we have a great cotton-growing industry being established. Why could not something have been done to establish a secondary industry to deal with the raw product? We want people in the cities and in the country, and if the Government do not know how they can achieve those two things, they should make way for people who do. When the day comes, it will be revealed that the men who succeed this Administration will be men of a different order—men of vision such as the hon. member for Bowen speaks about—and that the things they see will be carried out for the development of the country with understanding and confidence. The trouble is that the Government have courage to do certain things, but not the courage to do other things. They have plenty of courage to pull down; they have no courage to build up. Enterprise to-day, for instance, is strangled by the very thought that, instead of freehold tenure, the Government are simply working up to a big communal system which will go hand in hand with their nationalising aims and objects. That will not people the land. Hon. members generally must approve of the idea in the Bill, but to make it a success something more will have to be done, or the burden on the people will be greater than they can bear.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yarrango*): We have tarried far too long in this all-important matter of irrigation. To-day in Australia there is not the outlet by way of local consumption for the products that may be grown by irrigation in Queensland that there was a few years ago. I think hon. members

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on this side mentioned that a big question will be the disposal of the products to be grown on irrigation areas. I was very pleased to hear the Treasurer's statement that the passing of this Bill will not give the Government power to spend the enormous sum of £2,000,000. I think it is a splendid idea to carry out the smaller scheme first. In the meantime, I am satisfied that the Country party will educate the Treasurer and the members behind him in irrigation matters, just as they have educated the hon. gentleman while they have been in the House as to the wants of the farmer. After all, the Dawson Valley scheme may not be found, upon careful consideration, to be the best in the interests of Queensland. There are in different parts of the State many streams which might provide irrigation schemes more successful than one huge scheme absorbing all the money in one place, which might for some reason or other turn out to be a failure. Victoria's success has been gained, not by one huge irrigation scheme, but by carrying out many schemes in different parts of the State. In that regard Victoria to-day is an example to other parts of Australia. Before we go very far in the expenditure of huge sums of money, this matter should be sifted from top to bottom, to find out whether it is likely to be a success or not. We should not depend upon the opinion of one man, no matter how expert he may be.

Many things have to be considered in connection with irrigation. The Mildura scheme, as far as I understand, is as great a success as any irrigation scheme which has been carried out in any part of the world. That is largely due, first of all, to the climatic conditions; and, secondly, to the class of soil to which the water is applied. Chaffey Brothers started that scheme in 1885. To-day the settlers on the irrigation area are as wealthy as the settlers in any part of Australia. The Treasurer this afternoon told us that analyses of the soil have been made which prove that the Dawson Valley soils can be irrigated successfully. Another question which will have to be considered carefully before we proceed very far with this scheme is that of climatic conditions. That is a big factor. While the soil may be right

up to the mark as far as growing [8.30 p.m.] is concerned, when water is put over it at certain times of the year and certain climates it may prove an absolute failure. In that respect Victoria rather has an advantage over us, because we depend on getting the whole of our rainfall during the warm weather. That is the time of the year when the greatest quantity of water will require to be put on the land. In some instances we may be up against the problem of having heavy wet seasons after irrigating. Very careful consideration should be given to the question of carrying out a number of schemes, instead of having only one big scheme. Streams in different parts of the State have been inspected. The nature of the soils, the lay of the country, and that sort of thing should be taken into consideration before a huge sum of money like £2,000,000 is spent in the Dawson Valley. Very rarely in any part of Australia has the cost of establishing irrigation schemes not been double or treble the estimated cost. The Mallee country at one time was a dry belt in the north-west of Victoria. The other night, when I was speaking in this

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Chamber, I mentioned that the water in Victoria in some instances ran in open channels up to a distance of hundreds of miles. I was laughed at by hon. members on the other side. I was told by the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Bowen that, after all, Victoria was not hundreds of miles across. The hon. member for Barcoo claimed that North-west Victoria was his native home, and laughed at me for saying that water was run in open channels for hundreds of miles.

Mr. BULCOCK: From the original head.

Mr. EDWARDS: I know that the hon. member does not often make incorrect statements in the House, but he does so on occasions. I will read something which will prove to the hon. member that he should be careful in making such statements. Here is an instance of the length over which water is run in different parts of the north-west of Victoria. The Victorian "Year Book" for 1916-1917 says—

"When this work is completed, these districts, hitherto supplied from the Murray River by pumping, will be supplied, with equal efficiency and at a lower cost, from the Wimmera River by gravitation. The comprehensive Wimmera-Mallee gravitation channel system will then serve a total area of 8,500 square miles, extending, approximately, from Lake Lonsdale—at the foot of the Grampian Range—on the south, to Ouyen and Piangil—some 10 to 20 miles beyond Lake Tyrrell—on the north, and from the Richardson and Avoca rivers on the east to Lake Hindmarsh on the west. The channels which supply this extensive area have a total length of 3,600 miles."

Mr. BULCOCK: When the work is completed. That is not from one head.

Mr. EDWARDS: It shows how hon. members can, unintentionally, mislead this House.

Mr. COLLINS: We are not going to swallow that paragraph you have just quoted.

Mr. EDWARDS: After all, that has been the cause of the great success of the settlement of the dry belts of the north-west of Victoria. The reason I quote that is to show that it may be wiser to go into different districts where readings have been taken in connection with different streams, and see whether it would not be better to distribute over different parts of the State the money that we are prepared to spend in irrigation, instead of using it on the huge irrigation scheme which may be a failure. We should carefully consider also—as the hon. member for Warwick pointed out—the question of immigration for the purpose of settling the right class of settler on those lands when they are ready.

Mr. COLLINS: You would want a loan of £10,000,000 or £15,000,000.

Mr. EDWARDS: After all, it might be a good business proposition to get a loan of £10,000,000 or £15,000,000.

There is another thing which could be worked in very largely in connection with this scheme. When men are brought to work upon the area they should be encouraged to put a portion of their wages into a fund to enable them to take up land when the scheme

is completed. The question of granting such power to the Commissioner will be debated in Committee. The hon. member for Murilla stated that the power was not given to any other man of handling such huge sums of money in any part of the world. In Victoria the schemes are controlled by a Trust or a Commission of three. That matter will have to receive very serious consideration before we can agree to giving the powers that are sought in connection with this huge undertaking.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I am very pleased that the Treasurer has stated that the scheme is to be tried in a small way first. We have heard during the session a great deal about the giant scheme that is going to be put into operation. I am very pleased that it is not going to be a giant scheme. In such a scheme we have to consider three essentials—land, water, and men. We are not going to draft off a body of men and make them irrigation experts. Egypt is the only absolutely successful irrigation country in the world.

Mr. BULCOCK: Has the hon. member ever heard of Arizona?

Mr. WARREN: I am not going to say that there are not other partially successful schemes in existence. I know that irrigation is successful in Golden Valley, and is successful to a certain extent at Mildura. In Egypt 13,000,000 people are provided for by means of irrigation. We talk about an expenditure of a paltry £2,000,000 here. The last section of the scheme in Egypt cost £5,000,000. That irrigation scheme contains works that have been perfected by irrigation experts of the world. The very best brains dealing with the distribution of water have been utilised. Those men have been reared as irrigation experts. We know that the Egyptian soil is alluvial, and second to none in the world. It is perfect soil for irrigation purposes. Every year the Nile water brings down its own fertiliser. Labour costs only about five piastres a day, which is a fraction over a shilling, and there is no reason why those irrigation schemes should not pay. People have claimed that irrigation schemes have been successful in Victoria. That has also been claimed with regard to Mildura. When the tariff question was being discussed about three years ago, the settlers on Mildura complained that they could not grow fruit for the prices that were offering, so a tariff of 3d. per lb. was imposed by the Commonwealth Government. The biggest part of the fruit grown at Mildura goes through a drying process. That area is very close to the markets. We are thousands of miles away from the markets. It would be the greatest speculation and gamble to go in for a huge scheme of irrigation in Queensland. We must have people. How are we going to get them? It is no use hoping to get a few from the other States. I thought the Treasurer was going to bring forward a scheme to show how he was going to populate these vast spaces. We have land second to none in the world—I do not say for irrigation purposes. It is all very well to get analysis of the soil and say that it is good for irrigation. We know what the soil can grow. One hon. gentleman said that wheat was to be grown on the irrigation areas. Wheat can be grown round Mitchell, Roma, and on the Downs almost to perfection, but

it would be nonsense to talk about growing it on irrigation areas. It was said that we could grow fruit. We can get millions of acres along the North Coast line as good as any country in Florida for fruit cultivation.

Mr. HARTLEY: Whereabouts?

Mr. WARREN: Right along the North Coast Railway.

Mr. HARTLEY: You don't mean Beerburum?

Mr. WARREN: No. The hon. gentleman had not better refer to Beerburum, or I will touch upon that.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. gentleman said Beerburum was second to none for growing citrus fruits.

Mr. WARREN: That is a deliberate misstatement. I said nothing of the sort.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will not discuss Beerburum.

Mr. WARREN: That matter has been discussed pretty thoroughly. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of better land than ever Beerburum was along the North Coast railway, suitable for growing citrus fruits. We have other parts where we can grow deciduous fruits. We talk about irrigation in connection with growing fruit. We would have to go in for a drying plant. We find that the Burrinjuck scheme has been a distinct financial failure. Nearly £3,000,000 have been written off already. If the wall of the Burrinjuck dam were to break, it would sweep all the towns on Murrumbidgee River into eternity. It is one of the finest schemes of its sort that we could have, yet with good water and good land around North Yanco, the people are leaving there, and going into the dry wheat belts of Temora, and starting wheat farming in preference to farming on the irrigation area. They have their factories there, but they cannot pay their way, and one reason is because they are over 300 miles from a market. It is not that they have not equally as good land on the banks of the Murrumbidgee as any we have in Queensland. I know the country perfectly, and the only thing they have not got is the market. They have as good a class of people as we can produce here, yet we find the Leeton settlement is an absolutely rank financial failure. Therefore it will be wise for the Government to feel their way before they go in for a large irrigation scheme. There is no doubt irrigation is a good thing, as we can see from the small isolated plots in different places. The hon. member for Nanango said that Victoria had set us an example. Why? Simply because they have Melbourne, Ballarat, and Geelong—large manufacturing cities—to consume a considerable portion of the stuff they produce. But we find that fruit is being over-produced in Victoria at the present time.

Mr. COLLINS: It was overproduced in Great Britain the other day.

Mr. WARREN: That is quite likely. At the present time we have orchards laid out in Queensland, in New South Wales, and particularly in Victoria that would produce sufficient to feed a population, not of 5,500,000, but of 10,000,000, and to-day we find that the very people who are laying out these orchards along the banks of the Murray and in the Goulburn Valley and other places

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are becoming almost distracted in their efforts to find a market for their fruit. Now they are going in for high-class fruit and trying to export it; and until we can prove that we can send our citrus fruits to the people overseas, it is no use talking about putting large areas under fruit.

We heard a lot of talk on the Address in Reply about this big irrigation scheme. If this scheme were to eventuate, the Government would have to bestir themselves and find some means of disposing of our produce. If not, we would not have a loss of £3 250,000 like there is in connection with the Burrinjuk scheme, but we would have a loss of many more millions, and we would have the heart-break of knowing that the great scheme was a certain failure instead of a success. We want to consider these schemes from every aspect, and it is my duty to analyse this scheme, as I know something about irrigation in other parts of the world. I do not say anything against this initial scheme. The Government are doing the right thing, but I hope they will profit by the mistakes which have been made in the other States. If they profit by those mistakes, then we are not going to lose a considerable amount of money; but we must bear in mind that the produce from this irrigation area will have to be carted a considerable distance to the market. It must also be borne in mind that fruit grown on irrigation areas is very much softer than other fruits. If we go in for this irrigation scheme, then we must evolve a better system of distribution than we have had in the past, otherwise it is going to be a failure. I congratulate the Government on tackling the smaller scheme first, and I trust it will be the success the Government hope, but I do think it is a mistake to put the whole control in the hands of one man. I have heard nothing but good of the gentleman who we are told is to be appointed Commissioner, but it would be better if the scheme were put under the control of a Commission. I trust that the Government will see that, with the extra production, there will be evolved a proper system of distribution.

Mr. BELL (*Passifern*): We are told that this is a machinery Bill, and we have to accept the Treasurer's assurance on that matter, because we have not had sufficient time to study the Bills that come before this House. However, we trust that there is no ulterior motive behind the Bill, although our experience in the past has led us to believe that very often that is the case. The Treasurer has told us that before any scheme is gone on with a report, together with plan and estimate of the cost, will be submitted to Parliament. That is a very good idea, because before the country is involved in expensive experiments, Parliament should have a voice in the matter. The Treasurer to-night laid stress on the Dawson Valley scheme. No doubt, it is a good scheme and a big one, and one which appeals to the imagination; but whether it is a practical scheme, and whether it will be put into operation for many years to come, is very doubtful, because a great scheme like that will place on the area it serves a very heavy burden which will have to be met by the people who secure land in the irrigation area. Also, in order to settle this land under a comprehensive scheme, the Government will have to give financial assistance to many of the settlers. Although we realise what a

good thing irrigation will be for Queensland, still we should not launch out on expensive experiments before we are absolutely satisfied that they will be a success. In every irrigation scheme in Australia the initial cost has been so great that it has been more of a burden than a blessing to the people. I would like to suggest to the Treasurer that there are many smaller areas in Queensland that are quite suitable for irrigation; and, in order to prove whether irrigation will be successful or not, I recommend that the Government should start on some smaller irrigation scheme—such, for example, as the Mount Edwards scheme. The Treasurer has visited that district, and quite realises that very excellent country would be served by the proposed dam. The district is settled and it has railway communication, and, in addition, it is within a short distance of the metropolis and suitable markets. That scheme would not be very expensive. I think the initial cost would only run to something like £175,000. It has been recommended that, until the dam was completed, not more than 6,000 acres should be irrigated. The catchment area is 83½ square miles in extent, but the percentage of run-off is very high, and the whole scheme would be capable of irrigating 24,000 acres.

This scheme will promote settlement, and the water conserved will be of good quality. It is free from minerals, and is excellent for drinking and domestic purposes. I suggest that, before any expensive experiments are tried, a smaller scheme should be adopted to prove if irrigation can be made a success. This area is close to a market, which is very essential. To-day in Queensland much produce has to be sold under the cost of production, so that it is very essential, if any big scheme comes into operation, to make provision for marketing the produce.

[9 p.m.] When the Treasurer was dilating upon the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme, I do not know whether he was doing so in order to give an excuse for going on with the Baralaba-Castle Creek Railway. We all recognise that the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme will eventually be a good one, but I think it is a good many years before its time. In the meantime, I suggest that the Government should start with smaller areas to see whether irrigation can be successfully carried out.

At 9.2 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I listened to the Premier to-night when he launched out on the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme which we have heard so much about for the past two or three years. We must all regret the lack of enthusiasm on the part of hon. members opposite in this scheme now that we are confronted with it. The scheme is really too big for them to comprehend, or else they realise that the people who are going to be responsible for carrying the burden of this scheme are those whom we on this side represent. Irrigation is not a new thing. It was in operation in Mesopotamia in ancient times. They are finding traces of irrigation there dating back 2,000 years before the Christian era. It was a huge success in those days. The success of irrigation in Egypt has been referred to to-night. I would advise the Treasurer and the Government to be very cautious with regard to what is done in Egypt, as the conditions in that country

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are not comparable with those in Queensland. First of all, nature has ordained that the products of Egypt should be grown by the waters of the Nile. The first irrigation scheme in Egypt in modern times was commenced by Sir William Willcocks, the first part of the contract running into £2,000,000. That amount spent in Egypt would represent about £15,000,000 spent here in that direction.

Mr. BRENNAN: Black labour—you are advocating it.

Mr. COSTELLO: That work was carried out by black labour. You have to take into consideration the question of labour in regard to irrigation schemes in Queensland. The first scheme completed by Sir William Willcocks was the Assouan Dam, which is about 600 miles from the mouth of the river on the Mediterranean, and the first part of the scheme, as I said, cost £2,000,000. Italian skilled labour was used, with black labour for the manual work.

Mr. BRENNAN: What percentage?

Mr. COSTELLO: The percentage of skilled labour was only one in 100. The black labourers, as the hon. member for Murrumbidgee mentioned, were paid about 1s. a day. At that time they were really slaves. Many of them were taken out of gaols in Egypt and employed on irrigation work, and the only remuneration they got was sufficient rations to exist on. It is impossible for us to compare irrigation schemes in Queensland with those carried out in other countries where labour has been obtained for practically nothing.

Consideration should also be given to the quality of water. In Egypt, the water of the Nile is most suitable for irrigation purposes. The Nile brings down a lot of silt in the water. After a very short time the land in Egypt becomes productive and raises a light crop, and after treatment by the Nile water for a period of three years you get beautiful land worth about £150 an acre.

Mr. COLLINS: What kind of crops does it grow?

Mr. COSTELLO: The crops are such as we can produce. Then we must take into consideration the marketing of the products grown in Egypt. They are right against the European markets. They grow cotton, wheat, barley, and other crops. It is useless for us to contemplate growing wheat under irrigation in Queensland; it will never be in our time, for it will not pay, as the cost of water will be so excessive. Cotton-growing will probably pay best in Queensland. Cotton in Egypt five years ago was yielding from £60 to £80 an acre, and naturally people went in for cotton-growing, also maize and other kinds of produce paid well. Citrus fruits are not doing too well.

The Treasurer mentioned the controlling of what may be grown in the irrigation areas. I have had experience in regard to what people should and should not produce. In Egypt, under British occupation, production was controlled by the military authorities. It was necessary that certain crops should be grown to feed the army of occupation. In that country, it was quite simple to control production. There was an officer who was a kind of Lord Mayor of the district. He took his instructions from a higher authority, and passed them on to the farmers under him; but even in that country that system did not

work out altogether satisfactorily, although the people had always been subject to authority. The Egyptian rebellion in 1919 was caused principally because the people felt they were suffering an injustice by being compelled to produce certain crops which did not pay them. They wanted to produce things for which they could get the highest return. They felt that they were not getting a fair deal by not being allowed to do so, and they turned against the conditions, and we had considerable difficulty in dealing with the rebellion in that country. I fail to see how the Government will be able to control the people in regard to what they have to grow in irrigated areas in Queensland. The people will not be dictated to, even by the Government of the day. It is no use comparing any scheme in Queensland with the result in Egypt, because the waters of the Nile are different to any streams that we have in Queensland. Regarding the Dawson Valley scheme, I am a great believer in irrigation, but I am very much afraid that this scheme is going to cost us many millions, and we shall never be able to pay the interest on it in our time. The hon. member for Fassifern suggested that the Government should try a small area as an experiment first. The Condamine River has been mentioned for one, and we also have the Severn, which is a most suitable river for irrigation. The Macintyre River is another. There is a light loam along the Severn River, which is regularly in flood, and it would be quite easy to start an irrigation scheme there. It would cost much less than the Dawson Valley scheme, and we could grow many crops that would be easily marketable.

The Government have never taken into consideration the value of the tobacco industry in Queensland. That industry has been neglected, although it has proved a great success, and is a great asset to Queensland. If we had a small irrigation scheme in connection with the Severn River, we could grow cotton, tobacco, and lucerne. The Government do not take into consideration the value of lucerne to the State. The man who has got lucerne is well off, and has nothing to fear, particularly with irrigation. He is secure against drought. He can fatten sheep, lambs, and cattle for market. I commend such schemes as the Severn and McIntyre to the Government.

The Government should also take into consideration the quality of the water in the Dawson. I know many streams in Southern Queensland where the water is highly mineralised. There is no prospect of growing crops with mineralised water, and that is a thing that has to be taken into consideration. The nature of the soil and the climatic conditions have also to be considered. The Secretary for Agriculture will agree with me that we have a number of pests in Queensland, and we shall find, if we go on with the Dawson Valley scheme, that many pests will have to be contended with there. This scheme will involve a huge expenditure. However, I am always willing to support anything of a progressive nature. I will support the Bill, and watch the progress of irrigation in Queensland with great interest, but I am sorry they have not made provision for introducing more people. The scheme is no use without people. Before we waste £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 on an irrigation scheme, we should bring in more people to help us bear the burden of taxation. That

*Mr. Costello.]*



is why I think that the Government should introduce a bold immigration policy in connection with this scheme.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): Quite apart from the advisability of entering upon any particular irrigation scheme in Queensland, it is a good thing that this measure is being introduced, because it provides the machinery for forming a sub-department for initiating irrigation schemes, and for making necessary inquiries in certain districts. It is necessary that sooner or later we must develop irrigation schemes in Queensland. While irrigation schemes cannot be said to be drought-resisting—the conservation of fodder being a thing quite apart and something that we might give consideration to, because it is even more necessary than irrigation—nevertheless irrigation needs development also. Several members referred to the amount of money lost in connection with irrigation schemes in the South, and they therefore condemn every irrigation proposal. There are many reasons for the losses incurred in connection with the irrigation schemes in the Southern States. The Burrinjuck scheme cost £6,000,000, and £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 will have to be written off. There is a reason for the failure in connection with that scheme. The channelling and water arrangements were first class. I do not know if any mistakes were made with regard to that part of the business, but in connection with the purchase of land and the development of the towns and settlements, there is no doubt that gigantic blunders were made which proved very costly indeed. The land was purchased from Sir Samuel McCaughey for £3 10s. an acre, but they found afterwards that a great part of it would not grow anything. It was found that there was a clay band under the soil running at a depth of from 4 inches to 1 foot, and every time the water was put on it it set, and it required to be ploughed up. Fruit trees were put in, and after they were in twelve months they became stunted and practically of no use. Some people bought pigs, which they desired to fatten on lucerne, but they found that they could not grow lucerne, and they had to buy food to keep the pigs alive.

Mr. HARTLEY: That was the fault of the Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: It was a Labour Government that started the scheme.

The TREASURER: It was started and completed by the Holman Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: They built a bacon factory there, but found there were no pigs available. The initiation of the scheme was all right and the water was all right. There is plenty of excellent land at Mirrool, but a lot of mistakes were made in connection with the channels on inferior land provided for the settlers at Leeton. The settlers were advanced £1,000, but it was found that the fruit trees which were put in would not grow.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who told you that?

Mr. FLETCHER: I know from my own experience, as I lost some money there. They put electric light throughout the whole settlement. They cut up the areas into small blocks and they discovered that a lot of the money spent had been absolutely wasted. After a good deal of delay they had to compensate a lot of the settlers for their land, and they gave them some land in a more favourable part further up. That is

where the losses came in. A lot of these losses could have been avoided if a little more care had been exercised. The irrigation scheme there was all right, but it was the dearth of the land, and the ill-conceived administration, that was responsible for the losses. I consider that the success of the scheme largely depends on the man who has control. I notice that it is proposed to pay the Commissioner up to £2,000 a year. I would not object to pay up to £5,000 if we got the right man, because he will be controlling not only the Dawson Valley scheme, but also schemes in other parts of the State, and the right man may save us hundreds of thousands of pounds. He has to have high qualifications. The Premier stated that Mr. Partridge was an engineer, and engineers, as a rule, are not business men. It was an engineer who was in charge of affairs at Yanco. Had a business man of high business ability been in charge, I do not believe the mistakes there would have occurred. But the Premier also stated that Mr. Partridge had had a considerable experience of administrative work, and certainly from his experience in irrigation affairs in the South and other countries he seems to be highly qualified. I hope he has the administrative ability, because I believe that is absolutely necessary. A man of high administrative ability who understands irrigation and all about the construction works, can employ engineers and other officials to do the more technical work, so long as he sees the thing in its right perspective and can avoid mistakes. He wants to be able to sift each problem, to accept things that are sound and reject things that are unsound.

I do not see how any of these irrigation schemes can be a failure, if they are conducted as they should be conducted, and if the land and water are suitable; but there is scope for tremendous losses if you start wrong. That is why, in the first place, we must get the right man as Commissioner. I hope that in that respect no mistake will be made, and that it will be seen that he is a man of administrative ability and sound judgment, because otherwise you may have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds—even millions of pounds—before you know where you are, and have an almost impossible job in rectifying the mistakes.

The chief difficulty which will have to be met in this scheme on the Dawson will be in the choice of the crops that are to be grown. The Treasurer recognised that there would be a difficulty, and the man who is guiding the destinies of these schemes will need to have such business acumen as will enable him to direct the settlers as to what they shall produce. It is no use producing things that are not going to be marketable. It is quite possible that we may be able to develop pig-raising on a very large scale. Possibly further work can be done in dairying, if it is not possible to flood the market, and we may do quite a lot in cotton-growing, and the production of lucerne and fruits. But we must develop our population in Australia so that we shall have a market to consume more of our own products; and we must see that we produce cheaply enough to enable us to compete in overseas markets at a profit. We cannot do that unless we have a low production cost; therefore we cannot afford to have any mistakes, because any

[*Mr. Costello.*

waste of money will either fall on the settlers or will be written off and charged to the public of Queensland.

I understand from the Treasurer's statement that it is not intended immediately to start the big Dawson Valley irrigation scheme. Probably it will be years before it is commenced, but it is proposed to start the smaller scheme at Castle Creek almost immediately, and within a few months settlers, the hon. gentleman says, will be able to go on the land. It is not possible for them to go on that land without railway communication, and apparently this Castle Creek scheme is intended to justify the immediate building of the Baralaba railway. On the face of it the whole thing seems most unwise. The expenditure of £400,000 on the railway and the further expenditure on this Castle Creek irrigation scheme is going to mean such an outlay that 5,000 acres of irrigated land certainly will not pay for it. It will be unpayable at least until the big scheme gets underway some years hence. Our finances are such that we cannot start any more loan expenditure unless on productive lines. I concur with the hon. member for Fassfern that it would be far better to start on the Mount Edwards scheme as an experimental scheme. The initial outlay would only be something like £175,000, and the area of country developed is greater and nearer to markets. It would be safer, and at the same time we could discover how the whole thing worked and what the prospects were in the Dawson Valley. I shall be very interested to see what Mr. Partridge has to say on the subject of the Castle Creek scheme. It seems to me that the urgency of winning the Normanby seat is such that the Government must justify the building of the railway, and this smaller scheme is brought along in consequence. If the big scheme is not completed for years, it will be very foolish to build that railway and not have produce to carry on the railway line; and the money spent on the pumping plant at the smaller dam will be wasted, because the bigger scheme will be worked by gravitation.

I am simply in favour of the formation of this subdepartment of the Treasury to develop irrigation. It is necessary to have something of the sort, but I hope the greatest care will be exercised and that every avenue will be tested before any big scheme is launched, because the experience of Australia in the past has been that huge sums can be lost if you start in wrong. I hope the Treasurer will see that the Commissioner is the most capable man that can be found in Australia, because the success or otherwise of the scheme depends on whether the right man controls it.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Moran*): I think it has been brought home to us of late years that some improvement in our methods must be made if we are going to maintain a large population. Seeing that that is the case, I think we all realise that in the Bill before us there is the germ of very great possibilities. At the same time, in view of the large expenditure which such things involve, it is essential that all the works which may be undertaken under the measure shall be most economically conducted, and that the possibility of a large unremunerative expenditure is carefully avoided, or else it will simply add to our burdens. We have already a very large amount of money sunk in enterprises which are not paying interest. First

of all, therefore, I would urge the Government not to tie themselves down to any particular method of operations, but that they use whatever offers as the best, whether it be day labour or contract. The producers will be called upon in time to come to bear the burden of any unjustifiable cost, in the shape of interest. If that is kept in mind and those controlling affairs see that they get for the public the very best

[9.20 p.m.] return for the money, there is no reason why this should not contain the elements of very great good for Queensland. In all probability, lucerne will be one of the principal crops to be grown. I remember that, in the 1902 drought, a firm at Cowra in New South Wales, at a time when sheep were dying all round, obtained remarkable results. The statements regarding their work seemed so extravagant that the New South Wales Government considered it a national question and sent an official up to see what was being done. A paddock was turned over to him and on 22 acres of irrigated lucerne he fattened 1,600 drought-stricken sheep—not sheep that were half fat. The sheep were not put in the lucerne paddock, but were kept in perfectly bare paddocks alongside, and the lucerne was cut and fed to them. I mention that to show the possibilities of irrigation.

It has always struck me that the possibilities connected with lamb raising have not been properly explored. In Victoria the industry has reached considerable dimensions, while in New South Wales and South Australia a little of it is done. We know what the fat lamb trade has done for New Zealand. Such an area as we have in view on the Dawson is most favourably situated for fattening lambs. In Victoria they buy aged Merino ewes from the large sheep properties and put them with medium and long wool rams, such as Shropshire, Southdown, and Border-Leicester, and get fat lambs. The industry is a source of considerable revenue to that State. Seeing that there are large meatworks on the Fitzroy river below Rockhampton, within easy reach of the Dawson Valley, this would very likely be a profitable work to take up.

We must get away from the old "trusting to luck" methods which have characterised us in the past. We know that our climate is one of extremes. During the first two or three months of the year heavy floods occur, and then for eight or nine months not a drop of rain falls. In some districts on occasions they get no rain for three or four years. As our population increases and agriculture grows, we must try and conserve our supplies of water. It has often been said that our only means of repelling an invasion is to have a population of at least 20,000,000 in Australia. I doubt very much whether our food supplies under present methods would be adequate for a population of that number. A few years ago, during the prevalence of a drought, I was journeying North with two men who were acknowledged authorities on stock matters—Messrs. Baynes Brothers. They told me that at that time there was scarcely a fat bullock obtainable in Queensland; that the only fat stock was right up in the Northern Territory, and it would hardly be sufficient to maintain even our present small population for more than a few weeks or months. Luckily before we reached the extreme limit rain came and saved us. It is easily realised that, if we are to build up Australia into a great nation,

*Mr. Swayne.]*

we must adopt such methods as will increase our food supplies. In parts of India the climate is very similar to that of Australia—extremes of wet and drought—yet we know what a teeming population is maintained there by the aid of water conservation. We read of what they call tanks or big dams miles and miles round which have been in existence for thousands of years, through the aid of which this large population is fed. That shows the great possibilities there are in the way of irrigation. It seems to me that at the present time we have hardly sufficient of the right class of settler to work these areas; and, hand in hand with any large irrigation scheme, should go an immigration scheme. The one is a sequel to the other. We have heard some hon. members speak about the necessity for a home market, while others have stressed the need for growing crops which are adaptable for export. I think that both objects have to be kept in view. If we get the population which it is necessary that Australia should possess, we shall have the home market quite capable of absorbing all that we can produce. There is an interregnum to be breached, and during that period we shall have to look for oversea markets.

I have already mentioned an industry that seems to lend itself to that purpose. Others have mentioned dairying. When the different nations in Europe settle down to steady work, as we hope to see them do in a reasonably short time, the market for products such as meat, butter, and so on, will increase; and it will be an advantage for us to sell and for them to buy. We can attain a great measure of success in that direction only by irrigation. I come from a district where, luckily, irrigation is not necessary. Speaking with some experience as a cultivator, I say that in very many instances good cultivation is all that is necessary even in places where people consider that irrigation is essential. Small sums of money have been spent for irrigation purposes in the district from which I come. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company spent a good deal of money on one of their plantations. One farmer that I know put £400 into a steam pump, and another a slightly larger sum. At the same time their experience has been that, variable though the seasons have been, there was sufficient rainfall to render them independent of irrigation, provided thorough cultivation was gone in for, and the pumping plants fell into disuse.

It must always be remembered that if it takes £5 or £7 an acre to put the water on the land, that is only the beginning, and more money has to be spent in getting it applied to the crops. The Treasurer dwelt at some length upon the expert advice he had obtained. I was very glad to hear that. The estimated cost of the Inkerman scheme, in the first place, was £130,000, and now we find it has increased to £400,000, and we are afraid that the cost will be beyond that figure. I asked a question the other day as to what was the estimated acreage supply of water during eight hours. An answer should have been furnished at a moment's notice. It may be foolish to say so, but the lack of information to that answer is very informative. On a scheme costing £400,000 to £500,000, the Government should have some idea of the supply of water which will be available when the scheme is completed. I was told that the

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information would be prepared. The officials should have it at their fingers' ends. I asked a question with regard to the number of wells that were good and the number that were no good. That information should be in the hands of the officers controlling the matter. They should know to a well how many are good and how many are failures. I was told that the information would be procured. Perhaps the information was there, but the Minister was ashamed to disclose it. However, the people can form their own opinions. I hope that in the near future better methods will be followed. I hope that the gentleman who will be appointed to take charge of the scheme will be fully capable of handling the matter, and will carry it on in the best interests of the people.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am not going to give this Bill my blessing. I think it is the worst thing that the Government have done yet.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. BRENNAN: The irrigation should be established on the Dalrymple Creek.

Mr. DEACON: Any scheme would be ruined by a measure like this. I do not think you will get any settlers to endure what they will have to suffer under a Commissioner with powers such as are proposed to be given by the Bill. It is the farmers who will grow the crops and not the Commissioner who will make the irrigation scheme a success. The farmers would not stand a man having powers like the Commissioner will have.

Mr. KIRWAN: You object to political interference, and when you get independent control you also object.

Mr. DEACON: The Government could issue orders, and if they did not suit the Commissioner he could issue fresh orders, and the settlers would suffer in both cases. The Bill means more expenditure and more taxation on the people. In the end it will mean a lot of ruined settlers.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You take a very doleful view of the situation.

Mr. DEACON: It is not a doleful view; it is a commonsense view. I have no faith in the benevolent intentions of the Government or of any Commissioner they may appoint. The settlers will have no voice in the spending of the money, no matter whether it suits them or not. They will have to take the position and lump it. They can be turned off the land. I think they are to be allowed to buy the land.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No.

Mr. DEACON: There is some such tenure. The Commissioner has power under the Bill to declare a noxious weed or a noxious animal, and he can term the settlers noxious animals if he desires. I am endeavouring to show hon. members opposite the mischief they are going to make. Surely they know the mischief they have done in the past! They ought to realise that they have never yet done anything for the people on the land. They have made attempts, but the farmer has had to work out everything for himself. Certain crops will only return a certain amount in comparison with the amount expended on the land. If you have to pay too dear for any land and then start and make a profit out of the crops—the rate is there to pay whether you call it interest or whatever you may call it—

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is the trouble with a lot of land in Queensland—over-capitalisation.

Mr. DEACON: There is no necessity to make it worse.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That will not happen in this case.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you throwing cold water on the scheme?

Mr. DEACON: I am showing what is likely to happen. It is not a matter of throwing cold water on it. When the Bill gets into Committee I hope the Government will agree to put some limit on the powers of the Commissioner, and that they will show some consideration for the people who have to farm the land. They are the people to be mainly considered. I hope the Government will also see that the people who are already settled there will not have to pay further taxation owing to the tremendous expenditure this Bill foreshadows.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): More or less, I have always been somewhat of an enthusiast in connection with the possibilities of irrigation in our State. There is no question that during a certain period of the year we have an immense amount of water which is allowed to run to waste. Then, again, we have streams which, if properly dealt with by means of weirs and dams, would conserve a very large quantity of water, and in many instances we have the land along these streams which, at a glance, apparently is suitable for irrigation purposes. In dealing with so great a question as the one involved, it is necessary to cast around for the purpose of seeing what irrigation has done where it has been put into operation. Probably, in Egypt the largest amount of capital has been expended in the construction of barrages and dams for the purpose of conserving water and irrigating a comparatively small area of land in relation to the amount of money involved: and apparently the scheme, although it has cost such large sums of money, has been carried out on business lines and is a success from a business standpoint. Turning again to our own Commonwealth, we find on the Murray River that, by means of irrigation, success has been attained at Mildura and Renmark; but we have to realise that these two propositions were carried out by private enterprise, and unquestionably they were established on business lines, and every matter having relation to the success of the scheme—climatic condition, the suitability of the soil for irrigation, and the crops that were to be grown on the irrigated areas—was in the first instance fully considered. Of course, we find that the crops which are grown in these places can be made marketable owing to the dryness of the atmosphere. In our own State, while it may be possible to grow fruit of an equal quality—I am vain enough to say of a superior quality to that grown at Mildura—yet, owing to climatic conditions, we would not be able to make that fruit marketable. Therefore, we have to abandon crops of that character. Then, again, the Treasurer spoke about the possibilities of growing deciduous fruits, but we have to realise that, until we find a remedy for the fruit fly, we must abandon any hope of making a success of growing such class of fruits. Those who have attempted growing those fruits have found that the crop has been a financial failure. Then we come to the question of citrus fruits. I have no doubt citrus fruits could be grown there to perfec-

tion, especially if the growers had a proper supply of water; but hon. members are aware that, under present conditions, these crops would not be a financial success. In Southern Queensland—I speak from experience—there are areas in the electorate which I represent upon which orangeries were laid down, and to-day those orangeries are not a financial success. In many instances they have been allowed to go to ruin, and in some cases the trees have been rooted out although the soil is eminently suited for the purpose, and it is now solely used for dairying. Therefore, under the conditions that exist to-day, we have to realise that only certain crops can be grown which will result in a financial success, and those crops are limited so far as numbers are concerned. The question that arises with reference to this irrigation scheme is: what is to be the cost of the water supplied?

Any hon. member who has taken the trouble to read the history of irrigation in the State of California will realise that it is only by the adoption of the most economic methods and by supplying water at a minimum of cost that irrigation has proved a success there. Consequently the first question in connection with any scheme is what the initial cost will be, as that will be the determining factor so far as the price of water is concerned. I understand that the first scheme which it is proposed to enter upon under the Bill is one at a place where there is no railway. It struck me

[10 p.m.] as rather putting the cart before the horse to enter upon an irrigation scheme before a railway has been constructed to the area in question. It is necessary to have means of communication with the port of export, if this scheme is to be a success. Then, again, if a railway is not constructed to the irrigation area in the first instance, the cost of material for carrying out a work of such magnitude will be enormously increased, which will mean that the cost of water will be much greater than it would be if the materials used in the construction of the dam could be obtained at a cheaper rate. I understand from the Treasurer that, before any expenditure is undertaken in carrying out the work, the whole matter will be submitted to the House, with plans and reports on the suitability of the soil for irrigation purposes, to enable members to come to a conclusion as to whether the scheme is likely to be a financial success. It would be a serious mistake if—with the almost absolute knowledge that irrigation is going to prove one of the most successful means of settling this great State—the cost of water, owing to the fact that railway construction has been deferred instead of preceding the scheme, has rendered the construction so costly that it would be impossible to place settlers upon the irrigated area as they would not be able to make a financial success of their venture. The Inkerman irrigation scheme has been referred to, and, if the figures which have been quoted at different times in respect to it are correct, the cost of water to the settlers there would prohibit the scheme from being a financial success. The land will become so burdened by the cost of the water that it will be an area which will be avoided by settlers, save in some exceptional circumstances. This is a matter which should be discussed without party feeling, because it is one which

*Hon. J. G. Appel.]*

materially affects the development and irrigation should be pursued, to assist not only the men on the land but also the development of our secondary industries—in the production, for instance, of agricultural machinery and all else that is required by the man on the land—I should very much regret if, because the conditions were too stringent or not sufficiently liberal, it should fail.

All the matters brought forward by members on this side should be taken into consideration by the Minister who desires to make the whole scheme a success. There are unquestionably very large powers vested in the Commissioner, but whether they are greater than he should possess is not a matter on which I am prepared to give an opinion at present. One of the difficulties in connection with a scheme like this is that those who have to bear the burden and by their industry make the whole scheme a financial success will not secure that tenure in the land to which they are entitled. It was suggested by the Treasurer that it might be necessary to lay down conditions regarding the crops which the selector would be permitted to grow. But the selector would be handicapped by the tenure. From my experience of the earlier settlers, a great number of whom I know personally, I know they always favour the freehold tenure. That is the only way that we can have settlement on the land. When a man goes on an area and feels that the land is absolutely his own property, then he carves out his own prosperity so far as the management and control of that area is concerned. We have had ample evidence that the men who make a success of their land are those who have the freehold tenure. I know men who came into my district when it was standing scrub. They had no capital except the capital represented by their thrift, energy, and endurance. They knew that the land would become their own some day. They have been subject to taxation, which amounts almost to confiscation, but it is their own land to the extent that they own it and can do what they like with it. I have seen those men become independent men and a credit to the State. Everyone desires that an irrigation scheme should be catered upon in Queensland, but such a scheme should be followed with further development, and that can only be brought about by adding further population to our State. Let me point out that any scheme for the settlement and development of the State in which a large capital has to be expended will be absolutely useless unless we have a population prepared to undertake the attendant liabilities; and, unless the conditions are made considerably more liberal, unless it is assured that the cost of water will be so reasonable that there is a chance of the settlers getting a fair return for the labour they expend, and, furthermore, unless they are assured of a better tenure than that for which the Bill provides, I confess that I am inclined to think that the scheme will not achieve the wishes of those of us who desire to see the prosperity and settlement of this fair State of ours properly assisted. Of course, the Minister in charge of the Bill may accept reasonable amendments which will sufficiently broaden the measure, and I have no doubt that in that case it may become more attractive to persons who may be willing to assist in that development. Everybody will agree that we may pass measure after measure, but the mere fact that we have any measure on the statute-book does not ensure success. Only by having a good measure and good administration, which will commend it to those who are prepared to go on the land under it, will it attain success. With the keen desire I have that a sound policy of

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): No argument can be adduced against a measure to store up the water which falls on the lands of our State, and which otherwise would run away to the ocean. To be fully profitable, however, a scheme such as this must be included with other schemes of development and works properly placed and economically constructed and managed. Then only will they prove a boon to the city and country alike. When I say that this scheme must be worked in conjunction with other schemes, I have in mind the development of the interior of the State by supplying water power, not only for irrigation purposes, but for the generation of electricity. Steam is rapidly giving place to electricity, which is much cleaner and more efficient. Many of the drawbacks associated with living in the country are due to the out-of-date methods used in providing power. An electric scheme would provide for the machinery for manufacturing our raw materials. With a well-apportioned water supply, foodstuffs will be assured for the people in the State; and, with manufacture on the spot, large manufacturing centres will grow up in the interior of the State. In that way the State will benefit and the population will be taken away from the coast. We shall then put to the best use the inheritance that we have. I do not know why there is so much objection to a Bill of this nature. If we look ahead probably fifty years, we shall see the development which is going to take place, to the benefit of the whole of the community. Queensland at present is an exporter of raw material. If we want to build up manufacturing industries so as to absorb our unemployed, we have to make some provision. In this measure we are putting down the foundation for huge developments. I can prophesy that Queensland is going to be one of the wealthiest States of the Empire. It will be a beehive of industry. It is the duty of the Government to introduce a Bill of this kind and apply themselves earnestly to the development of the scheme. I hope that the Government will take a broad view of the matter, and not look upon it as a vote-catching method by which they can oust the hon. member for Normanby or somebody else. It has a deeper interest to the State than the gaining of party political advantage. A scheme such as this applies to every person in every part of the State. In Brisbane we can see the benefits which follow the conservation of water. The water which we get from our taps every day is the result of storage.

Mr. BRENNAN: Sit down. Why do you want to stonewall the Bill?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: I ask the hon. member for Toowoomba to behave himself. I am not going to argue with a man who pays his accounts with valueless cheques.

Mr. BRENNAN: Sit down! Sit down!

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope that the hon. member for Toowoomba will obey my call to order.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS interjecting,

The SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Pittsworth also to obey my call to order.

Mr. FRY: The Government are well advised to bring in a scheme of this nature. Opposition members will give the Bill every support, provided the work is carried out in a wise and economic way. Is it not a fact that all the water conservation schemes in Australia, with the exception of Mildura, have been financial failures? For that reason the State Government should devise some means by which they can make the scheme in Queensland a profitable one. The water conservation scheme outlined in the Bill cannot be successful unless the water power is used for generating electric power, and so give lighting facilities, enabling the settlers to go in for more than actual farming.

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

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

The House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.