Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST 1923

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Act Amendment Bill;

Diseases in Poultry Bill;

Pest Destroyers Bill;

Trust Accounts Bill; and

Workers' Compensation Acts Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS.

ATTENDANCE AND ACCOMMODATION IN STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*), in the absence of Mr. Warren (*Murrumba*), asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. What was the average number of children attending State schools during each of the years 1912 to 1922?

"2. What was the total floor space of State schools in the same years and the floor space per child?"

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

"1. The average daily attendance of pupils in State schools during the years 1912-1922 was as follows:—

	Pupils.
1912	77,385
1913	79,955
1914	83,314
1915	85,108
1916	84,968
1917	88,259
1918	91,341
1919	92,569
1920	94,602
1921	99,152
1922	102,803

"2. As the compilation of these particulars would entail considerable labour and expense, I regret that I do not feel warranted in supplying the information."

RENT OF SPECIAL LEASE FOR OIL STORES ON BRISBANE RIVER.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), in the absence of Mr. Swayne (*Mirani*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Where is the land that the Government is receiving £350 per annum rent for?

"2. For what purpose is it being used?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"1. The Government is receiving a rent of £350 per acre per annum for land on the Brisbane River, at New Farm, between Dalgety's wharf and Hawthorne ferry.

"2. It is leased as a site for oil stores and wharf."

ACTION OF COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT IN RE INCIDENCE OF LEAD POISONING IN CHILDREN IN QUEENSLAND.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Premier—

"1. In the face of the correspondence that has passed between the State and Commonwealth Governments agreeing on behalf of the latter to the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the cause of a certain illness amongst the children of Queensland, provided a sum of £1,000 was contributed by the State Government, is it the Government's intention to refuse to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government on such inquiry?

"2. Does he not think the expenditure of that amount of money towards such a Commission is justified, seeing that there is a diversity of opinion amongst a section of the medical profession as to the cause of the illness?

"3. In the event of the State Government declining to contribute the amount desired by the Commonwealth Government, would the Government be prepared to accept that amount from interested parties to enable finality being reached in the matter, and will the Government postpone putting into operation section 116 of the Health Acts, 1900 to 1922, pending the decision of that Commission?"

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

"1. The Government does not propose to proceed with the inquiry.

"2. The Government is of opinion that there is already sufficient justification for the prohibition of the use of white lead in paint.

"3. The Government is not prepared to accept the sum required from interested parties, and cannot agree to further postpone the operation of the prohibition."

FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS GUARANTEE BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) laid on the table the Tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement for 1923-1924.

Ordered to be printed.

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1923-1924.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the Estimates of Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1924.

The Estimates were ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

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

"That you do now leave the chair."

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, there is one matter I would like to bring before the House, and that is in connection with the recent elections. On 12th July last the hon. member for East Toowoomba gave notice of this motion—

"That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the detailed results of the voting at the various polling booths throughout the State at the recent general election."

When this motion was read by you on 18th July a Government member called "Not formal," and, as a consequence, the matter was adjourned until 31st July, when the question was put and passed. There should be no keeping back of any information with regard to the elections.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The information that is desired will be supplied within two days.

Mr. TAYLOR: In 1915 the information was supplied on 25th July; in 1918 on 25th July, and in 1921 on 11th August.

The PREMIER: The date of the elections in the earlier years was earlier.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are waiting for some particulars.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not want to detain the House or delay the Treasurer delivering his Financial Statement, but in reference to the delay that has taken place, it is only right and proper that these things should be known.

The Attorney-General a short time ago supplied some figures to the Press. The remarkable part of the hon. gentleman's figures was that he only supplied figures for sixty-four electorates. There were eight electorates which he did not mention at all in those figures, and of those eight electorates for which no figures were supplied seven are represented by members of the Opposition side of the House and one by a member of the Government. The least that can be said about the figures, therefore, is that they are not accurate. I would not say that this was done for the purpose of misleading, but they were not as accurate as they should have been. The electorates for which figures were not supplied were Albert, Cooroora, Fassifern, Sandgate, Stanley, Toombul, and Wide Bay, all held by the Opposition, and Barcoo, which is held by Mr. Bulcock, a member of the Government party. When the Attorney-General supplied those figures, he should have given the information to the Press in regard to those electorates. In the figures I have here we have endeavoured, as far as possible, to be accurate and not misleading in any possible way. In Warrego, for instance, where Mr. Lonsdale contested the seat as an Independent Labour candidate, we have credited the votes given to him to the Labour party; and in regard to various other candidates we have credited the votes which they polled, so far as we could possibly do so, to the party for which they showed a preference.

When you come to go into the figures of these electorates they are remarkable. I have in my hand figures for nineteen country electorates represented by members on the Government side, namely:—Balonne, Barcoo, Burke, Charters Towers, Chillagoe, Cook, Eacham, Flinders, Gympie, Gregory, Leichhardt, Maranoa, Mitchell, Mount Morgan, Mundingburra, Queenton, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Warrego. The total number of electors on the rolls of those nineteen electorates was 99,523. Then we have nineteen country electorates represented by members on the Opposition side—Albert, Aubigny, Burnett, Burrum, Carnarvon, Cooroora, Cunningham, Dalby, Fassifern, Lockyer, Mirani, Murilla, Murrumba, Nanango, Normanby, Stanley, East Toowoomba, Warwick, and Wide Bay—which

show a total number of electors on the rolls of 126,676. The average number of electors on the rolls of the nineteen country electorates represented by the Government is 5,238, as against an average for the nineteen electorates represented by members on this side of the House of 6,667. This table shows that there is an average enrolment in those nineteen electorates represented by members of the Opposition of 1,429 more than in the nineteen electorates represented by members on the Government side. We claim to be democratic, and to stand for democracy, and all that kind of thing; but, when we take these facts into consideration, it shows that the electorates are not so evenly distributed as they should be. These figures are compiled from the returns which were supplied in the advertisements containing the declarations on the polls by the various returning officers throughout the State, and they are as accurate as they can possibly be. There may have been a few more postal votes to come in after those figures were published, but otherwise they are absolutely correct.

Again, if you take the figures for the twenty metropolitan seats, you will find that the United party polled 66,488 and the Independent United party 4,934 (including such electorates as Sandgate and Toombul), making a total of 71,422. The Labour party, in the same number of electorates, polled 56,529. I do not desire to waste time, and I therefore ask permission to have the figures I have here printed in "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the figures be printed?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: I thank hon. members for allowing the papers to be printed.

VOTING OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN AREA.

Electorate.	Electors on Roll.	United Party.	Independent United Party.	Country Party.	Independent Country Party.	Labour Party.	Independent Labour.	Informal.	Total.	Percentage.
Aubigny	6,329	..	..	3,318	..	2,294	..	51	5,663	89·4
Balonne	5,297	1,284	..	..	..	2,223	..	35	3,542	66·8
Bowen	5,912	1,798	..	..	..	3,036	..	28	4,862	82·2
Bremer	6,083	2,417	51	..	..	3,086	..	104	5,658	93·0
Bundaberg	7,348	..	..	2,628	..	3,777	..	48	6,453	87·8
Burke	5,649	1,235	..	..	..	1,943	..	133	3,311	58·6
Burnett	6,310	..	..	3,114	133	2,144	..	56	5,447	86·3
Burrum	6,800	..	..	2,860	..	2,799	..	37	5,696	83·7
Cairns	6,484	2,173	..	..	..	3,106	..	89	5,368	78·9
Carnarvon	7,196	..	..	3,099	..	2,721	..	25	5,845	81·2
Charters Towers ..	4,752	1,545	..	..	..	2,487	..	44	4,076	85·7
Chillagoe	4,834	1,083	..	..	..	2,459	283	84	3,909	80·8
Cook	4,689	1,760	..	..	..	1,888	..	34	4,015	85·6
Cunningham	6,637	..	..	2,485	1,224	2,067	..	93	5,869	88·3
Dalby	6,623	..	..	2,678	742	2,064	..	92	5,576	84·1
Eacham	5,596	1,809	..	..	..	2,641	..	141	4,591	82·0
East Toowoomba ..	7,001	3,650	..	..	..	2,275	..	47	5,972	85·3
Fassifern	6,716	3,025	..	2,767	..	..	..	73	5,865	87·3
Fitzroy	7,305	2,805	..	..	..	3,093	..	..	..	..
Flinders	3,767	697	..	..	..	1,186	..	16	1,899	50·4
Gregory	5,192	1,000	..	..	..	2,014	..	..	..	..
Gympie	5,295	..	..	2,035	..	2,588	..	26	4,649	87·7
Herbert	6,434	1,605	..	..	..	3,188	..	44	4,837	75·1
Ipswich	6,789	2,770	..	..	..	3,346	..	24	6,140	90·4
Kennedy	6,344	2,611	..	..	..	2,754	..	30	5,395	85·0
Keppel	6,345	2,120	..	..	..	3,270	..	48	5,438	85·7
Leichhardt	5,403	1,772	..	..	..	2,521	..	25	4,318	79·9
Lockyer	6,083	..	..	2,384	849	2,257	..	52	5,542	91·1
Mackay	5,851	1,931	..	..	..	2,652	..	14	4,597	78·5
Maranoa	5,543	1,951	..	..	..	2,636	..	13	4,600	82·9
Maryborough	6,497	2,260	..	..	..	3,366	..	50	5,676	87·3
Mirani	6,379	..	..	2,670	..	2,563	..	33	5,266	82·5
Mitchell	5,778	1,258	..	..	..	2,362	..	25	3,645	63·0
Mount Morgan ..	5,472	1,323	..	..	..	3,282	..	32	4,637	84·7
Mundingburra	5,676	1,809	..	..	..	3,276	..	29	5,114	90·0
Murilla	6,006	..	..	2,590	..	2,094	..	20	4,704	78·3
Murrumba	7,068	2,982	..	1,206	95	1,538	..	75	5,896	83·4
Nanango	7,113	..	..	2,852	809	2,414	..	74	6,149	86·4
Normanby	5,163	2,221	..	..	..	1,964	..	42	4,227	81·8
Port Curtis	6,960	2,760	..	..	210	3,316	..	46	6,330	90·9
Queenton	4,746	1,739	..	..	..	1,968	..	20	3,727	78·5
Rockhampton	5,866	1,699	..	..	..	2,705	..	47	4,451	75·8
Rosewood	6,655	..	..	3,172	..	2,691	..	100	5,963	89·6
Stanley	7,168	..	..	2,929	2,904	..	..	59	5,892	82·1
Toowoomba	7,665	2,987	16	..	..	3,349	..	64	6,416	83·7
Townsville	5,096	1,991	..	..	..	2,136	..	31	4,158	81·5
Warrego	5,298	..	..	..	..	2,309	979	58	3,346	63·1
Warwick	6,788	3,128	..	..	..	2,685	..	43	5,856	86·2
	292,001	67,198	67	42,787	6,966	118,533	1,262	2,354	230,586	..

UNOPPOSED SEATS—PREVIOUS ELECTION FIGURES.

Albert	7,411	3,688	..	..	..	1,621	..	26	1920 election
Barcoo	5,574	1,105	..	..	..	2,628	..	37	1920 election
Cooroora	7,554	..	..	3,213	..	1,766	..	53	1918 election
Wide Bay	6,331	..	..	2,485	..	2,223	..	31	1920 election
	26,870	4,793	..	5,698	..	8,238	..	147	..

METROPOLITAN SEATS.

Electorate.	No. on Official Roll.	Votes Polled.					Percentage.
		United Party.	Independent United Party.	Labour Party.	Informal.	Total.	
Brisbane	7,079	2,087	..	3,099	53	5,239	74·0
Bulimba	8,297	3,298	94	3,956	49	7,397	89·1
Buranda	7,276	2,806	..	3,662	42	6,510	89·4
Enoggera	7,971	4,165	..	2,930	25	7,120	89·3
Fortitude Valley ..	7,081	2,307	..	3,726	31	6,064	85·6
Ithaca	7,337	2,991	..	3,549	45	6,585	87·7
Kelvin Grove	6,916	2,668	..	3,343	33	6,044	87·3
Kurilpa	6,915	3,310	..	2,675	56	6,041	87·3
Logan	8,089	3,717	..	3,345	77	7,139	88·2
Maree	7,368	3,073	..	3,450	24	6,547	88·8
Merthyr	7,701	3,189	..	3,509	28	6,726	87·3
Nundah	7,429	3,659	298	2,492	77	6,526	87·8
Oxley	7,965	4,435	..	2,443	55	6,933	88·1
Paddington	7,025	2,080	..	3,750	28	5,858	83·3
Sandgate	7,699	3,863	2,273	..	377	6,513	84·5
South Brisbane	7,199	2,450	333	3,155	146	6,084	84·4
Toombul	7,559	3,991	1,936	..	302	6,229	82·4
Toowong	8,029	4,837	..	2,108	35	6,980	86·9
Windsor	7,667	3,868	..	2,840	43	6,751	88·0
Wynnum	7,473	3,694	..	2,497	33	6,224	83·2
	150,075	66,488	4,934	56,529	1,559	129,510	86·2

SUMMARY.

——	No. on Official Roll.	Votes Polled.					
		United Party.	Independent United Party.	Country Party.	Independent Country Party.	Labour Party.	Independent Labour Party.
Metropolitan	..	66,488	4,934	..	..	56,529	..
Outside Metropolitan Area	..	67,198	67	42,787	6,966	118,533	1,262
Unopposed	..	4,793	..	5,695	..	8,238	..
Total party votes ..	..	138,479	5,001	48,485	6,966	183,300	1,262
		143,480		55,451		184,562	

Total Anti-Labour vote	198,931
Total Labour vote	184,562
Anti-Labour majority	14,369

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I wish to refer to one matter on this question. In 1921, the vote for the Public Service Superannuation Board was under discussion on the Estimates, and the question was raised as to whether individuals who had been retired at sixty-five were receiving justice from the Government, and if their contracts with the Government had been kept. On the 29th December, 1921, the following letter appeared in the Press entitled "Retrenchment in the Public Service":—

"Retrenchment in the Public Service.

"Sir,—When the Assembly was last in Committee of Supply, and the Estimate of the Superannuation Board was under discussion, the Minister promised that he would go into the matter of the hardship inflicted on the retrenched officers who had contributed under the 'age 70' table (Schedule II. of the Act). It was clearly brought out in the House that certain officers had become contributors under a statutory agreement contained in the Superannuation Act of 1912, providing that they should be retained in the service till seventy years of age unless physically or mentally incapacitated. The Public Service Act of 1896 provided for retirement at sixty-five. The Superannuation Act of 1912 provided that in certain cases the age should be extended to seventy, 'notwithstanding anything to the contrary' in the earlier Act. If that is not a contract, then there is no meaning in the words. True, the promise was not made by the existing Government. But it was made by a Queensland Parliament, and the circular issued by the Superannuation Board was merely the expression of the will of Parliament, and to give effect to the express promise in clause 13 of the Act of 1912. A considerable time has elapsed since the Minister's promise was made, and officers in the service are anxiously waiting for the result of the Minister's promised reconsideration of the matter.—I am, sir, &c.

"Justice."

When that was before the House the Attorney-General said that, in view of the opinions expressed by hon. members on the question, he would examine the circular and go into the matter; that he had never seen or heard of the circular previously, and that he wanted to do justice to everybody. I have not been able to learn whether the hon. gentleman has gone into this question. There is no doubt that a definite superannuation contract was signed, and it would appear that public servants have not received the justice they are entitled to. I would like to know whether the question has been gone into as promised, and whether these people who signed a definite agreement with the Queensland Parliament have had that agreement honoured. If the Minister finds that the treatment was unjust, it is certainly unfair to the section of public servants who entered into that agreement with the Government; they should have the remuneration for which they contracted.

If the conditions are as stated in the letter, I would like the Minister to give the matter consideration and let the House know whether he has done anything to remove the injustice. I do not wish to labour the question, but I would like it to be borne in mind, because a definite promise was made and I think we should have the fullest information on the subject.

I should also like to mention another matter. There has been a good deal of publicity given in the newspapers about the glut of fruit resulting from the large crop of winter pineapples on the soldier settlements. I would like to know whether the Government are taking any steps similar to those that have been taken by the Government of Victoria to assist the fruitgrowers in their extremity by the printing of leaflets describing to the people the benefits to be derived from eating more fruit, also showing the cost of railage, showing exactly what fruit is available, and allowing railway station-masters to assist in every possible way in the distribution of the fruit. It seems rather an anomaly that in Brisbane to-day pineapples are selling at a ridiculously low rate, while in the country for small pineapples you have to pay 9d. and 1s. each.

Mr. KIRWAN: They are paying 3s. for them in Western Australia.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that that makes the position any better for the pineapple grower in Queensland. What I am endeavouring to point out is a remedy to cope with the over-supply.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where does private enterprise come in?

Mr. MOORE: I want to know whether the Government are doing anything to assist these people whom they have induced to settle on the land and engage in fruitgrowing. Are the Government assisting them in the marketing of their products?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you advocate interference with private enterprise?

Mr. MOORE: I want the Government to accept their responsibility. After they have induced the returned soldiers to settle on the land and engage in fruitgrowing, it is up to them to see that they have some assistance in the marketing of their produce.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are handling some of it.

Mr. MOORE: The Co-operative Fruitgrowers' Society is doing a certain amount.

Mr. HARTLEY: How many tins of pineapples have you bought?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that I keep a record of how many tins of pineapples I buy.

Mr. HARTLEY: I bet you have not bought one.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member is talking of something which he knows nothing about. I am not discussing the question from that point of view at all. What I am pointing out is that in Victoria the Government have recognised a certain amount of responsibility, because they induced the people to go in for fruitgrowing, and they recognise that anything they can do to assist these men to get rid of their fruit is going to assist settlement in Victoria. I want to see the same thing done in Queensland. About two years ago the railway station-masters throughout the State sold a considerable amount of fruit, which relieved the situation to a considerable extent, and I want to see the same thing done again. We do not want one small section endeavouring to distribute an enormous quantity of fruit when there are means available at the disposal of the Government through their organisations for getting rid of a large quantity of fruit which would be eagerly sought after by the people in the country. At the present time the country people are willing to buy, but the distribution is not as good as it might be. The prices are too high, consequently fruit that should be brought to the people at the lowest possible rate in a great many instances is going to waste. It is all very fine to say that it would be interfering with private enterprise, but the Government are not so punctilious about interfering with private enterprise in other matters, and in a case like this the Government should give every assistance they can by advertisements and through their organisations, such as the railway stations, railway refreshment rooms, and in every possible way, to enable these men to get rid of the bulk of their fruit at the best possible price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a question of the cost of distribution.

Mr. MOORE: I realise that the cost of distribution is the trouble; but I quite realise also that there are means at hand, through the railway stations and different organisations that have been established by the Government, by which a large quantity could be got rid of, and this knowledge only wants to be brought before the people in the country for them to take advantage of those opportunities. We find that in Victoria the Railway Commissioners have issued a pamphlet, in which they state definitely what quantity of fruit is available,
[4 p.m.] and the price of it, and also the rates of freight from where the fruit is grown to the various distributing centres. They are allowing the railway station-masters to act as agents, which I think is an exceedingly good plan. They are now going in for this scheme to a greater extent, because it has been a success and a great help to the fruitgrowers. We want to help our fruitgrowers in every way we can. I recognise that the Government have some responsibility in regard to assisting them, and I trust that they will follow the example

of the Railway Commissioners in Victoria, and issue a pamphlet giving all the necessary information on this subject to the people. At present we only find a few small advertisements inserted in the papers by co-operative associations, which are doing the best they can, but it is a pretty big order for them when they have not the organisation at their command that they need. The Government have the means of distribution at their command, and I would like to see them assist in this way, and let the people know what fruit is available. I am certain that a great deal of the distress which is being caused by a glut of fruit which the growers are not able to dispose of will be obviated, and the producers will not be disheartened and led to throw up their lots.

The SPEAKER: Hon. members will have full opportunity of discussion on the debate on the Financial Statement.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I want to ventilate a few grievances on this occasion.

The SPEAKER: Full opportunity for discussion will be given during the debate on the Financial Statement.

Mr. KERR: That is so, but full opportunity has been taken on previous occasions on this motion to discuss grievances before Supply. I hope that the Government will not have occasion to impose retrenchment in the public service as they did last year. I want to deal with the salaries of public servants who are unfortunately reduced for reasons beyond their control; that is, on account of the financial conditions of the State. I want to refer to a statement which Mr. Story, the Public Service Commissioner, made last year to employees in the State service. He said that the classification must largely be determined by the financial policy of the Government. There are many officials who have been in the service from anything from ten to twenty-five years, and who are unfortunately on the same salary to-day as they were ten years ago. I am going to show that, because of the policy of the Government, the salaries of public servants in Queensland are much lower than they are in other parts of Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that it would be much better to discuss that matter after the Treasurer has read his Financial Statement.

Mr. KERR: I take it that the details with regard to salaries of public servants could not very well be brought up under the Financial Statement; but Supply covers the matter of payment of salaries of public servants, and I take it, before you leave the chair, I can ventilate this matter. I want to take one particular officer first; that is the Deputy Auditor-General. The salary of that officer in Queensland is £546 per annum, while in New South Wales the salary for the corresponding position is £800 per annum. The State Chief Audit Inspector in New South Wales has a salary of £780, and the senior inspector £750. There are six senior inspectors there all getting from £80 to £150 per annum more than our Deputy Auditor-General gets.

Mr. PEASE: The members of Parliament over there get more than we get here.

Mr. KERR: I am not talking about members of Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have a full opportunity of discussing this matter later on.

Mr. KERR: If you are going to pull me up, Mr. Speaker, I shall have to discuss this question another time. I have taken the trouble to study the records of "Hansard" for a number of years, and on no occasion have hon. members been deprived of the opportunity of discussion on such an occasion as this. I should be sorry if any action is taken to prevent hon. members from discussing this question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing the question for an hour on the debate on the Financial Statement.

Mr. KERR: I have other matters to talk about during the debate on the Financial Statement. It seems to me that the policy of the Government has been on every occasion to take advantage of the man who is getting £300 a year or over. That position does not exist in the other States because there are no Labour Administrations in power there. There is no justification for keeping high officials in this State on low salaries. I noticed an advertisement the other day in one of the papers with regard to certain positions in the Gatton Agricultural College. We find that men who had many hundreds of pounds spent on their education are being offered salaries as dairy inspectors and instructors which are not equal to what men working on the wharves are getting. The time is now ripe to ventilate what is happening in our public service.

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you know what a man who is working on the wharf is getting? How much does he get a year?

Mr. KERR: I know what he is getting, but I do not know what his average is per annum. The Government are not giving our Under Secretaries and Chief Clerks—professional men—a fair "go" in this State.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: For many years they have been suffering an injustice. I am not going to proceed on that line, however. Another matter I desire to speak about is in regard to the travelling expenses of Ministers. A resolution has been passed in this House, both in the term of the present and previous Governments, that a return should be compiled on this matter for the information of the people, but the Government have not had that return prepared. This is a time when I can ventilate such a thing as that. It is useless for the House to spend half a day or more in discussing and passing a resolution if the Government then take the law into their own hands and decline to table the information.

I want also to bring before the House the question of asking the Secretary for Public Works to take charge of the war service homes administration in Queensland. (Government laughter.)

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What a nice thing you want to unload!

Mr. HARTLEY: Billy Hughes's bungle.

Mr. KERR: I want the Government to take over the erection of future homes under the Commonwealth Act.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: Very well, Mr. Speaker. I just bring that before the Government and the House, and now I want to tackle the question of workers' homes, for which we are voting money on the Estimates. A great deal has been said in regard to this matter, but I find that, if a man wants to get a home from this Government, he has to plank down anything from £25 to £30. I want to emphasise that £5 should be a sufficient deposit for any bonâ fide working man to provide, irrespective of whether the home is to be built on freehold or leasehold land.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Would you make the ordinary banks do that, too?

Mr. KERR: I am not concerned about the banks. I am talking about a Supply matter, and I would not be permitted to discuss the other question. I hope that some action will be taken by the Government to bring in a decent Workers' Homes Bill for the purpose of giving the working man a home on payment of a deposit of £5. The arrears under the Workers' Dwellings Act are infinitesimal, only amounting to something under 1 per cent.; and if we can achieve that result with the advances we give under that Act, surely we can give a man a home for a deposit of 5 per cent.! Let us advance him 95 per cent.

Mr. HARTLEY: Five per cent. is the present deposit.

Mr. KERR; Yes; but there are a good few additions which may run into £25 or £30—there are so many fees to pay. I think that, if they had to put down £5, it would be quite enough.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would you do away with any deposit at all?

Mr. KERR: I think that if we got into power we would give a man a home without any deposit at all.

Mr. WEIR: Is that what you did with the soldiers?

Mr. KERR: That is exactly what they are doing. I refer the hon. member to the Commonwealth Act.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I shall reserve any further remarks on these points until a later stage.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think I shall be quite within my rights in bringing one or two matters before the House at a time like this, when you, Mr. Speaker, are asked to leave the chair, and I do not think I shall be disobeying the Standing Orders if I bring before the House matters which I consider are grievances and which relate to the affairs of Queensland. I think you know, Mr. Speaker—and I say it very sincerely—that I would be the last in this House to disobey your ruling given in accordance with the Standing Orders. I believe I shall be quite in order, and, if I am in order, I shall claim to the fullest extent my right in that particular regard. I want the Treasurer to listen for a moment, because last session when you were asked to leave the chair a matter was brought before the House concerning the expenses of Ministers—not only of present Ministers but also of Ministers who had occupied various positions under the Crown for a number of years—and a resolution was carried to the effect that information in respect to their expenses should be laid on the table of the House. So far—I say I have a distinct grievance in this matter—those returns have not been made available to hon. members. I want to know how it is that the Premier can overlook the request, which was made in all seriousness. Various charges were hurled from one side of the Chamber to the other, and the country is in a state of suspense because the exact position is not known. There are some men who may be under a cloud by reason of the fact that the Premier apparently has a difficulty in furnishing the information. Last year I drew attention to the fact that I had written to the Auditor-General and asked for certain information, and the Treasurer, by interjection, said I had been discourteous to him because I had not spoken to him or asked by letter for the information. So far, at any rate, it has not been forthcoming, and I want to ask whether the House is to be treated with indifference in such matters, because it has to do with the very honour of the House and of the individuals concerned. Is the Treasurer afraid, by reason of the extravagance which his Government have manifested in the conduct of public affairs, to let the public know what has gone on? Is the Treasurer—surely ordinarily a man who is prepared to face a situation—afraid to let us have the information which we are seeking? It is information which we have a right to get. Seeing that this is early in the session of a new Parliament, I hope that the Treasurer will remove any misapprehension in this particular regard and see that the statements which we are seeking are furnished, in accordance with an undoubted right which we have under the Standing Orders that, when a resolution is carried, the request it makes shall be granted by the gentleman leading the House—and the Treasurer is that gentleman.

I want to bring under your notice also another grievance, which has to do with unemployment. I have said previously in this House that nothing is so terrible as unemployment.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about retrenchment under Liberal Governments in the South?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member is barking up the wrong tree, because he will find that the deflation here has been much greater than it has been in the South. To-day there is a very great deal of unemployment, and, when a man applies to a Labour Bureau, he has an absolute right to get a fair "go." Mr. James Towner applied for engagement on the Mundubbera railway works, and he received this letter from the Labour Agent, Department of Labour, Brisbane, under date 7th September, 1922—

> "With reference to your engagement as earthworks ganger for the resident engineer, Mundubbera, I shall be pleased if you will call at this office immediately."

I think it is signed by Mr. Walsh. What happened? The man was turned down because he could not find the money for the union ticket. Is that a fair or a right thing?

Mr. HARTLEY: That cannot be proved.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I say it is true. No man who is in need of work should be treated in that way, especially by a Government administering offices such as this Government are administering. They have a right to extend the greatest sympathy to any person who is seeking employment. I have no objection to any person being a unionist. I never ask a man whether he is a unionist

or not. He has the right to satisfy his own conscience on that matter. That is his business. If he desires to be a unionist, why should he not be? If anyone came to me and asked for my advice, I would say, "Do what you believe to be the best for yourself." I have the right to give such advice as that. If a man is of no particular brand of politics, then he has no right to be debarred from getting work, and, it may be, even food, simply because he declines to join a union. This is a grievance which the Minister administering such a department should look into and see that it is absolutely rectified, because it is unfair.

I want to bring before this House another grievance. The Government have failed to grant to men who have been seeking workers' dwellings the same privileges that were granted in 1913, 1914, and 1915. I complain that there has been a slackening of effort on the part of the Government. It may be that they are anxious to encourage leasehold and avoid freehold tenure. Let me put before this House the figures that I have taken from the different Government journals. I find that in 1913-14 there were 1,591 houses erected under the Workers' Dwellings Act, and in 1914-15 there were 1,586 houses erected under that Act. Let me draw attention now to the comparison between those years and the year 1921-22. In that year there were 290 houses erected. Is it because the Government have no money? Is it because the Government are wasting it on doubtful enterprises which are showing very big debits now? Those enterprises now show a loss of over £400,000. Do not let us forget that the cost of building has increased during the past few years, but, notwithstanding that fact, the value of buildings erected in the years I have stated has gone down very considerably. What has been the real reason? What power has been pulling the Minister to prevent him doing the just thing by the workers of Queensland? I say deliberately that the workers of Queensland are the backbone of Queensland. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite may doubt that.

Mr. PEASE: All you left them was a backbone.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The value of the houses constructed in 1913-14 was £420,415. In 1914-15 the value was £408,574. I admit that the cost of building has increased from various reasons, but just fancy, notwithstanding that increase, that the value of buildings erected in 1921-22 is only £136,890! That is what we get from a Government who are supposed to be a working man's Government. I say "supposed to be." Surely we have the right to bring such a grievance before the House and ask, "What is the reason"?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You will be shedding tears in a few minutes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It would be a very good thing if the hon. gentleman shed tears sometimes. Then probably he would not be so case-hardened towards these men who want workers' dwellings.

Mr. WEIR: Terrible! Terrible!

HON. W. H. BARNES: It would be a good thing if the hon. gentleman could get to the stage of repentance. What is going to happen in connection with these workers' dwellings? The Government cannot plead that they have not had the money. They went to America and got the money, and the Premier gloated over the fact. Why did they cut off this supply of money for workers' dwellings? I would like to ask the Premier did the Emu Park Convention at some previous meeting say that that money was not to be supplied? Is that one way of getting at the man who votes for the National party, the Country party, or the United party?

Mr. KELSO: They want to establish the leasehold system.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This is a very serious matter. The Premier, if he did himself justice, would rise and explain why the Government have done what they have done. I emphasise again that it is wrong, because there has been money put into doubtful ventures—the fishing industry, State stations, and many other things—which have not gone towards the development of the country. What do we find happening at every turn now in connection with the demand for increased railways? The cry is "No money." Why no money? Because it is sunk in doubtful enterprises. The Government have sunk over £2,000,000 in that way. The Premier and his party are responsible for what is happening. The Opposition would have failed in their duty if they had not brought this matter before your notice, Sir, this afternoon.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I must first complain of the absence of the reports from the various departments and the absence of the Auditor-General's report. It is impossible for the Opposition properly to criticise and do their duty in the interests of the State if they are not supplied at this stage with the reports I have just mentioned.

Another grievance I desire to ventilate is in connection with the action of the Government during the elections. They are not shy in any way in authorising the expenditure of Government funds in the interests of their own candidature. Even the Premier himself distributed no doubt tens of thousands of letters to electors. The cost of printing and stamps was borne by the State.

Mr. PEASE: It was a very good letter.

Mr. CORSER: It was a good letter in the same way as the letter from the "Rich Uncle in Fiji" was a good letter. It was a good confidence trick which tempted them to all sorts of things, like the "Rich Uncle from Fiji" did. We find, when the Government are returned, that they do not fulfil the promises which were made before the elections. They immediately wiped out the existing facilities for country people, and brought in a Bill by which rural workers are brought under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act without first securing a fair price for their products. They immediately went back on their promise to provide the financial means to carry on the Primary Producers' Organisation scheme. Contrary to that promise, they now ask the primary producers to find practically one-half, or an amount over £20,000 this year, to carry on that scheme. That is quite a different tale, and that is quite a different statement from the one which was sent out in connection with the "Rich Uncle from Fiji" stunt during election time. All those promises and statements were published broadcast at the cost of the State—not at the cost of the Premier, or the cost of the Labour party. All these political stunts are being put to the people of Queensland, who on every occasion are supposed to be subdued, and to have no say with regard to them. The action of the Government seems to point to the fact that they regard hon. members on this side and those

whom we represent as a conquered people, and that we have to submit to all these things. We represent a majority of the people in the State. We have behind us in our districts throughout Queensland the majority of people against the Government. During the elections the cards were stacked against us. When we saw our hand we realised that it was impossible for us to show a majority. Everything possible to be done was done by the Government to make a majority on our side impossible. In the last Parliament the Government had a majority of two, and they wiped out four Country party seats, and created four certain seats for themselves, which means that they had a majority of ten straight away. They wiped out the late hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Green) and other hon. members in a way more in keeping with the dealing of a hand at cards after looking at its face value.

[4.30 p.m.]

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You spent £2,000 on the Toowoomba election.

Mr. CORSER: The Country party did not contest or have a shilling to spend in Toowoomba. The Government saw both hands and the other party saw only one. Election expenses should not be a charge on the State; they should be a charge on the party.

We have heard some grievances regarding city interests. We have also heard some grievances regarding public servants. I have one great grievance regarding the country. That is a grievance against the State Advances Corporation. This institution is of the greatest importance to our country people, and it is particularly important now, as on that institution rests the success or otherwise of the great Upper Burnett Settlement Scheme. The members of the Government, previous to their advent to office, always advocated that, instead of hundreds of thousands of pounds being advanced by this corporation, millions should be made available, and they said that, when they attained power, they would liberalise the Act. When they were returned to the Government benches they certainly liberalised the Act, but at the same time they tightened up the regulations, making it impossible for the settlers to secure what was available to them under the past Administration.

At 4.33 p.m.

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. CORSER: I will prove it. In 1915 the amount applied for by settlers was £541,826; in 1922, £652,000 was applied for. In 1915 the amount approved of for advances was £416,190, whereas in 1922, although £652,000 was applied for, only £282,000 was approved of. The amount actually advanced in 1915 did not amount to millions, but was £296,000 out of £415,000 approved of, while in 1922, with Labour in power, £155,000 was actually advanced to meet applications aggregating £652,000.

Mr. KELSO: Is that on freehold?

Mr. CORSER: That is to all settlers. If that is not a genuine grievance, when settlers, under the liberalised conditions of the Advances to Settlers Act passed by the Labour Government, applied for £652,000 last year and had only £282,000 approved and £155,000 advanced, then I do not know what it is.

Mr. COSTELLO: They asked for bread and got a stone.

Mr. CORSER: We have further criticism in regard to this institution. We find that in 1915, the total number of borrowers was 6,412, whereas in 1922 we have 7,618, and yet the total amount of advances is less. The total number of farms in possession of the institution—seized farms from which the selectors were evicted by the Crown—in 1915 was 59, and under this liberal Labour Government in 1922, the number was—not 59 farms, but 156.

Mr. COSTELLO: Oh!

Mr. CORSER: This was the Government that was going to liberalise the organisation and advances and make it easier for them to live!

Mr. COSTELLO: They hit them up.

Mr. CORSER: This was the party that was going to make it easier for the man on the land to carry out the agricultural industry in our new districts. We find that during this period there were no moneys appropriated by the Crown for the assistance of settlers under this Administration. Not one penny was available for the manager or management of that concern. The only moneys available to settlers from that institution were moneys collected by it in the way of interest and redemption from the previous borrowers. The total profit of this institution during the twelve years of the Liberal Administration—shocking enough, perhaps—was £22,654, but it was a blessing in comparison with the profit made out of the settlers during the period when no money was advanced—a profit on the interest and redemption paid by settlers themselves. During the last seven years the present Government have made £85,049 from this money-lending institution, and 156 farms were in their possession in 1922. If that is not a grievance worthy of ventilation, what is? This Act was passed for the purpose of giving assistance to the man most in need—the settler who is looking for assistance to the Crown, and there is nothing more important or worthy of consideration than to show that this state of affairs is going on. So far as the Act goes, it is a liberal one. It has been liberalised by the present Administration with the assistance of the Opposition, but the Act is governed by regulations which are opposed to the spirit of the Act and prevent settlers from receiving advances it was intended they should receive. Under the last Administration, the maximum amount to be made available to each individual applicant was £800, but the present Government increased this amount to £1,200, or from 13s. 4d. to 15s. in the pound. How many settlers have received that £1,200? The average amount approved of, in spite of the increase of the maximum to £1,200 per settler, is only £188.

Mr. COSTELLO: A starvation policy.

Mr. CORSER: During this last year, when advances were supposed to be made on the more generous scale, when the Government were absolutely responsible for the administration of the further amending Act under the State Advances Corporation, which controls it to-day, we find that £1,200 per individual has not been granted, but only £297. Hon. members will agree that it is impossible for us to carry on any settlement scheme in the interests of the State and the settlers if we do not carry out the laws Parliament has passed. The figures I have given are figures applying to the

whole of the State. In 1922 £141,000 less was advanced than in 1914-15, and the applications in 1915 totalled £500,000 as against £652,000 in 1922. If the Government are proud of this record of applicants amounting to £625,000 and only £155,000 granted, then it is time for us to reconsider this organisation before putting settlers on the Upper Burnett who are to be financed under this same organisation. An advance of £300 at the rate of pound for pound is provided for by the Act, and we have not got £300 as an average advance to settlers by that institution over the whole of the land. That is a genuine grievance. I do not ventilate it from any party point of view—I have cut out that significant part of the whole thing—but on behalf of the man who desires the assistance. It is a scandalous state of affairs, and a grievance I feel justified in ventilating.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the remarks of the hon. member for Burnett. Since the redistribution of seats a number of men engaged in agricultural pursuits have been brought into the East Toowoomba electorate, and, consequently, I am meeting with similar experiences to those mentioned by the hon. member for Burnett. I want to bring under the notice of the Treasurer the considerable delay which takes place from the date of application for an advance to the date on which it is made available. It must be recognised that, when a man applies for an advance, he has realised the necessity of getting that advance at the earliest moment. I have found within the last two or three months, in cases I have had to deal with, that advances to settlers were applied for six or seven months ago, and they are not yet finalised. If we are going to do the right thing by these men who are asking for advances, applications should be dealt with expeditiously and on business lines. Some attention should be given to that. This afternoon the leader of the Opposition made one or two statements as to why the Government won the elections, and I wish to enlarge on those statements. I said when the elections were on, and I say again this afternoon, that the winning of the elections was carefully studied by the Government. We find to-day in the "Brisbane Courier"—and when you are travelling through the country and see the number of able-bodied men who are carrying their swags while the Labour Government are in power, it is necessary to emphasise this point—this statement coming from Ingham—

> "One hundred men who were employed on the railway construction have been paid off. No reason was given. It is freely stated that the work generally will cease within the next few days.
>
> "Questioned last night as to the accuracy of the report the secretary to the Commissioner for Railways (Mr. G. R. Steer) stated that he did not know anything about the matter."

The Secretary for Railways has an opportunity this afternoon of intimating, in the interests of these men who have lost their work, the position of the Government. Are they financially at a dead-end?

Here is another statement taken from the daily Press to-day—

> "MORE WORKERS PUT OFF.
>
> "Rockhampton, 20th August.
>
> "It is stated that fifty construction workers at Rannes and forty at Castle Creek have been put off work. No details are yet to hand."

The Government are certainly dismissing men, and I am going to say something in that direction. It will be remembered that last year in Toowoomba we were interested, by reason of a large number of men being out of employment, as to the likely date of commencing certain railway construction work at Willowburn. On 13th August, 1922, I directed this question to the Secretary for Railways—

> "In view of the continued unemployment at Toowoomba, as shown by the report of the Inspector of Labour in his monthly report, what are the prospects of an early resumption of work at the engine-sheds, Willowburn?"

This is the reply the hon. gentleman gave—

> "The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. F. T. Brennan, M.L.A., has frequently urged the recommencement of this work. No provision, however, has been made in the current year's Estimates to resume operations."

And yet, three weeks prior to the elections, those works were started, although we had the Secretary for Railways on the floor of the House last session telling us that there was no money available until July of this year. I want to ask in all seriousness—I am in politics seriously—if the men governing this State of Queensland are honest when methods such as that are adopted; when the Minister himself distinctly stated that no more money was available, and yet, because the elections were brought on six or seven months before they were anticipated, that work was started. And now, in the face of this, we learn this afternoon of many men anticipating dismissal—fifty men dismissed at Rannes, forty at Castle Creek, and 100 at Ingham.

Mr. PETERSON: The elections are over now.

Mr. ROBERTS: I think the House is entitled to this information. I want to voice another protest, and show how the elections were fought. In 1922, at the request of the Harlaxton State School Committee, I brought under the notice of the Secretary for Public Instruction the desire of the committee to purchase a piece of property. The committee were instructed to put their request in writing, and this is the reply I got—

> "4th October, 1922.
>
> "Dear Mr. Roberts,—With reference to your recent interview with me when you urged the purchase of an addition to the school grounds at Harlaxton of allotments 3, 4, and 5, Molen's Hill Estate, at a cost of £125, I much regret that funds are not available at present to enable this additional area to be purchased. The vote for the current financial year for State school buildings is being conserved strictly for works of an urgent or indispensable nature such as new schools, urgent additions to existing schools, urgent repairs, painting, etc., and the demands on the vote in this connection are very heavy."

Yet, in spite of that letter, during the course of the election campaign, the hon. member for Toowoomba (now Assistant Minister)—and this school is not in the Assistant Minister's electorate—was advised within three weeks of the elections that the Government intended to buy that piece of land. I was not

advised until the 10th April. I want to know if the men governing this State are acting honestly when they adopt these tactics, to which they owe their majority. I can imagine this kind of thing being done all over the State, and I have it in my own knowledge that aspiring candidates received official information that certain works would be done in the electorates they were contesting, thus slighting the men who had previously been returned as the representatives of those electorates. Therefore, we are justified in voicing these grievances to-day.

There are one or two other points that I wish to bring forward. Last session Parliament was closed before we had an opportunity of perusing the Auditor-General's report. Hon. members have often spoken of the various trade guilds, and we know how very keen the Secretary for Public Works was at one time in regard to these guilds. We also know how he went out of his way to help the Building Trades Guild with the money of this State. This is the way in which the public funds are gradually being wasted. I find, on page 41 of the Auditor-General's report, the following statement:—

"Queensland Building Trade Guild, Milton—

"Loan of £700 authorised.

	£	s.	d.
"Advanced—			
Purchase of building and land	650	0	0
Machinery	47	18	0
	£697	18	0

"In April, 1922, the Public Curator took possession of the property in consequence of default in payment of redemption and interest, and is endeavouring to effect a sale of the assets.

"Sales effected to date have realised £23 0s. 3d., whilst the Curator's costs in connection therewith amount to £23 11s. 6d. The difference, 11s. 3d., added to the above, increased the debit to £698 9s. 3d."

At 4.52 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is not very good business. We sold our assets, and then found our liabilities had increased. That is what I want to draw particular attention to, because it is unfair to the other unions. If the Government are doing this is Brisbane, they have just as much right to find employment for men in Toowoomba, in Maryborough, or in other centres where they are looking for work. They have no right to give special conditions to the unions in the city of Brisbane because it is the seat of Government. The Auditor-General's report continues—

"In addition to this amount, the sum of £1,189 3s. 8d. for timber supplied by the Forest Service Sawmills, has been written off as irrecoverable."

That is certainly worthy of some comment. If the House had been in possession of the Auditor-General's report when the Estimates were going through last session, we would have been able to deal with these matters at the time, but we had not got the Auditor-General's report, and consequently I am taking advantage of the opportunity to-day to bring them forward.

We are asked repeatedly by members on the Government side, if we were in charge of the Government, where we would save money, what we would do, and so forth. Here is one of the things where business acumen has not been exhibited—this is in connection with the Loan Stores Suspense Account. In dealing with this matter the Auditor-General's report says—

"Stock was taken as at 30th June, 1922, and tested by the Audit Inspector. The value of stock as disclosed by the certified stock sheets is £24,056 15s. 3d., after writing down the value of certain items to the current market price by an amount of £4,894 3s. 3d.

"Profit and loss account discloses a loss of £6,079 17s. 11d., as under—

	£	s.	d.
Direct loss on year's operations	1,185	16	8
Loss by writing down value of galvanised iron	4,894	3	3
	£6,079	19	11"

This is something that I know something about, and if the Government had done the same as business men were doing that loss of £4,894 on galvanised iron would not have been incurred. It is no good the Secretary for Public Works or the Secretary for Public Lands telling us every now and again that day labour has an advantage over contract. It is no good measuring up one job and taking the cost of that particular job. You have to take into account all the contingencies before you can say that day labour has an advantage as against contract. The State is carrying the loss all the time; but we have to dig into the Forestry Department to ascertain just where the losses are. If it was the Premier's own business, he would soon know, because his banker would tell him that his credit was exhausted; but we do not know the position until we get an opportunity of looking carefully into the Auditor-General's report. I shall not pursue that matter any further on this occasion, but I shall probably deal with two or three other items on the Estimates.

I want to support the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in conection with the way in which the Government have entrenched themselves in office to-day. They stand convicted, not once or twice, but over twenty times. We can cite instances time and again where, when they were appealing to the people in April and May last, they bought themselves in. They talk about bribery! They talk about corruption! But I want to know which is the most dishonourable—if there is any difference so far as bribery and corruption are concerned—the man who offers his own money or the man who offers the country's money?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ROBERTS: I want to say——

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! A large amount of latitude is allowed in criticising the Government as a party, but the

hon. member is not in order in imputing bribery and corruption.

Mr. ROBERTS: I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker; but I have given instances of refusals of requests by Ministers in charge of Government departments to myself as the representative of the people of East Toowoomba, and I have shown, in your absence, where the same requests have been granted on the eve of an election. I am not going to say whether that is bribery or whether it is corruption. I leave to the people of Queensland the decision as to whether it is bribery or corruption.

Mr. DASH: They gave their decision last May.

Mr. COLLINS: Why don't you take your defeat like a man?

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): There are one or two matters to which I would like to call attention. I notice that the Governor's Speech—which, I take it, outlines the policy of the Government—has no reference to immigration, and I think I am right in saying that one of the most important questions to the Empire to-day is that of immigration, while Great Britain itself is overcrowded. We know that at the present time we have vast vacant spaces that require to be peopled, and we know that our power to protect ourselves, and our financial position—our power to pay our debts—depends largely upon an accession to the number of people at present in Australia, and of all the Australian States no State offers the same opportunities that Queensland does for immigrants. Yet in the Governor's Speech there was no reference whatever to that important subject. In the Budget Speech, which I understand will be delivered directly by the Treasurer, there should be some announcement on that important subject.

There are one or two other important matters that I wish to bring before hon. members. One might be termed a local grievance, but it is not a local grievance only. It is a grievance of far-reaching effect, as it has to do with land settlement. It has reference to the manner in which a most fertile district at the back of Mackay is being locked up at the present time. I am referring to the Eungella Tableland, which is one of the richest spots in Queensland. It was designed eleven or twelve years ago. A road was made giving access to it about eight years ago—just before the present Government came into power. Large sums of money were spent on that road, but the country has been lying unused from that time to this. There have been spasmodic attempts made to settle it which have always been thwarted by the actions of the Government. At the present time there are a few settlers there on the outskirts of a State forest reserve. I know that State forest reserves are necessary for the sake of those who come afterwards, but, at the same time, I do think an arrangement could be made by which sufficient land could be reserved for forestry purposes, and sufficient land made available for settlement purposes. At all events, sufficient land could be made available for settlement to enable the people of Mackay to take advantage of what is really the proper source from which they should obtain their dairy products.

There are a few settlers who were tempted by misleading pamphlets issued by this Government to settle down there. There are not enough of them to [5 p.m.] warrant the establishment of a butter factory, but they were led to believe that more would come, but further settlement was stopped, and they are now marking time and are on the verge of destitution. The Government should make some definite statement on the subject. We have a new Minister in charge of that department. I would like to know whether he intends to open additional areas to permit of the establishment of a butter factory. If he will not do that, and is going to maintain this forest reserve, he should recompense the settlers who have been tempted to go there under false pretences on the part of the Government. Those settlers were told there was ample land there to provide for all the requirements I have spoken of. They are also deprived of the advantage of a school to which to send their children. I speak in regard to this matter on behalf of the electors of Mirani and also of the town of Mackay.

There is another matter I wish to bring forward; that is, the position of members of Parliament in regard to the judiciary. I quite realise that it is only right and proper that those who occupy the judicial bench should be protected from undue criticism or anything savouring of interference on the part of members of Parliament.

Mr. KIRWAN: They suspended a member of the Federal Parliament the other day for talking about the judiciary.

Mr. SWAYNE: I quite recognise that we are the legislative branch of the Government and that the judiciary are the executive branch; but, after all, we make the laws, and I think it is necessary for the welfare of the people that those who make the laws should be allowed a certain amount of liberty to comment on those who interpret the laws. It has been ruled over and over again both in Australia and Great Britain that, so long as a case is not sub judice, a reference to it is allowable. As bearing me out in this contention, I would like to read to the House a comment by the late Sir Samuel Griffith in the Australian case of the King against Nicholls, in which it was decided—

> "Statements made concerning a judge of the High Court do not constitute a contempt of the High Court unless they are calculated to obstruct or interfere with the course of justice or the due administration of the law in the High Court."

Sir Samuel Griffith, in delivering the unanimous judgment of the bench, said—

> "Judges and courts are alike open to criticism, and, if reasonable argument or expostulation is offered against any judicial act as contrary to law or the public good, no court could, or would, commit for contempt of court."

With regard to scandalising a court or judge, Lord Morris, in "McLeod and St. Aubyn," says—

> "Prosecutions for that class of prosecution are practically obsolete in England. In one sense, every defamatory

publication concerning a judge may be said to bring him into contempt, as that term is used in the law of libel, but it does not follow that everything said of a judge calculated to bring him into contempt in that sense amounts to contempt of court."

The paper from which I am quoting—"Truth" of 16th July, 1916—said—

"Sir Samuel Griffith also quoted a Privy Council case—the Bahama Islands appeal. In that case a man had, in a letter published in a newspaper, held up the Chief Justice of the colony to public ridicule in the grossest manner, representing him as an utterly incompetent judge and a shirker of his work, and suggesting that it would be a providential thing if he were to die. The board, consisting of eleven members of the Privy Council Judicial Committee, said that the letter complained of, though it might have been made the subject of proceedings for libel, was not, in the circumstances, calculated to obstruct or interfere with the course of justice or the due administration of the law, and, therefore, did not constitute a contempt of court. Sir Samuel, continuing, said that counsel in the present case had suggested that the words implied a want of impartiality. His Honour was not prepared to accede to the proposition that the suggestion of the want of impartiality in a judge was necessarily a contempt of court. On the contrary, his Honour thought that: 'If any judge of the High Court, or of any court, were to make a public utterance of such a character as to be likely to impair the confidence of the public, or of suitors, or of any class of suitors, in the impartiality of the court in any matter likely to be brought before it, any public comment on such an utterance if it were a fair comment, would, so far from being a contempt of court, be for the public benefit, and would be entitled to similar protection to that which comment upon matters of public interest is entitled under the law of libel."

As an old member of the House, I am speaking on behalf of all hon. members, and it is up to us jealously to guard our rights and privileges in these matters. I have here a cutting from the "Sun" of 24th September, 1917—

"In reference to newspaper criticisms of Mr. Justice Higgins, president of the Arbitration Court, the Minister for Defence informed Senator Maughan in the Senate that the High Court has decided that judges are not exempt from criticism which does not amount to defamation or contempt of court. No action is contemplated by the Government to specially protect Mr. Justice Higgins."

Again, I would remind hon. members that comment on the action of judges is common in other bodies. Quoting from the "Daily Standard" of 26th July, 1923, I find the following statement in a report of a meeting of the Trades and Labour Council:—

"The action of Judge McCawley, in threatening to cancel the awards of unions who refuse to work on this building, was most severely criticised."

I would like to ask if members of Parliament have not the same right as members of unions. I should think that we have superior rights in this regard. We make the laws, and surely we are warranted in referring to what might happen in the carrying out of those laws. I find from "Hansard" of this session—I was not present at the time—that an hon. member of this House was suspended during the debate on the initiation of the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, because he simply said that something might happen. He did not refer to any judge at present on the bench, but simply said that certain things might happen under the measure, and he was suspended.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: That was a most serious interference with the right and privileges of hon. members of this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the hon. member suggesting that I did anything unfair?

Mr. SWAYNE: Most certainly not, Mr. Speaker. I am not at this stage suggesting that anybody did anything unfair. I am simply drawing attention to what happened, and my object is to bring hon. members—I do not care to what party they belong—to a realisation of the need for standing up for their rights and privileges, not for ourselves individually, but on behalf of those whom we are elected to represent. I say that, if this sort of thing is going to continue, Parliament will be utterly helpless in these matters. Moreover, what accentuates the matter is that the hon. member had finished his speech and sat down, and another member was speaking when a member on the front bench opposite, a Minister, went across to the Temporary Chairman and said something to him. What he said we do not know, but it is most significant that, after he had been to the Temporary Chairman, the hon. member for Burnett was called to order.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: I think that the hon. member for Burnett most rightly refused to withdraw under the circumstances, seeing that he had finished his speech and had sat down and another hon. member had begun to speak, and so got himself suspended.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): There is a matter under the Public Service Superannuation Act which is not directly my own grievance, but is the grievance of a very large number of public servants. I am concerned, and I am sure a very large number of public servants want to know, whether the attitude of the Government on this matter has changed during the last couple of years. The wrongdoing to which the public servants have been subjected during the last few years would be a long tale to tell, but everyone is aware that under the Public Service Superannuation Act an agreement was entered into between the Government and the public servants which protected them up to the age of seventy years. Opportunity was taken in October, 1921, to refer to this

matter, and on that occasion I went so far as to quote the actual letter which had been written to an officer of the State in connection with the business. The Attorney-General had quoted section 13, subsection (2), of the Public Service Superannuation Act—

> "Any such officer, if the exigencies of the public service permit or unless he is incapacitated, shall be continued in employment until he attains the age of seventy years, anything in the Public Service Act of 1896 or any regulations thereunder to the contrary notwithstanding."

It seems to me that under the simple term "exigencies" the Government are endeavouring to defend themselves or find a cloak for their action in many instances. If you will compare that section with the actual letter which was written to many public servants, you will see the absolute injustice which has been done to them, and the injustice which is likely to be done to many more who entered into an agreement with the Government. The letter I quoted in 1921 was to this effect—

> "CLASSES C AND D.
>
> "MALES 40 AND OVER.
>
> "If you contribute under tables B, D, F, or H, you will acquire the right to remain in the service until the age of seventy, and your contributions will continue until that age, when your rights to incapacity allowance, if you have contributed for that benefit, will cease, and your annuity will commence, and if you have contributed for assurance, the sum assured will be payable at death, or you may, on retirement, exchange for an additional annuity according to its value.
>
> "Dated, Public Service Superannuation Board Office, Brisbane, December, 1912.
>
> "(Signed) ROBERT RENDLE,
> "Manager.
>
> "Public Service Superannuation Board Office."

There you have a statement of the actual agreement between the State service and the Government, the former taking the Government at their word and entering into an agreement with them through their agents, the Public Service Superannuation Board. Yet the Government disregard or break the agreement very unfairly; and what the House wants to know, and what the country wants to know, is whether the Government have changed their attitude on the question, or whether they are going to continue to tear up this scrap of paper. Such an action is not to the credit of any Government or any country. Many public servants have gone on in good faith subscribing to the fund, and it is only right for us to ask whether the Government propose to pursue a course of fair play and bonnie play, or are going to adhere to their attitude of two years ago. The time is ripe for them to reconsider the question and indicate their attitude upon it, for it concerns many men who have served their country in their younger days, and have contributed to the fund, and have the right to expect a fair and reasonable return for their contributions.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): There are one or two small matters to which I want to refer on this question. The first relates to the double-days on Estimates, which were introduced last year. I think we were overworked then. The working day of almost every man is specified as a certain number of hours, and that principle ought to be extended to Parliament. I have not heard any notice that we are going to have the double-day system this year, but, apart from the fact that it overworked us, it also interfered materially with the privileges of the House, because it meant a shortening of the usual time allowed for Estimates. We had about four days cut out. Instead of seventeen days, we got only about thirteen days in actual time.

I do not wish to make any reflection on the administration of the Department of Public Instruction. The money that was voted was utilised in that direction as far as it was able to go. A good deal of money has been unwisely spent in some directions, and I think that could have been spent in erecting schools, etc. A number of people in outback districts have not a sufficient number of children to entitle them to ask for the erection of a school. That is a grievance which I think exists with most hon. members. The policy of this Government is to say that those people shall not have a school because it costs too much. The Government have increased the cost of education by giving higher salaries to teachers. I do not say that they are not entitled to those higher salaries, but I consider we should not deprive the children of education because we are paying the teachers so much. It is not a matter of salaries altogether. The best way you can spend money is in giving the children education. The children in the outback districts do not get the same facilities as those near the populated centres, and, therefore, the former are entitled to a greater amount of expenditure per head than those who are not so far away from the cities. There are many outback places where children can only be educated by means of correspondence. I hope that this matter will be considered by the Government. Several times last year I brought under the notice of the department the question of painting and repairing the school buildings in my electorate. I consider we should take care of Government property in this State, no matter what electorate it is in. The Government property is not getting the care and attention to-day that should be given to it. I hope this matter will be taken into account by the Government.

I wish now to deal with the question of wheat. The Government guaranteed the farmers during the first year of the existence of the wheat pool 8s. per bushed for a certain quality of wheat. The Government advanced sufficient money to the Wheat Board and guaranteed, when the accounts had all been settled, to make up any difference if the money was not sufficient. There were a lot of people who had wheat which should have been paid for on the basis of 8s. per bushed, but because of the delay—perhaps unavoidable—in taking delivery of that wheat, the wheat deterioriated and they had to accept as low as 3s. 6d., 3s. 9d., and 4s. per bushel. That wheat at the time of harvest was equal to the wheat which was guaranteed 8s. per bushel.

Mr. PEASE: Whom do you blame for that?

Mr. DEACON: I blame the hon. member, for one. I am blaming the Government for not keeping strictly to their promise when they promised the people that they would do certain things for them. That wheat was sent overseas, and I now see, according to the last Auditor-General's report, that it realised £49,000. That amount is due to the people, but it cannot be paid because the accounts of the Australian Wheat Board have not been finalised. The Wheat Board cannot say exactly what amount is due to the people who owned that imperially sold wheat. The Government led the people to believe that they would receive a certain amount. The farmers did not delay; they did their part. There is now the possibility of another delay in the making up of the accounts. The Government should advance the money or guarantee that there will be no loss to the farmers. I think it is only fair that should be done. The Government promised to do certain things during the elections, and they gained a certain amount of support on account of that promise. The moral obligation is still there, and it should be kept. I hope that this matter will also be considered by the Government.

Question—"That the Speaker do now leave the chair"—put and passed.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): Mr. Kirwan,—Few people, and certainly not those who understand anything about public finance, will envy the Treasurer his position at the present time. As hon. members are aware, during the next twenty-two months we are faced with the task of meeting maturing loans totalling £25,196,000, of which £13,000,000 falls due on 1st July next. Unfortunately, the Treasurer of the day, when borrowing these very large sums, apparently overlooked the embarrassment that would result in arranging for large amounts to fall due upon one date instead of distributing the redemption period over several years.

The result of last year's transactions at the Treasury was much better than was anticipated when I delivered my Financial Statement twelve months ago. The actual deficit was £184,979, as against an estimated deficiency of £576,840, and the deficit would have been still further reduced had we not made adjustments in connection with the losses, amounting to £53,540, on the wheat and cotton guarantees.

The estimated and actual results were—

	Estimated.	Actual.
Revenue	£12,202,700	£12,599,403
Expenditure ...	£12,779,540	£12,784,382
Deficit	£576,840	£184,979

Revenue over estimate, £396,703.

Expenditure over estimate, £4,842.

REVENUE, 1922-1923.

The following table gives the revenue under the main heads and shows that there was an increase in every service. It will be noted that the receipts exceeded expectations by £396,703.

Head of Revenue.	Estimated.	Actual.	Increase.
	£	£	£
Commonwealth ...	974,000	977,397	3,397
Taxation	3,203,000	3,330,885	127,885
Land	1,437,000	1,524,156	87,156
Mining	26,700	28,223	1,523
Railways	5,300,000	5,400,320	100,320
Other receipts ...	1,262,000	1,338,422	76,422
Totals	12,202,700	12,599,403	396,703
Increase ...	£396,703		

The excess under the heading of "Taxation" was wholly accounted for by income tax, which exceeded the estimate to the extent of £149,000.

The land revenue returned an increase of £87,156.

Railways showed increased earnings over the previous year of nearly £275,000, and £100,320 more than the estimate for the year 1922-1923. In view of the depression in the mining industry in the North and the position of the meat business, this result must be considered highly satisfactory, and seems to indicate that our railways are at last entering upon a period during which we may expect reasonable buoyancy in the revenue.

The excess under the heading "Other Receipts" is mainly accounted for by increases in fees of office £10,682, harbour rates £10,183, and interest on the public balances £52,800.

EXPENDITURE, 1922-1923.

Although the total expenditure shows an excess over the Estimates of £4,842, if we deduct the undermentioned amounts, which could not be foreseen when the Estimates were framed, we get a saving of £114,197, viz.:—Grant under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act, £15,000; expenditure to comply with the conditions of the Commonwealth Government's grant for main roads, £17,500; additional expenditure owing to the early election, £18,246; losses on wheat and cotton guarantees and cost of fodder distribution to farmers, £56,540. In addition to the above, the increase in the amount for interest on the Debt and Sinking Fund payments was £11,753 more than estimated, and was the result of the ready response to the recent 5½ per cent. loan issue. The foregoing items make a total of £119,039.

Although the Estimates were prepared with every regard to economy, it will be seen that most departments have kept well within the amounts allotted to them, and, if allowance is made for the "unforeseen" above referred to, it must be admitted that expenditure has been well controlled.

The unforeseen expenditure for the year 1922-1923 as disclosed by the Treasurer's annual statement of the public accounts totals £173,614 only, and the greater part of this is accounted for by the services previously referred to, and which could not be provided for when the Estimates were prepared.

The following table shows the expenditure of each department and the saving or excess as compared with the Estimate appropriation:—

—	Appropriation.	Expended.	Saving.	Excess.
	£	£	£	£
Schedules	356,267	373,244	...	16,977
Interest on the Public Debt	3,582,031	3,589,714	...	7,683
Executive and Legislative	23,522	25,113	...	1,591
Premier and Chief Secretary	93,443	110,919	...	17,476
Home Secretary	1,405,624	1,403,128	2,496	...
Public Works	202,621	199,407	3,214	...
Justice	144,114	163,300		19,186
Treasurer	390,292	362,703	27,589	...
Public Lands	283,041	263,312	19,729	...
Agriculture and Stock	178,971	228,772	...	49,801
Public Instruction	1,299,843	1,276,397	23,446	...
Mines	81,463	76,011	5,452	...
Railways	4,738,308	4,712,362	25,946	...
Totals	12,779,540	12,784,382	107,872	112,714
Net excess	£4,842		£1,842	

The excess under schedules is more than accounted for by the payment under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act, £15,000, and additional payments to the sinking funds, £4,070. The increase of interest on the debt is due to the large amount of the over-the-counter loan taken up by the public.

In the department of the Premier and Chief Secretary £17,500 was made available to comply with the Commonwealth Government's grant for expenditure on roads. The excess in the Department of Justice is accounted for by the extra amount necessary for the expenses of the elections, £18,246, and £2,065 for Supreme Court jurors and witnesses. The Department of Agriculture and Stock would have shown a substantial saving in the appropriation had it not been for the unforeseen charges in connection with the cotton and wheat guarantees and fodder for farmers, totalling £56,540.

It will be seen on reference to the above table that all other departments show substantial savings, and, in view of the fact that the railways earned £100,320 more than estimated, the saving in railways expenditure of £25,946 is very satisfactory.

For full details of the various transactions of the Consolidated Revenue Fund I would refer hon. members to the Budget tables.

Trust Funds.

The operations under these funds were particularly heavy in the financial year just ended. Receipts totalled £4,998,225, the principal items being—Central sugar mills, for proceeds of the sale of raw sugar, £1,322,152; State enterprises under the control of the Commissioner for Trade, £831,657; State Insurance Office, £794,478; State Advances Corporation, £525,384; and Main Roads Board, £334,655.

Expenditure for the year amounted to £5,467,668, some of the larger amounts being —Central sugar mills payments, £1,283,347; State enterprises, £1,034,881; State insurance, £648,009; State Advances Corporation, £700,460; and Main Roads Board, £347,305.

It will readily be understood that the financing of the various accounts under these funds is an undertaking of some magnitude, and greatly increases the responsibilities of the Treasury in providing funds pending recoupments. During the present financial year I propose making some adjustments in the Trust Accounts, with the object of using part of the funds in the healthy accounts to strengthen the position in the weaker ones. The discrepancy between receipts and disbursements of some of the accounts of these funds must not be taken as an indication that they are getting into difficulties, as in most cases the apparent deficiency is the result of unavoidable delay in bringing credit transactions to account. For instance, we expended from the Cotton Trading Account last year £264,720, whereas receipts amounted to only £135,843, but when all the cotton has been disposed of it is expected that the additional proceeds will adjust the account. The Stock Diseases Fund is an unsatisfactory account which has been going to the bad during recent years to the extent of about £25,000 per annum. This has been brought about owing to the limit of assessment under the Act being quite insufficient to meet the increased expenditure. It is proposed to introduce legislation this session which will enable us to put this fund upon a satisfactory footing. The transactions of the various accounts under Trust Funds are set out in Tables D to D4, and a reference to these will give hon. members some idea of the extent of the operations.

Loan Fund.

At the commencement of the last financial year we had a Loan cash balance of £4,501,962, which, with the exception of £122,367 held in extended deposits in three banks, was available at call or short notice.

During the year we decided to test the local market by making a 5½ per cent. over-the-counter loan issue, commencing 1st February last. The issue was most successful, the subscriptions totalling £1,277,000 during the three months the loan was open. We acceded to a request from the Commonwealth Government that we should not remain on the market during the period originally fixed for the receipt of subscriptions to the Commonwealth conversion loan, and consequently we shut down on our issue, although further applications to the extent of £250,000 were subsequently received. We declined, however, to accept any additional amounts. A pleasing feature of the issue was the large amount of subscriptions which came from the southern States. This loan will mature on 1st July, 1938, with a Government option to repay on 1st July, 1933. A further £150,000 was taken up at 5¼ per cent. for three years. Both these issues were made at par.

After the date the Commonwealth Government originally proposed to close its conversion loan, we decided to again go on the market with an over-the-counter issue at 5½ per cent. at par, with a term to 1st January, 1934. Up to 18th August (last Saturday) £309,810 had been received on account of this issue.

The two loans raised in America, which were dealt with at some length in my last Financial Statement, have formed the subject for a good deal of comment both in Parliament and in the Press. When the results of these issues were made public, I stated that we had raised them at a lower cost than the rate at which money could have been obtained in London at the time, and no evidence has been supplied by critics to disprove my statement.

Under the contracts for these loans, certain sums have to be provided for the purpose of establishing sinking funds, which are to be used in purchasing the bonds on the open market at a price not exceeding par. Although the loans were raised in October, 1921, and February, 1922, for 12,000,000 dollars and 10,000,000 dollars respectively, only 18,000 dollars has been required for the purchase of bonds for the purpose mentioned. This, I think, indicates the value of the security in the minds of the investors.

The transactions of the Loan Fund are set out in the table hereunder—

LOAN FUND.

	£	£
Balance at 1st July, 1922	...	4,501,962
Receipts during the year—		
Loans from Commonwealth	200,000	
Net proceeds of sales of Treasury bonds and inscribed stock ...	1,526,463	
Amount received from Commonwealth Bank under clause 10 of the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920	756,000	
Repayments by local authorities, soldier settlers, &c.	350,687	
Receipts under Land Sales Proceeds Act	6,084	
		2,839,234
		£7,341,196
Expenditure during the year—		
Expenditure as per Budget Table E2	3,701,750	
Balance of expenses in connection with the second American loan (10,000,000 dollars) floated in New York, February, 1922	2,755	
Amount of war gratuity bonds received from soldier settlers paid to Commonwealth Government in reduction of soldier settlement loan indebtedness	1,131	
Amount credited to Sinking Fund in terms of Agreement with the Commonwealth Government on account of loans advanced to local authorities	8,000	
		3,713,636
		£3,627,560
Deduct—		
Amount of adjustment between Trust and Loan Funds		20,000
Total balance at 30th June, 1923		£3,607,560

During the year we expended £3,701,750, as against £2,599,573 in the previous year—an increase of £1,102,177. Expenditure on railways accounts for £965,420 of the increase, loans to local bodies £131,381, and to the Main Roads Board £157,500. As we had funds available it was considered advisable to push on with the North Coast and other lines under construction, and also to procure additional rolling-stock which was urgently required.

COMMONWEALTH BANK, SAVINGS BANK BRANCH.

I should like to preface my remarks with regard to Savings Bank affairs by making reference to the late Sir Denison Miller, governor of the Commonwealth Bank. He was recognised as a leading authority on banking matters, and undoubtedly his knowledge and acumen were responsible for the great success of the Commonwealth Bank. I always found it a pleasure to transact business with him, and felt that whilst he had to consider the interests of his own institution he never did so at the expense of the State, and was always ready to give sound and practical advice.

Under the provisions of the agreement between the State and Commonwealth Bank relating to the transfer of the Savings Bank business, we have a call upon 70 per cent. of the excess deposits as a loan for a term of twenty-five years, with interest at a rate of not more than 1 per cent. above the rate allowed to depositors. Since the agreement was entered into in October, 1920, we have taken full advantage of this provision, and have received a total sum of £1,493,665, for which we are paying 4½ per cent. interest for twenty-five years.

The Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Bank are partners in the business, and, acting in conjunction with the governor of the bank, the State Treasurer determines the rates of interest and other matters affecting depositors. We also share in any profits made by the Commonwealth Savings Bank in Queensland. In the earlier periods of the agreement the amalgamated business showed losses, due to the fact that certain non-recurring expenditure was charged to profit and loss account which could have been debited over an extended term.

The position to date is that the profit and loss account for the full period of the amalgamation shows a net loss of £3,277, and we are responsible for half of this amount. However, as showing the improvement which is taking place, I give the result of the transactions for each half-year period from the date of the agreement, viz.:—

Half-year to—		£
31st December, 1920	Loss	9,886
30th June, 1921	Loss	22,799
31st December, 1921	Loss	3,373
30th June, 1922	Profit	3,437
31st December, 1922	Profit	13,344
30th June, 1923	Profit (approximately)	16,000

The depositors' balances at date of transfer were—

On account of the Commonwealth Bank	£3,360,500
On account of the State Bank	£14,841,720
	£18,202,220

At 30th June last the balance to the credit of Savings Bank depositors in Queensland was £20,453,963.

STATE ENTERPRISES AND STATE ADVANCES CORPORATION.

The balance-sheets and reports dealing with the operations of these activities for last financial year will be presented to Parliament as early as possible.

ESTIMATES, 1923-1924.

Revenue.

The amount received last year and my estimate for the current year are as follow:—

	Received, 1922-1923. £	Estimated for 1923-1924. £
Amount from Commonwealth	977,397	1,008,000
Taxation	3,330,885	3,340,000
Land revenue	1,524,156	1,551,500
Mining receipts	28,223	28,600
Railways	5,400,320	5,700,000
Other receipts	1,338,422	1,436,000
Total revenue proper	£12,599,403	£13,064,100

Expenditure.

Expenditure for the last financial year and the estimate for the current year are given in the table which follows:—

	Expended, 1922-1923. £	Required for 1923-1924. £
Schedules	373,244	394,932
Interest on public debt	3,589,714	3,696,072
Executive and Legislative	25,113	24,535
Premier and Chief Secretary	110,920	101,099
Home Secretary	1,393,907	1,385,936
Department of Public Works	202,605	214,143
Department of Justice	162,923	149,279
The Treasurer	350,471	357,295
Department of Public Lands	281,944	298,729
Department of Agriculture and Stock	206,747	201,443
Department of Public Instruction	1,298,421	1,313,909
Department of Mines	76,011	73,365
Department of Railways	4,712,362	4,846,330
Total expenditure	£12,784,382	£13,057,063

It will be seen that an increase of revenue amounting to £464,697 is anticipated. The principal sources of this increase are—Payments from the Commonwealth, £30,603; taxation, £9,115; land revenue, £27,344; and railways, £299,680.

The estimated expenditure for the year shows an increase over that of last year of £272,681. This increase is largely accounted for by the following items:—Additional sinking fund payments, £17,000; increased interest payments, £106,000; additional requirements for the railways, £134,000.

In order to bring the estimates of expenditure down to the figures I have placed before you, a drastic control has been exercised, and all departments have been placed under the necessity of economising rigidly.

It is probable that some of the departments consider they are being stinted and their operations unduly restricted, but the Government are determined to keep the expenditure within the limits of our revenue resources, and to avoid the necessity of placing further burdens on the general taxpayers.

The statutory exemption under the Income Tax Act will be increased from £200 to £250, and the concessional deductions for wife, children, and dependent relatives of taxpayers will be raised from £26 to £40 in each case. The annual loss of revenue involved in these alterations is estimated at £66,000.

It will be necessary to continue for another year the super land tax.

It is the intention of the Government to introduce during the session a proposal to

impose a fee upon bookmakers and levy an impost on racecourse betting. This is expected to yield £25,000 for this financial year, and that amount has been embodied in the Estimates.

The reduction under the Salaries Act of 1922 will continue to operate, but scale increases will be allowed officers of the public service to bring salaries up to an amount not exceeding £400 per annum. In addition, officers receiving less than the minimum salary of their classification will be brought up to such minimum.

Summarised, I anticipate the position at the end of the year will be as follows:—

Total revenue	£13,064,100
Total expenditure ...	£13,057,063
Surplus	£7,037

Before dealing with other subjects, I think I will be justified in saying a few words about the Railway Department. Both the Government and the Railways administration have in the past been severely criticised for allowing the railways to show each year a heavy deficit. The critics attribute the loss to mismanagement, extravagance, or over-staffing. The criticism has almost always been based upon false assumptions or an entire ignorance of the facts. I think it can be truthfully said that the Queensland railways in recent years have been as economically managed, as capably administered, and as faithfully served by the employees as any railway system in Australia. The heavy deficits are the result of increased cost of operating without a commensurate increase in freights and fares.

The cost of wages, fuel, and stores has increased enormously, and in about the same proportion to the increases in the other States, but freights and fares have not been increased in Queensland in anything like the same ratio.

The Government have consistently pursued the policy of keeping down the railway charges to the lowest possible level in the interests of primary producers and country dwellers.

The following table shows the relative position of Queensland as compared with other States and countries in the matter of increased freights and fares since 1914—

—	Queensland.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	South Australia	West Australia.	New Zealand.	South Africa.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Percentage increase in freight rates over 1914	12	52	43	44	29	40	29
Percentage increase in fares	17	66	48	Various	30	25	29

The policy adopted in Queensland, although it has resulted in heavy railway deficits, has enabled agricultural produce, live stock, and the necessaries of life for country dwellers to be carried at lower rates than such goods are charged for in any other State in Australia. Moreover, a recent publication issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in England, which has just come to hand, shows that the rates at present charged in England on agricultural products are 50 per cent. higher than the rates of 1914, and are much higher than the rates charged in Queensland. For example, the rate charged in England on potatoes is 17s. 2d. per ton for 102 miles; the rate in Queensland is 10s. 2d. per ton for 100 miles.

The heavy railway losses in Queensland compared with the other States are directly attributable to the policy of continuing the low freight charges. It is considered by the Government to be sound policy to keep the freights at a low level and charge up the losses on the railways to the consolidated revenue each year, rather than reduce the taxation of city dwellers at the expense of rural industries.

TRUST FUNDS.

The requirements for 1923-1924 of the various accounts charged to the Trust Funds total £5,962,366, compared with an expenditure last year of £5,467,668—an increase of £494,698. The principal additions are—Central sugar mills for cane payments, £67,000; Cotton Trading Account for the purchase and handling of the cotton, £135,000; Main Roads Board, increased activities, £267,000; Mount Mulligan mine, working expenses (a new item), £65,000; and State Advances Corporation, for advances to settlers and workers' dwellings, £184,000. In some of the services there are substantial decreases, notably Chillagoe smelters £46,000, and State enterprises, working expenses, £72,000.

LOAN FUND.

The amounts provided for this year total £5,038,156, as against an expenditure last year of £3,701,750. The proposed expenditure for 1923-1924 is admittedly a very large sum, but after going exhaustively into each item I am unable to make any further reductions. As a matter of fact, it will only be by the closest supervision that the expenditure can be kept within the estimate.

Compared with last year's expenditure the following are the main increases:—Buildings, £183,000, which includes an additional £80,000 for the new block of the Treasury Building, £10,000 for State schools, £12,500 for the South Brisbane High School, £11,500 to complete the Hamilton cold stores, and additions to the Goodna Hospital for the Insane, £21,000. For loans to local bodies an additional £56,000 is provided, and for the new sugar mill on the Tully River a sum of £100,000 on account. The Lands Department shows the greatest increase over last year's expenditure, the amount being

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

£946,000, the chief additions being for resumptions of the Burnett, Callide, and Capella lands £455,000, activities of the Irrigation Commission and Water Supply Department £141,000, Main Roads Board £278,000, and for land settlement £55,000. The railways have been allotted an additional £184,000 over the amount expended last year.

Mr. Kirwan,—I move that there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1923-1924, the sum of £300 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

Question stated—That clause 16—"*Number of houses in residential district*"—as amended, stand part of the Bill—on which the Hon. F. T. Brennan (*Toowoomba*) had moved the insertion, after the word "area" on line 48, page 9, of the following words:—

> "Provided that the standard number of houses shall be so fixed as to provide a minimum area for each house of 16 perches."

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I have had circulated an amendment providing that the minimum area be 20 perches, with a minimum frontage to the road or street of 40 feet and I hope the Minister will consider the question of increasing the minimum area of allotments. At the present time the area fixed by Act is 16 perches, and we have had discussions in this House on a number of occasions, and it has been pointed out that 16 perches is far too small an area for a private residence. After all is said and done, the most necessary thing is light and air, and, if my suggested amendment were adopted, we would get a greater amount of light and a greater amount of air. At the present time with 16-perch allotments we find houses are built window to window, which is not the right thing. There are 160 perches to the acre, which means, with 16-perch allotments, that there are ten allotments to the acre, or ten houses may be erected to the acre, whereas under my proposal to limit the area to 20 perches with a 40-ft. frontage we would only have eight houses on 1 acre. I hope the Minister will admit that my proposal is a reasonable one, and that he will agree to it, seeing that we now have the town-planning principle coming into force in connection with local authorities. I take it that it will only apply to estates that are cut up in the future, and therefore it can easily be brought into force and will be of great advantage to the people. At a sale the other day land fetched from £200 to £300 an allotment, and I venture to say my proposal would meet the situation. Such a proposal is badly wanted in connection with any new estates that are cut up. The question of corner allotments should also receive consideration. We could very easily make a provision that corner allotments should have a frontage of 40 feet so as to give sufficient air and sufficient light. If the Minister will consider this question as a whole, he will see the necessity of not insisting on 16 perches being the minimum area on which a house may be built. We must remember, too, that it does not apply to city properties. We know that 16 perches in a city property is a large area. But this applies to residential areas outside the city proper, and some discrimination should be made. There is no discrimination in the clause. I am very glad to say that in Brisbane we have not got the slums that other capital cities of Australia and other cities of the world have. We are very fortunate in that connection, and we want to keep our city healthy and clean as long as possible. It is well, now that we have the matter before us, to make provision for larger areas for residential purposes rather than be forced to make the reform at a later date. The Act at the present time provides for a minimum area of 16 perches, and a number of the houses are so broad that it is impossible to build a veranda on one side. While these small areas are possible, you can rest assured that the people will build on them, and it is only a question of time before many of these houses will have to be removed to make way for progress. Ten houses on 1 acre are far too many. I beg of the Minister to visit the suburbs and see the houses that are built on 16 perches; what style they are, and how they are kept up. In the metropolitan area there are very few houses which are built on 16 perches, and my proposal, if adopted, would do a hardship to no one, and it would be of great advantage if we could provide for a minimum area of 20 perches. I must vote against the amendment moved by the Minister, because I do not think it will meet the position. In Sydney there are some awful places, and they propose to bring in a Bill there to deal with the situation; and, now that we have this Bill before us, we should make provision for larger areas for residential purposes. We should not wait till a later date before we legislate to meet the requirements of a healthy, virile population. If there is one thing that is going to ruin the health of our people, it is the building of houses on 16-perch blocks, window to window. We should make the position satisfactory once and for all, and increase the minimum area to 20 perches with a minimum frontage to the street of 40 feet.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I am opposed to any proposition to fix the minimum area of land at 16 perches, as 20 perches is a small enough area. I lived in a house on a 16-perch allotment until I grew up to man-
[7 p.m.] hood, because my parents were not in a position to get a larger area of land. I am speaking on behalf of the children of the State in this matter. It was impossible for us as children to enjoy the ordinary comforts of home life, because there was not sufficient room to play cricket or football or the usual children's games in the yard.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You will want a cricket and football ground in the yard next. (Laughter.)

Mr. FRY: When the hon. member has children he will not want them to play football on the streets. He will want a home in actual fact for them, and not merely one for them to sleep in. The home should be a

place where there is room for comfort and development for the children, not merely a place where there is a house. The allotment should be large enough to afford reasonable comfort for growing children. If you are going to legislate for posterity, you must see to the comfort and happiness of the home. A man who has a larger income than the average working man and who wants to build a large house, will buy two allotments, but we have to legislate for the man whose wages will only permit him to purchase one allotment on which to construct a home. Light and air are essential, and if there is not sufficient space around the home the tendency which has already begun to construct higher buildings will continue, and to a great extent that will prevent the free circulation of air and free access of light. Then, in a climate like that of Queensland, we must provide ample living space within the home. The rooms must be large enough for health and comfort. It is not advisable to permit families to be brought up in houses with small rooms. Give them as much room as possible—an extra foot or two in length or width so that the floor space may be sufficient—and you will help them to live in the room in comfort. Then small verandas are not conducive to comfort. Town planners and modern architects prescribe wide verandas, which can be used for sleeping out in summer time; but an allotment of 16 perches—which will become the maximum in many cases—makes the conditions such that sleeping-out verandas will be things for the wealthy and not for the poor man. The necessity for widening streets and legislation for that purpose has arisen because legislators of the past did not look far enough ahead or provide for the growth of cities. They legislated for their own times. If we do the same, posterity will look at this measure and read the debates in this House, and say, "These men were not far-sighted enough to see further than their political noses." I earnestly request the Minister to give further consideration to this question of increasing the size of allotments to 20 perches. Personally I think 24 perches is a better size. As I said last week, if we must have congestion, we should endeavour to avoid slums. I support the amendment, not merely because we have a Government Bill before us, but because of my firm conviction from experience. Many other persons have had to live under the same conditions as I did. It is all very well to say that children should not play cricket and football on the streets, but where are they to go to?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The town planning will provide reserves.

Mr. FRY: Assuming that the reserve is a quarter of a mile from the home, where are they to go?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Every section will have such a reserve.

Mr. FRY: They should have a place in which to play within the enclosure of their own homes.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What workman will be able to buy as much land as you are asking for?

Mr. FRY: It will not cost very much more to buy a 20-perch allotment than a 16-perch allotment, and if the Government fix the minimum at 16 perches land owners will get the same price for 16 perches as for 20 perches.

Mr. FARRELL: If there is no Labour Government the price will increase.

Mr. FRY: Everybody knows that the Labour Government—although I never call them a Labour Government; they are a socialistic Government—have been responsible for raising the price of building land.

An interjection like that only indicates that that hon. member has had very limited experience in this Chamber. Soap-box oratory does not count in this Chamber.

Mr. FARRELL: The hon. member knows more about that than I do.

Mr. FRY: I have listened to the hon. member. I know that the Minister would like to do the right thing by the children of the coming generation, and I earnestly ask him to give the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Enoggera his serious consideration and accept it. He will be doing a wise act, and in the years to come he will be pleased at having taken the advice which is now being tendered from this side.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The section of the Act dealing with this matter is a discretionary one. Although the majority of local authorities may see fit to make the allotments more than 16 perches, still, there are a number who may come down to the minimum in that regard. It was stated, by way of interjection, that a person would have to pay more for a 20-perch allotment than for a 16-perch allotment. That is obvious; but the mere question of pounds shillings and pence is a small consideration when compared with the ultimate benefits that are going to accrue. A person intending to erect a house may have to pay a little more for a 20-perch allotment than for a 16-perch allotment, but he is going to get ever so much better results in the health of his children. That, surely, will weigh with him. It ought to weigh with him. I certainly think that an allotment should not be less than 20 perches.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The local authorities can regulate all that.

Mr. KING: I know they can, but I am afraid that many local authorities will bring the allotments down to the minimum.

Mr. GLEDSON: You can advise them not to do so.

Mr. KING: If they take my advice—I am glad to say they generally do—they will go beyond the minimum. An acre of land can be easily subdivided into eight 20-perch allotments. An allotment with a 40-feet frontage and a depth of 132 feet is a decent allotment. A 16-perch allotment has a frontage of 33 feet and a depth of 132 feet. Now, take the ordinary cottage. Let us say there are two front rooms each 14 feet wide, which gives us 28 feet, and then with a 5-feet hall we have 33 feet—the whole width of the allotment—without an inch of space for a veranda on either side. In Queensland a great number of people sleep on the verandas. On an allotment with a 33-feet frontage the people will be deprived of the advantage of having sleeping quarters on a veranda because there will be no room for the construction of a side veranda on such an allotment.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Where do you get the 33-feet frontage from?

Mr. KING: That is the usual frontage of 16-perch allotments now.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is without any reserve in the section. It is possible to have a reserve in every section. If we go in for town planning and certain sections are reserved, there will be a wider frontage.

Mr. KING: If there is going to be a reserve, it is going to bring the houses too close together. There is no space between the houses. If you have 16-perch allotments and the buildings are going to be three stories high, slum areas will be created, because you are going to deprive householders in the immediate vicinity of getting the quantity of sunlight that is necessary, and any area which does not get its proper proportion of sunlight is a slum.

The HOME SECRETARY: A man that can buy a 16-perch allotment can buy an allotment and a-half.

Mr. KING: A man who can buy a 16-perch allotment may not be able to buy an allotment and a-half.

The HOME SECRETARY: The greatest difficulty to-day in Brisbane is to sell the 16-perch allotment.

Mr. KING: That is in the city.

The HOME SECRETARY: You go to a man who has three 16-perch allotments for sale and he will not sell you two.

Mr. KING: Auctioneers selling land a little bit out in the country have the greatest difficulty in selling two allotments at a time; they then have to fall back on one allotment.

The HOME SECRETARY: Very seldom.

Mr. KING: It does happen. It is the desire of the Minister to give every person who intends building sufficient land to ensure health and comfort. (Hear, hear!) That is his object, but he will not gain that object by fixing the minimum at 16 perches.

Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*): I hope the Minister will take into favourable consideration the suggestion that the minimum subdivision in suburban areas should not be less than 20 perches, and, what is more important still, that the frontage shall not be less than 40 feet. I am not speaking from a mere theoretical knowledge of this matter. I have dealt with this particular question of the subdivision of land for some years. The greatest curse in Brisbane to-day is the 16-perch allotment.

The HOME SECRETARY: The greatest curse is subdivision without settlement.

Mr. KELSO: You can take any lithograph in Brisbane to-day to confirm my statement. You will find from the lithograph that the land is generally subdivided into 16-perch allotments.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Very seldom.

Mr. KELSO: I think nearly all lithographs will show that in almost every case allotments are 16 perches, because in many cases the buyers are forced to purchase them as they are not able to afford a larger area. As a half-way measure, which will tend to a better state of affairs, the suggestion made by the hon. member for Enoggera to make the minimum allotment 20 perches, and the minimum frontage 40 feet, will be a great boon to the future generations. The workman who purchases a 16-perch allotment has to build a cottage according to his purse and according to what he can borrow. No man should be compelled to live in a four-roomed cottage with a little kitchen on the back veranda.

The HOME SECRETARY: This Bill does not compel him to do that.

Mr. KELSO: If he has a 24 feet by 24 feet house—which is about as small as he can reasonably live in—it does not leave him very much space on either side. Houses may be found so close together that you can tell in one house what the people next door are having for dinner. There is not enough sunlight getting in between such cottages. In a tropical climate like this, we want all the sunlight we can get. If the Minister will go around the suburbs he will see rows and rows of houses on 16-perch allotments; in some cases the eaves of the houses are actually overlapping.

The HOME SECRETARY: In other suburbs you will find miles of roads and very little settlement.

Mr. KELSO: That is quite true, but we should provide for future settlement; and provide that it shall be under the best conditions so that the rising generations will have better living conditions than we have had in the good old days. Of course, hon. members opposite will say "the bad old Tory days." I can take the Minister up to Petrie terrace and show him rows of houses with narrow streets 33 feet wide. The allotments average 8 perches, and I believe there are some with an area of 6 or 7 perches. That is a disgrace.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What is the hon. member for the district doing to allow it? (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: The Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act brought about a great improvement.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about the flats in Brisbane to-day?

Mr. KELSO: I am talking about the suburban areas of land at the present time, and not about city residential areas. The amendment suggested by the hon. member for Enoggera has for its object the making of better provision for the future of Brisbane as it extends. There is no particular reason why a man should have to build a smaller house than he desires simply because he has only got a 16-perch area. I admit that in many cases a couple of men combine and buy three allotments, dividing the middle allotment into two, which gives them 24 perches each. That is an ideal size. However, I am quite prepared to support the suggestion that the Minister should make the minimum 20 perches, with a minimum frontage of 40 feet. If the Minister wants to shine in the eyes of posterity and have the unborn generations bless him, he will accept this amendment to-night.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): I support the amendment which has been urged by this side of the Chamber for a 20-perch minimum and 40 feet frontage. I think that all of us who go about this and other cities realise that the undue subdivision of land has been responsible in the old world for slumdom, and that it has brought many diseases in its wake. Undoubtedly we can put crime and other baleful influences down to its effects. In dealing with such a question in a new country like ours, these new subdivisions will take place largely in areas which now extend beyond the existing tram termini, and which

will later become new suburbs. Those suburbs will be benefited by this amendment. At all our tram termini we have acres and acres of land suitable for subdivision, and undoubtedly within the next few years, with more adequate transit, they will be occupied by people who now are dwelling in congested areas. I maintain that, if land is subdivided into 20-perch blocks, the cost will not be excessive, and, even if it is excessive as compared with 16-perch allotments, I am quite satisfied that the average man and the average woman will be quite prepared to continue paying deposits a little longer in order to get 20 perches.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where does this Bill stop them from getting 20 perches?

Mr. SIZER: The clause says the local authority "may approve." It should be made mandatory.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you trust your own local authorities?

Mr. SIZER: Whether I trust them or whether I do not trust them, the fact remains that the clause allows for a difference of opinion when the word "may" is inserted. The intention of Parliament should be made clear, and the intention of Parliament in this respect is that the people should have greater living areas than they have to-day, and therefore it should be made mandatory on the local authorities to carry out the wishes of Parliament.

The HOME SECRETARY: From their local knowledge they may say that 24 perches should be the minimum.

Mr. SIZER: We must fix the limit at some area. The hon. gentleman may say that an acre is a reasonable area, and someone else may say that 2 acres are reasonable. A 16-perch allotment with a frontage of 33 feet will only permit of a house with two 14-feet rooms and a 5-feet hall, as that will cover the whole of the land. We say naturally that that is not a sufficient area.

Hon F. T. BRENNAN: Nobody spends so much money on a small piece of land.

Mr. SIZER: We want to see the position of the workers improved. We have provided a Workers' Homes Act and a Workers' Dwellings Act for that purpose.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Under the Workers' Dwellings Act they cannot build on less than 30 perches.

Mr. SIZER: That is a very excellent provision. We have done that by legislation, and yet in this Bill we are going to stultify the effect of that legislation by saying that the minimum area may be 16 perches. My experience has been that, when the Act says it may be 16 perches, it usually is 16 perches. The minimum area should be 20 perches with a frontage of 40 feet. Sixteen perches do not provide sufficient room for a reasonably sized house for the average worker. If there was a minimum frontage of 40 feet, that would enable the worker to have a house with two 14-feet rooms and a 5-feet hall. That is the minimum area that the Legislature should provide for as being ideal for the worker.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about the cost?

Mr. SIZER: Whatever the cost may be, it is the duty of the Government to see that the worker gets a home as reasonably as possible. When the last Administration were in power, under the Workers' Dwellings Act workers could get homes at a reasonable price. It is the duty of this Government also to see that workers get homes at a reasonable price. No Government can justify their existence if, when the opportunity is before them, they do not prevent the creation of slum areas such as exist in other parts of the world. I am bound to admit that there has been short-sightedness in the past in permitting undue subdivision of land, but surely the most Conservative Government in the world would never think of allowing it to continue, and yet we have to plead with this alleged democratic Government, who are supposed to be extremely solicitous of the welfare of the workers, to include in this Bill a provision fixing a minimum area of 20 perches with a minimum frontage of 40 feet. This legislation will be in force for many years. We are laying the foundations of new suburbs and cities, and we should not cramp the building areas. By accept-

[7.30 p.m.] ing an amendment to make the minimum area 20 perches it will make all the difference between living in slumdom and living under conditions of happiness and prosperity. We are in the fortunate position of having a large area of excellent land in Queensland for building purposes, which can be got at a reasonable price. In some parts of the world houses are built on 5, 6, or 7 perches of land. I have seen people huddled together in houses on small areas. We have only to look at Stanley street and other places in South Brisbane in illustration of that. No one has, perhaps, seen anything much worse than there is there. I trust the Minister will accept the amendment to make the minimum area of land 20 perches. At the same time, I would like the words "the local authority may," on line 45, page 11, of the clause altered to read "the local authority shall." I had occasion to introduce a deputation to the Home Secretary asking that areas on which people who were living in the city were making a living should have differential rating. It was the desire of Parliament that there should be differential rating for a man who earned his living off the land in a city area, as against those who simply lived there. We made provision that the local authorities "may" make differential rating, but the fact remains that they have not done so, and the intention of Parliament has been defeated.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were elected on the same franchise as you.

Mr. SIZER: But we are a higher tribunal than the local authorities, whose duty it is to carry out the will of Parliament. We left the matter of differential rating to the discretion of the local authorities, and they have not carried it out.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are pretty well all political supporters of yours.

Mr. SIZER: I cannot help that; it shows that I am not biased in my views. The provision should be made mandatory in future. When we have arrived at what the minimum area of land is to be we should make the provision mandatory, and not leave it to the discretion of the local authorities. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The arguments of the hon. member for Enoggera and other hon. members who supported him are altogether unanswerable. It would be well if the Minister in charge of the Bill attempted

to controvert the suggestions which have been made.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Have you seen the New South Wales Act?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The conditions with regard to building in New South Wales are altogether different. If you are going to say that New South Wales conditions should prevail in Queensland, and that the buildings must be of brick, stone, or concrete—you are on perfectly safe grounds when you advocate a 16-perch allotment.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The local authorities have that power under this Bill.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: But you are laying down no such rules here, and the Government are ignoring the responsibility which may fall upon them by inducing the erection of wooden buildings close to each other. One of these days a fire may sweep through the country, when the destruction and havoc will be beyond what we can imagine. If the Government are going to stipulate that, if a man chooses to build with brick, stone, or concrete, a frontage of 33 feet will be ample; but unless a condition of that kind is prescribed, the 16-perch allotment as suggested by the Government is altogether inadequate. Hon. members on this side are standing for the worker, while hon. members opposite, by interjection, say, "If a man wants two allotments instead of one, let him have them." If it was stipulated in the Bill that no allotment of land should be sold with a smaller frontage than 40 feet, there would be no need for a man to buy two allotments. We are out to protect the worker against the speculator. When a 16-perch allotment is cut up, it is largely done in the interests of the speculator, who will cut up land in areas as small as possible, and would be better pleased if it was 10 perches. Hon. members on this side want the people to be in a much better position in the future than obtained in the past, and we ask hon. members opposite to support us in our reasonable contentions. If there was a differentiation made that on certain sections there should be first-class buildings, and it was prescribed that a building on a 16-perch allotment should be of a certain character, well and good; but, if that is not done, the suggestions of hon. members on this side should be accepted in the interests of the worker. There is no room for cavilling. The amendment should be accepted immediately in the interests of the worker.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): This part of the Bill is purely a town-planning Bill. There is no question of "Something introduced by the Labour Government." The hon. member for Kurilpa says that we should have large areas for our houses. The hon. member for Warwick says, "No You should legislate for fireproof buildings."

Mr. KELSO: He suggested first-class sections.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN. The amendment suggested by the hon. member for Enoggera asks for a frontage of 40 feet. Well, that can be provided with a 16-perch allotment. The Bill does not set out to make 16 perches the size of every allotment, but it states that the area shall be prescribed by the local authority concerned. It has to be assumed that the local authority will design the land to meet the needs of the times. The minimum of 16 perches is only specified—

"Until a residential district has been declared by the Governor in Council, as hereinafter provided, or other specified part of the area has been approved by the Governor in Council as aforesaid, and until a maximum standard number of houses per acre has been fixed within such district or part of the area, no map or plan of subdivision of land in which any allotment or portion of such land is shown as of less area than 16 perches shall be approved or registered."

The councils will have the right to see that that is carried out when plans are submitted.

Mr. KERR: They may go into court and object. Why do you not specify a frontage?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I am not prepared to say that the councils will not do so. I say that the councils are actuated by the best of intentions.

Mr. KERR: Certainly, they are.

Mr. KELSO: Some councils might be purely land speculators.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: If the hon. member admits that they are——

Mr. KELSO: I say it might happen.

Mr. FRY: The personnel might change, and your supporters get on the councils.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: In New South Wales, under the Town Planning Advisory Board, they fixed the minimum area at 14 perches. Here we have fixed no area, but allow the local authorities to prescribe the minimum area. I do not intend to accept the amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I am rather surprised at the attitude of the hon. gentleman, especially in view of what the Government themselves have laid down in the regulations under the Workers' Homes Act, where it is specifically stated that areas of 32 perches are considered most suitable for workers' homes.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Quite so.

Mr. TAYLOR: They say that that is so, except under special circumstances, but even then applications in respect of land of less than 24 perches or under a capital value of about £100 will not be entertained. Why did they put that in the regulations? Simply because the Government recognised that an allotment of 16 perches was not sufficient. The amendment suggested by the hon. member for Enoggera is one to which the Minister might well give reasonable consideration, otherwise the Government are practically backing down on what they have said under the Workers' Homes Act. The Minister knows, and all hon. members know, that in quite a number of instances houses are too closely crowded together, and, unless something in the nature of the suggested amendment is included, we shall have a repetition of what has happened in the past.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Seven-perch allotments!

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know anything about 7-perch allotments. At the very least, the area should be 20 perches, which would mean better health and better conditions generally. We should certainly have better suburbs than we have in a number of instances. One hon. member has mentioned a particular area, and I am sure no hon. member can go through that portion of the city without feeling that it is a shame that houses are so huddled together.

Mr. LLOYD (*Kelvin Grove*): It is rather interesting to consider what the Opposition would look like if the Minister did accept the amendment. This amendment is one of those proposals put forward in the sure and certain hope that it will be rejected. The party opposite are associated with the interests which are responsible for whole streets in Brisbane being cut up into 7 and 10 perch allotments, and, if they got into power, minimum areas such as they suggest would be the last thing they would have.

Mr. KELSO: What rot!

Mr. LLOYD: There are more serious things than crowded houses, and one of them is the crowding of families. There are streets in Brisbane where almost every house is occupied by two families, and some of them by three families. A larger allotment is desirable, but everything cannot be got at once. Fresh air and space are important, but drainage and sanitation, especially in the large growing towns, are also very important. I do not know the exact figures, but I am told that the cost of connecting the average residence in Brisbane with the sewerage system will run into £80, and the farther apart the houses are the greater will be the cost. The only practical way of providing sufficient breathing spaces in a large town is to have plenty of reserves in convenient places; but the gentlemen who are so eager to get this amendment through are the very gentlemen who often go on deputations to the Minister asking for the cutting up of public parks.

Mr. FRY: No.

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member who suggests this amendment allowed the largest park in Brisbane to be alienated for University purposes without protest.

Mr. EDWARDS: Are you in favour of larger allotments?

Mr. LLOYD: I am in favour of as large allotments as possible, but the hon. member is one of those who support an amendment because they know perfectly well it stands no chance of being accepted.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I understood the Minister to say that the Town Planning Association had recommended that the minimum area of the land shall not be less than 16 perches.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: No, they did not mention any area at all.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have in my hand the plan of a certain area of land on the market to-day in Brisbane about 5 miles from the General Post Office. This land has been cut into 698 blocks, and, with the exception of about thirty, each block contains 16 perches, with a frontage of 33 feet. We have to recognise, especially those who watch land sales, that the working man or any other person who wants land on which to erect a home buys two allotments. Why does he do that? Because, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for Logan, it is unthinkable for a man to buy an allotment 5 miles from the Post Office with a frontage of 33 feet for his future home. The plan that I have shows that there is no back entrance to the property. The people should have the right to claim to have a lane between certain blocks.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Under this Bill that will be prevented.

Mr. ROBERTS: Anyone who watches land sales realises that the person who usually buys one block with a 33-feet frontage, and erects a house on it, is a speculator, and we want to stop such a person from operating. He buys a couple of blocks of land cheap, and knocks up a couple of houses, and sells them.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I will accept an amendment to allow the local authorities to decide how the land is to be subdivided. I ask the hon. member to move that amendment, and prove his *bona fides*.

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not think it is advisable to have these 698 allotments with a frontage of only 33 feet. That is not advisable in the interests of the people who desire to erect homes.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I want to reply to the statement by the Minister that this matter was suggested by the Town Planning Association. I had the pleasure of listening to the official representative of that association addressing No. 1 Ward Progress Association in the Kurilpa electorate. I raised the question with regard to areas, and that representative assured me that the association's idea was that allotments should not be less than 24 perches. I am not prepared to listen to another story allegedly from the same association without making some comment. Either that association does not know what it is talking about, or what it wants, or else the Minister is not quoting correctly. I want to know definitely what is the idea of the association in regard to this matter. The arguments put forward by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove were all in favour of flats and slums. He argued that with wider frontages there would be extra cost in connection with drainage, lighting, and water. The extra cost of lighting, water, and drainage would be so small that it would have hardly any effect. Let me take the case of a sewer running at the rear of 16-perch allotments. It would not cost any more to connect those allotments if they were 20 perches in area.

Mr. LLOYD: Would not the main be longer?

Mr. FRY: We know that the depth of a 16-perch allotment is very much greater than its width. The extra 4 perches in a 20-perch allotment would not make the main any longer, because the frontage of the allotment would be wider. I am prepared to show the hon. member where there are many disadvantages now because of the small allotments. The electorate of the hon. member is very much congested, like my own, and I am surprised that he should bring forward arguments in favour of building flats and slums. There would be no additional cost in drainage, lighting, or water. The additional cost is in the royalty on the timber used in the construction of the houses, and that is fixed by the Government. The Government draw from every worker through that royalty from £50 to £75 on every house that is constructed. (Government dissent.) I raised this question in the House before; it was also raised by the hon. member for Cooroora, who stated that an average of £80 per house was taken by the Government in timber royalty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It does not represent £18 on the average cost.

Mr. FRY: It is a serious thing to have more than one family in a house. We want to improve conditions so that there will be one family one home.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How many houses would you allow on an allotment?

Mr. FRY: They would have to be tents if they were to be placed on allotments such as are suggested by the Assistant Minister. Let me ask the Secretary for Agriculture the size of the allotment he is talking about. If he will fix the area, then I will tell him how many houses there should be on it. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove is wrong when he says that the Opposition do not desire to have this amendment carried. If he is game to stand up and support it, we are prepared to allow a division to be taken on it. However, we would then find him sitting behind the Government.

Mr. WEIR: Sure.

Mr. FRY: Then where is there any sincerity in this matter? When it comes to putting the acid test on the question, and to finding the seriousness of hon. members, we find them backing down. They simply throw gibes across this Chamber. Let the hon. member for Kelvin Grove stand up and support his conviction. If he is not going to support us, we shall let him vote, as he has to vote—behind the Government. I hope that the 16-perch allotments will not be insisted on by the Assistant Minister.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I am surprised at the line of argument that has been taken up by hon. members opposite this evening. They know full well that the local authorities are elected on a broad franchise, and if that were not so I would feel inclined to support a more drastic proposal than hon. members opposite are submitting. As the hon. member for Kelvin Grove stated, they are trying to mislead the people. They know full well that the Bill, on page 9, provides this—

> "The local authority may, with respect to any residential district or other specified part of the area approved by the Governor in Council in that behalf, fix the number of houses per acre which shall be the maximum standard number permitted in any future subdivision of land within that district or part of the area."

I am one who has great hopes that in the future—considering the broad franchise that we have in connection with local authority government—the people in the different local authority areas will have sufficient intelligence to elect as their representatives to the local authorities men who will be able to define what shall be a proper area for allotments in the different areas. It is quite clear that 16 perches is only a
[8 p.m.] provision put in there until the local authorities shall declare what shall be residential areas. What is the use of hon. members opposite beating about the bush and trying to deceive the people outside? We on this side of the House hold that the people shall know the truth with respect to the question. If it were not so, I would be in favour of supporting a larger area than 16 perches. Knowing that local authorities will have full power to deal with this matter, it is just as well to let the people who are elected on those bodies now on an adult franchise say what the area for the people to live on should be.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I understand that the Minister has definitely decided not to accept the suggestion in respect to this matter?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: My amendment is a town planning provision, and you know that.

Mr KELSO: Has the Minister definitely decided not to accept the suggested amendment?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I will not accept it.

Mr. KELSO: That being the case, and in view of the statements that have been made from the other side, it is quite apparent that the suggestion will not be accepted.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is quite safe for you to speak now that the Minister has intimated he is not going to accept it.

Mr. KELSO: No, I have something else to suggest in the interests of the people, of which the hon. members on the Government side need not think they have a monopoly. Now that the Minister is wedded to the 16-perch allotment, will he accept an amendment that the minimum frontage shall not be less than 40 feet?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That would defeat the whole of the objects of the Town Planning Committee.

Mr. KELSO: It would not.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Read the Bill for yourself and see.

Mr. KELSO: It does not necessarily follow that there is a Town Planning Committee on every local authority.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: There should be.

Mr. KELSO: If the hon. member for Burnett is correct, and the local authority, having freedom in the matter, decides not to follow the dictates of the Town Planning Committee, or whatever arrangements are made by the town planning authorities, the provision will be no good.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Then you do not trust local authorities?

Mr. KELSO: Not necessarily always. I go the length of saying that there might be a case where a majority of the members of a local authority might be land jobbers. We have to look at what might happen, and it is our duty to make provision to prevent them agreeing to any subdivision below a certain area.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I will accept an amendment from you to give local authorities power to fix the price of land in any subdivision.

Mr. KELSO: I have nothing to do with that at the present time. What I rose at the present time to ask was this: If the Minister wants to see better housing accommodation, if he really desires to make conditions better for the people, and he is not able to accept an amendment providing for an area of more than 16 perches, will he accept an amendment providing for a minimum frontage of 40 feet? Under the present method of subdivision the frontage of a 16-perch allotment is 33 feet and the depth 132 feet. If the Minister will accept a 40-feet frontage, that will mean that the——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the hon. member going to move an amendment in that direction?

Mr. KELSO: I am asking the Minister if he will accept an amendment in the direction.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: No.

Mr. KELSO: If the Minister says he will not accept it, that is an end to the matter.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The hon. member for Kurilpa said that a certain member of the Town Planning Committee had told him that 24 perches was the minimum area that had been agreed on. This clause is taken from the very words of the Town Planning Association. The hon. member for Kurilpa should not come here and tell this Committee that he has seen a certain member who told him something, when the association sitting in conference has arrived at a decision which is not in accordance with the hon. member's statement. To hear the arguments of hon. members on the Opposition side, one would think that local authorities were composed of land jobbers. If hon. members desire, an amendment can easily be moved vesting in local authorities power to fix the price of land in any subdivision.

Mr. TAYLOR: You know that it is no use suggesting such a thing; it is impossible.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: The remarks of hon. members opposite are in the nature of attacks on the land owners, and a sort of suggestion that, as the local authorities are composed of land jobbers, they cannot be trusted. That being so, I will accept an amendment in the direction I have indicated.

Mr. TAYLOR: You know you cannot do so; it is quite impossible.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): I am rather surprised to hear the Minister make the suggestion that he has done. As a lawyer, he knows that a clause imposing such a limitation, if embodied in this Bill, could not stand the test of the courts. It is an unreasonable restriction.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that the hon. member is not going to wander from the point under discussion.

Mr. SIZER: I am not going to wander.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! There is a distinct amendment before the Committee, and I intend to keep hon. members to it unless they move a further amendment.

Mr. SIZER: I intend to move a further amendment. I only want to argue that the Minister, although he raised the point about imposing a restriction on values in a subdivision, knows full well that it will not stand the test of the courts.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I cannot allow any discussion on that matter unless an amendment to that effect is moved for by the hon. member or the Minister moves it himself.

Mr. SIZER: The Minister having definitely decided that he will not accept an amendment from this side of the House for 20 perches, we therefore have to accept his amendment, knowing that he has the full weight of the Government behind him, and that is the law.

Mr. BULCOCK: Why prolong the agony?

Mr. SIZER: Although you have the might, it does not say you have the right behind you. In this case the Government have not. In this matter we are out for a definite purpose—to achieve an important advantage so far as our future citizens are concerned. I move, as an amendment on the Minister's amendment, the insertion after the words "16-perches" of the words—

> "having a minimum frontage of 40 feet."

That is a definite instruction to those responsible that no subdivisional plans will be accepted unless provision is made for allotments of not less than 16 perches with a 40-feet frontage. That is for the purpose of meeting the cases we have mentioned—of men who want to go in for a reasonable frontage in order that they may have room to erect a veranda at the side of their houses to give them the comfort which is so much needed in Queensland in the summer months. That, surely, is not vital to the hon. member opposite. It is reasonable. Anyone can grasp what the idea of the Opposition is. I am informed that the War Service Homes Department have laid it down that their minimum frontage shall be 42 feet.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about the Toowoomba Show Ground? Each area there is 16 perches, and the houses are dog boxes.

Mr. SIZER: The further the hon. gentleman goes in his cross-firing, the further he emphasises the force of our argument about 16-perch areas with a 40-feet frontage. He admits that the houses he alludes to are dog boxes, and yet he is not prepared to accept the suggested amendment. I say that the hon. gentleman can certainly effect an improvement by accepting the provision that the land must not be cut into less than 16-perch allotments with frontages of 40 feet. Surely that provision will not wreck the Bill?

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: The suggested amendment would defeat the whole object of town planning. I therefore cannot accept it.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I fully recognise that the amendment proposed by the Minister is one to give effect to town-planning principles, and I appreciate it on that account. The principles of town planning are not generally accepted or appreciated throughout Queensland at the present time, and the people—particularly local authority representatives—should be educated up to the principles of town planning to enable them to appreciate their worth. I would suggest to the Minister that he accept an amendment providing for the larger allotment as a maximum simply for a period—he says he is going to bring in a consolidating Local Authority Bill later—to enable local authorities generally better to understand town-planning principles. They do not understand town-planning principles laid down in any local government law. Under this new Bill town-planning principles are making their advent into local government, and persons taking part in local government will have the opportunity of studying and appreciating those principles in this measure. They will recognise that there is something in town planning—that it is not the idea of faddists, but is really worth while giving effect to. I urge the Minister to accept the suggested amendment in the meantime, and by the time he brings in his consolidating measure local authority members will have a higher appreciation of what town planning means, and the restriction of 24 perches may then be removed.

Amendment on amendment (*Mr. Sizer*) negatived.

Amendment (*Mr. Brennan*) agreed to.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I beg to move the omission, on line 55, page 9, of the word

"portions" with a view to inserting the word "parcels." The word "parcels" would be better. "Portions" is a technical term used by surveyors and has a special significance. Land is described as "subdivision 1 of portion so-and-so."

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I will accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. King*) agreed to.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*): I have an amendment to propose which really follows on the amendment accepted by the Minister last week. It will assist in the cutting up of areas outside of towns and cities. I am sure that the Minister will understand that it is quite impossible for his provision to be carried out in districts which cannot be looked upon as residential districts—that is in outlandish districts

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Who will have control of the roads if you do that?

Mr. EDWARDS: I move the insertion, after the word "Titles," on line 51, page 10, of the words—

> "Provided that nothing in paragraph (*b*) of this subsection shall apply where the land is not within a township or within a shire or division of a shire declared by the Governor in Council to be a residential district."

The Minister asks who will have control of the roads. It will simply mean that, if a person who is cutting up land—or even the Government if they were cutting up land——

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The local authority in the area has no control at all.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the person who is going to cut up land is called upon to put the roads in perfect order and build bridges before the plans and specifications are accepted by the local authority, it will be impossible to cut up land at all in the outlying districts; therefore, I hope the Minister will accept this amendment in the interests of the subdivision of land in districts apart from residential districts.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I hope the Minister will accept this amendment. In many districts there are freehold areas today, and, if the cotton industry becomes successful, as we all hope it will, a lot of these areas may be cut up into small cotton farms. You can imagine, if an area of 5,000 acres, 20 or 30 miles from a railway, were cut into 150-acre cotton farms or dairy farms, the enormous expense that would be necessary in order to fulfil the conditions under subclause (*b*). The expense would be so great that it would deter a man from cutting up his land, and, as a result, these areas would not be subdivided.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Why not leave it in the hands of the local authorities?

Mr. MORGAN: We do not wish it to apply to residential areas. We quite admit that these provisions are necessary in residential areas, where land is so valuable, but in country districts the lands may be worth only £3 or £4 an acre, and you can quite understand that that amount of money would go nowhere in the grading of roads and in complying with the other conditions laid down in subclause (b), which reads—

> "The roads have been constructed and drained to the satisfaction of the local authority in accordance with the approved application, plans, and specifications, and with any conditions attached to any such approval."

One can quite understand the amount of money it would be necessary to expend in order to make the roads equal to the roads in a suburban area, and the expenditure is not necessary. I feel sure, therefore, seeing that it only applies to farming areas and grazing areas, that the Minister will accept the amendment, as it will not interfere with the principle of the Bill.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I cannot understand such an amendment as this being moved at all. The amendment is to exempt from the provisions of this Bill any area not declared a residential area. If that is done, it will destroy the whole purport of the clause, and it would be a retrograde step. I take it that the hon. member for Nanango and the hon. member for Murilla know very well that a local authority is not going to ask a man who cuts up an area of 5,000 acres into small blocks to put drains along all the roads; but the local authority has to be satisfied that the roads are put into such a condition that the people can get along to their farms. In many districts roads have been surveyed over the tops of mountains, and nobody can get over them, and the consequence is the settlers have to go through private property. Under the regime of hon. members opposite, roads were surveyed but they were not gazetted, and the consequence is that the roads run through private property, and we have to go to the expense of resuming those roads, which cost the ratepayers a lot of money. Proper roads should have been provided when the land was subdivided, and this clause gives the local authorities power to see that the roads are surveyed in proper places and made trafficable. The men in farming districts want roads as well as the people in residential areas, and members on this side are going to see that people in the farming districts, who are represented by members on this side of the House, are protected as well as the people in residential areas. Hon. members opposite say they represent country districts, and yet they are trying to make it possible for those who are subdividing big properties—for the grazier to whom the hon. member referred—to survey roads that it will be impossible for the farmers to use. That is the haphazard way hon. members opposite did things when they were in power. This Bill is going to make it possible for the local authorities to have a say as to where the roads shall be. You will not hear the hon. member for Logan getting up and advocating such a retrograde step as this. He knows very well that the local authorities want the right to say that the roads shall be made in proper places. I hope the Minister will not accept the amendment, and I hope the hon. member for Murilla will not move any further amendments to protect the big man. They are trying to protect the big man all the time. They say, "Look at the expense he would be put to in making a road." It does not matter about the poor man who has to get his produce to market.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The hon. member for Ipswich does not know what he is talking about. The present Act gives power to the local authorities to approve of the roads before approval is given to the plans and specification, and they have the right to

prevent land being cut up unless the roads are satisfactory. But the greatest offenders in this respect in the past have been the Government themselves. They want to put roads in wrong places; but, when a private estate is being cut up, the plans and specifications have to be submitted to the council, and the council have the right to inspect the area, and always do inspect it.

Mr. GLEDSON: They do not.

Mr. MOORE: They have to sign the plan before approval is given, and they do inspect, and they see that the roads are in the proper places. This proposal goes the length of saying that the council may see that the roads have been constructed and drained to the satisfaction of the local authority in accordance with the approved application, plans, and specifications, and with any conditions attached to any such approval. The unfortunate individual who has to cut up his land is not allowed to appeal to a judge for a fair deal; he has to appeal to the Minister, of all people.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Or a surveyor.

Mr. MOORE: Not to a judge, but to somebody whom the Minister may appoint. This is a most unreasonable provision. The Government say that it is contained in the New South Wales Act; and what [8.30 p.m.] has been the result there? I know of an estate which has been cut up in New South Wales about 24 miles from Sydney, the conditions and stipulations of the local authority in regard to which were such that by the time the roads were made and drainage provided the value of the land was completely eaten up. That is possible under this clause, and even in a residential area close to a town there could be a decided hardship inflicted. There is another provision later on, in connection with which we are going to move an amendment to lessen the hardship; but to make this applicable to the whole of Queensland, as the clause is at present, is most absurd. The local authority should not be able to shift their responsibility to an individual by compelling him to make an expensive road which they should themselves construct. The local authorities have to look after their finances, and, if they can put the expense on to the individual, they will do it.

Mr. VOWLES: This will stop the cutting up of land.

Mr. MOORE: It will stop it. The land has been paying rates till cut up. When it is cut up it will probably pay more rates, and the rates contributed by those areas is the money which should go towards the making of the roads for the convenience of the people. It is most unfair that a man who cuts up land and makes it available for settlement should have a burden placed upon him at the whim of the council, which may be out of all reason. The hon. member for Ipswich should be perfectly satisfied with paragraph (*a*) of subclause (6), which reads—

> "An application in respect thereof, accompanied by plans and specifications thereof (which plans of a subdivision, if the local authority so requires, shall show the contours of the land and all known flood levels) has been approved under this Act."

The local authority has to approve of the position of the road. The next clause gives the local authorities powers which are too great in extent. Owing to the conditions under which they are elected to-day, too heavy a burden could be put on the individual. We want to see every convenience given to individuals who cut up land, so that it may be made available for closer settlement, and it will be a stumbling block if we impose onerous conditions on these people. The council will be able to shift its responsibilities on to them in a way it has no right to do. The council should have power to carry out its duties in an efficient way, but it has no right to shirk its responsibilities and be in a position to place onerous duties on individuals who are cutting up land and bringing about settlement in a district which will relieve other ratepayers. If the man who cuts up land does his duty and puts the land in good order and suitable for traffic, that is all that can be reasonably required.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is all we are asking at any time.

Mr. MOORE: If that is so, why will you not accept the amendment?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Leave it to the judgment of the local authority.

Mr. MOORE: I am not in favour of leaving such a power as this to the discretion of the local authority, when it has every opportunity of passing the responsibility on to the individual.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: It is placed there in case of emergency.

Mr. MOORE: If extraordinary powers are placed in the Bill, there will always be councils which will use them to the detriment of the individual. I do not think that such a provision is likely to be for the benefit of the State. I would ask the Minister to leave the power with regard to residential areas about towns in the Bill, but to apply it to the whole of the State would be both unwise and unjust.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I would ask the Minister to give the amendment more consideration. The hon. member for Ipswich has evidently not read the clause, and has made a lot of nonsensical statements about it. The hon. member was talking about something which was not in the clause, and which we have not advocated. All we ask is that protection be given to those who cut up land and allow people to get it at a cheaper rate. If the money is expended on these particular roads, the people who get the land will have to pay it. We should do anything we possibly can to induce people to cut up land into small areas. We know that the Government put a land tax upon large holdings simply to get the land opened up in small areas, and not really for the taxation which is secured therefrom. Under this clause, you are going to get land cut up into small areas, and to pass on to the people who get those areas a burden which they will not be able to bear. By this amendment we are advocating the cutting up of large areas. I advocate the cause of the man with the small holding, and have always advocated it, provided that holding is capable of giving a man a decent living. We should study the interests of the small man who is struggling to make a living, because the big man is able to look after himself. The amendment is moved with the desire of having large estates cut up into small areas, and to see that the small man who gets the land will not be unduly burdened with the expense of making roads and draining the land.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The amendment will still cover 160 acres.

Mr. MORGAN: The amendment of the hon. member for Nanango covers all areas of 160 acres which are not considered to be suitable for cutting up into residential areas. In some districts 160 acres would be a big farm, while in other localities it would not afford a living to a settler. In some parts of Queensland 5,000 acres would not be a living area, while in other parts 40 acres or 50 acres would give a man a decent living. We must look at the land from the point of view of whether it is going to be used for residential purposes or for agricultural purposes. I am sure the Minister does not wish to inflict a hardship upon people in those areas. In the Toowoomba district, for instance, there are certain grazing properties of 5,000 acres which it would be beneficial to the district to cut up into holdings of 640 acres. At the present time plans and specifications must be submitted.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I would point out to the Minister that these estates which are being cut up have paid rates for many years and got nothing for them. The Minister must know estates on the Downs which have paid heavy rates for years and have had very little done on their behalf. Now, under this clause, they will have to put roads on them although they have been paying rates for years for that purpose.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Do you not trust the local authorities?

Mr. DEACON: In some cases the local authorities would be all right, but why force them to impose these conditions if they are not necessary? The cost will be added to the cost of the land; the man coming in will have to pay; and we ought not to put any obstacle in the way of the cutting up of estates.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You know very well that no local authority opposes the cutting up of estates.

Mr. DEACON: Yes; but you should not put any obstacle in the way of cutting them up. I think it would be better if the clause were recommitted and the whole thing reconsidered.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am supporting the amendment. It would be a good thing to accept it, in the interests of the settler. Does the Minister suggest that this provision is inserted in the interests of the prospective settler? If so, why not extend the principle to Government land? The Government hold large estates, and, when they cut them up, they put the whole of the cost on to the person who is about to select. Yet here, because a man may be forced by the land tax to cut up his land, he is to be asked to do something in addition.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Do you think the roads should be constructed by the local authority?

Mr. CORSER: It has been done up to the present time.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Who pays for them?

Mr. CORSER: Who gives the land to the local authority for roads? It is provided by the estate. I hope that the Minister will make an exception in the interests of country districts.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The local authorities will be fair and reasonable.

Mr. CORSER: The local authorities might desire, and, of course, it would be to their advantage, to insist on roads up to the specifications of the Main Roads Board.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Under the present Act they have to submit the plans for approval.

Mr. CORSER: The present Act does not stipulate that this shall be done, and one never knows what the regulations may prescribe. Now the Lands Department has to approve of the plans to the extent of seeing that the roads are sufficient, and no hindrance should be put in the way of those persons who wish to cut up estates.

At 8.45 p.m.,

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

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Such a provision as this will only lead to evasion of the Act, and even at the present the Act is being evaded. I know of two estates which have been cut up recently where no roads have been provided at all. The owners have provided access to each block, and have inserted in the other titles a provision to that effect. So long as access is given to each block in a reasonable way the council has no right to object. If the person who is cutting up land is to have these unreasonable restrictions imposed on him, he will get out of the responsibility in some way. I do not think it wise that the councils should be able to shirk their responsibilities. As has been stated by the hon. member for Cunningham, rates have been paid by these estates for years, and rates will continue to be paid by them for the purpose of enabling access to be given to them. What is the object of shifting the responsibility to give access on to the individual?

Mr. GLEDSON: You are hard on local authorities.

Mr. MOORE: No; but I know that certain local authorities will shift their responsibility, if they can thereby save the other ratepayers.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is very wrong.

Mr. MOORE: It may be wrong, but I do not want them to have the opportunity. It is quite right that they should have the right to approve of plans so that the roads may be put in the best places; the danger we are afraid of is that unreasonable restrictions will be placed upon the owners of estates. We have seen what has happened in New South Wales. We have every reason to be afraid of that.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are all right now.

Mr. MOORE: I do not suppose that we have been worse off in the history of Queensland. I hope the Minister will not be dictated to by the hon. member for Ipswich, who has only lived in the city and knows nothing about conditions outside. This amendment is only going to restrict the areas where such a provision will be applicable, and it will not in any way damage the Bill. It is unreasonable to place such powers in the hands of the council for administration. I ask the Minister to look at it from a broad view-point, and not give extraordinary powers to the council to deal with ordinary conditions. He must realise the danger. It is all very well for him to say that it will operate for three years and

can be repealed. He has suggested that there is some danger in the clause. It is only reasonable, when he brings in a Bill containing a clause which is applicable to the whole State, that that clause should be a reasonable one, and not one which will impose a burden on the individual. I do not want to relieve the councils of their responsibilities. I want them to be able to carry on their work efficiently and economically. I want them to have all requisite powers, but not to have extraordinary power to meet ordinary cases. I think the Minister might well consider whether it is not advisable to accept the amendment.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*): I hope the Minister will reconsider his decision in this matter. I am sure that he will agree that the amendment has a tendency to eliminate expense in cutting up large estates. The greater expense that you put on people who have an area of land to cut up the less opportunity there will be for purchasers to get that land at a reasonable figure. The Minister says that the local authorities should be trusted. The local authorities certainly can be trusted up to a certain point. Supposing we take an area in the country with a dominating vote in the shire council coming from a fairly large town. The councillors in the town will be interested very largely in making the person who is cutting up the land for closer settlement construct the roads as good as possible, and may possibly force him to build bridges and do other things which will make it impossible for the owner of the land to proceed with its subdivision.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Do you think the Minister in charge or the surveyor would allow that?

Mr. EDWARDS: The Minister does not realise what a lot of red tape there is before an owner can come with his case to the Minister.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: No; it is a case of walk in without knocking.

Mr. EDWARDS: A shire council can put all sorts of obstacles in the way. Let me put this position to the Minister, which could quite possibly crop up: Let us say that in a certain shire a piece of land is being cut up, and the ratepayers in that particular district do all their business with another town. That shire would certainly try—as has often happened—to harass those cutting up that land by compelling the construction of very good roads before the subdivision can take place. That would place a burden on the owners of the land, and would also be a burden on the people who afterwards took up the areas. It is quite possible for the shire councils to impose all sorts of conditions on the owner of the land. They can impose such conditions as would make it impossible for the land to be cut up unless a heavy burden is to be passed on to the settlers who would come on to the country. The Minister must know that the local authorities in the old settled areas can well afford to assist a little in the new areas. I cannot see one reason why he should refuse this amendment. It is in keeping with the spirit of cutting up land into small areas. I hope that he will not stick hard and fast to his statement that he does not intend to accept the amendment. I am satisfied that, if he had considered it carefully at the beginning, he would have concluded that it was something in the interest of cutting up estates, and will be of assistance to the smaller settlers who will go on to the land when it is cut up.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): Section 83, subsection (7), of the principal Act provides—

> "After such hearing, the Minister or such person as aforesaid may either reject the map or plan or approve thereof with or without such modifications as he thinks just, and with such conditions, if any, as to clearing, grading, or opening up any such new road by the owner of the land as he thinks fit to impose in the public interest."

Those words, "clearing, grading, or opening up any such new road," are already in the Act, and have been in operation for a number of years. If the amendment is accepted, it will not only take away the extra power that is sought by the councils, but it will take away the power that they already possess. You have to trust the local authorities when you give them this power. You must look upon them as a body of men who are elected by the votes of the people, and you must give them powers in a discretionary way rather than not give them that power at all.

Amendment (*Mr. Edwards*) negatived.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the insertion after the word "sum," on page 10, line 55, of the words—

> "not exceeding one-half."

The clause will then read—

> "Any applicant, instead of executing the work of constructing and draining the roads, as hereinbefore provided, may either—
>
> (*a*) Pay to the local authority such sum, not exceeding one-half, as may be agreed upon with the local authority as the cost of executing such work, and agree with the local authority as to when such work shall be executed by the local authority;"

This will apply to small areas, whether residential or town areas, or country areas. It is a reasonable thing that the council should accept its share of the responsibilities. I know for a positive fact that, when an estate was cut up outside Sydney, the council, owing to the conditions under the New South Wales Act—similar to these—imposed such restrictions that they placed the estate—which was a fairly large one—in a very unfortunate position. The owners were compelled to hold that estate for years and pay rates because they were unable to comply with the conditions stipulated by the council. The owners were unable to secure the money to pay for the conditions in respect to drainage, the macadamising of roads, putting in gutters, and making footpaths, that were stipulated by the council.

I know how difficult it was for the estate, and they had to hold the land for seven years. I suppose the same argument was used in New South Wales—that we should trust the council. It only goes to prove that, when councils are placed in the position, they will shirk a certain amount of their responsibilities and place it on the estate or the owner who is cutting up the land. I know

[9 p.m.]

very little was left of the estate because the cost of making the roads, curbing, and guttering was so high. It is all cut up now except one portion, but practically all the land sold up to the present time has gone to pay expenses forced on the estate by the council imposing harsh conditions. It shows that it can be done.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Your amendment is out of order.

Mr. MOORE: Why?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: In view of paragraph (*b*) of subclause (6).

Mr. MOORE: No; it is only a qualifying one. It says here—

> "Pay to the local authority such sum as may be agreed."

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: See paragraph (*b*).

Mr. MOORE: This is an alternative.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: It is not an alternative to do the work—only to do half the work.

Mr. MOORE: It is an alternative when the council places the conditions on it. The council would then have the power to make an agreement with the individual to pay such sum, not exceeding one-half, and the council would pay the other half. The council are getting revenue from the land all the time it is being cut up and afterwards. It is only reasonable that the council should borrow a certain sum of money over a period in order to make the requisite roads, kerbing, and guttering, and to make an agreement with the estate as to a contribution towards the cost of the work, not to exceed one half. We say the council should contribute the other half. It is only a reasonable suggestion. I do not see how it nullifies subclause (*b*).

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That amendment will be inconsistent with paragraph (*d*) of subclause (6) and paragraph (*c*) of subclause (7).

Mr. MOORE: The local authority imposes certain conditions and specifications, but the individual may not agree to them because he cannot carry them out. He can refuse to cut up the land under those conditions. In such a case, he goes to the council and says, "I am willing to make a certain agreement with you to carry out such work as you suggest." We say the council should pay half, and the individual should also contribute. In some cases where Crown land is subdivided, the Public Estate Improvement Fund makes the necessary access to the property and places the cost on the land that is being cut up. In certain cases no provision for access is made. The Government are quite on a different plane to the individual. This is a case where the individual is cutting up a block of land and the council imposes conditions. The individual makes an agreement with the council and agrees to pay a proportion of the cost, and it is only fair that the council should pay their proportion also. It is unreasonable for the council to escape free of all liability, after having received rates for all time from the land and seeing they will continue to do so. After all, it is only putting a burden on the incoming tenant and the individual ratepayer.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The same argument applies to paragraph (*b*).

Mr. MOORE: I know it does to a certain extent, but the Minister is going a long way further. This is not a question of clearing, but a question of the council imposing what conditions they like. It is not a question of going to a judge and letting him say what is a reasonable charge.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: He might take sides.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think the Minister should be placed in the position of having to take sides. A judge, if the matter is referred to him, would take evidence and decide the matter on the evidence placed before him, and it will be the fault of the individual if he does not place the evidence before him. The matter can come before a judge on appeal in New South Wales.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Each side then will have to pay the legal fraternity fees.

Mr. MOORE: He need not necessarily be represented by a lawyer; he can appear and put his own case before the judge.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: He will get a nice reception.

Mr. MOORE: I want to make it possible for the individual to be treated fairly and justly. I want to see the councils accept their share of responsibility. The Minister need not be afraid that it will damage his Bill or inflict hardship on the local authority. It is only putting in a reasonable condition whereas the present condition will impose heavily on the individual. It will give the individual an oportunity of making a bargain with the council. It is not a very drastic amendment, and it is only placing on the shoulders of the council what is their proper duty.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would like to press the Minister to accept this amendment. It is a reasonable one. Whilst I am out at all times to get as much as I can for local authorities generally, I would not like them to be considered unreasonable. I think it is rather an unreasonable power to give to local authorities to compel the owner of land that is being subdivided to pay practically the whole of the charges of these works. Paragraph (*b*) of subclause (6) provides—

> "The roads have been constructed and drained to the satisfaction of the local authority in accordance with the approved application, plans, and specifications, and with any conditions attached to any such approval";

In addition there is an alternative proposition which can be put in. He can either carry out the work according to these plans, or arrange for the local authority to do the work for a price. Supposing the work is to cost £100, is there anything, even with the clause at is stands, to prevent the local authority saying, "We will let you have it for £50"? I say there is nothing.

Mr. GLEDSON: What about sub-clause (7)?

Mr. KING: Paragraph (*a*) of sub-clause (7) reads—

> "Pay to the local authority such sum as may be agreed upon with the local authority as the cost of executing such work, and agree with the local authority as to when such work shall be executed by the local authority."

With the clause as it stands it would be competent for the local authority to make

arrangements with the owner of the property to accept half the cost.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why not leave it as it is?

Mr. KING: I want to see it definitely stated that the local authority may make an arrangement to accept payment not exceeding half the cost.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is mandatory, and cannot be accepted.

Mr. KING: I do not want to leave it discretionary. It is a fair suggestion. We might have the property held by the owner for years and years with rates being paid year after after, and the owner unable to get rid of it.

Mr. GLEDSON: Waiting to make a profit.

Mr. KING: No; simply unable to sell because the district is not progressing. I know of cases at Coorparoo where you could not give land away. See what you can get for it now. A man has a chance of selling the land. He is put to great expense, and gets no benefit beyond the general use of the roads. I ask the Minister to accept the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Aubigny as being a perfectly reasonable one.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): Let us again review the figures, etc., connected with certain estates. I have them more complete than when I quoted them on the second reading of the Bill—

"A. An estate agent taking up land at £6 an acre and selling at £47.

"B. An estate agent taking up land at £5 an acre and selling at £113.

"C. An estate agent taking up land at £24 an acre and selling at £50 10s."

Mr. SIZER: How long did they hold the land?

HON. F. T. BRENNAN:

"D. Purchased at £50, sold at £157.
"E. Purchased at £74, sold at £125.
"F. Purchased at £125, sold at £393.
"G. Purchased at £149, sold at £208.
"H. Purchased at £131, sold at £209.
"I. Purchased at £36, sold at £100."

Mr. SIZER: Could you tell us what length of time eventuated between the time of the purchase and the time of the sale, and what rates were paid?

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: All the land was taken up in the last five years. I will show where I asked nineteen local authorities to give particulars. They show the prices of 404 subdivisions, 18,850 allotments, 2,689½ occupied, 15,154½ unoccupied, and with a mileage of streets of 79 miles 63 chains. That is a nice state of affairs—to allow these speculators to come along and purchase upon those lines. They should put the land in better condition, and make it fit for persons to purchase.

Mr. SIZER: Why?

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: Because the people could not afford to take up land at £5 and £6 an acre as a speculation, and wait to get £47 an acre. You would not have half the speculative energy going on in Brisbane.

Mr. SIZER: How long were those lands held before they were sold—fifty years?

Mr. BRENNAN: No; most of this land was bought recently by speculators.

Mr. SIZER: At those prices?

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, less, of course, 10 per cent. for roads. Those speculators have no right to cut up land for people to settle upon before it is ready for such settlement.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): Will the hon. gentleman tell me how many allotments were bought during the last five years at £5 per acre and realised £300 when sold.

Mr. GLEDSON: What has that got to do with the matter?

Mr. SIZER: The Minister says that land has been bought in Brisbane at £5 per acre and sold at £300. I say that those figures will not hold water.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I said land had been bought at £5 per acre and sold at £113 per acre.

Mr. SIZER: I very much doubt whether the hon. gentleman can give us evidence of land being bought during the last five years at £5 and sold at £113. I say the hon gentleman is trying to lead this House to believe that that is the existing state of affairs. He should be fair and back up his argument by giving us the cases. It cannot be done.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: If you will give notice of a question to-morrow, I will table the information.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I move the omission of lines 29 to 31 on page 11, reading—

"Provided that nothing in this subsection shall apply where none of the parts into which the land is subdivided contains less than twenty acres."

The reason for this amendment was recently referred to by the hon. member for Aubigny. This clause withdraws from subclause (8) an application if the land contains less than 20 acres. There was a case where a man subdivided 1,280 acres into 90-acre blocks and put in easements instead of roads. We want to prevent that kind of thing happening.

Amendment (*Mr. Brennan*) agreed to.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I move the insertion, after the word "not," line 14, page 12, of the words—

"a proportionate part of the cost not exceeding one-half of the cost of".

We are going even further than the making of roads and the cutting up of blocks of land. Councils are to be absolved, apparently, from any responsibility. All the money that they have collected in rates from an estate is not to be used for the purpose for which it was directly contributed. It places upon the owner an injustice—the whole cost of kerbing, guttering, and footpaths——

Mr. GLEDSON: Where does it say that?

Mr. MOORE: In paragraph (*e*).

Mr. GLEDSON: Did you read subclause (11)?

Mr. MOORE: Yes.

Mr. GLEDSON: What does it say?

Mr. MOORE: "In respect of any application for approval of the opening of a road, the local authority shall take into consideration"——

Mr. GLEDSON: It just says that the local authority shall have power to take the matter into consideration.

Mr. MOORE: It gives the local authority power to compel the owner to pay the whole of the cost. Does the hon. member mean to say that it only gives them power to take into consideration whether it shall be provided or not? The onus can be placed on the individual.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why should you have local authorities at all if you do not give them any power?

Mr. MOORE: I am very glad that the hon. member for Ipswich is not in charge of this Bill, because he would be more drastic than the Minister. I hope the Minister will accept this amendment, as it is a most reasonable suggestion. After all, what is the council there for? The council collects funds to make roads, make footpaths to give access to the place, and keep them in proper repair. If you put the onus on the individual cutting up the property to provide kerbing, guttering, and concrete channels, it becomes an absurdity. It is all very fine for hon. members to argue that the clause only says they shall take it into consideration. I have had plenty of experience, and I know that, when you place extraordinary provisions in an Act of Parliament, they are often taken advantage of. We know that we agreed to some extraordinary provisions when we passed the Sugar Acquisition Act. It was supposed that they would only apply to the acquisition of sugar, but they were afterwards taken advantage of compulsorily to acquire cattle and beef and many other things.

Mr. GLEDSON: It was found very useful to the people of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that it was found to be very useful—it was used as a means to evade a Commonwealth Act. The States of the Commonwealth went into federation under a certain specific Constitution, and the Queensland Government found a way of evading those conditions by passing an Act under which they commandeered property belonging to individuals in this State. I do not know that it is anything to be proud of. To my mind, it is something to be ashamed of.

Mr. HYNES: It was for the good of the people.

Mr. MOORE: Is it a fair thing to rob one individual in the interests of the community? I do not hold with that. There is no reason why a man should have his property taken away because it suits the people. If we agree to this clause, we shall find that certain local authorities will take advantage of it to impose harsh conditions on the people. I do not believe in such extraordinary provisions being placed in the Bill at all. I want to see a fair and reasonable Bill given to the local authorities to work under; but I do not want to see provisions placed in it whereby an individual can be treated harshly and the local authority escape its just responsibility. Merely because there is such a provision in the New South Wales Act is no reason for placing it in a Queensland Act.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): This clause is taken from section 332 of the New South Wales Act; but under the New South Wales Act there is an appeal to a District Court judge. The prime factors in considering matters that have to be taken into consideration under this clause are public interest and the circumstances of the case; but I say these factors might be considered as mixed questions of law and fact. If the appeal in a subsequent portion of the Bill were left to a judge, either of the Land Court or the Supreme Court, I would not have any very grave objection to the clause as it stands.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Did not the Local Authorities' Conference pass a resolution last week or the week before to metal all roads?

Mr. KING: No. That would be pretty rough. I think a resolution was submitted to that effect, but I am perfectly certain it was defeated. My recollection is that it was almost unanimously defeated. There are certain matters here which the local authority has to take into consideration, and against which the owner of the property has the right to appeal to the Minister, as provided by the present Bill. If the Bill was framed on the same lines as the New South Wales Act, with an appeal to a judge, then the judge would decide whether the conditions laid down by the local authority were fair or reasonable. It must be borne in mind that there is no appeal from the decision of the Minister. The Minister may send the matter over to a surveyor. I think an engineer ought to be consulted in some cases; but the Minister, surveyor, engineer, or person hearing the appeal may come to a wrong conclusion altogether. Where the circumstances of the case are reasonable, it is a mixed question of law and fact as to how the reasonableness shall be construed.

At 9.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) resumed the chair.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: It is a matter of common sense.

Mr. KING: Very often it is a matter of common sense, which we do not always get even from a Minister. (Laughter.) I trust that the Minister will see fit to accept the amendment moved by the leader of the Country party.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I think the amendment is a reasonable one. I do not suppose that there is a single local authority outside Brisbane which has got 15 per cent. of the kerbing or channelling made in its area, and probably hardly any of the footpaths are made. We are asking that these improvements shall be made. I do not suppose that there is a single local authority in the metropolitan area that has not approached the Government for loans to carry out this work.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: If it was not for the Tramways Company in Brisbane there would be no good roads to-day.

Mr. TAYLOR: We had roads in Brisbane before the Tramways Company came. I do not known that the Tramways Company made a very good job of roads in the metropolitan area, as the Minister would like us to believe. If the clause goes through in its present form, it will have the effect of preventing the cutting up of estates, if the whole of the charges in connection therewith have to be borne by those who cut them up. I think that the owners of estates should pay a fair proportion of the expenses incurred in cutting them up. A local authority can only carry out its improvements from year to year as the rates are received, and, if it wants to go ahead any faster, it has to borrow money from the Government. I hope the

Minister will accept the amendment. I take it that we are all desirous of seeing an improvement in local authority matters and of protecting the ratepayers in every way with regard to the improvements carried out, and not to block progress. If the subclause goes through in its present form it will prevent progress, and will not achieve the object which the Minister has in view. I quite agree with the chairman of the Local Authorities' Association, who said that, if a local authority sees an opportunity to get work carried out by an individual, in nine cases out of ten it will take the opportunity.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I move the omission in subclause (12), page 13, of the following paragraph—

> "(*a*) Nothing in this subsection shall apply where none of the parts into which the land is subdivided contains less than twenty acres; and"

Amendment agreed to.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: I move the insertion, after line 16, page 13, of the following words:—

> "Provided that before the local authority proceeds to indicate on the plan such position relating to any mains, the representatives of the water, gas, or electric interests shall be consulted in order to determine the suitability of such position."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I move the omission of lines 37 to 42, page 13, reading—

> "(iv.) This subsection shall come into force in an area or part of an area as and when specified in that behalf by the Governor in Council by Order in Council, but shall not, so far as it relates to water mains, apply or be made to apply to the district, for the time being, of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board,"

with a view to inserting the following paragraph:—

> "In all cases where a constructed carriage-way or footpath is opened up by any person or authority for the purpose of laying mains or service pipes, such carriage-way or footpath shall be reinstated by the local authority to its original state before such opening up took place, and all expenses incurred by the local authority in so doing shall be repaid to it by the person or authority responsible for such opening up."

Under present conditions it is impossible to have decent roads. The Electric Light Company, the Gas Company, the Water and Sewerage Board, and the Commonwealth authorities are continually opening them up. The local authorities in the metropolitan area are spending thousands of pounds annually for work rendered necessary by the opening of the roads to take mains into houses, and no attempt has been made to remedy the position. The Gas Company, the Electric Light Company, the Water and Sewerage Board, and the Commonwealth authorities just fill in the hole and leave the job, and after a few carts have been over it there is a drop in the level. I have in mind a particular road in the metropolitan area where three or four houses went up adjoining one another, and the result was an expenditure of many pounds by the local authorities to put the road in order. I take it that the proper authority to do this work is the local authority. They have men well versed in such matters, steam rollers, and other plant, and the charge is certainly a legitimate one against the Water and Sewerage Board or anyone else concerned. I move the omission of paragraph (iv.) because it gives the Water and Sewerage Board exemption. I do not see why they should have exemption at all. They have had exemption of catchment areas from local authority control, much to the detriment of the local authorities concerned, and I do not think it is fair that they should be allowed to open up the roads and leave them for the local authorities to fix up. The amendment which has just been inserted on the motion of the Minister provides on the one hand that these bodies shall be consulted as to the positions of the various mains, but on the other it makes no provision for imposing on them the obligation of putting the roads in proper condition.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I know that one of the greatest troubles of local authorities is caused by the opening up of the roadways by the Gas Company, the Electric Light Company, or the Water and Sewerage Board. Certainly, they fill in the excavation and do a certain amount of ramming, but that work is not followed up, and it does not appear to be done as thoroughly as it ought to be, so that in the course of a month or two the roadway is full of ruts. I certainly agree with the remarks made by the hon. member for Enoggera. I think the best person to carry out the replacement of a road after an excavation has been made by no matter what party is the local authority itself. They have the materials and men, and they know just exactly what is required. If they carried out the work there would not be the heart-burning that exists to-day between the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board and the local authorities in connection with these matters. It is difficult to understand why the Board should be exempted from the duty of replacing the road. It is a revenue-collecting body just the same as any local authority. It collects revenue for the services that it renders, and why should it be exempted from carrying out certain replacement works? I do hope the Minister will accept the amendment, which is a fair one and a common-sense one.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is not in the same category as the local authorities. It is not a profit-making institution.

Mr. TAYLOR: Nor are the local authorities.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: No. The board has a very important function to perform. Let me take the Enoggera area. The valuation for rating purposes in 1910 was £4,047, and in 1921 £10,200. The board supplies water free to water troughs, for fire extinction, children's playground at the Domain, the Botanical Gardens, and the General Hospital. It carries out a very big service. After all, under the Greater Brisbane scheme, that service will be taken in by the local authorities. I do not think it is any good taking a provision out of one place and putting it into another. I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): By and large, in the whole of the metropolitan area there has been a very considerable increase of

valuations of recent years. Although the Water and Sewerage Board may be supplying to my home and your home and hundreds of others just exactly the same quantity of water that was supplied a few years ago and at no greater expense, it is getting a very considerable increase in revenue, and that revenue, as the value of property increases in the metropolitan area, will continue to increase. We must recognise that the board is performing very good work for the community, and in certain instances is supplying water free. If in 1923 I use water in excess of what the valuation of my land entitles me to use, I shall have to pay the excess; but, if in 1924 I do not use the same quantity of water, I shall still have to pay the same amount as I shall have to pay in 1923. No deduction is taken into account. The board has a method of collecting its money which is superior to that which can be adopted by any other local government body in the whole of Queensland. They do not send out any collectors. The water users know perfectly well that, if they fail to pay their rates on the due date, not only will they lose the discount, but probably they will have the bailiff in in a few days. They will also get their water cut off. The water authority has powers which the local authority has not. The amendment proposed is one which should commend itself to the Minister. It is not introduced in any captious spirit, but only to see that there should be fair and reasonable business dealings in this matter between the two authorities. Both authorities carry out great public works. The local authorities are carrying out their work without any fee except the allowance made to the mayor, and no Minister should place any obstacle in the way of seeing that the roads are left in a good condition and not in their present condition, which in many cases is an endless source of worry and expense to the local authorities concerned.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I do not know that the Minister has taken the right view of the amendment. I am moving in the direction of local authorities taking charge of the roads when they are being opened up by a gas company or suchlike body. I have a further amendment in regard to the catchment areas of local authorities which I intend to move. The Water and Sewerage Board are continually opening up the roads. In the laying of a small water pipe into a house there is no reason why the Water and Sewerage Board should leave the road in a deplorable condition. It would be an equitable charge to make the body concerned place the road in order again. It is only right that Parliament should lay down that the gas company, or whoever opens up the road, should complete its work. The local authorities concerned in the metropolitan area are paying thousands of pounds every year on account of the neglect of those bodies. The amendment is only put forward in the spirit of getting the right thing done. It is a reasonable amendment, and one which might be very well adopted by the House.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I do not know exactly what the position of gas companies will be in connection with the breaking up of roads, but it appears to me that provision to a certain extent is made to meet the trouble which is being ventilated by the hon. member for Enoggera. In the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board Act, section (35), paragraph (7), reads—

> "If the board or such person as aforesaid, having broken up a road—
>
> (*a*) keeps it broken longer than is reasonably necessary, or fails within seven days after filling in the opening to make good such road or to carry away all surplus materials and the rubbish occasioned by the operations, to the satisfaction of the local authority concerned, or further, in the event of the trench sinking at any time within six months next ensuing, and attention having been called to such sinking; or
>
> (*b*) neglects to cause the road to be fenced, guarded, and lighted as described;
>
> the local authority concerned may do the necessary work and recover from the board or the person in default the expense incurred."

That section was put into the Act by reason of a complaint that was made by the Hamilton Town Council. The council went to the expense of making the River Road, metalling it, and making other improvements, and, as soon as it was laid down, the Water and Sewerage Board came along, rooted it up, and put down its mains, and the council had no redress. A certain amount of redress is now obtainable against the Water and Sewerage Board, but no redress in connection with other mains such as gas or electric light mains that may be laid underground. I think that, if there is such a provision, it ought to be put in the Local Authorities Act. I ask the Minister to accept the amendment, because it is fair and right. Although the Water and Sewerage Board may be a local authority, it is a local authority working on its own. It is similar to one Government department charging another Government department for work done. A local authority should be able to charge another local authority for any expense it is put to by that authority. If the Treasurer wants to give any railway passes, the Railway Department charges the Treasury Department for those passes. So, if a local authority carries out certain work brought about by the neglect or the operations of another local authority, the latter should bear the expense. I think the amendment is perfectly reasonable.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*) negatived.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I move the omission on page 14, line 16, of the words "the Minister" with a view to inserting the words—

> "a judge of the Land Court or Supreme Court."

I previously mentioned that these appeals should go either to a Supreme Court judge or a Land Court judge. There are certain questions, partly law and partly fact, to which I think a judge would be more capable of giving an interpretation than the Minister. I would like to mention that certain matters in this connection are taken from the New South Wales section. The 1919 Act of New South Wales provides that appeals shall be determined by a judge of the District Court—and I might say that a judge of the District Court down there, Judge Docker, has given an interpretation to questions that have

arisen under this section—matters that were referred to him on appeal. He has given decisions, and such decisions are final. Here the appeal is final with the Minister. Although the Minister may wish to be quite fair, there are questions of law and fact which he may not be capable of deciding. It ought to go before a judge of the Land Court or a judge of the Supreme Court.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Bring one along and see.

Mr. KING: The Minister is the final court of appeal, and, if the Minister does an injury to an individual, the latter has no redress. I ask the Minister to take the amendment seriously into consideration.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The hon. member seems to be annoyed because there is not enough litigation about the matter. (Laughter.)

Mr. KING: I am not annoyed.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: The Home Secretary in 1902, Mr. Foxton, who was a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland, introduced this clause. There was no objection to the clause at that time, and I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I do not see that, because the Minister in 1902 introduced this clause, in 1923 there is any reason for refusing to accept it. We have exceptionally drastic clauses in this Bill, and I think it is only fair and right that the individuals concerned should have an opportunity of appealing to a Land Court judge or to a Supreme Court judge. It is not a question for the Minister to decide whether it is going to cost a lot for litigation or not. It is for the individual concerned to decide whether he should appeal to a Land Court judge or to a Supreme Court judge. The Minister is not infallible, and, although he may transfer his powers to a surveyor or some other individual, it is only a fair thing, when you have drastic provisions in the Bill whereby the local authority may place very onerous conditions on the individual, that every opportunity should be given to the ratepayer to put his case before a Land Court judge or a Supreme Court judge if he wants to do so. Where you have an appeal in other cases you do not have the Minister setting himself up as the only court of jurisdiction. You have a police magistrate to whom the ratepayer can appeal. The provisions of this clause are absolutely new to Queensland.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The same in principle.

Mr. MOORE: This clause is a very long one, and contains all sorts of conditions. They are entirely new conditions which have been copied from New South Wales. The Government have adopted the conditions from New South Wales, but they have not adopted the protection. Although the present Minister happens to be a lawyer, we are not always going to have a lawyer in that position. We may have a man who is absolutely ignorant of the law, and he may not be able to give decisions that are satisfactory. I quite understand the hon. gentleman is willing to give the ratepayers the benefit of his advice free, but the ratepayers should have an opportunity, if some other Minister who is not a lawyer happens to fill that position, of appealing to a Land Court judge or a Supreme Court judge. When such a harsh provision as this is imposed on an individual, he should have the right, if he thinks fit, to employ a solicitor to appear for him. I suppose lawyers do fulfil some useful function. (Laughter.) They are prepared [10 p.m.] to place the cases of people who consider they are not getting fair treatment before a tribunal in order to secure justice. I trust that the Minister will accept this reasonable proposition. The cost will not be thrown upon him, but will fall on the individual who will appear before the court. That individual should have the right to have his case placed before a tribunal from which he considers he will get a fair deal. It is not fair for the Minister to refuse this privilege of allowing a man to go before a court and have a proper opportunity of placing his case before it. I do not think that the Minister should place himself in the position of an adjudicator in a case in which he may not have the experience or even the judicial knowledge necessary to give a fair decision. As the consequences are going to be so serious under this Bill, I think every facility for access to the court should be given, and I trust that the Minister will not be obstinate in regard to the matter.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I am not obstinate at all. The present Act has been in operation for a long time, and there has been no dispute.

Mr. MOORE: The present Act does not contain the same conditions as are proposed by the Bill. The provisions in the Bill are such that an individual should have every right to appear before a court in which he has every confidence. If these drastic provisions were not in the Bill there would be no need for the amendment. When you amend an Act and give extraordinary provisions to a council, it is only fair that an individual should have an opportunity to protect himself and lay his case before a man who is trained in legal matters.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: It may be a question of fact.

Mr. MOORE: Every individual does not know what is fact. It should be placed before a trained man.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Common sense is better.

Mr. MOORE: I do not agree with the hon. member. I want to have the opportunity of going before a man who is trained in giving decisions and whose training will enable him to give a verdict with which I shall be satisfied. I do not want to have to go before an amateur. I think the hon. member has enough experience of councils to know that the majority of a council may be swayed one way or another by one individual. They are not skilled or trained in the matter of deciding what is fair or just to the individual. They are looking after the interests of the ratepayers, and they may have a tendency to be partial. Every individual should have the right to put his case before an impartial tribunal.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The Minister says that this provision was in the 1902 Act. So it was; but he has seen fit to make very drastic alterations in the 1902 Act, and in doing so he has copied the New South Wales Act. If the New South Wales Act is good enough to be copied in many respects, as the hon. gentleman has done, it should be good enough to be copied in respect of the right

Mr. King.]

of appeal. We are going to have altogether different conditions now from those which existed under the 1902 Act. We are very glad to have greater powers for local authorities, but we should be in a position to meet the new conditions as they arise, and I want to conserve the rights of the individual and see that he is not victimised by a local authority or even by a Minister. Certain decisions have been given by the court in New South Wales which indicate how important these matters are. Here is one—

> "Surface construction.—Where a council, in disapproving of a plan and specification of proposed roads on which hard sandstone was to be used, substituted another specification requiring the surface of the roads to be made of blue metal, Docker, D.C.J., held that there was nothing in the Act to empower a council to dictate to an individual the way the road must be made. All the council can do is to disapprove of the plan and specification as not being reasonably sufficient for the purpose, giving reasons for its disapproval. He also held that the question whether plans and specifications for the making of roads are reasonably sufficient is one of fact depending on the particular circumstances of each case, and there may be cases where roads require to be blue metalled."

Here is another—

> "Where a council disapproved of a plan and specification of proposed roads in a subdivision, on the grounds that the gravel surface of the roads should be tarred, the same judge, on appeal, held that, under the circumstances of the case and having regard to the public interest, this requirement was not a reasonable one, adhering to the principles laid down in Todman's case (above)."

Mr. GLEDSON: Could not that be decided without all that nonsense?

Mr. KING: There is no nonsense about it. It requires a trained man to distinguish between what is reasonable and what is not reasonable, and what facts have to be considered in justice to the individual and in the public interest. These are things on which a judge with a trained logical mind can give correct interpretations better than a layman. This is another case—

> "In an application for approval of a subdivision it was proposed to construct certain roads with 20 feet of ballasting and kerbing and guttering of rough stone. The council refused to approve unless the ballasting were 24 feet wide, with concrete kerbing and guttering. Cohen, D.C.J., on appeal, decided that there should be 24 feet of ballasting, and that the other condition attached to the council's approval should be carried out, provided that the council did the whole work at their own estimated cost within a specified time, otherwise rough stone could be used, as specified by the applicant."

These are cases which show that questions of law arise. Nobody but a legal man, such as a Supreme Court judge or a Land Court judge, can decide these questions of law. Those are my reasons for advocating that appeals should go to a judge in preference to a layman.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I cannot follow the argument of my legal friend. I do not see where there is any question of law as to whether a road shall be constructed or drained to the satisfaction of the local authority, or as to whether or not kerbing, guttering, or footpaths shall be provided. I cannot see how any hon. member can import any question of law into these subsections. The idea of appointing a Minister or someone appointed by the Minister, such as a surveyor, is to save legal expense. Everyone knows that in legal cases there are nice little fees for the legal fraternity. The idea is to save unnecessary expense for the parties concerned. We do not want judges trained in law to decide whether a gutter shall be made of stone or cement, or anything else. We want a practical person to give a decision. There is no question of law at all, but it is purely a question for a practical and common-sense man.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): We are now dealing with a most intricate clause, comprising six or seven pages of this Bill. In fact, it is almost a Bill in itself. The Bill proposes to make very drastic alterations in the existing Act. Notwithstanding what the Minister has said, I think it would be better if some little expense was incurred by the parties, because it may probably be better in the interests of those parties to have a judge to decide any disputes in this connection. There will be disputes. The clause gives the Minister power to transfer his jurisdiction to a surveyor or any other person, and it also gives him power to assess the costs. There is no appeal from the decision of the Minister, nor is there any appeal from the person to whom he delegates his authority. I certainly think, if he is anxious to save the expenses of the parties, that he would be doing a very good thing in accepting the amendment. It would be a very good thing to save costs, but in doing so the Minister may be doing an injustice to the parties concerned.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: An injustice may be done to the majority of the local authorities.

Mr. TAYLOR: Exactly. I do think that an impartial authority, such as a judge as suggested in the amendment, will do away with all the trouble in connection with the matter, and the person interested would be quite satisfied that he would get a fair and unbiased opinion. The local authority will be concerned in winning its case. The local authority is under the administration of the Home Secretary's Department, and, quite unconsciously, perhaps, the Home Secretary may be biassed in favour of the local authority. So that all suspicion of bias may be removed, the amendment should appeal to the Minister as one to be considered. We have not been able to move him in regard to amendments, although they have not been brought forward in any captious spirit, but in a desire to assist to make the Bill a workable one.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): This amendment seems a very desirable one. It is up to this Committee to ensure that the authority dealing with the matter is an impartial one. In view of the fact that there may be very large sums at stake, I venture to say that a judge would be a competent authority to deal with this matter. The court would take sworn evidence. It does not by any means follow that a surveyor, no matter how good

he may be in his own profession, is able to adjudicate in such matters as this. I know districts where a surveyor gets a great deal of his work from the local authority. It might at times place him in an awkward position to have to adjudicate between the local authority and somebody who is a large land owner. It seems to me the whole weight of the argument is in favour of an impartial legal man, who will be able to weigh the evidence and judge its proper value and so on. Nothing short of a legal man would ensure that effect.

Amendment (*Mr. King*) negatived.

Clause 16, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 17, 18, and 19, put and passed.

Clause 20—*Amendment of section* 111—*Animal trespassing to be impounded in nearest pound*—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I move the insertion before the word "The," in line 23, of the following:—

> "The following amendments are made in subsection (i.) of section one hundred and eleven of the principal Act:—'After the word 'pound' the word 'nearest' is deleted and the words 'most convenient' are inserted in lieu thereof. After the word 'land' (where it first occurs) in the said subsection, the words 'or if such land is equidistant or nearly so from two such pounds, then to either of them' are deleted. In paragraph 6 of the said subsection the word 'nearest' is deleted."

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I will accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

The House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.