

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 1923

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PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Primary Producers' Organisation Act of 1922 in a certain particular.”

This is a Bill of two clauses and an amendment of section 14 of the principal Act. Because of the decision of the Council of Agriculture it becomes necessary to make a levy for the next financial year after 1st July next in order that the Council may raise sufficient money, together with the Government subsidy of £1 for £1 provided for by the Act, to carry on for the third financial year. It will be remembered that the Government agreed to finance the Council for one year, and they financed the Council for the first year to the extent of £26,000. In view of the adverse seasons and other circumstances they have now undertaken to finance the Council for the second year, involving a sum of £30,000. It is necessary now to consider the question for the third year. This amendment is due to the fact that, when the original Bill was going through, I accepted an amendment moved by the hon. member for Mirani, and the Committee unfortunately did not exempt levies for the ordinary expenses of the Council of Agriculture from the provisions requiring a poll in connection with all levies. I thought at the time that it was a reasonable thing to allow the primary producers the right to have a poll in connection with levies for any special purpose, but unfortunately the section in the principal Act as it now reads prevents the Council from making a levy for general expenses without having a poll. At least that is the opinion of the Solicitor-General, and we want to put it beyond doubt. I do not think the Committee ever intended that that should be so. The amendment will provide that after 1st July next a levy for general purposes may be made by the Council, but for no other purpose, without the necessity of a poll. I think that is justification for giving the Council of Agriculture power to make a levy for general purposes without submitting the question to the farmers. I think the Committee will agree that a general levy for the carrying out of the general work of the Council should be permissible without a referendum, because the Council was elected by the farmers to carry out their work. The Bill provides that the amount of a general levy made in the financial year 1924-1925 is limited to a sum not exceeding £20,000. It is expected that £15,000 or £16,000 will be sufficient. With that information the Committee should allow the Bill to be introduced. It is a short Bill and is being passed for the one purpose—to enable the Council to make a levy for general purposes.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): We have heard the Minister's explanation in regard to the alteration proposed, and I would point out that it is very late in the session to consider this matter. It is a fairly important matter, and I would ask the Minister, instead of asking us to deal with the Bill right away, that it be delayed till a later hour.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am prepared to leave it over till to-morrow.

Mr. Taylor.]

WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER, 1923.

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

LAND ACTS (REVIEW OF CATTLE HOLDING RENTS) AMENDMENT BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER FOR THIRD READING.

On the Order of the Day being called for the third reading of this Bill,

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move—

“That this Order be discharged from the paper, and the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of amending the title.”

In Committee, occupation licenses were included in the Bill, and it is therefore necessary to amend the title to include occupation licenses.

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the insertion after the figures “1926” of the following words:—

“and for the reconsideration of rents of certain lands held under occupation license.”

Amendment agreed to.

Title, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amended title.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am quite satisfied if the Minister leaves it over till to-morrow, as that will give us an opportunity of seeing what the amendments really are and what the effect is likely to be.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

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

HOSPITALS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would remark before dealing with this Bill that there is a difficulty when we have such a rush of Bills in seeing to what extent this measure is going to affect people who are living in the areas concerned—as to how far they are to contribute and what burden is going to be put on them. There is such a rush of Bills in the last few days of the session that it is almost impossible to keep them in one's mind.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have had the Bill for a long time.

Mr. MOORE: I know that we have had this one for some time, but we have almost forgotten it in the rush of Bills which are coming on and in our endeavour to keep pace with the legislation introduced. This Bill is such a long one that it is almost impossible for us to discuss it intelligently and see what the effect of it is going to be in the time at our disposal. It may be quite simple for members of the Government to discuss the Bill in caucus, but with the rush of the last few days it is very difficult for members of the Opposition to give that attention to Bills which should be given. When the Minister was making his second reading speech last night he made several rather sweeping statements. He certainly made a statement with which we all agree—that the responsibility for those who are unable to care for themselves should be a charge on the general community. Nobody wants to see the hospitals in this State starved, but we want to see them managed as economically as possible. I am quite prepared to admit that under certain circumstances the grouping of districts and the centralisation of boards in those districts will conduce to more economical and efficient management, particularly in view of the suggestion of having a certain amount of control over the Ambulance Brigade. There is a certain amount of over-lapping in connection with the hospitals and the Ambulance Brigade, and from that point of view the Bill may have a beneficial effect in the direction of securing economical and efficient working. The Home Secretary said that the present system has failed all over Queensland. I cannot see that it has failed, although it may have failed in some small districts. It has failed as far as the Bris-

bane district is concerned, and districts like Toowoomba have had considerable difficulty in securing the requisite funds for urgent purposes.

The HOME SECRETARY: They found it difficult even to instal a septic system, and they hung on for years before they were able to afford such a system.

Mr. MOORE: I cannot agree with the statement of the Home Secretary as to that. I will take the statistics for Queensland for 1922. The total income of all the hospitals of the State was £470,498 and the total expenditure £416,050, leaving a credit balance of £54,448, showing that a considerable number of the smaller hospitals of the State are in a sound financial position and are able to continue on the principle of hospital management which we have had up to the present. The point which strikes me is that, directly you institute a new system in Brisbane by which taxation is going to be levied on the people to keep the hospitals in an efficient state, you are going to have other districts throughout the State copying the example and desiring to come under the Act. I am afraid the system of voluntary contributions will fall to the ground directly it is found that an efficient and easier method—and no doubt it will be an easier method—of financing the hospitals is brought into being in one district. There will be plenty of committees only too anxious to come under the system laid down in the Bill and solve a great number of their financial difficulties without the present exertions on the part of the committees and of the people outside who conduct these hospitals. I do not think that it is a good thing that the system of voluntary contributions should be done away with. A system by which a large section of the people in many centres get up entertainments and assist their hospitals is a good thing for the community. I do not think that, merely because it will be an easier method of collecting and placing the burdens on the shoulders of one section of the community, it is a good thing to bring in a Bill so sweeping in its incidence as this measure is. The Minister quoted two exceptional cases last night of the cost of collecting voluntary contributions in New South Wales, in which the percentage of cost to the total contributions was out of all reason. He quoted one case where £12,000 was collected and only £2,000 was handed over to the hospitals. But it is fallacious to say because one or two exceptional cases like that occur in different places that that is the general rule. It is by no means the general rule, and to my mind it would be a pity to abandon altogether the present system, which has proved of so much service in the financing of hospitals, in favour of the method proposed in the Bill. Merely because that method is one under which the funds are easy of collection does not prove that the principle is the right one. Nor does the fact that New South Wales is considering the question of raising funds in a similar manner prove that it is desirable. It only shows that Governments are prone to take the easiest way of collecting funds, and that whether it is fair or just to the community or equitable in its basis does not matter, nor the fact that it may bring another department into existence. Really the whole Bill hinges on a question of finance, and in dealing with that point I want to refer particularly to the Brisbane district as it

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is constituted in the Bill, and I want to indicate the burden which the people in that district already have to bear as taxpayers and the large number of persons who should contribute to the hospitals but who under this scheme will escape. When we take into consideration what happened in regard to the Brisbane General Hospital when the institution was taken over by the Government, I think it is perfectly obvious that voluntary contributions will be affected in regard to other hospitals which will be controlled under the Bill, not only in Brisbane but also in other parts of the State. Here is a list of the voluntary contributions to the Brisbane General Hospital—

Year.	Voluntary contributions.
	£
1916	4,619
1917	3,361
1918	1,094
1919	553
1920	695
1921	756
1922	703

Those figures show a decrease in six years of 84 per cent.

The HOME SECRETARY: The system had failed.

Mr. MOORE: The system failed when they found that another method was to be introduced.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you aware that the Kidston Government had to introduce a Bill in 1905 to deal with the problem?

Mr. MOORE: The question is whether it is not possible to get a more equitable system for financing hospitals than is provided in this Bill. I find that the payments by patients at the Brisbane General Hospital have remained during the same period at roughly about the same figure—

Year.	Patients' payments.
	£
1916	6,014
1917	3,522
1918	3,474
1919	3,698
1920	4,325
1921	5,119
1922	6,786

During the same period salaries have increased from £9,597 to £33,460 and the cost of maintenance from £17,688 to £30,521, and the cost per patient from £89 in 1916 to £186 in 1922. The point I want to make is that the burden on the ratepayers is higher in Brisbane—taking the 465 square miles of the Greater Brisbane Scheme—than in any other capital city in the Commonwealth. I am quoting now the figures given in the book of Mr. Chuter, the Assistant Under Secretary to the Home Department, "Local Government Law and Finance"—

City.	Rates per head.		
	£	s.	d.
Sydney	1	9	6
Melbourne	1	2	7
Adelaide	0	18	0
Brisbane	2	8	5

This book is particularly useful when one desires information regarding this Bill. In dealing with the question of hospitals, Mr. Chuter says—

"For many years now there has been

a general disposition to transfer the control of hospitals to the local authority. Hospitals are a local governing function, and the Local Government Association of New South Wales propounded a scheme for taking over control of hospitals. So that with the possibility of hospitals passing to the control of the local authority the added burden which this would entail may be stated. It is estimated that under the new conditions brought into being by the Arbitration Court award, the annual cost of the four public hospitals in the metropolitan area will be £150,000. To this must be added the annual charge which will inevitably accrue by reason of the need for increasing and improving existing hospital provision (the cost of which has not been ascertained) and the added working expenses which also must necessarily follow and might conceivably increase the cost to £200,000 or more. This charge will, of course, be spread over the whole of the metropolitan area and would entail additional direct taxation from 2d. to 4d. in the £1."

That is provided that the whole of the maintenance devolves upon the local authorities instead of the present system of 60 per cent. contributed by the local authorities and 40 per cent. by the Government. I think £200,000 is an under-estimate of the total cost. Mr. Chuter goes on to say—

"The position may be summarised as follows:—

	£	£
Estimated receipts for 1921 (Brisbane, South Brisbane, and Ithaca, and water rates)	532,025	
Land tax in same areas (estimated)	110,000	
		642,025
Taxation in prospect—		
Sewerage in two years	134,527	
Difference in annual charge upon sewerage loans (£2,000,000 and £3,000,000)	55,000	
Annual charge for Town Hall Loan (approximately)	19,000	
		245,527
Hospital tax, say	200,000	
Total		£1,087,552
Unimproved value of land		£9,851,178

"It will thus be seen that taxation is in prospect of absorbing the whole rental value in Brisbane, and if local government taxation, water rates, increase as they have done in the last few years it will not need the addition of a hospital tax to absorb the rental value."

He then gives an instance. He says—

"Situated in side street off Logan road. Present owner purchased house and land for £320 in 1910. Area of land, 48 perches. Income of owner, £20 per month. Land valued by local authority in 1916 at £234. Land valued by local authority in 1921 at £280."

He sets out that in 1921 the rates paid in the city amount to £14 12s. 10d., or an increase of 68 per cent., and the water rates amount to £7 7s. 10d., or an increase of 140 per cent., or a total amount of £22 0s. 8d., making an increase of 87 per cent.

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We have before us a proposal. From the remarks of the Minister, the cost will be fairly reasonable. The local authorities will have to pay roughly from 1/3d. to 2d., and in one case a little over 1d., in the £1 as a hospital tax. That will be on the unimproved value. Under the Greater Brisbane scheme the unimproved value will be fairly high, so the amount of tax will be fairly considerable. To my mind, the hospital tax would not be objected to by any section of the community, but at the present time we have voluntary contributions, and there is a large section of workers who voluntarily form associations and contribute to the upkeep of the hospitals; but directly there is a system providing for the easier collection of the necessary money you will find that other hospital districts throughout the State will want to come under this scheme, and then you will find that the man who is paying the tax to his local authority will certainly not be a voluntary contributor as well, and then we shall have a very heavy tax throughout the State. In taking last year's figures into consideration it will mean, roughly, that the total rates levied by the local authorities will have to be increased by one-fifth in order to provide the requisite money for the hospitals. Last year in West Australia it was decided to bring in a Hospital Bill, but before that was done a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the best method of financing the hospitals on an equitable basis. The Bill that was introduced as a result of the investigations of the Commission was thrown out. Its recommendations were equitable and fair. I mention that because it [11.30 a.m.] was based on the system that we consider would be a fair basis for the upkeep of hospitals. The report of the Royal Commission on hospitals in Western Australia is contained in the "Votes and Proceedings" of that State for 1922. The Commission, on page ii. of their report, state—

"There are two existing channels by which a considerable number of the community is taxed—(a) the local rating by local government authorities, and (b) income taxation.

"In considering schemes for raising additional funds, it is obviously economical to take advantage as far as possible of existing channels, and so avoid the necessity of setting up new and expensive machinery. The utilisation of the channel of local rating to provide some supplementary funds for hospital maintenance is proposed in the Bill referred to your Commissioners, but this method has received all-round condemnation, one objection being that it represents a tax upon thrift, and another, that by utilising this channel only a minor proportion of the community is reached.

"One suggestion made to your Commissioners was that there should be a small increase in the income tax, but the same objection lies here as in the case of local ratepayers, seeing that only approximately 38,000 people in the community contribute towards income tax.

"Another suggestion was made to us from various quarters, namely, that a small charge be made on all wages, salaries, and other income, and that suggestion has been investigated to a considerable extent by your Commis-

sioners. After giving careful consideration to the various figures placed before us, it would appear that there are approximately 139,000 earners in this State, so that there are over 100,000 people earning money or receiving income who do not, apparently, contribute to income taxation. We are of the opinion that these earners should all contribute some small quota to the maintenance of hospitals and medical services, and it is estimated that a charge of 1d. in the £1 on all salaries, wages, and other income would return £113,418 per annum. The exact figures as to the gross amount of wages and salaries paid in the State are not available, but it is considered that the above estimate of revenue is a conservative one, and your Commissioners recommend a charge of this nature, and that this amount be levied on the community as a reasonable means of providing funds for the carrying on of necessary hospital and medical services.

"We consider that such a charge should be levied absolutely without exemption (except in the case of old-age, invalid, or war pensioners), as, in the first place, the ratio is so small as to be almost negligible. In the second place, a universal charge has the merit of impressing upon the mind of every member of the community the fact that hospitals exist and need financial support.

"We consider that the proposed charge may be levied in two ways—(a) by the affixing of stamps of the necessary amount on wages and salary sheets, and (b) by the collection through the existing income channels of the standard ratio of charge in respect of incomes other than wages and salaries.

"Machinery already exists by which supervision is exercised in regard to the proper stamping of receipts under the provisions of the Stamp Act, and the same machinery, or perhaps a little extension of that machinery, could with small cost be arranged to supervise the proper stamping of salary and wages sheets."

The Commissioners go on to say, in their recommendation, part 7, on page vii.—

"Your Commissioners therefore recommend that legislation be enacted as under—

1. Finance.—That a hospital charge of a uniform rate of 1d. in the £1 (calculated to the nearest penny) be made on all wages, salaries, and other incomes.

That the only incomes exempted from such charge be those derived from old-age, invalid, or war pensions.

That the charge be made payable in the case of wages and salaries by means of special stamps properly cancelled, or by other means as suitably arranged between the employer and the department, and that the charge on other incomes be collected through existing income tax channels.

In outside districts businesses or firms could, under any such arrangement as above, make payments through the local Treasury paymaster, clerk of courts, or other recognised Government official.

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That the funds so collected be paid into a special fund to be known as the Hospitals Trust Fund, and used only for the provisions of hospitals and medical services."

To my mind that is a more equitable basis of taxation than the present proposal. The total amount to be found by the local authorities for the Brisbane area will be about £32,068, and the contribution by the Government will be £48,102. Last year the Government paid to these hospitals as subsidy £79,296; so that there would be a saving to the Government of £31,194.

The probabilities are that, with this Bill in operation, the voluntary subscriptions and collections—£39,648 for 1922—would cease, and the expenditure would increase by, say, 50 per cent. This would mean that the amounts to be found by local authorities would be double the amounts shown above, and the rates would have to be increased by double the percentages shown.

The point of view I take in regard to the incidence of this taxation is that the levy on the local authorities is to be made on the basis of the ratable value of the land in each local authority area. Owing to the different methods of valuation and rating adopted, the increases in rates necessitated by the hospitals levy will vary from approximately 7.6 per cent. in the case of South Brisbane to 20.8 per cent. in the case of the Pine Shire. The worker in the city or town who is thrifty and is purchasing a worker's dwelling or home will pay the increased rate, while the worker who is content to be always a tenant or a lodger will escape. The city dweller with a large income will pay—if an owner of a home—a relatively small contribution, while the farmer with a living area of land will pay a large contribution. That is the position we come to as regards this area. There is a considerable farming area in the district. In many cases the individual who has a home and a certain income will contribute practically the minimum rate, whereas the man making a living off the land will contribute five to ten times as much, because he has to work in an industry and earn his living out of the land. It is an inequitable basis of taxation. A levy on wages, although it was a very small one, would be preferable, and would provide ample money to conduct the hospitals in an efficient manner. It would also place a far less burden on a section of the community. The whole basis of taxation is that there should not be an injustice placed on any section of the community. If we have a basis of taxation such as this, we shall find that the hospital authorities will consider themselves absolved from collecting voluntary contributions from the section of the people who now recognise the obligation. The Minister must recognise that must be the end of such a scheme as this. Voluntary contributions will, if not absolutely, almost completely cease. I do not know why a hospital tax should be placed on the thrifty taxpayer.

Mr. COLLINS interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Of course the hon. member is supporting this Bill. We know the chains that the hon. members opposite are bound in, and when any Bill is brought in they are bound to support it. They may have their disputes outside, but their support is given to any Bill when it is introduced. That does not make the proposal just or fair.

Hon. members opposite must also recognise that in the country districts public servants, professional men, bank managers, and men with regular salaries living on country town allotments where the rating is not by any means high will pay the very smallest contributions possible for the upkeep of hospitals, while the people living on the land and working it will pay the largest contributions. There is no justification for that, and it is not a special service by which these people are going to benefit individually. It is a service for looking after the poor and sick in the community, and for that reason the distribution of the tax should be made as wide as possible so that everybody can contribute to services which are recognised as a duty of the community. The Minister in introducing the Bill drew a beautiful picture of what would happen when the Bill came into operation. Of the abundance of comfort and the affluence of hospitals—in some cases I think it might lead almost to extravagance. He painted a picture of the ambulance going out on a beautiful road and the patient coming into the hospital amid beautiful surroundings. All that sounds very nice, but it will cost a lot of money.

The HOME SECRETARY: It should not cost any more than the present upkeep of hospitals.

Mr. MOORE: I think there are not many districts to which the Minister can point where slipshod methods exist.

The HOME SECRETARY: They lack co-ordination.

Mr. MOORE: If you give them stability of finance—that is if the hospital committee only has to make an estimate of what is required and it will be necessary for the local authority and the Government to find that amount, whatever it may be—you are not going to make for economic management, although you may make for efficiency.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Estimates have to be adopted.

Mr. MOORE: We know that, but we also know quite well that, when an assured income is available, there is an inclination to go in for all sorts of things—perhaps improvements that may not be a necessity in the particular area. That is just because it will be easy to get the funds required. If it is a question of securing the funds as is done to-day the hospital committee has to go carefully and has to judge whether the surrounding district is capable of paying for the innovation, and whether the expense is warranted by the number of cases coming into the hospital.

Regarding the Bill generally, practically the whole meat of it lies in the question of finance, and that is the basis on which it is brought in. There are one or two things which I desire to discuss when we go into Committee. Some matters are not very clear, and it is difficult to know from the drafting of the Bill how the different hospital committees are going to work with the boards and how the contributors are to be divided up. One clause dealing with the question of surplus or deficit in the annual working of the hospital based on the expenditure seems to be loosely drafted. If the estimate of expenditure is exceeded the board apparently will have to carry the weight. If the estimate of expenditure is not reached, then the board will be able to

carry forward the surplus it has to the next year. The whole thing seems to be based on the estimate and not on the actual expenditure, which is rather an anomalous position and does not make provision for unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

The HOME SECRETARY: The conditions will be the same as those under which the fire brigades work now.

Mr. MOORE: I will deal with that when we get into Committee, and will endeavour to get an explanation from the Minister. I certainly do not agree with the principle of taxation which is embodied in the Bill. One section of the community is to be asked to pay twice—to pay local authority taxation and income taxation—while another section of the community only pays one tax. That is an unfair basis. When you are taxing individuals in an area for benefits received and services rendered you should make that tax as equitable as possible, so that the thrifty person who is doing everything in his power to advance is not unfairly treated. The Minister would be well advised if he could see his way to adopt a different basis of taxation.

I looked up the old New Zealand Act and find that they evidently adopted a similar principle. Judging from a speech that was made, I think in 1885, the whole argument of the Colonial Secretary, who introduced the scheme, was that the tax was easy to collect. There are other things besides ease in collecting that should be looked at when introducing taxation. There is the matter of equity of distribution, and also whether it is just to place an additional burden on an individual when he is already carrying a burden which is difficult to bear. To my mind it will be a most difficult problem for a large number of the Brisbane ratepayers to meet their taxation.

Mr. COLLINS: You read the "Courier" and such papers.

Mr. MOORE: I do not worry about the "Courier," but, if the hon. member for Bowen would look at the taxation on the small holdings in South Brisbane, he would find that the amount of rates collected on them and the prospective rates that will be levied for sewerage services amount to quite a considerable portion of the income of the individual.

Mr. COLLINS: It is not bad on a 16-perch allotment.

Mr. MOORE: I can quote the case of a 20-perch allotment in South Brisbane the valuation of which is put down by the council at £320. I cannot see any justification for placing an additional burden on a section of the community that makes a home for itself and endeavours by thrift and economy to make conditions as comfortable as possible. While imposing an additional tax on the thrifty people you leave the individual who may be a lodger and may squander his money, and who may be a thoroughly extravagant person, to reap the benefit of the taxation of the thrifty section. It is perfectly justifiable to ask that a tax such as this should be as equitable as possible and that every section of the community should bear a fair portion of the tax, which we all recognise it is the duty of the community to bear.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I have examined

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the Bill from two points of view—from the point of view of the management of the hospitals in existence and from the point of view of finance. On a previous occasion I said in this House that the various health authorities of Queensland were very disconnected and needed something to co-ordinate them and work them from a centralised authority. That difficulty has not been surmounted in any way in this Bill. In my opinion, as regards health matters, and particularly as affecting hospitals, we should have a Director of Health, and all these institutions should come under his authority. It is essential that the financing of the various institutions should be covered by the income tax and other taxation of the State, but there must be a discrimination in the application of that taxation. People do not mind meeting their obligations by way of taxation when the direct application of such a method is for the upkeep of our charitable institutions, hospitals, asylums, etc., although people are already taxed for that purpose to a larger extent per capita in Queensland than they are in any other State in Australia, and it seems a deplorable state of affairs when we have to go beyond the realms of taxation to meet our legitimate requirements in regard to these necessitous institutions. I think it is a sad commentary on the Government when they have to go beyond the ordinary realms of taxation to keep these very necessary institutions alive. I emphatically protest at this stage at the introduction of such a Bill as this, which is going outside the ordinary taxation field to get sufficient revenue to enable the hospitals and other institutions to make ends meet. I am firmly of the opinion that there is no necessity for a Board to control our hospitals. Instead of having a cumbersome Board consisting of nine members in any one district we could very well have a Director of Health who could control the hospitals, insanity, lock hospitals, and such things.

Mr. KIRWAN: You would not expect him to do the administrative work of each hospital?

Mr. KERR: I would expect the Director and his staff to do a certain amount of work in regard to these institutions. Look at the position as it is to-day. The Brisbane General Hospital has got its administrators on the spot, and they are under the jurisdiction of the Home Secretary's Department. It would be better to have a Director of Health rather than a Board composed of men who are not experts in regard to health matters. We would get better results from a Director of Health, and there would be more economy than if a Board were appointed. It may come about that we shall get a number of Boards in Queensland, and we shall have no connecting authority between these various Boards. At the present time we have no connecting authority between the various charitable institutions. The Health Commissioner is absolutely overlooked, although he and his staff could very well manage the hospitals to-day. I am going to make myself quite plain as to where I stand in regard to the financing of these institutions, and in this connection I want to quote from the first speech that I made in this House in regard to hospitals, as reported on page 693 of "Hansard" for 1920—

"He agreed with the hon. member

for Ipswich in regard to the nationalisation of hospitals . . . and if the Government would bring in a Bill to nationalise the hospitals, he would support it. . . . The Government controlled the Goodna Asylum, and other institutions, and yet they discriminated between them and the ordinary hospitals with the exception of the Brisbane Hospital. He had been going into a few figures in regard to the Brisbane Hospital, and he found that if the Government had not come to the rescue that institution would not have been able to carry on. When people were paying such heavy taxation they would not contribute to the hospitals. They had collections in the streets for various things, and the people were getting tired of giving."

It is a fact that to-day the people are tired of giving.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you still in favour of nationalisation?

Mr. KERR: I am still in favour of nationalisation, and I am advocating that the cost of running these institutions should be borne by the people of the State. It is a legitimate undertaking on the part of the Government. The Government are dodging their responsibilities when they seek to impose on a section of the people a tax for the upkeep of these institutions. It is impossible to conceive that any Government would impose a definite tax on a certain section of the community for the purpose of meeting something which the community as a whole should support. That is exactly what we are doing in this connection. Time and again the present Government, through the local authorities, have hit the man who owns his own home. The man who owns his own home is now to be asked to pay a hospital tax. The local authority rates to-day are greater than people on the basic wage who own small homes can afford to pay. When this Bill becomes law, on that rate notice there will be a hospital tax. The Home Secretary says that it will be a very small amount in the £1, but I am going to show that the figures quoted by the Home Secretary do not agree with my own. I have based my figures on the valuation. I wanted to ask the Home Secretary how he is going to reconcile this fact: We have in the metropolitan area which is to be constituted under the Bill different valuations in the various local authorities, and we have in addition different rating. We are going to ask these local authorities to strike a rate of so much in the £1, and owners of property in places like Hamilton, where the wealthy people of the community are living, will pay less than the small householder in my electorate.

Mr. COLLINS: How do you make that out?

Mr. KERR: I will give the figures in a moment, and I will prove my argument. In my electorate there are some men who make a living off their land. They must have a fairly large area of land in order to make that living, and under this Bill they will pay a certain rate based on the valuation of that land. On the other hand the man at the Hamilton can live on two allotments, and he does not make his living from that land. He, too, will pay a rate according to the valuation of his land. If you take the valuation of the two allotments at the

Hamilton, as compared with the valuation of the larger area in my electorate, from which the owner has to make his living, you will find that the small man in my electorate will pay a greater tax to the hospital than the man with two allotments at the Hamilton. That is not an equitable arrangement. The most equitable way of financing these institutions would be to levy a special tax on the whole of the community for the purpose.

Mr. COLLINS: A special tax?

Mr. KERR: I indicated that the taxation would be for the specific purpose of financing the charitable institutions, but, unfortunately, the taxation to-day is paid for the purpose of paying the loss on our railways.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: How would you make the railways pay?

Mr. KERR: If the Government give the Commissioner a fair go he will make the railways pay. At the present time the Government are taxing the people, not for the upkeep of the hospitals and insane institutions, but for the purpose of paying the losses on different State ventures.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I want to go a little further in regard to what I said. First of all, I want to show how this Bill will affect the country districts. The capital value of land in the Enoggera Shire is £212,000, and the total rate levied is £9,244. A hospital tax on the 40 per cent. basis proposed would amount to £401, which will mean an increase on the general rate levied of 4.3 per cent. While the people of Enoggera are paying perhaps 7d. in the £1, the people in another shire may be paying 1s. in the £1. There again is discrimination in regard to the rate, and it is impossible to make an equitable arrangement on the basis provided by the Home Secretary. In the Moggill Shire the capital value

[12 noon] is £78,862, and the total rates levied £1,976. The hospital rate will be £148. That is an increase on the rates levied of 7.5 per cent. The rates in the Enoggera Shire will be increased by 4.3 per cent., in the Moggill district by 7.5 per cent., and I understand that in the Pine Shire the increase will be 10 per cent. There is no equality in regard to those figures. You cannot under any circumstances impose a hospital tax which will be fair—it will do a good deal of injustice to the people concerned. Take the Hamilton Shire, for instance. The capital valuation there is £563,100, the total rates levied £30,192, and the hospital tax to be collected will be £1,058.

The HOME SECRETARY: How are you basing your figures?

Mr. KERR: On the valuation. One way to get the money required is by taxation, and the other way is to state what is required from the whole of the local authorities in the area and strike a flat rate. To make one person pay more than another in this connection is wrong. There are only two solutions to the question—to nationalise hospitals and let taxation pay, or else take the whole of the local authorities in the proposed area and strike a flat rate.

Mr. COLLINS interjected.

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Mr. KERR: The hon. member says that in his opinion the only way is to increase taxation; but I differ from him. The only way is to stop leakage on the railways and on State enterprises.

Mr. KIRWAN: They are worse off in Victoria than we are here, and they have no State enterprises.

Mr. KERR: I am sorry that in Queensland we are not in the same position as Victoria.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am talking about the hospitals.

Mr. KERR: The wells of charity have been dried up by this Government's taxation.

Mr. KIRWAN: Rubbish!

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say the wells of charity are dried up in Victoria?

Mr. KERR: No, the taxation in Victoria is less, and they are able to conduct their hospitals by charitable effort. I said at the commencement of my remarks that, had it not been for the support of the present Government as well as previous Governments, the hospitals in Brisbane would not have been able to carry on. I have quoted figures to show what the increase in rates in various local authorities will be under the Bill. The accommodation at the Brisbane General Hospital and the Diamantina Hospital, in connection with which there is an interchange of patients, is totally inadequate. Under this Bill, it is going to cost many thousands of pounds to right the wrongs which exist. The Bill gives power to borrow money. When money is borrowed, redemption and interest will have to be met, and in addition to the ordinary hospital rate there will have to be a loan rate levied to wipe off the debt. The Bill gives wide powers to the Board; but it is not right to leave the matter of the loan entirely to the Board. The matter should be submitted to Parliament by the Commissioner of Public Health so that we would know where the money was going.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You are keen on the Commissioner of Public Health.

Mr. KERR: I have already advocated that he should take charge of health matters in this State. When people pay a hospital tax under this Bill it is only to be expected that they will avail themselves of the benefit of the hospitals for which they are taxed. There are going to be hundreds more patients in the hospitals when people are taxed to keep them going—human nature is too strong.

The HOME SECRETARY: How many pay now? In New Zealand 17 per cent. of the revenue is represented by voluntary contributions.

Mr. KERR: There are, say, 200,000 people in this area, and when they are paying a hospital tax they will avail themselves of the privileges of the hospital, and where are you going to put them all? They will want their medical treatment for nothing.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: They will get sick just for the purpose of taking out their rates. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: The hon. member says so. Under the Bill as it stands the Government will get out of a certain amount of expenditure, but once this system is in operation,

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and the large number of people who are paying the tax patronise the institution and expect to get free treatment, the responsibility on the Government will be equal to what it is to-day.

On present figures the Government will be on the right side in regard to finance. The expenditure for 1922 on the hospitals in Brisbane and the South Coast area, taking the area for which the Board is created under this Bill, was £125,306. Allowing for collections, etc., that leaves £80,000 to be found by the Government and the local authorities. If the Government have to find 60 per cent and the local authorities 40 per cent., the respective contributions will be—

Government	£48,102
Local Authorities	£32,068

The Government last year found £79,296, but they are now only required to find £48,102, which means a saving to them of £31,194.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think the Government should have found the money last year?

Mr. KERR: I know that even last year they did not meet their responsibility.

The HOME SECRETARY: They did; they more than met their responsibility.

Mr. KERR: The Government asked the various hospitals in Queensland how much they required as a subsidy to the local contributions, and they replied that they wanted £205,000 or £210,000. When the Estimates were tabled it was found that the Government did not provide the amount which was required, but only £130,000, so that there was a deficiency of something like £25,000 or £30,000. I am not going to say that the Government did not make it up—of course, they made it up—but it was by the "Golden Casket" gambling. If the Government can reconcile that action with an ordinary Treasury commitment, they can reconcile anything. To my mind, you cannot bring those two factors together—they are two vastly different things.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you opposed to the "Golden Casket"?

Mr. FRY: Are you?

Mr. COLLINS: No.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member will be able to say so at a later stage.

Mr. COLLINS: I gave a direct answer, and you are quibbling.

Mr. KERR: It is not possible to take this Bill in any one of its aspects and say that it will be a workable measure. I do not think it will be workable. Of course, anything can be worked if it is made compulsory in the Bill, but the system ought to be made equitable to the people concerned. On behalf of the ratepayers in my electorate, I want to know why it is that business people living in flats and hotels, and hundreds of people who have no homes at all—

Mr. KIRWAN: Where do they live?

Mr. KERR: They possibly live in the electorate of the hon. member.

Mr. KIRWAN: People with no homes?

Mr. KERR: You can call where they live homes, if you like, but I think an Australian looks upon a home as a house where he lives with his family. In the hon. member's electorate are hundreds of people, some of

them the wealthiest section of the community, living in the best of hotels and boarding-houses and paying as much as £5 a week for a flat for two persons—

Mr. KIRWAN: Would you put a flat rate on them? (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: I would, and that is where I say this Bill is not workable. The man in my electorate with a small home will now have to pay a hospital rate in addition to his other rates, but the other man to whom I have referred will get off scot-free. I venture to say that not a man in this House could carry out the scheme of the Bill reasonably. Surely the Minister went into this question in caucus; but does it meet the requirements of all the members sitting behind the Government? We need something more than is provided in the Bill. There is no desire to dodge responsibility for these institutions. They are essential and have to be maintained. But by the Bill we are going to bring about a state of affairs that will be to the detriment of the finances of the State and of the people. If the valuations of the component local authorities were all on the same basis, as in New Zealand, it would be a different proposition. The Home Secretary has based the wording of his Bill on the New Zealand Act, but he has omitted the basic part of it—the Valuation Board and the system of uniform valuation.

Mr. KIRWAN: Do you believe in that?

Mr. KERR: I talk enough in this House on matters directly before it without telling the hon. member my opinion on thousands of other things.

Mr. KIRWAN: Because your party do not believe in it.

Mr. KERR: The Home Secretary satisfied himself that the New Zealand Act would do for Queensland, but he overlooked the fact that in New Zealand they have a system of uniform valuation. I am not criticising the Bill from any feeling that the hospitals should not be maintained, but because the Government have not tackled the question in the right way. As I said at the start, the only way to tackle it from the financial point of view is by direct taxation of the people. The Minister knows that the people are paying heavily to-day and they are not getting the result which they should get. What is wrong with our Commissioner of Health that he should not co-ordinate all these things?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may not deal with that question.

Mr. KERR: This Bill does not meet the requirements of the case. It is not logically based. I hope that in Committee the Minister will go into the question. He has to find some other scheme whereby the man with a workers' dwelling will not be called upon to bear a large share of the burden when others who are drawing just as much as he but have no responsibilities get off scot-free.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I do not know whether the Minister in charge of this Bill has overlooked the fact that in Queensland we have a large number of men who are members of friendly societies and have relieved the State for a long time past of any responsibilities with respect to them for hospital treatment.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. PETERSON: I happen to be a member of a lodge and I know the benefits I have received. A large number of lodges subscribe to hospitals throughout the State for a certain number of beds, whereby when their members become ill or have to undergo operations they get attention free. The members of those lodges are paying all the year round for the maintenance of certain beds.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hospitals are not built to meet their requirements, but the requirements of destitute persons.

Mr. PETERSON: The Government say that the workers are not destitute, then why legislate for a class of men who they have said election after election are not destitute?

The HOME SECRETARY: You cannot tell me that an old-age pensioner living on 17s. 6d. a week can provide for sickness.

Mr. PETERSON: I agree that he cannot, and provision should be made to give him and others in indigent circumstances the benefits they need, but the hon. gentleman is going to exempt the wealthy classes from the incidence of this taxation; and he is taking fine care that the man who takes advantage of the provisions of the Workers' Dwellings Act and is struggling on very small wages to get a home for himself, and who has to provide to meet the stress of times of sickness, shall be mulcted in a further sum for rates.

The HOME SECRETARY: You read that in the "Courier."

Mr. PETERSON: The "Courier" has nothing to do with it. The hon. gentleman knows that in his district and my district hundreds of men are struggling to buy homes by putting down small deposits. Because they are doing that and paying off mortgages they are to be rated for the hospitals, whilst a multitude of others are not being called upon to help finance them at all.

Mr. WEIR: They finance the hospitals now.

Mr. PETERSON: They do not. The local authorities now have no power to levy any such rate, except for contagious disease purposes. In the hon. gentleman's electorate of Mount Morgan they have a splendid hospital. How has it been carried on? As the hon. gentleman knows—because he has had a good deal to do with it—the Mount Morgan miners subscribe so much a week towards their hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is nothing in the Bill to stop them.

Mr. PETERSON: But any one of them who has a little homestead will not only have to pay rates for ordinary purposes but also an extra rate for hospital purposes.

The HOME SECRETARY: This Bill does not deal with Mount Morgan. It deals only with Brisbane.

Mr. PETERSON: I am giving an illustration of how the system will operate, and, in any case, we know very well that, if it succeeds in Brisbane it will be extended to other parts of the State.

The hon. gentleman knows full well that, if the spirit of the Mount Morgan workers permeated the State, there would be no necessity for the Bill. What I am complaining about is that, whilst the Bill is not applicable to my own district, which adjoins the Mount Morgan electorate, or to the Mount Morgan district, yet there is a possibility

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of those districts being included at a very early date after the passing of this measure. By all means let the wealthy classes meet these institutions will be borne in the main not only by the wealthy classes but by those assisting the hospitals by putting a double infliction upon thousands of workers who are struggling to get their homes and who cannot pass on the expense. The Queen street merchant can pass it on and does pass it on, as the Premier has often stated; but the worker has to pay the increased cost that is passed on by the merchant; consequently the Minister's suggestion that I am adopting a Queen street argument or an argument of the "Courier" is of no avail. I sincerely trust that the Minister will be able to devise some other means whereby the upkeep of these institutions will be borne in the main, not only by the wealthy classes, but by those who are in a position to contribute.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you agree with the suggestion that there should be a tax on wages?

Mr. PETERSON: I agree that there should be payment for services rendered.

The HOME SECRETARY: Take $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £1 on a valuation of £100 on a worker's allotment, and compare that with a wage tax.

Mr. PETERSON: The Minister is quoting a case that is not parallel. A tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £1 on a £100 allotment would not give sufficient money to meet the commitments of the hospitals.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would on the figures I quoted last night.

Mr. PETERSON: You would not be able to square the ledger with that, and the onus would be on the local authorities, who would be called upon to meet the obligation by a further increase in rates. Like the hon. member for Enoggera, I think there is a large number of young men who are receiving very fine salaries in the various Government departments and elsewhere who are not inclined to take up married life, and who do nothing to help the State along and do not carry any of the responsibilities in that respect, and the whole of the obligations have to be placed upon the person who has a small home. The bulk of the property of the State is owned by the workers, therefore the majority of those who have not seen fit or advisable to take a wife and build a home for themselves and so become an asset to the State are not going to be mulcted in any way. We shall probably have the old argument trotted out that by paying board or by paying rent for a flat they are indirectly contributing. If the Government can assure us that that is how the scheme will be carried out, a lot of our objections will vanish, but unfortunately it has been shown that a further impost will be placed upon the thrifty man and the man who is prepared to do a little bit for his wife and family and the State. Therefore I regret that I cannot support all the recommendations made by the Minister, because those who are called upon to pay so much to-day to live have enough commitments imposed upon them, more particularly those who come within the area proposed in the Bill, and who may be members of friendly societies. Let me revert to that question. The friendly societies of Brisbane have a splendid hospital at Kelvin Grove, where any of their members who are ordered to the hospital by the doctor can go and receive medical attention by paying the small

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sum of 15s. per week. These men are paying into a fund week after week and year after year to meet the commitments necessary for the upkeep of that hospital, and now the Minister proposes to place a further impost upon them. These men are going to be called upon to contribute for the upkeep of hospitals for other people who will not take the trouble to join a lodge or become thrifty. I am sure the Minister has not given the attention to this matter that he should have given, and I am confident that the workers will have their eyes opened and will protest against this action when they come to realise the extra taxation that will be placed on them through business people passing on the extra cost and through the extra taxation by way of increased rates.

HON. J. G. APPEL (Albert): I do not suppose that any serious objection will be made by any member of the community contributing to the upkeep of our hospitals according to his or her means. As the Minister stated by interjection, this Bill is to provide for those who are destitute. If that is so, then it is for every member of the community to contribute to the up-keep of these institutions according to his or her means.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are supposed to do that if they go in as in-patients.

HON. J. G. APPEL: We know that they do not do it. There are certain members of the community who evade all responsibilities in connection with assisting the upkeep of these institutions, and invariably they are the members who make use of those institutions.

Watching the whole trend of events in connection with the administration of our hospitals, in the first instance the policy of the present Administration was the nationalisation of our hospitals. Has that eventuated? In connection with the Brisbane General Hospital, what one may term threats that were held over the heads of the taxpayers that the upkeep and maintenance of the hospital would be cast upon the taxpayers led to the drying up of those public subscriptions which previously had supplied the necessary finance for the upkeep of that institution. Apparently the Administration, being met by the fact that the amount required has been increasing and increasing, have abandoned that policy. In order to escape contributing a sum of money for that up-keep from the revenue of the State, the Government instituted "Golden Caskets," and I am not altogether opposed to the "Golden Caskets" and the utilisation of the funds, for the reason that by that means contributions have been drawn from persons who have never before contributed to the maintenance of hospitals or paid any direct taxation levied by the State.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the State levied that amount of taxation direct there would be a revolution.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That may be. As I have already intimated, I am not averse to money being drawn from those persons who have never contributed for that purpose. But we now find that the funds drawn from those persons are not sufficient for the upkeep of our hospitals, and in turning round we find that our eyes are once more [12.30 p.m.] directed upon the taxpayers of the State, and those taxpayers of the State who pay local authority rates. I am not going to argue whether they are small taxpayers or large taxpayers, because, so far

as the incidence is concerned according to the amount of their ratable value, so do they contribute. Probably no serious objection would be made by those local authority taxpayers provided every member of the community was also required to contribute. The Minister interjected when the hon. member for Normanby was speaking, "Do you suggest a levy on wages?" I am prepared to say that if the individual is not a local authority taxpayer he should be compelled to contribute out of his wages, just as the man who owns a small block of land is compelled. I have no hesitation in saying that.

MR. COLLINS: Of course you have not.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member for Bowen simply interjects because he is frightened of losing the votes of those people, but I am not frightened. If I lost the votes of that section of the community because I am bold enough to state on the floor of this House that every member of the community should be taxed for that purpose, then I am prepared to lose them. Apparently thrif—

MR. PETERSON: Is a crime.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, and the thrifty man, who does not call upon and ask something from the State is the man who has to bear the burden of the State in connection with that section of the community who bear no burden at all. The action taken in connection with the Brisbane General Hospital resulted in the drying up of all public subscriptions. Any hon. member who takes the trouble to read through the list of subscribers of the Brisbane General Hospital will find that practically the same members of the community contribute year after year. Those individuals never use the hospital, or at least 90 per cent. of them do not. Yet they contribute to its maintenance and upkeep because they consider it their duty to do so.

The Minister states that this measure is not to apply to the Central district, but only to the South Coast district. There is an excellently managed hospital in the South Coast district, the upkeep of which, outside the Government endowment, is freely contributed to by the residents of the district. The residents of the coastal side of the district have subscribed funds for the purpose of erecting a local hospital at Southport. The necessary site has been purchased after it had been recommended by the officials of the Health Department. The necessary funds, plus the Government endowment, are available for the erection of the hospital. I have no hesitation in saying that, if taxation is to be imposed on the local authority ratepayers of the State, these residents cannot go on contributing to the hospitals, and I am afraid that particular hospital will have to go by the board. I understand that the Minister has indicated that the patients treated in the Brisbane General Hospital admitted from outside the Brisbane area represent something under 8 per cent.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Outside the metropolitan district.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. In many instances the conveyance of patients even for a distance of 50 miles by train or otherwise has a prejudicial effect on their condition. That is the reason why, after consideration by those who contributed for the purpose, it was

decided that Southport, from its location and position, was the best centre to serve the district. The Minister stated that this Bill is going to become law. The Opposition have no power to prevent it, but can simply protest and point out the injustice of it. I am not concerned about the taxpayers but about those who are ill and require the comfort and attention they receive in a hospital. It simply means that in all probability the Southport Hospital will not be proceeded with, and that persons suffering in that district will have to journey all the way to Brisbane. I want to impress upon hon. members that it is not the conveyance of patients from a centre like Southport to Brisbane, but in the majority of cases they have to travel by any means of conveyance over roads in mountainous districts before being accommodated in a motor-car or ambulance.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You are getting good roads constructed now.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Only in parts, and, from the rate of progress being made, the sufferers will have to suffer for years before they are able to take advantage of those roads. (Laughter.) The speed at which the roads are being constructed is not electric. We have to take the position as it is to-day and as it will in many instances continue to be. Why should the unfortunate persons who are prepared to go out into our sparsely populated districts on to our scrub lands, where there are no roads or means of communication, for the purpose of settling and developing this State, have this injustice inflicted on them? The hon. gentleman can realise what the effect will be on these persons if the building of hospitals in centres away from Brisbane is not proceeded with because of the taxation which will be levied and drawn from the central scheme.

I wish to refer to the question of finance once more. The amount contributed to hospitals and similar institutions by the last Administration from Consolidated Revenue for upkeep and maintenance was something like £200,000 per annum. The present Government have already escaped practically the whole of that responsibility by means of grants drawn from the "Golden Casket" fund.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That does not relieve us of our endowment payment.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am inclined to think it has, because I find that the endowment to the ambulance brigade has been reduced.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That is in the aggregate.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It has also been reduced in the case of other hospitals which, because they have been thrifty and have accumulated funds, have been able, if the requirements necessitated it, to proceed with additional building schemes. Their endowment has been cut off because they happened to have a bank balance, due to their thrift and to the generosity of their contributors. Let us get down to the foundation of the whole thing. I understand that the contribution by the State is to be only 60 per cent., as against 40 per cent. to be drawn from a section of the community through the local authorities. Therein lies the injustice. Take the electorate which I represent. In that electorate the majority of the electors are local authority ratepayers. In the Brisbane

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district the great majority of the electors are not ratepayers, although they make the greatest use of our hospital service. A great injustice is thus being placed upon local authority ratepayers in our country districts. They will have to contribute a larger amount of funds for the purpose of maintaining the Brisbane Central Hospital than will those immediately surrounding that hospital and who are taking greater advantage of it. The present Administration state that they stand for equity and justice. If they are honest and sincere in that contention, why do they not realise that in the matter of the maintenance and the upkeep of our hospitals every member of the community should contribute according to his or her means? I contend that every member of the community should make some contribution to the upkeep of our hospitals, whether he is a local authority ratepayer or not. There is no justice in placing the greater percentage of the burden on less than 50 per cent. of the community—the local authority ratepayers. Therefore, I reiterate that every member of the community, by whatever means may be found necessary, should contribute to the burden which is now to be placed on the community by the Administration. I urge again that the Minister, even at this late hour—and I recognise that any appeal on my part is likely to be futile—will realise the force of my contention, that a greater proportion of the electors residing in the country and who are local authority ratepayers—probably I shall be correct in saying that they represent 80 per cent. of the community—will have to contribute to this taxation while in the large centres the position and percentage will be reversed. It should be the endeavour of the Minister to give greater consideration to the fact that, if the Bill becomes law, it will lead to the non-erection of local hospitals, which are so necessary to ensure the recovery to health of our patients. We realise that in many instances, when a patient who may be suffering from a severe accident has to travel many miles through the lack of a local hospital to the central hospital in Brisbane, that long distance removal under serious difficulties may mean the loss of a life which is a valuable asset to the country. I urge the Minister to take these facts into consideration and see if it is not possible to devise some more equitable scheme than the one suggested, which rests so heavily upon our unfortunate primary producers. Whatever the burden—and we bear it willingly—it should be so arranged that every member of the community shall contribute his share, according to his ability, towards the upkeep of these institutions, which we cannot do without.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Undoubtedly this Bill is a step towards the attainment of a definite objective. Seeing that so much legislation of this kind has been placed on our statute-book, I fail to see why the recent demand of the Australian Labour party was made on the Premier, when they instructed him to meet them and explain why it is that the Emu Park objective has not been proceeded with more speedily. I consider that this and many other Bills that we have passed this session are all steps, and speedy steps, in that direction. I think a fair title to the Bill would be "A penalty on Thrift Bill." The one reason behind the whole policy of the Bill is that of finance. We find that the funds are described as coming from

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the four sources set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d). So far as donations are concerned, we need not bother about them, because I do not think that there will be many donations after this Bill becomes law. The last source mentioned—paragraph (d)—refers to moneys received by way of loan. This also is a matter we need not worry about just now, because those moneys have to be repaid and from other sources than that from which the funds are derived. The sources mentioned in paragraphs (b) and (c) will be the main sources from which moneys for the hospitals will be derived—moneys derived from the Consolidated Revenue and moneys received from local authorities. It comes down to this, that the principle laid down is that all the funds that are necessary to support these institutions will be contributed first of all by the taxpayers, who are taxed for the purpose by the Consolidated Revenue; secondly, by those who pay rates to the local authorities. That is one and the same source, and it means that all those who by thrift and industry have placed themselves in the position of owning something will have to bear the additional burden. I consider that this is one matter in which everybody in the community who is earning money, no matter whether he possesses property or not, should be asked to contribute towards the upkeep of the hospitals, just as he has already been asked by this Government to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. We know that everyone who is paid a wage is compelled to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. Would it not be more reasonable to say that they should contribute to a fund to enable them to receive medical attention in the event of sickness? In a democratic community it should be laid down as a matter of justice that those who receive the benefits of citizenship should also accept the responsibilities of citizenship. It is not a good thing that a citizen in a democratic community should have no responsibilities towards the community from which he receives such large benefits. What more suitable ground could we have on which to assert this principle than the upkeep of our hospitals? Every citizen should contribute according to his means towards the upkeep of those institutions that take care of the sick, but under this Bill nothing of the kind occurs. The Bill provides that those who have saved something—those who have a little property of their own—are to carry the whole of the burden. Already we know the demands that are made on that class are so great and are increasing at such a rate, that it is inevitable that in the very near future the total value of anything they own in the shape of a home or other property is going to be taken from them; it is going to be absorbed in the rates and taxes levied on them. Therefore, I am quite right in saying that this Bill is a step towards the collective objective of the Government. We know that one way to attain that objective—the doing away with everything in the shape of private ownership—is to make it not worth while for anyone to save for the purpose of acquiring a home, because if they do acquire even a small home of their own they will find that it is rendered valueless, and that they will be in a worse position than those who have spent every penny of their earnings in pleasure, or it may be on vice. Those who spend their money in that way will be

in equally as good a position as those who have denied themselves pleasures in order to save money, so that they will be independent of the State in their old age. I do not think that is a good thing, and I am quite sure that this Bill, and many others that we have lately considered, are going to destroy anything in the shape of energy, industry, forethought, or thrift; and if you take away the reward for the exercise of qualities of that kind you will get a community in which all the best qualities of mankind are lost. We know quite well that when a quality is no longer exercised it becomes atrophied and perishes, and any faculty that remains unused is taken from us. Every thinking person must realise that if all these good qualities are discouraged by legislation such as this the position of the community will be very serious indeed. A Bill such as this will tend to discourage all generosity. Amongst the workers are many who have contributed generously towards the upkeep of charitable institutions. I have known many a man who has thrown in his "quid" towards the hospital, but there are many who do not; and when those who do find that those who do not are going to be in precisely the same position as themselves, they will think twice before they will give anything to the hospitals in the future, and gradually they will relinquish the habit of contributing something to the hospitals. In connection with our sugar-mills, funds have been created to which the workers have contributed, and in many instances the outside hospitals have been kept in a good position financially through the generosity of the workers. But this legislation is going to discourage generosity of that kind. The whole principle of the Bill is bad because it will discourage qualities that are so necessary for the wellbeing of the community.

The leader of the Country party stated that it was estimated that if this Bill became law 20 per cent. would be added to the rating liability of the country people, and he also pointed out that the liability in the case of one shire would possibly be increased by 40 per cent. Does not that bear out my contention that the Bill is of a confiscatory nature? Already the owners of property have a very heavy burden to bear in the matter of water and sewerage rates and other rates; and if you are going to add to these rates you will have such a rating liability that it will no longer be worth while to own your own home. Under these conditions it will cost you more than it is worth, and those who have never exercised self-denial—who have earned good money, but have spent it in pleasure as soon as it has been earned—will be better off than those who have exercised self-denial for a lifetime, and have secured a home of their own and made some provision for their old age.

I am quite sure that legislation of this kind is bad, and is a very big stride towards the attainment of the objective of the party opposite—that is, the abolition of everything in the shape of private ownership. I do not think that the people of Queensland as a whole desire that. In fact, we know that a majority of the people of Queensland voted for the Opposition at the last general election, largely because they were opposed to that principle. Some amendments should be made in Committee to extend the liability, or so arrange it that all who are likely to benefit by the hospitals should contribute something towards defraying the expenses

of the hospitals. What man worthy of the name of man would object to contribute something towards the maintenance of our hospitals?

If any institution more than another is for the benefit of all it is the hospital. The hospital stands for the good of all, and more particularly those who are not in a position to pay high charges for medical attendance when sickness comes on.

I have here the figures with regard to the general revenue of the local authorities in Queensland taken from the last Commonwealth "Year Book." I find that the general rates for 1920 were £931,488. I have not got all the figures I would like to have; but, if we are going to add to the general rates a considerable amount for hospital maintenance, we on this side are quite right when we urge that this is one of the burdens which will force people to think that it is not worth while for them trying to own anything of their own.

Without going into the Bill in detail, there is one clause which should be altered in Committee—that is in connection with the matter of representation. Under the Bill the Board is to comprise three members elected by contributors, three members appointed by the Governor in Council, and three members appointed by the local authorities. I think we all agree that with the new method the contributions will fall off considerably. It is a matter for consideration as to whether the representation of the ratepayers should not be increased even if that of the contributors is reduced. It is a question whether the number of representatives of the contributors should not be reduced to two and the representatives of the ratepayers increased to four. This opens up the question of the system of election in connection with the local authority representatives. I would not be justified now in going into the local authority franchise, but seeing that this is going to be another charge on ratable property, and the contributions to be levied will come through the local authorities, it is an argument in favour of the members of local authorities being elected by ratepayers. The whole principle is wrong. This is particularly a charge which should be borne by the whole community. Everyone in the community who is likely to require the aid of these institutions should, as a matter of citizenship, contribute towards their upkeep. It is a reflection upon them to think that any man worthy of the name would object to contribute a few shillings a year to the hospitals. As I have pointed out, many workers already do pay, and pay liberally. It is only a fair thing to those who do their duty that the others who shirk their responsibilities should be brought up to the mark, and that, just as the Government have compelled all workers to provide for a time when they are out of work, so everybody should be required to assist in the upkeep of our hospitals, instead of leaving it to those who have been thrifty and who have put some small sum by against the evil day when they may be laid up with sickness. If it is right in one case, it is right in another. Most certainly this is one of those measures which are going to make the abolition of private property possible. If such Bills come along at the rate at which we have been getting them lately, it soon will not be worth anybody's while to own property.

Mr. Swayne.]

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I quite appreciate the position in which the Home Secretary finds himself with regard to our hospitals. In fairness to the hon. gentleman's department, with which I had a certain amount to do during the term of the hon. gentleman's predecessor, the present Secretary for Public Lands—I want to say, having been chairman of the Children's Hospital Committee, that no man could have been more decent and humane than the then Home Secretary. I am quite satisfied that the present Minister is following in his steps, and that he will be as prepared to give generous treatment to the sick poor as was his predecessor.

It seems that every tax nowadays is directed at the holder of private property. Let me say here and now that at the rapid rate at which our taxation is travelling, the man who owns private property in Queensland will soon be glad to reside somewhere else. It is only necessary for me to draw attention to the statement read by the leader of the Country party from that very fine little pamphlet published by Mr. Chuter, Assistant Under Secretary to the Home Department, to show the rapid rate at which taxation is increasing. I venture to say that by imposing another tax a huge injustice is going to be done to the holder of private property. The local authorities are to impose it, and, although in that fact we have a splendid testimonial to the wonderful work which has been done by local authorities, at the same time we can go too far in that direction. At every possible opportunity the Government throw work on to the local authorities, who are carrying the burden not only of the rich man but also of the poor man. I venture to say that they are doing the work of the Government, and the suggestions which have been made by the leader of the Country party and others should commend themselves to the Home Secretary. We have heard that it is the intention to proclaim certain areas and establish certain boards for carrying out the work of the hospitals, but it appears to me that there is going to be duplication and even triplication in a number of instances.

Let me draw hon. members' attention to one big organisation operating throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. I refer to our friendly societies. Our friendly societies have a hospital of their own and members are taxed by their societies for the upkeep of their hospital.

THE HOME SECRETARY: There is only one Friendly Societies' Hospital in the State.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is in Brisbane. I have heard the Home Secretary boasting of the manner in which miners and others maintain the hospitals in Mount Morgan and other places. While it is not intended at the present time to make the Bill applicable to other places, the Minister during his second reading speech stated that it would not be very long before there would be requests from other places asking to be allowed to come under the provisions of the Bill. The friendly societies in Brisbane are compelled by their rules to contribute to the upkeep of their hospital. I say all honour to them for the noble and self-sacrificing way in which they have worked to maintain their hospital. Now we find that, while those men and women do not avail themselves of the privileges extended by the Brisbane

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General Hospital, they are to be compelled to contribute towards helping that hospital, which is used by another section of the community. They will be compelled to do that by way of a tax levied by the local authorities. Nothing is too good that will alleviate the needs of sick and suffering humanity, but there ought to be some more equitable basis of taxation than is proposed in this Bill. On all occasions when fresh taxation is brought forward the same old method of getting right down to the unimproved value of the land is adopted. It has been said that everything comes from the land and that on the land you must base the taxation. I want to say to hon. members opposite, and particularly the hon. member for Bowen, that you can go too far in that direction. One of the planks of the party of hon. members opposite that has been boasted of is nationalisation, and amongst other things the nationalisation of hospitals. That is a lofty ambition. Here is an opportunity for them to put one of their planks into operation, but they are not doing that. All they are prepared to do is to maintain the hospitals on a 60 per cent. and 40 per cent. basis, notwithstanding that a very considerable sum of money has been raised through a gambling institution, which money is used for the upkeep of the hospitals. The Home Secretary in introducing the Bill said that the Government did not think it would matter very much if the voluntary contributions entirely died out, because under the voluntary system the larger portion of the money was expended in the efforts to raise it. I join issue with the hon. gentleman there. In the metropolitan area the expenditure in that direction is very small indeed.

Mr. COLLINS: That shows a very unchristianlike attitude.

Mr. MAXWELL: I remember some time ago when I was speaking on a certain question the hon. member for Bowen asking me if I understood anything about the "Sermon on the Mount," and then he commenced to talk about "Love one another." The hon. gentleman ought to be the last man in the House to talk about an unchristian attitude in the face of his utterances the other night about the socialisation of industry and the ruination of certain businesses. Let me draw the hon. member's attention to these remarks by the hon. member for South Brisbane, as contained in "Hansard" for 1922, at page 1075. Mr. Ferricks said—

"Very often people who are stricken with illness in distant parts of the State come to the Brisbane General Hospital rather than go to a country hospital, because they realise that the largest hospital has better appliances and offers better opportunities of dealing with many of the complicated cases which come to this State hospital."

The demand for entrance to the hospital is one of the greatest compliments that can be paid to the staff. They come to the institution from all over the State. The hon. member for Ipswich, on the same page, stated—

"Many are sent to the Brisbane General Hospital because they cannot obtain the required treatment in country hospitals."

THE HOME SECRETARY: A large number of them are paying patients.

Mr. MAXWELL: I venture to say that a large number do not pay; but the doors of

the hospital should not be closed against those who are unable to pay.

The HOME SECRETARY: The State Insurance Department pays for the treatment in the institution of any injured worker.

Mr. MAXWELL: The case of a man who has a very dread disease came under my observation. That man was in very straitened circumstances. Both he and his wife were well educated. They came from Victoria, settled on the land in this State, and lost everything they had. This man entered the hospital, but the institution never got a penny from him because he did not have a penny; but it never made the slightest difference to Dr. McLean and his staff whether that man was a millionaire or a poor man.

Mr. COLLINS: Why should it?

Mr. MAXWELL: It should not make any difference. We are getting right down to bedrock when we say the opportunity has come for the hon. members on the other side to give effect to one of the planks in their platform.

Mr. COLLINS: Which you don't believe in.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member does not know what I believe in so far as the hospitals are concerned.

Mr. COLLINS: Nationalisation is unprofitable.

Mr. MAXWELL: Is it unprofitable to see the sick suffer? It is one of the most profitable functions of the State to alleviate the sufferings of the sick if it can.

Mr. COLLINS: Will it pay?

Mr. MAXWELL: It is all very well for the hon. member for Bowen, at the instigation of the Secretary for Agriculture, asking, "Will it pay?" That parsimonious policy in connection with hospitals is to be deplored, and more particularly when it comes from the hon. gentleman.

This Bill is making another attack upon property. It is only giving effect to some of the suggestions and utterances of some of the leaders of the party to which hon. members opposite belong. I wish to refer to the discussions at the Emu Park Convention on the methods of achieving the objective of the "socialisation of all means of production, distribution, and exchange." Mr. J. V. Macdonald, at that convention, said—

"There were ways of gaining their ends, such as taxation and competing the capitalists out of business."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the provisions of the Bill under consideration.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am pointing out that the hon. gentlemen opposite are taxing not only the wealthy classes who can afford to pay, but the unfortunate worker who has a home of his own. The Premier also said at the convention—

"They were all aiming at one objective, though they might have different ideas of ways of obtaining it."

What is the position going to be in regard to the men who have taken up workers' dwellings and those who are paying for their homes to the building societies? The increased rating by the local authorities, combined with the heavy rates that will be necessitated by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board installations, will make the position of those people very

hard indeed. I need only refer the Home Secretary to the statement made by the Assistant Under Secretary in regard to the increased taxation that the people of the State will have to bear.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member would not mind if they paid a tax for the building of the Town Hall, but he makes a lot of fuss when they are asked to support and to build hospitals.

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not take up that attitude.

The HOME SECRETARY: Your words suggest that.

Mr. MAXWELL: I deplore the position in which the hon. gentleman finds himself. I say that he is taking the wrong method of raising this taxation, which should be evenly distributed. Under this Bill taxation will fall upon the men who can ill afford to bear it.

Mr. HARTLEY: What form of taxation would you advise?

Mr. MAXWELL: I leave the hon. member, who is such a genius, to solve the problem. He swallowed the plank of his party for the nationalisation of hospitals. Now he is shifting his ground altogether and throwing the responsibility upon the local authorities, compelling them to maintain the hospitals.

Mr. HARTLEY: That plank is wrong.

Mr. MAXWELL: It is like a lot of other planks belonging to the hon. member's party's platform—they are wrong when they come to put them into operation.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: I want to explain the position so far as it concerns workers who have workers' dwellings and the workers who are interested in building societies.

Mr. COLLINS: Why don't you bring in the poor widow?

Mr. MAXWELL: This is an imposition on those workers, more particularly as a great number are members of friendly societies and are already contributing towards the upkeep of their own hospital. There is another aspect of the question—that is, what the Home Secretary proposes to do with a committee such as that working the Children's Hospital at the present time. According to the Bill certain methods are to be adopted which will mean the elimination of such a committee. I venture to say that even the Home Secretary will admit that that committee has done wonderful work in establishing the Children's Hospital on a sound basis. The Minister mentioned the matter of the ambulance brigade, and there seems to be a tendency to eliminate the ambulance brigade or to attach it to the hospitals. Last night the hon. gentleman talked about the ambulance men cleaning brasses and harness, and he said that they ought to be doing other work. The ambulance brigade does not only bring in unfortunate people to the General Hospital. It also carries people to private hospitals. Does the hon. gentleman desire to wipe out the ambulance brigade—a body that has been in existence for a number of years and has done excellent work—and is he going to create something else in its place?

Mr. KIRWAN: Where is the clause in the Bill that proposes to wipe out the ambulance brigade?

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Mr. MAXWELL: I think the hon. member can get that from his newspaper cuttings.

Mr. KIRWAN: You should deal with plain facts.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am quoting exactly what the Minister stated.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are putting up "Aunt Sallies."

Mr. MAXWELL: I venture to say that, if the whole of the responsibility is going to be thrown on the local authorities for the carrying out of ordinary civic functions, the management of hospitals, fire brigades, water boards, and such things, it will be almost impossible to get men to carry out the work. You will want a body of men who must concentrate upon that work, and upon that work alone. I appreciate the position in which the hon. gentleman finds himself, but at the same time I do not want him to heap more injustices upon people who have more burdens than they can carry at the present time. Under the voluntary system excellent work has been done, and I need only refer the hon. gentleman to the splendid effort that is being made at the present time by the committee of the Children's Hospital. I want to stress that all I can.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why should a few good women have to do that work?

Mr. MAXWELL: They do that work for the love of the children they are working for. Why should you not inculcate the necessity for that charitable feeling that is so essential? Why should you eliminate from the community the desire to act voluntarily?

The HOME SECRETARY: Why should those good women be compelled to work under bad conditions?

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not agree with the hon. gentleman, and I think he knows that is not a right statement.

The HOME SECRETARY: These women worked for years and could not find the miserable quota necessary to improve the conditions.

Mr. MAXWELL: I quite agree with that, and I say here and now that I do not stand for these good women working under bad conditions. The hon. member wishes to convey the impression that the women working in these institutions are working under bad conditions to-day, when they are doing nothing of the kind. I want to deal with the condition of affairs as we find them to-day. It is no good the hon. gentleman trying to sidetrack the question by telling us of the conditions that obtained some time ago. I know the conditions that did obtain some time ago, and I know what wonderful work has been done by the good women connected with the Children's Hospital, and I know the excellent work that has been done by the fine committee of the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital. Why kill the spirit that is in those people? Only a few days ago when we were discussing the Estimates for the National Art Gallery the Premier asked "Why have we not got people charitable enough and magnanimous enough to come forward with donations for the beautification of their city?" Yet the Government to-day are doing exactly the thing that will kill the desire to assist their fellow men and women. The hon. gentleman wanted to know what was the reason for the falling off in the collections under the voluntary system. He knows that the policy that has been enunciated

ated by his Government has to a certain extent interfered with the contributions.

Mr. KIRWAN: Nonsense!

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member can interject as much as he likes. So long as you can get a certain section of the community to believe that somebody else is going to contribute, they will say, "What is the good of me contributing, because I am contributing in another way?" If they were contributing in another way, hon. members opposite would draw attention to that fact; but it has never yet been brought home to me that these people are contributing in any way at all towards the upkeep of institutions such as this. I would stress the desirability of the hon. gentleman not taking from the public the opportunity of exercising charity, and that he should give the people the chance of giving their tithes to maintain the hospitals. If the Government do that, the people will feel that they have a share in the hospital—that there is a "kiddy" or a man or woman whom it is their duty to look after. It cannot be said that the appeal which is being made by the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital has not been fairly well responded to. A wonderful work is being done in that connection. I would make an appeal to the Home Secretary in regard to the work which the committee of that hospital is doing. I know the difficulties which the committee have had to contend with. If we take hospitals such as that, the Lady Lamington Hospital—which is doing a noble work for women—and the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital—which is also doing a wonderful work—and practically place them under local authority control, we are going to do a huge injustice to the whole of the State, and place a burden of taxation on a portion of the community which they will find it impossible to bear.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I am not much concerned about the Government not carrying out their platform. It is quite evident that they are going through a process of mental change. We quite recognise that they knew when they went to the people that they would not be able to carry into effect many of the pledges. We knew that there would be certain influences brought to bear which would deter them from doing so. We never expected them to nationalise the hospitals or the liquor traffic.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must deal with the Bill.

Mr. WARREN: I know that I cannot deal with that subject. I knew that the Government were not sincere and merely had a craze for taxing the people. It is neither a genuine nor a permanent method. I would point out one aspect of this matter that the Home Secretary does not appear to have taken any notice of. Take the farmer on the boundary line of the Caboolture and Landsborough shires. Two farms may be equal in value, but the man on the Caboolture side will be taxed to the extent of £4 if his land is worth £1,000, while the man on the opposite side of the line will go scot-free. The former will be paying the Caboolture shire about £25 or £26 in rates, and on the top of that will be taxed to the extent of £4 for the upkeep of the base hospital. The doctor in Caboolture, who might be getting an income of £500 a year, will have land on which he is residing valued at £25, and he will be paying 12s. 6d. in rates to the

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Caboolture Shire Council and about 2s. 1d. towards this scheme which the Home Secretary has brought forward. That is manifestly unfair.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Will not the doctor be paying through the Government contribution?

Mr. WARREN: The other man has to pay his income tax. The average farmer will not be making £300 a year.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say the average farmer's land is only valued at £1,000?

Mr. WARREN: I merely mentioned that figure for the purpose of comparison. It is more likely to be £2,000 if the farmer is doing anything reasonable. The farmer with his property valued at £2,000 is not likely to be making a net income of £300 a year, but he will have to pay his local rates and taxes and also the hospital tax; yet the Home Secretary is heartless enough to attack that man. These farmers already are generously keeping up two hospitals. I am not saying that the hon. gentleman will not assist us—I want to be quite fair—he has been quite generous to us with the funds at his disposal, and he has said that he will continue to help; but I want to show his want of thought in regard to this proposed taxation. It is going to do serious harm. Some better method of taxation should be evolved. There is no doubt that the base hospitals here and elsewhere in the State have not been treated generously enough. The workers in many places—at the Moreton Mill, for instance, and some of the railway stations—already have created a fund. I heard the Home Secretary speak of Mount Morgan. The hospital there is a splendid institution and has done some wonderful work. The hon. gentleman made a boast about the way in which the people there support their hospital, and I give them credit. Is this scheme calculated to foster that good spirit? I say that it is not. Mention has been made about people being sent down to the base hospitals in Brisbane and other places, but in nine cases out of ten those people pay for their accommodation. It is a grand thing to have an institution to which people can go and have their lives saved. It has been stated that people go in on the cheap, but the country people are the best payers you can get. I give the base hospital in Brisbane credit for effecting some wonderful cures, and it is only right that country people should come into it as a base hospital. I have made arrangements for country people to come down to the Brisbane General Hospital, where the treatment has been splendid. I have gone to see those patients in the hospital, and it is a great pleasure to anyone who sympathises with suffering humanity to know that we have an institution of that description. All I say is that the method of taxation is wrong. That is the whole trouble with the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): After listening to the debate, and considering the methods which are proposed for maintaining the hospitals, I think the Home Secretary will be well advised if he will withdraw the Bill and institute a more equitable system of taxation. The measure, as I understand it—and, I think, as most other hon. members understand it—does not provide for a fair method of raising the money required. I do not go so far as the Home Secretary in

saying that the voluntary system has failed, but I do say that it has not been satisfactory in quite a number of instances. Whatever has been said about the maintenance of the hospitals, it must be admitted that the proposed method of raising revenue through the various local authorities is a land tax pure and simple, because the Bill specifically states that the necessary money is to be raised by each local authority on the basis of the ratable value of the land within its area. We know quite well that any number of men get their living in a local authority area, but own no land whatever. They will go scot-free under this Bill. Any number of professional men and tradespeople who have very fine incomes will not contribute a farthing under the method which the Bill proposes. Therefore, we on this side contend that the Bill embodies an inequitable form of taxation. Everybody in the community should contribute to the upkeep of the hospitals according to his ability. It would be very much fairer—and even then we would not catch a large number of persons who ought to contribute—to collect the money by adding a flat rate to the income tax of so much in the £1. Take a country town. The tradespeople and others living in it will be called upon to contribute practically nothing in comparison with the primary producer, because both will pay on the value of the land they hold. If the farmer's land is worth £5,000 or £3,000, he will be asked to pay a considerable sum for the upkeep of the hospital, whereas the professional man or the tradesman, who has land worth only £50, £60, or £100, but yet has an income perhaps greater than the farmer, will pay practically nothing. For these reasons I think that the Bill is deserving of further consideration by the Home Secretary. I appreciate the effort which the hon. gentleman is making to provide a better method of adequately maintaining hospitals, and we all realise that those who are in a position to contribute should do so according to their means for the sake of those who are not so fortunately placed. We all subscribe to that proposition, and wish to see our hospitals efficiently maintained.

The hon. member for Albert pointed out what might happen under this Bill—I am speaking now more of the country than of the cities. People will be very chary about starting a hospital, although it may be urgently required, if they know that the method of taxation which will be adopted to keep it on a sound financial basis will be a burden on them. The hospitals need not be a burden to anyone in the community if the Home Secretary could see his way to alter the incidence of the proposed taxation. I sincerely hope that he will take a rational view of the situation. Under the Bill, a man with £1,000, or £1,500, or £2,000 a year who does not own a bit of land will not be asked to pay a single copper, whereas he would pay fairly if the thing were done through the Income Tax Office, although even then many people would escape scot-free.

The ambulance brigade may be brought under the operation of the Bill by Order in Council. In the city of Brisbane we have an ambulance brigade which anybody who knows it will admit is as nearly 100 per cent. efficient as it can be got. Why disturb it? If it is carrying out its object and has no difficulty about finance, why interfere with it? I think the late Mr. James

Mr. Taylor.]

Campbell, who has been dead for many years, was one of the principal men who brought it into being many years ago, and I think I am correct in saying that Brisbane was about the first city in the Commonwealth to establish an ambulance brigade, so that a person who met with an accident in the street could get proper treatment, instead of being put into a cab, or some other vehicle, and taken to the hospital—which very often aggravated his condition. From the very start, when they used the old horse method of transport, right up to the present time, the ambulance has done yeoman service in the city of Brisbane, and has been an object lesson to the other States. I do not think that an organisation such as that should come under the scope of this Bill. It cannot be improved upon to any great extent. That is a very great thing to say, but probably it could be improved only as science introduces new methods of transport, and so on—and that may be a long or a short time hence.

We on this side want to see that everybody in the community who is in a position to do so contributes a fair and reasonable amount towards the upkeep of the hospitals of Queensland, but we object to the method of taxation imposed by the Bill.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I regret the form that this Bill has taken. When the Government took over the Brisbane General Hospital it was anticipated that they would carry out their policy of nationalisation. I am assuming that this Bill indicates the point to which the Government are prepared to go in the matter of nationalisation.

Mr. COLLINS: It is a fairly big step.

Mr. ROBERTS: During this debate the hon. member for Bowen has asked how we would propose to nationalise hospitals. I have never proposed to nationalise the hospitals, consequently I have no suggestion to make. The Home Secretary has told us what the taxation is going to be, roughly, under this Bill. I want to draw attention to the fact that the expenditure will increase when the hospitals are taken over under this Board. What is the position at the Brisbane General Hospital? After some five or six years of administration by the Government the Medical Superintendent says—

“The position of the Brisbane General Hospital is similar to that existing in other States. The condition becomes more acute every year, and the sick poor, who must depend on hospital treatment, are not receiving the attention that is necessary. The whole matter requires grave consideration. The increase of two or three wards does not meet the difficulty, as with more wards, more nurses, and more equipment, increased accommodation at the Nurses' Home, improved laundry, etc., are required.”

We have to recognise that immediately the Board takes over these hospitals the expenditure will rise, and must rise. The present position of the Brisbane General Hospital is a disgrace to the Government. We are told that the ordinary channels of contributions have closed up by reason of the impending taxation. We have to recognise—I want to pay a compliment in this connection—that there are some hospitals in Brisbane that have been largely maintained by voluntary contributions, and it is proposed to take

over those hospitals. I refer to the Hospital for Sick Children, the Lady Lamington Hospital, and the Lady Bowen Hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say that those hospitals have been maintained by voluntary contributions?

Mr. ROBERTS: Largely. The management of those hospitals will come under the control of the Board and the expense will fall on the ratepayers. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that this Bill has been very ill-conceived. I have wondered whether the Home Secretary gave instructions to certain of his officers to prepare a Bill on lines acceptable to the Government, and the Bill was drafted hurriedly, with the present unfortunate result—anything but satisfaction.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about the position of the Toowoomba Hospital?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am going to deal with that matter. Some hon. members have made reference to friendly societies. The leader of the Opposition has pointed out that by the easy method by which men and women in the friendly societies make contributions for the benefit of the sick they get some benefit, whereas under the proposal to fix a rate on the unimproved value of the land they will not get that benefit. Generally speaking, the man who is thrifty joins a friendly society, and at the same time tries to own his own home, and under this Bill he will become the taxpayer, and for that reason, in the matter of contributions, we are not treating fairly those who are trying to build homes for themselves. The more we go into the matter the more we see the weakness of the position. I can hardly imagine that we are going to get more efficient management under the control by a Board than under the present system.

Reference has been made to the Toowoomba Hospital. The Toowoomba Hospital—no one knows this better than the Assistant Home Secretary—carries one-third of the responsibilities that are carried by the Brisbane General Hospital in connection with the treatment of the sick. Toowoomba has done wonderfully well in the matter of contributions for the carrying on of that hospital. We have to recognise, also, that the Toowoomba Hospital is the only hospital outside of Brisbane to which the Arbitration Court award applies. The payment of the full wages—with which I find no fault—and the working of the hours as set out in the award have added largely to the financial difficulties of the Toowoomba Hospital. That hospital has nothing to be ashamed of. I have the last report of that hospital, and I find that the subscriptions and donations for the previous twelve months amounted to £1,384 17s. 6d. The Brisbane General Hospital only received £703 9s. 4d., but that I think is largely due to the fact that there is no definite system of collection.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The amount received by the Toowoomba Hospital was contributed mostly by workers and farmers.

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not know who contributed it. Probably it was largely contributed by farmers, but a large number of business men contribute too. I suppose that £500 of that amount would be the annual subscriptions of men in business. The workers also contribute very handsomely to the hospital. I always say that you have nothing to fear from wage-earners in asking

[*Mr. Taylor.*

them to pay for the sick of the State. The workers of Toowoomba have paid £1,398 6s. 9d. on the basis of 1d. in the £1 directly from their wages to the Toowoomba Hospital. If the workers in Brisbane would give as freely in proportion to the wages earned by them, there would be no difficulty with the Brisbane General Hospital. But there is no system of collection. The Government took over the hospital, and did not care how they were to get the ordinary contributions, and simply recognised that they had the State at their back.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Don't you think the method of holding concerts in the street is a very half-hearted method of collecting money?

Mr. ROBERTS: A pleasing feature is that the workers' contributions are increasing. The employees of the Railway Department in Toowoomba have contributed over £500. As proceeds from benefits we got £1,478 16s. 3d., and altogether last year the Toowoomba Hospital received from the city and district £4,323 12s. 10d. That is a very considerable amount of money when compared with the city of Brisbane, where the General Hospital is carrying on under similar conditions.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Yet the Toowoomba Hospital cannot carry on.

Mr. ROBERTS: I grant that the Toowoomba Hospital finds it difficult to carry on. The fact that the Government have talked so long about nationalisation has to some extent hindered the committee in carrying on. The point I want to make is that the estimate by the Home Secretary as to the cost of maintenance under this Bill is going to be exceeded. I am quite satisfied that once this new taxation is imposed, and once the hospitals come under the control of the Board, the expenditure in connection with management will be heavier.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): We are all agreed as to the necessity of supporting hospitals, and our efforts should be directed to see that every person entitled to contribute should contribute if he does not do so willingly. No attempt is made in this Bill to compel people to contribute equally. The ratepayer is to be asked to shoulder the whole of the burden. It is not

[3 p.m.] justice to saddle one class of the people with the whole burden of finding what money is required over and above the contribution of the Government. The necessity for the Bill has arisen because a lot of people have been too mean to recognise their duty to the hospitals. The working man has been just as negligent in that respect as any other class of the community. There are mean men in every class. I cannot see any reason why three-quarters of the people of the State should be exempted from contributing and placing the whole of the burden on the other quarter. This Bill will have an injurious effect on farm lands. Farming land will have to contribute out of proportion to the town allotment. The unimproved value of a farm is about half of the improved value. There is a tremendous difference in the unimproved and improved values of the business allotment. The average improved value of a farm is £1,500, and the pick of the allotments in country towns would not be valued at more than £750. In that case the farmer will have to pay twice as much as the owner of a business allotment. Many allotments in country towns that have private

dwellings erected on them are not worth more than £50, and the owners of these allotments will not contribute much to the maintenance of hospitals.

Mr. KIRWAN: Where can you get an allotment in Brisbane worth £50.

Mr. DEACON: I am talking of country towns, where the unimproved value of many allotments is not more than £50. It does not matter what the income of the owner may be—it may be £1,000 a year—yet the farmer has to contribute out of all proportion to that man for the support of the hospital.

Mr. COSTELLO: Many farmers, with the assistance of their families, will not make £200 a year.

Mr. DEACON: Hon. members opposite do not seem to understand the position of the farmer, and the tremendous difference between their incomes and the income of the man in town. I heard one hon. member on the Government side interject that there were very few wheat farms that were not worth £1,500.

Mr. COLLINS: £1,500 unimproved value.

Mr. DEACON: I could quote the valuation of a number of shires showing wheat and mixed farms of an unimproved value of £1,000 and £2,000.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You said last week that they could be bought for a mere song.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That was a different Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN: You ought to be careful and sing the same swan song.

Mr. DEACON: I am trying to show the difference between what the farmer and the dweller in the city will have to pay under the provisions of this Bill. The contribution should be in the same proportion. The ratepayer in the smaller districts where there is no public hospital are going to contribute a great deal more than the people in the larger districts, who receive the greatest benefits from the hospitals. The sick in nearly every small town, or the greater proportion of them, have to be treated at a private hospital. I quite admit that some go to the public hospitals in the larger towns, but the percentage compared with those treated at the private hospitals is smaller than in the cities.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: If they are in such a bad way as you suggest, how can they go to a private hospital and pay high fees?

Mr. DEACON: There are times when they have to go to private hospitals.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Why?

Mr. DEACON: Because they are not able to be shifted. The sick have to be got into the nearest hospital as quickly as possible. I cannot see any good reason why the country people should pay more to maintain the hospitals than the people in the larger centres. The contributions should be fixed on an equitable basis. Why should the working man and the travelling working man escape taxation? The travelling working man today earns as much as the average farmer.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The working man consumes the farm produce and helps to keep the farmer going; so what is the use of talking like that?

Mr. DEACON: That has nothing to do with the question. The Bill should provide for an equal contribution by all classes.

Mr. Deacon.]

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Take the report of the Toowoomba Hospital and see if the farmers are paying their fair share of its maintenance.

Mr. DEACON: It is quite possible that under the Bill many members of Parliament will not contribute at all. They should pay in proportion to their means. Why should we put all the burden upon one section? The freehold landowner has to pay more taxation proportionately than any other class of person in the community.

Mr. BRUCE: He can get a leasehold if he wants it.

Mr. DEACON: All landholders come under the taxation imposed on behalf of the hospitals. That is not fair, as they are already taxed out of all proportion. The only fair way of getting at everybody is through the income tax. If you put on an extra amount of income tax and make everyone liable to pay that tax by lowering the minimum, I consider that would be a fair way of raising the amount required.

I never dreamt for one moment that any Government would try to single out one section of the community and put on them the whole burden of maintaining the hospitals. Hon. members opposite must see the injustice of such action. So far as my experience in Parliament goes, hon. members opposite have never shown any regard for equity in regard to taxation.

Mr. COLLINS: We generally tax the rich and help the poor.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): Most hon. members on this side of the House are very disappointed with this Bill because it proposes to impose taxation on a certain section of the people and to allow the other section to give donations should they wish to do so. I know that the Bill at present only refers to the Brisbane area. I consider that it was necessary for the Government to do something in the matter, because they have had to find an enormous amount of revenue for the hospitals in the city area.

We differ in the country in this respect. The burden that will be imposed on the taxpayers will be very heavy, and I sincerely hope that the necessity will not arise for the Minister to extend the operations of this Bill to the country districts. Regarding my district, the Maryborough and Lady Musgrave Hospitals are particularly fortunate and the finances of the Maryborough General Hospital are in a healthy condition. The Secretary of the Maryborough Hospital in his latest report says—

“The balance-sheet reveals a very satisfactory financial position. The receipts for the year totalled £8,250 11s. 5d., an increase of £157 17s. 5d. on the income of the previous year, and the expenditure amounted to £8,135 17s. 6d., an increase of £7 7s. 7d. The net result leaves a credit balance of £1,255 0s. 4d. to be carried forward, which compared with that of the previous year, £1,140 6s. 5d., represents an increase of £114 13s. 11d.”

It is very satisfactory to know that the people in the Maryborough district contribute such a large amount to their hospital, but I venture to say that, if the Government take over those hospitals,

[*Mr. Deacon.*

the contributions will drop just as they did in the Brisbane area when the Brisbane hospitals were taken over. While Maryborough was contributing £1,200 in a voluntary way the whole area of Brisbane only contributed somewhere about £700 voluntarily. I am inclined to think that, if the Government extend this Bill to the Maryborough district, the voluntary subscriptions and other relief afforded by the committee will cease. The report continues—

“It is pleasing to record appreciation of the generous assistance derived from benefits, which contributed a sum of £517 15s. 2d., a marked increase over the previous year.”

I think that, if we are allowed to carry on as we have done during the last few years, we shall be able to keep the finances of our hospitals in a satisfactory condition, because all sections in the Maryborough district are at present contributing to the hospitals. They will contribute still further if you do not place a burden on the landowners in the way of hospital taxation. Once such a burden is placed on them through the local authorities, you will find that the very people organising benefits for these charitable institutions will be the ones who will have to pay the additional taxation under the new scheme. I shall quote further from the secretary's report showing that all sections are contributing to the hospital—

“The committee submits for the earnest consideration of the industrialists of Maryborough the scheme adopted by the members in the Howard Miners and Enginedrivers' Union, and the Torbanlea Miners' Union, of contributing one penny in the pound from their weekly wages to the funds of the institution. The amounts received for the year from these two industrial bodies were £77 6s. 4d. and £69 respectively. In the event of the scheme being adopted by the various unions in Maryborough, a very considerable source of revenue would be provided, resulting in mutual benefit to both the workers and the hospital.”

I think we should be very proud of the fact that these people are contributing in such a way, and even if this measure were extended to Maryborough I think the people should be encouraged in a similar manner, because the industrialists are not hit to the same extent under this Bill as is the man on the land. The industrialist in some instances lives on land valued at from £20 to £30 an allotment, and he will contribute a very small amount in comparison with that contributed by the farmers in the district, who have to own the land from which they are earning a living.

My opinion of the Bill is that it is simply an extension of the land tax principle.

I cannot understand how a Government who pose at election time as being the friends of the farmers want to impose such additional burdens of taxation when there are other means of financing the hospitals. I would rather see a tax placed on incomes than on the land. If we want to develop Queensland we must encourage people to go on the land, and this Bill is certainly not going to do that; it is going to place an extra burden of taxation on the man on the land. Had the Government decided to place

a tax on incomes in order to finance the hospitals, the man in a position to pay would have been called upon to pay. If the Bill is extended to my district, a hospitals district will be formed, which would comprise the municipality of Maryborough and the Burrum and Tiaro shire councils. The capital value of the land in those areas amounts roughly to £900,000, and the expenditure of the General Hospital in Maryborough last year was somewhere about £12,000. The Government share of that £12,000—60 per cent.—would be £7,200, and the local authorities' share—40 per cent.—would be £4,800. That is without voluntary contributions. That would mean a new tax of 1½d. in the £1 on the land in that district; and already, owing to the drought conditions and bad markets, they are sufficiently taxed without a further tax to pay for the upkeep of the hospital. The hon. member for Cunningham drew attention to the heavy burden that will be placed on the man on the land, and I would point out that a professional man may have an allotment in Brisbane valued at £200 and may be receiving an income of £1,000. No doubt he will have to pay a certain tax to the hospital, but because I am a farmer and happen to own land of an unimproved value of £800, although I am only making an income of about £300 a year, yet I shall be taxed four times as much as the professional man who is earning an income of £1,000 a year. Although the farmer receives less than one-third of the income of the professional man, he has to pay four times the amount of taxation. How can the Government pose as being the friends of the man on the land when they introduce a measure of this sort?

The Bill also provides for the amalgamation of hospitals and ambulance brigades. I am in favour of that. I have seen a good deal of the work of the hospitals and of the ambulance brigade in my district, and there is an enormous amount of overlapping. A good deal of expense could be saved if the two institutions could be worked in conjunction. I understand the Minister has been giving this matter consideration, and I am not opposed to an amalgamation of that sort being brought about, as it would effect a very great saving and would be of benefit to the people in the country, particularly in the case of those who are engaged in the holding of fêtes and entertainments generally for the benefit of these institutions. I hope the Minister will accept amendments in Committee from this side of the House, and that the Bill will be much improved at that stage.

At 3.25 p.m.,

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

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): It seems to me that the Bill cannot be said to be the outcome of the work of the Home Secretary, because it looks to me very much as if it were a copy of a Bill that was introduced some years ago.

THE HOME SECRETARY: It is a better Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will say it is a better Bill because of the fact that he introduced it. I have taken the trouble to go through the Bill that was previously introduced and the present Bill, and I have found that the present Bill is very largely a copy of the one that was previously before the House and that was

placed on the shelf. It is something that has been resurrected.

MR. COLLINS: Are you referring to the 1905 Act?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am referring to the Bill that was introduced by the present Government but was not proceeded with. I do not know whether the present Secretary for Public Lands was Home Secretary at the time or not.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I never introduced any Bill that I did not put through.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I accept the hon. gentleman's statement.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was introduced by my predecessor.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am perfectly right in saying that the present Government did introduce a Bill that was not proceeded with.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was proceeded with. The Upper House "chucked" it out.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Does that not show that it was not placed on the statute-book of this State?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You said it was not proceeded with.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was not proceeded with because, if the Government had been in earnest about it at that time, they would have said, "It has to go through," and they would have put it through. Apparently they were very glad to have another place to wipe it out for them.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, no!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Whatever happened it did not become law.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Now you are getting at the facts of the case.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Now after five or six years it has been resurrected with a few little extra details.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not the same Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have taken the trouble to go through both Bills, and I find that very largely this Bill is the same as the previous Bill with some additions.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The system of taxation is different.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I admit it is, and it is on that system of taxation that I am going to speak now.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the main principle of the Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The system of taxation as disclosed in the Bill before the Chamber is absolutely wrong, as it is going to make it possible for a person who has a very considerable income to escape any taxation whatever, and it is going to throw upon the local authorities an added burden. Last night, when speaking on another Bill, I drew attention to the fact that the local authorities were being asked to do what the policemen have been asked to do again and again, and in this very Bill again the poor local authorities are asked to accept a further burden.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The local authorities in the old country impose a poor law rate.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has to go to the old country to find out what the local authorities are doing. Under this Bill we are going to place more work on the local authorities. If there is an election in a local authority, the [3.30 p.m.] clerk has to prepare a roll; and it is significant that he will have to pick out not the residents in the electorate, but the people who are property-owners. It seems to me that at every turn there is a dead-set against the local authorities, and the object is to make them pay more and more. It means that extra hands will have to be employed to do the work, and that is passed on again. The local authorities are having placed upon them additional duties which it is not right to put upon them. This taxation is going to be laid upon people who are not entitled to bear it. It is manifestly unfair, and the Minister must know it.

Dealing with the Bill itself, what is the position? Take the people who are entitled to vote. The members of the Board are to be elected by the contributors, and the local authorities and the Government will appoint certain other members. The Bill is framed along the lines that the representation on the Board will be entirely acceptable to the Government. The powers with regard to voting are such that no one else has a chance.

The HOME SECRETARY: The contributors and the local authorities will elect their own representatives.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I admit that, but the person who gives a donation of £1 in connection with another organisation is entitled to vote. We find that all along the line the Bill goes in the direction of making it possible to load the Board which is going to control this work in a way which will be altogether one-sided. Is it possible for a Board to do what this Board is going to be asked to do, taking the constitution of the Board into consideration?

Prior to the introduction of this Bill, it was proposed to build a hospital at Wynnum, but I am inclined to think that this will frighten them. There are hospitals in my district—I do not say public hospitals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hospitals which charge six guineas a week.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman would not object to paying six guineas a week if he required to go into a hospital. I want to draw attention to another phase of the Bill which was mentioned by the Minister to a deputation the other day. A deputation from the committee of the Lady Lamington Hospital waited on the hon. gentleman and pointed out that ever since the establishment of that hospital they had always paid their way, apart, of course, from the ordinary contribution received from the Government. I think the hon. gentleman will admit that that hospital is in a flourishing condition. Why is it that a hospital like that is included in this Bill? The ladies on the deputation drew the attention of the Minister to the fact that they had always paid their way, and were prepared to go on as they are doing. This is how the hon. gentleman tried to get out of the difficulty, and it was done most skilfully. He said, "Ladies, at the end of the Bill there is a clause which will rope you in most beautifully, and you will be able to become the

servants of the committee, collect money, visit the sick people, and generally give a finishing touch to the whole business."

The HOME SECRETARY: That was what you suggested.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I did not suggest it at all. I want to be perfectly clear. I would not think of suggesting to the ladies that they should be a kind of a fifth wheel in the coach, after having run that hospital so successfully. What is going to happen is this: You are going to take away all heart from men and women who have worked as they have worked in that case. The same thing applies to the Lady Bowen Hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: What authority have you for saying that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have no warrant for making any statement with regard to the Lady Bowen Hospital, but we are going to take away all incentive for the committee of the hospital to work as they have previously done. Is it likely that people are going to do very much when they find they are being taxed in the way it is proposed to tax them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have had a good experience in connection with the Children's Hospital, in connection with which such good work has been done.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I shall not be out of order in referring to that by way of illustration. The committee of that hospital was able to carry on its task until the question of having it taken over by the Government was brought forward. When that happened, it immediately prevented people from giving.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You could not carry on long before this Government came into power.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am prepared to admit that the Children's Hospital committee had a great deal of difficulty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No—the General Hospital.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have the General Hospital more particularly in mind. I am prepared to admit that it had greater difficulties than the Children's Hospital. I want to ask the Home Secretary why it is that all the hospitals in the metropolitan area are not included in this Bill? I think I am right in saying that St. Martin's Hospital and the Mater Misericordiae Hospital have public wards.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are not endowed.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If you turn up the Estimates, I think you will find that they get a lump sum. My point is, that I believe that they will do better work by not being included. I say that deliberately. I say deliberately also that the Lady Lamington Hospital would do better work if it were not included.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not agree with you, because, with all due respect to the work which has been done, I do not think they have the necessary buildings.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister is evidently not seized of the facts, because they have a building scheme on foot now. In fact, it is well under way. I speak of what I know.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you not think they could be amalgamated?

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*]

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman may be right, but a committee consisting of the number provided for in this Bill cannot do the work for all the hospitals efficiently unless they give all their time to it. The provision in the Bill to which I referred a little while ago as having been mentioned by the Minister to the deputation of the committee of the Lady Lamington Hospital is clause 12 of Part II. of the schedule, to be found on page 20. It says that local committees may come in and help. That is the provision which the Minister so graciously pointed out to the ladies the other day when he said that he would get them in to do the work, but would give them no control whatever. All I can say is that the ladies would be very foolish to do anything of the kind.

The Government and the local authorities are each to contribute a certain proportion of the funds. The hon. member for Enoggera shewed how that was going to work now and how some people are going to be penalised.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Do you take him seriously?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I take him very much more seriously than I take the hon. gentleman who has introduced the Bill—if you study the two faces you will see the difference. The hon. member for Enoggera looks serious when he is speaking, whilst the Minister does not. It seems to me that, although the Government may pass this measure, they will come back in a year or so with an amending Bill and say that they made a mistake. By this legislation they are out again to do what I told them last night. They are working everything into one channel—putting taxation not now on the big man but on the small man who has a home, so that by and by the time will be ripe for them to say, “Let us throw the whole lot into one lap and get to the ideal”—the ideal towards which the hon. gentleman, in common with others on the other side, is deliberately working. There is the road leading straight ahead—the road laid down at Emu Park, on which the lives of every member opposite depend. If they do not follow it, it will be a case of “Johnny Walker, but not going strong.” (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Certainly something is required to amend the constitution of our hospitals. We know perfectly well that during the last few years some committees have been at their wits' ends to raise sufficient money, particularly in newer districts in times of drought. The whole organisation of the hospitals centres on the means of obtaining revenue, and our aim should be that everybody in the community who is likely to benefit by hospital treatment and everybody who would not use a public hospital because he could afford to go to a private institution should contribute towards the expenses. That practically means that all people should be contributors. The Bill drafted some time ago practically aimed at that object; but this Bill seems to provide for a new tax on the man who holds a piece of land, who also may pay land tax as well as contribute otherwise to the revenue of the State. That means that all who are making their living out of the land, whether held under perpetual lease or not, and who are paying local authority rates will become contributors to the hospitals. They are a

section of the community who are bearing too great a share of the taxes at the present time. When the Opposition advocate that all sections of the community should contribute towards the upkeep of the hospitals, hon. members on the other side say, “You are going to tax the wage-earner.” Particularly when the hon. member for Albert was speaking this morning that suggestion was thrown across the Chamber. If you tax a man's wages, you are taxing something he has actually got—the results of his labour—but, if you tax a man because he has a piece of land which is the instrument of his work, you tax his labour. That brings us back to the old parrot cry, “Why do you not make them pay a poll tax straight away?”

Why not have some insurance scheme to which people would contribute by way of using a stamp, making it possible for the whole of the public to be contributors to our hospital expenditure? I do not think anything of a man who, because he does not own a piece of land, endeavours to get out of his contributions to the hospital and expects the poor individual, whether he be a selector or a farmer, to contribute not only for the benefit of his family but for the benefit of any wage-earner who evades his responsibility.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The employer has the right to contribute to repair his human machine in the same way as he repairs his mechanical machine.

Mr. CORSER: That is a responsibility that the Minister should take upon himself. We shall be responsible for that when we are in office.

Mr. COLLINS: That will be during your reincarnation.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman will never be reincarnated.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He will be reincarnated as a bloated capitalist. (Laughter.)

Mr. WEIR: I would like to see the hon. member for Albert with “bowyangs” on.

Mr. COLLINS: We have never worn spats.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Burnett to address himself to the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: I shall address myself to the Chair. Hon. members opposite are trying to draw me away from my argument that the wage earner should not only contribute but that he is in a better position to contribute than the selector. He is in a better position to contribute than the man who is trying to make a living from the land. It is not an inhumane suggestion to make that all the people in the community should contribute to the upkeep of the hospitals, and in saying that I am not going to exclude the idle rich. Hon. members know that in this city are people who have come to live here after they have made some money or won a Melbourne Cup sweep or something like that. Quite a lot of people in the city do not live in homes of their own, but live in boarding-houses and flats and hotels, and are not direct ratepayers. Many of them have a large amount of money, still they are going to escape hospital taxation. They are not going to be asked to contribute voluntarily, because it will be deemed unnecessary to do so after the passing of this Bill. This Bill is going to kill voluntary contributions. Here we have a section of the community in many

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cases with no encumbrances at all, who are able to contribute something to the hospitals, and they are going to dodge what they have practised in the past in the way of carrying out charitable work. The Government may have been actuated by the best motives in introducing the Bill with the idea of placing the hospitals on a sound footing.

Mr. COLLINS: This is the third attempt.

Mr. CORSER: As it was necessary to make the first attempt and as it was necessary to make the second attempt, and as it was necessary to make the third attempt, then it is just as clear as it is possible to be that there should be a further improvement in the attempt so that the whole of the community will have confidence in the fact that everybody is contributing according to their means.

Mr. COLLINS: Your friends in the Upper House prevented anything being accomplished before.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman had more friends in that place than I had. If what I suggest is brought about, there will be a better state of affairs, and all will contribute. The institutions should have greater financial assistance so that they can put forward greater efforts in treating the sick. We do not want hospitals merely to exist, but we want them to be conducted in the very best manner. There should be no limit to the special work that can be engaged in by a hospital. The bigger hospitals in the city may specialise in a lot of things, but the surgeons in the country places should have the opportunity, as a result of the good financial position of an institution, of treating not only those living in the localities but in the surrounding districts, and conducting the hospitals as bases for the smaller hospitals in the area. This Bill is introduced in the main with a view to placing the Brisbane General Hospital on a sounder footing, by placing the administration and responsibilities to a certain extent upon the people here, and with that I quite agree. The cost of the upkeep of the Brisbane General Hospital should never have been a charge on the State, and under this Bill the people in this locality will be called upon to contribute, which they should do. The Government are then going to effect a saving of £31,194 per annum, according to last year's expenditure on the Brisbane General Hospital. If the Government want to do a fair thing, they should place the responsibilities not only on the ratepayers but also upon those who are able to contribute towards the maintenance of that hospital. That is what we claim should have been provided in the Bill, and it would have been a much more pleasing Bill to the majority of the people of the State if that had been done. When you are continually placing the tax on the man who holds a little bit of land, whether it be a small selection or anything else, and whether it be freehold land or a prickly-pear selection, and you are compelling him to put his hand in his pocket to pay for these things, you are not doing the fair thing, because the wage earner enjoying a good wage—

Mr. COLLINS: What do you call a good wage?

Mr. CORSER: Some of the maximum wages are good wages. Those individuals are not going to be called upon to pay, but all the ratepayers in the cities and towns are going to be called upon to pay one-fifth

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increase in rates for the maintenance of our hospitals. There is nothing in the Bill to show that that is going to be all, because, if a hospital does not exceed its estimate of expenditure, the Government and the local authority are going to benefit, but, if it exceeds its estimate of expenditure, then the Board will have to shoulder the burden and float a loan or adopt some method of collecting subscriptions, and it again comes back to the ratepayers in the country areas.

This Bill is making provision for compulsory co-operation amongst landholders so that the whole of the people can share in the benefits. The contributions are paid by one section for the benefit of all. The Bill makes provision for those who hold land to contribute to the upkeep of the institutions for the general public—including wage earners and men who pay a levy not to the hospital but to the union—to keep the Government in power so that they will not be taxed any further. I think it will be agreed that that is the point that we come round to. On last year's figures we find that the Government will have to contribute towards the Brisbane General Hospital £79,296 on the 60 per cent. basis, and the local authorities will have to pay £48,102.

At 4 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER: The State will be making a direct saving in contributions to the Brisbane General Hospital of £31,194. The total expenditure of hospitals in the State in 1920 was £416,000. The total amount of the rates for the same year was—

	£
Shires	497,287
Cities	338,010
Towns	96,190
Total revenue	£931,487

The total revenue of local authorities in Queensland from rates in 1920 was practically £1,000,000. The Government under this new proposal, taking the previous expenditure as a criterion, will find £249,600 and the local authorities £166,400. The local authorities will have to strike a rate equal to one-fifth of the present rates to find their contribution. Some local authorities will find it necessary to contribute considerably more than others because of the value of land in their area. It is generally conceded that, whilst a hospital is not altogether a benevolent institution, it should provide for the sick and make possible charity to those who require it. No institution in our community and no board of management deserves an easier existence than our hospital committees. If there is any Christian sentiment about any person and a desire to help others, it cannot be better shown than in trying to put new life and vigour into an individual who is sick and cannot afford to do it himself.

Mr. COLLINS: That Christian spirit has not been shown in the past.

Mr. CORSER: It has been shown by some individuals, particularly our women folk, in caring for the inmates of the Sick Children's Hospital, the Lady Bowen Hospital, and Lady Lamington Hospital. As has been the case in our towns, these institutions have been cared for by committees composed chiefly of women, who have worked hard and long. There are men in

the community who have gone considerably out of their way to assist the sick and poor. If that work is essential for our sick and poor, how much more is it essential for the healthy, vigorous men in the community who are in receipt of a maximum wage? The individual in the country has probably had to borrow money in times of stress.

Mr. COLLINS: The worker generally gets hurt in producing profits for the master class.

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to follow that line of argument. It has been used here for forty years, and it is dead in every other soul but the hon. member's. We are sincerely hoping that the general community will demand that they should be allowed to contribute to the maintenance of the hospitals. We have not one general hospital in the Burnett such as there is in Brisbane, but five hospitals.

The HOME SECRETARY: What distance are they apart?

Mr. CORSER: It does not matter if they are only 2 miles apart.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is very vital.

Mr. CORSER: They are 30 miles, 21 miles, 21 miles, and 40 miles apart.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why should the general taxpayer provide endowment for hospitals which are only a few miles apart?

Mr. CORSER: It shows that the contributions have been found.

The HOME SECRETARY: One-third of the contributions.

Mr. CORSER: The endowment has been paid for by the whole of the community.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did you not get a special grant of £400 for the Gayndah Hospital?

Mr. CORSER: What I have been able to get for the Gayndah Hospital is thanks to myself and not to the Minister. (Government laughter.) I give every credit to the Minister in that matter because he was sympathetic enough, but there is a story to be told about that grant. That grant was made because the committee of the Gayndah Hospital had to provide a gap of £1,200 over and above the estimate for a building. I said that there are five hospitals in my electorate, and they are all carrying on and doing what is required of them. Every section of the community is paying its quota for their upkeep. These institutions also have an ambulance brigade attached to their operations, and the brigade is a credit to the whole area. The Government can put 500 to 1,000 navvies in the electorate and they will find a system existing for the care of the sick which will provide for them all. If this Bill is passed, there should be no necessity for private subscriptions. The Bill relieves everyone who is not a landowner of all obligations in this respect. That is a feature we do not like. The Government are aware that only the landowner will be levied upon.

Mr. McLACHLAN: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member making a donation if he wishes.

Mr. CORSER: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member also giving a donation if he wishes.

Mr. McLACHLAN: And he gives it.

Mr. CORSER: Then why all those crocodile tears? (Laughter.) I hope that the Minister will be prepared to broaden the provisions of the Bill along the lines I have suggested. It is to be hoped that the Bill will relieve those in charge of hospitals of a lot of their present anxiety, and will make provision for the better care of our sick—better care than they have at the present—and make provision for such hospitals in new districts as are required, but which are not possible under the present conditions.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): I deprecate the presentation of the Bill, as I come from an electorate that in a hospital sense has kept and will continue to keep its house in order. My conception of the need for this Bill may possibly differ from that of some other hon. members. I attribute the introduction of the Bill, in the first place, to a desire to save the Government from having to make their annual contribution. The basis of those contributions in the past has been £2 to £1. The proposal now means that the Government of the future, when the idea becomes universal, will contribute 60 per cent. instead of two-thirds of the amount required. I imagine that right down at bedrock that is the motive which the Government have in mind in this matter. They want to be relieved of the need to continue paying two-thirds of the amount as we have been paying pretty well all our lives—that is, to be relieved of some 6 or 7 per cent. of the amount that has heretofore been paid by them. I do not think the Government are to be congratulated on a move of that kind. Looking at things broadly, we should contemplate an increase rather than a restriction of generosity when it affects our charitable institutions. The Government have posed all along the line as a Government who are intensely humane and sympathetic to the people, and they are now stepping down from their high throne.

Mr. COLLINS: Oh, no!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Depend upon it, what is taking place to-day in connection with Brisbane and Toowoomba under this Bill will very likely become general. That being so, we have absolute proof of the charge I am making that the Government are tightening their purse-strings and are tightening their disposition to deal generously with the charitable institutions of the State. During my term in this House I have never seen hon. members opposite, who have posed as the friends of the people, take a liberal view regarding matters of this kind, and I am sure that they feel this to be the most retrogressive move they have ever made.

In regard to the Brisbane hospitals and what has brought about the condition of things that have existed during the last few years, I put down the trouble to the cry of nationalisation that went abroad immediately the present Government assumed office, and which existed prior to their assumption of office. From the very first day of their administration the people commenced to be frightened on account of the possibilities of nationalisation. Fortunately, the feeling did not spread to the country centres, but was confined to the city. In the city the workers dominated the position, and this brought about the condition which obtains to-day of our hospitals not being supported.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Will anyone stand up to-day and say that Brisbane is less able to support her charitable institutions—particularly her hospitals—than was the case fifteen or twenty years ago? This city, above all cities of the Commonwealth, if we are rightly informed, is making greater strides generally in the matter of wealth, and her population is increasing tremendously. I consider the first thing that interfered with the support of the hospitals was the idea of the nationalisation of hospitals, and the second thing—and I ask the Home Secretary to note this particularly—is that we have lacked men of organising ability who could control matters and bring in the necessary revenue. In my own electorate we are saved from being in want and from what has happened in Brisbane, because the people have taken action to meet the hospital requirements of the town and the district. It is surprising what can be achieved by wise and tactful organisation. In the little town and district of Yangan an effort was recently made in connection with the local State school, which resulted in the raising of a sum of over £400. Can anyone tell me that what can be done there could not be done in a city like Brisbane? Recently in Warwick an effort to raise funds brought in something like £1,000. There is no reason why similar things should not be achieved in the great city of Brisbane. The whole trouble is that the people of the metropolitan area are being relieved of the notion that they should subscribe to their hospitals, and in consequence no organisation has existed.

I particularly object to the Government doing less than they have done heretofore. With the growth of the city the revenue has been growing, and the Government ought to do more and more for the charitable institutions.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think that we should give special treatment to Brisbane?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Had the hon. gentleman listened to me he would have known that I blamed Brisbane for not doing its share. That is due to the Government talking nationalisation, which has frightened the people.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you aware that for seven years before the Labour Government took charge of the Brisbane General Hospital not one penny was spent in construction or maintenance?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That was due to the fact that no organised effort was put forward. I remember the days when Mr. William T. Reid was the organiser and secretary of the committee which collected for the Brisbane hospitals, and then there was never any trouble. It was a matter of the right man being in the right place, and of doing what was to be done. I am not going to cast a slur on Brisbane by saying that the people should be one whit behind what we have been in the matter of supporting our hospitals. The trouble is due to the cry of nationalisation. The Government are cutting down their liability from 66 per cent. to 60 per cent., and in doing so are putting the burden specifically upon a few people, from the wealthiest man in the community who has his mansion down to the worker who has his home. Those are the people who will have to bear the burden. Is that a fair thing?

The HOME SECRETARY: All local taxation is placed upon these people.

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is so, but it is not fair to the worker; it is not fair to any individual. These are the builders-up of the country; these are the individuals to whom we look to advance Queensland generally; and these are the people on whom indirectly you are imposing extra taxation. The Bill provides that a local authority may pay the amount out of its ordinary income, but hon. members know as well as I do that very few local authorities are burdened with a surplus, and it simply means that an extra tax will have to be imposed upon the owners of land in order to make up the amount required. Every young man of twenty-one years of age who is in receipt of £3 10s. per week, and every young woman of twenty-one years of age who may earn £2 10s. per week, should contribute to a fund of this kind. It is unfair to say that the whole responsibility should fall on the married man who may receive £4 per week, and that the young people should escape scot-free. The incidence of the tax is wrong, and the Minister would be acting wisely if he gave consideration to a proposal that would take the whole of the community, instead of singling out those who have the building up of the community. The effect of the Bill will be that, generally speaking, the hospitals will come under this scheme, and the ill-effect will be that the charitable instincts of the people will be checked. We do not want to see that come about. Half the joy in life comes as a result of sacrifices made, and this Bill is going to do away with the privilege and happiness that are found in working for charitable institutions, and particularly for hospitals.

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango): Everyone realises that the people on the land are being driven to the city on account of the heavy burdens imposed on them; and, therefore, it must be quite clear to the Minister that we must eliminate some of the heavy burdens imposed on these people. If we keep heaping up the expenses of these people, it is quite impossible for us to keep them on the land.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do they maintain their hospitals to-day?

Mr. EDWARDS: As soon as this measure becomes law, it will naturally follow in most cases that the hospital committees will ask for the 40 per cent. contribution by the local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: And it will be spread equally amongst the people.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is the very point on which we do not agree. How can it be spread equally, if a big percentage of the population in each district pay no rates whatever? I am satisfied that no honest, hard-working man asks for hospital treatment, or anything else unless he pays his fair share towards it. Therefore, it is quite clear that the proper method of securing the revenue necessary for the upkeep of our hospitals would be through an income tax, and not by a land tax, which this Bill provides for. We must all realise that the business people can pass their overhead expenses on to the general public, and gradually these overhead expenses go from one portion of the consuming public to another, until they at last rest on the shoulders of the man on the land. The taxes on property have been growing greater year by year, and the people are getting sick and tired of the burdens imposed on them, and

are gradually letting go and coming to the larger centres of population. The Minister will agree that some day it will be necessary to alter the whole system of taxation, in order to encourage these people to go back to the land. There is only one possible means by which we can do that, and that is by eliminating some of the overhead expenses that have been imposed on them at the present time.

I would like to ask the Home Secretary whether any portion of the 60 per cent. that the Government may be asked to find will come out of the "Golden Casket" money?

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am pleased the Minister has given that information. If that is the case, we must realise that a larger proportion of this money will have to be found from the revenue; and if the Government are going to take this step, they have a right to step in and nationalise the whole of the hospitals throughout the State. If they did that, everyone in the State would contribute towards the upkeep of the hospitals.

The hospital committees in country districts—I do not know much about them in the larger centres of population—deserve the greatest credit that it is possible to give them. They have done wonderful work. In new districts they have built up splendid buildings and have secured facilities to guard against sickness and to help those who are in trouble. The Government would not be doing their duty if they imposed greater obligations on these people who have been bearing the larger portion of the burden up to the present time. I hope the Minister will realise the necessity of imposing an income tax, in order to secure funds for the upkeep of our hospitals, instead of imposing a direct land tax. That is practically what this Bill means.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Sessional Order agreed to on 18th October, I shall now proceed to deal with the questions and formal business.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

STATE ENTERPRISES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on State Enterprises for the year ended 30th June, 1923.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

EMPLOYEES ON STATE STATIONS.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. How many employees are engaged upon the State stations?"

"2. How many of these are other than whites?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) replied—

"1. Approximately, 300.

"2. Sixty; mainly on Gulf stations."

BALLOT UNDER PRIMARY PRODUCTS POOLS ACT.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"In connection with the ballots taken

under the provisions of the Primary Products Pools Act of 1922—

(1) Are the papers so prepared that the ballot is a secret one?

(2) Are scrutineers allowed when the counting of the votes takes place?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes."

ALLOCATION OF COMMONWEALTH GRANT FOR MAIN ROADS.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"With regard to the money provided by the Commonwealth Government to the State for road purposes—

(1) What is the amount provided, and what conditions are attached to its expenditure?

(2) Has the allocation of this money yet been finalised; and, if so, what allocation has been made?

(3) Will he endeavour to expedite as much as possible the commencement of the work for which this money is provided in order to afford some relief to settlers in the Southern Burnett and other districts affected by drought conditions and to country workers who are out of employment?"

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

"1. Commonwealth quota, £96,000; State quota, £96,000. Expenditure must be in accordance with the Federal Main Roads Development Act No. 2 of 1923. The State quota will be under similar financial provisions to those of the Main Roads Act—viz., the local authorities concerned repay one-half of the cost over a thirty-year period. The State constructing authority (the Main Roads Board) must submit plans and specifications for the approval of the Commonwealth Minister for Works and Railways together with a report.

"2. No. Final approval of the schemes submitted has not yet been received from the Minister for Works and Railways.

"3. Yes."

DIVISION LIST OF COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE IN RE COMPULSORY LEVIES WITHOUT POLL.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"Will he publish the division list on the question of making levies compulsory without a poll at the last meeting of the Agricultural Council?"

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

"The minutes of meetings of the Council of Agriculture are not public property. I will inquire whether the members of the Council have any objection to furnishing the information desired, and, if not, I will advise the hon. member later."

PAPERS.

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

Return of all schools in operation on the 30th June, 1923, with the attendance of pupils and the status and emoluments of the teachers employed.

Annual report of the Department of Public Lands for the year 1922.

HOSPITALS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I do not propose to duplicate a number of the arguments which have been raised this afternoon. I think the main question for debate at the present time is the inequitable method which is proposed to be adopted in raising this revenue. In days gone by we had the example of the Brisbane General Hospital before us. Many of us for a number of years were contributors to that hospital, and unfortunately it must be admitted that a number of those who ought voluntarily to have given contributions to the hospital were not seized with the fact that the hospital required maintenance, and got out of what we might call their just dues. It has been a recognised principle for many years that the man who can afford is expected to give donations to charitable institutions, and above all to hospitals, for the sake of those who are so unfortunate as not to be able to pay for nursing and medical assistance in their time of trouble. The voluntary system was tried and it was not a success. It got so bad that I remember that at one annual meeting of the Brisbane General Hospital the committee admitted that they were worried to death, not with managing the affairs of the hospital but with raising revenue. It seems to me that the principle which the Minister is adopting in this Bill is going to work unfairly in not distributing the hospital tax as far as possible over the whole of the community. It is true that 60 per cent. of the required revenue is to be contributed by the Government, but we know that a large proportion of that necessarily must be paid—the whole of it, as a matter of fact—by the people who pay income tax. It is unfortunate for the community that there is a large number of people who do not receive sufficient wages to come within the scope of the Income Tax Act; but the fact remains that only a comparatively small number of the community are assessed for income tax. The 60 per cent. contribution from the Government to the hospitals in connection with upkeep will come mainly from people who pay income tax and land tax. The remaining 40 per cent. is to be a charge upon the local authorities. Year by year the charges on local authorities are increasing. Whenever anything fresh is introduced it is placed on the local authorities. The tax will fall on people of moderate means, some of whom are not in a position to pay income tax. The tax on their freeholds already is very burdensome, and it is proposed to put this further tax upon them.

The HOME SECRETARY: What tax are you referring to—the municipal tax?

Mr. KELSO: All sorts of taxes which are passed on to the local authorities. The hon. gentleman must know that a very large proportion of the revenue of the local authori-

ties at the present time is disbursed in connection with these taxes. As a matter of fact, I do not think I am going beyond the mark in saying that fully 50 per cent. of the revenue of local authorities has been earmarked for all the special duties which are cast upon the land. (Government dissent.) The leader of the Country party knows more about it than I do, and I am prepared to take his statement. When you come to take the balance you find that there are certainly some departmental charges which are only fair, but on the whole is it any wonder that the ratepayers are calling out for roads and other facilities which they expect the local authorities to give them? Now on top of it all you have this hospital tax! I want to emphasise the case of the man who owns property and provides for that class in the community who unfortunately are not able to provide houses for themselves, that is to say, who has houses to let.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He gets a rental for them, though.

Mr. KELSO: Just so; but the argument which is always put is that the tenant pays the whole of that rental and the landlord gets off scot-free. In section 8 of the Fair Rents Act of 1920—which I think is generally known in Brisbane as the "Unfair Rents Act"—is this direction to the magistrate—

"In determining the fair rent the Court shall ascertain the unimproved value of the land whereon the dwelling-house is erected and the value of the dwelling-house which value shall be the cost of the dwelling-house to the owner up to the date of the hearing less such fair and reasonable sum as may be estimated for any depreciation."

The vital thing I want to draw attention to is in subsection (2)—

"The Court shall determine the fair rent at a sum not exceeding £10 pounds per centum of the total value of the land and dwelling-house ascertained under subsection 1 hereof."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He gets his 10 per cent.

Mr. KELSO: That may be so on the face of it, but I can assure the hon. gentleman that nobody who has property to let finds that 10 per cent. is adequate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: 10 per cent. free of all charges.

Mr. KELSO: No.

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

Mr. KELSO: I connect them in this way, that I think it is unfair that 40 per cent. of the cost of the hospitals should be placed on the local authorities. The local authority ratepayers comprise persons who own and live in houses and other persons who own houses and let them. The Bill imposes an unfair burden on a section of the community. It is a direct tax on the owner of property. It would be quite fair if this Fair Rents Act were not in operation, because the landlord could pass it on to the tenant. There are certain burdens which he is prepared to take himself, and he has been taking them, but the reason why so many

[Mr. Kelso.]

people are hunting for houses is to be found in the operations of the Fair Rents Act, which is preventing people from investing money in houses.

Mr. KIRWAN: Nonsense.

Mr. KELSO: The incidence of the taxation of this Government prevents people from providing houses for letting in order to accommodate people who have unfortunately no means of their own.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELSO: I think I am in order in claiming that it is unfair for the Minister to impose on property a tax which cannot be passed on to the whole of the community. If there is any tax which everybody should be willing to pay, it is a hospital tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Those who are not ratepayers pay in another way.

Mr. KELSO: In most cases the owners of property are persons who by thrift and looking after their businesses have accumulated some money. I do not suppose hon. members on the other side will have any objection to that. In fact I feel pretty certain that members on the front bench are in a very fair position and have a fair share of this world's goods. People in such circumstances look about for an investment, and putting money into house property was at one time a very popular form of investment. There may have been some abuses, but the landlord in Brisbane was a very reasonable man on the whole, and competition regulated the rents. Now another tax is to be imposed on the investor; another blow is to be aimed at him; another deterrent to his endeavours to provide for the wants of the community in respect of housing, and at the same time get a legitimate return for his money. This is another tax which cannot be passed on, and I think the Minister will be well advised to reconsider that aspect of the case.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is that why you are objecting?

Mr. KELSO: I am suggesting that, if he is determined to impose this tax on the community, it is only a fair thing that an alteration should be made in the Fair Rents Act, whereby all rents and taxes shall be paid by the tenant. The hon. gentleman must know that out of the 10 per cent. laid down in the Act the landlord has to keep his house in repair, and anybody who has had a lot to do with dwelling-houses—and I claim to have had considerable experience in that line for a number of years—knows that it is necessary to put away reserves for maintenance and repairs.

The SPEAKER: Order! Although the hon. member may be unfortunate in speaking at this late stage of the debate, and whilst I do not want to curtail discussion, I would point out that he is repeating arguments which have been used by hon. members who have preceded him; and hon. members are not in order in repeating arguments which have been used by other hon. members.

Mr. KELSO: I do not desire to disobey your ruling in any way, Mr. Speaker. I think I was quite in order in pointing out a way by which the 40 per cent. of the cost of hospitals could be borne by local

authorities in a fairer and more equitable way, and even at this late hour I commend the matter to the attention of the Minister.

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

COMMITTEE.

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

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

Clause 2—"Interpretation."

Mr. TAYLOR (Windsor): I move the insertion after the word "association" on line 23, page 2, of the words—

"for each such sum of one pound so contributed by such company, firm, or association."

Paragraph (c) reads—

"A person nominated as a contributor by any company, firm, or association which during the year has distributed to a hospital within the district not less than £1 in one or more sums out of the moneys of the company, firm, or association."

If my amendment is accepted, the paragraph will read—

"A person nominated as a contributor by any company, firm, or association which during the year has contributed to a hospital within the district not less than £1 in one or more sums out of the moneys out of the company, firm, or association for each such sum of £1 so contributed by such company, firm, or association."

It will be noticed that the very first line of paragraph (d) reads—

"A person or persons nominated. . ."

Under paragraph (c) the company, firm, or association can only nominate one person as a contributor, whereas under paragraph (d), because it happens to be an association of employees, they can nominate ten, fifteen, or twenty contributors if they so desire, provided they contribute the necessary funds. For every £1 contributed under paragraph (d) one person can be nominated as a contributor and have a vote in hospital affairs, whereas under paragraph (c) that is not permitted. I do not know whether the Minister has noted that or not. If under one paragraph five contributors can be nominated for a contribution of £5, then the same thing should be allowed under the other paragraph. There should be no discrimination between different classes of contributors, and I hope the Minister will accept the amendment, which is a reasonable one.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, Mount Morgan): I certainly do not intend to accept the amendment. The leader of the Opposition made out what he may deem a good case, but when it is analysed it will be found to have a totally different bearing from what he suggests. The hon. gentleman justifies the acceptance of his amendment on the ground that the amount of subscriptions should affect the ballot. What the hon. gentleman is really attempting to bring about is the introduction of plural voting. This matter has been dealt with in other classes of legislation. Take my own

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electorate of Mount Morgan. The Mount Morgan Company, by the expenditure of £100, could nominate only one person; but if the amendment was carried, it could contribute sufficient to get a controlling interest in the hospital.

Mr. TAYLOR: Has the company not got certain officers and an outfit on the mine in case of accident?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; but I do not want to enter into a discussion about the Mount Morgan Company. I am only citing it because it is in my electorate. I want to point out the difference in the subscriptions from the two sources. Under paragraph (d) a body of men can co-operatively subscribe a certain sum of money, and for every £1 subscribed they return the same number of names as contributors. That is quite different to a firm or association practically purchasing the right to a certain number of proxies. I think all hon. members believe in the principle of one man one vote, and if I accepted the amendment, I think I should be departing from that principle.

Amendment (Mr. Taylor) negatived.

Mr. TAYLOR (Windsor): I beg to move the omission, on line 24, in paragraph (d), of the words—

“or persons.”

The Minister would not accept my previous amendment, which I contend was a reasonable one, and I consider that in paragraph (d) he is really introducing the plural voting system.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): The amendment is very interesting, coming from the source it does. The question is whether the voluntary system should be injured by tampering with the main principle contained in the measure. We must start in this matter with a full knowledge that contributors are not entitled to any medical benefits at all. The object of these institutions is to deal with cases of people who cannot help themselves. No matter how much a man contributes, be it £1 or a portion of £1, he is not entitled to any medical benefits. The leader of the Opposition suggests that we were drying up the fountains of mercy. The principle contained in paragraph (d) has been in operation in many of the industrial centres for many years. The system has operated with regard to every hospital throughout the State, and it has brought a considerable amount of revenue to the various hospitals. If the hon. gentleman analyses his amendment, he will find that it has not the bearing that he indicates, and he will find that it will prevent very largely certain contributions to hospitals. I hope that he will withdraw his amendment.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): If I understand the Minister aright, it is proposed in the Bill that where employees contribute a certain sum from their weekly wages for the hospital, for every £1 subscribed some individual will have a vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: The body will have a vote for every £1 subscribed.

Mr. ROBERTS: I referred to this matter during the second reading of the Bill, and illustrated the case of the Toowoomba Hospital, to which the railway employees, by weekly contributions from their wages, last year paid £526 3s. 4d. There might be 300

contributors connected with that sum; and am I to understand that there will be 300 voters?

Mr. GLEDSON: There will be one vote for each £1 contributed. If they contribute £526, they will have 526 votes.

Mr. ROBERTS: Is it the individual who contributes the money who will vote, or will they nominate some representative who will have these 526 votes? The Minister said that there would be no plural voting. I do not mind so much about men who contribute a weekly sum being allowed to vote at the annual meeting of a hospital committee. I do not object to that, but I object to a person, or perhaps six persons, going to the annual meeting as representing 526 votes for the contribution of £526.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is nothing of the sort suggested.

[5 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When they send in £60 they send in the names of sixty persons with it.

The HOME SECRETARY: That has been the practice for years in Queensland. In Mount Morgan they give £1,600, and send in the names of 1,600 persons with the contribution.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister is talking of persons contributing in an area where the hospital is right at their doors. I am talking about contributors to the Toowoomba Hospital, some of whom may be working 200 miles away. It would not be convenient for those men to attend.

The HOME SECRETARY: Each contributor of £1 has the right to vote if he likes.

Mr. ROBERTS: If I understand that the person who contributes the money is the only person entitled to vote, I am not objecting.

Mr. TAYLOR (Windsor): The definition of “contributor” is—

“A person or persons nominated as a contributor or contributors by any association of employees, which during the year has contributed to a hospital within the district not less than one pound in one or more sums out of the moneys of such association or out of moneys accumulated by weekly deductions or contributions from wages of members of such association for each sum of one pound so contributed by such association.”

My reading of that definition is that, if an association contributes £20, it can nominate twenty persons as the contributors.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; those persons would have contributed towards that money.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Paragraph (d) specifically provides that for each sum of £1 the name of one person will be sent in as the contributor. Does that also apply to a firm or company? There is discrimination there.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is possibly not aware that the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition has been defeated. The amendment before the Committee now is to omit the words “or persons” in the first line of paragraph (d).

Mr. KERR: If this amendment is carried, it will put paragraph (d) in the same relation

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as paragraph (e). That is the aim of the "Opposition.

Mr. GLEDSON: It will not do anything of the sort.

Mr. KERR: It is not a question of an injustice at all. It is a question of equity. If it is reasonable in one instance to allow a vote for every £1 contributed, it is reasonable to allow a vote for £1 in another instance. We may discuss this amendment as involving the principle of one vote for £1. I contend that the Minister, on his argument on the previous amendment, should accept this one. He is having it both ways. There should be no discrimination in the contributions made from any source, if it is intended to make the Bill a success, because the money is all going to the one cause. This amendment should be accepted to place all classes of contributors on an equitable footing.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): These two words, "or persons" in paragraph (d), are really surplusage. If paragraph (e) read, "A person or persons," it would be brought into line with the wording of paragraph (d). It is very hard to determine why the words "or persons" are included in the latter paragraph. The Minister would be well advised to delete the words "or persons" and make the clause read on all-fours with the qualifications in paragraph (e), which is confined to the singular "person" and does not include the plural "persons."

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): Hon. members opposite are attempting to deprive men who have had the right to vote for years of a vote at the annual meeting of hospitals. The whole of the coalminers at Ipswich and Maryborough and the miners of Mount Morgan will be deprived of that right to vote if the amendment is carried, and they will probably cease to contribute.

Mr. KELSO: The amendment will put paragraphs (c) and (d) on the same footing.

The HOME SECRETARY: It will not. I do not want people who do not subscribe in any way to have the right to vote. It will only be those who make contributions from their wages who will be given that right.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): The words "or persons" are put in paragraph (d) but not in paragraph (c).

The HOME SECRETARY: What you seek to accomplish has been defeated in paragraph (c), and because it was defeated you are now adopting a dog-in-the-manger policy.

Mr. KELSO: We do not want to adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy, but we want to secure the policy of one man one vote that the Minister has enunciated. I claim that the words "or persons" are surplusage. If the amendment was adopted, paragraph (c) would read, "A person," and paragraph (d) would also read, "A person." It is an anomaly to have it in the singular in one case and plural in the other.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The point raised by the Minister regarding the contributions of a firm, and not by an individual appears in paragraph (d). It is an unfair discrimination, which should not be. The amendment I propose places both paragraphs on the same footing.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): The amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition does not place them on the same footing. His

amendment is to delete the words "or persons" in paragraph (d), which, in effect, would mean that any association could only appoint one person in respect of all the money contributed through that association, while in the case of a contribution by a firm every one of its members would have the right to vote. An employee is not entitled to vote unless his contribution is £1 or more. The amendment seeks to give men who contribute hundreds of pounds one vote only.

The HOME SECRETARY: Firms need not contribute their donations in a lump sum. They can put it in the names of different members of the firm.

Mr. GLEDSON: Every member of the firm would be able to have a vote, but the proposal is that the whole of the money sent in by an association should only entitle that association to one vote. I am glad that the Minister has seen through the purpose of the leader of the Opposition, and that he will not accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The present reading of the Bill is simply going back to the principle of giving money a vote instead of the individual. If an association containing twenty members contributes 6d. per week for each member, or £26 per year, it will mean that the association will have twenty-six votes for the £26 paid in, although there are only twenty members in the association. That is what the Minister said.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman did say so, and this is merely going back to the principle of giving money a vote instead of the individual.

The HOME SECRETARY: It has been the practice in the State for years.

Mr. MOORE: That does not say that it is right. It is a most extraordinary proposition to come from the party opposite to say that money should have a vote. The Minister admits that if the association sends in the names of fifty men, each a contributing member, it will be entitled to fifty votes. That attitude is a most extraordinary one for the Minister to take up.

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 6, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 7—"Members of Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board"—

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the omission, after the word "contributors," on line 4, page 5, of the words—

"every hospital respectively,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"any hospital."

Paragraph (a) reads—

"Three members shall be elected by the contributors to every hospital respectively within the district to which this Act has been applied."

That appears to me to be rather indefinite, and I cannot quite understand the wording, "every hospital respectively." It seems to me that, to make the paragraph correct, those words should be omitted, and the words "any hospital" inserted.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I really do not think the amendment is necessary; it is

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only a matter of wording. However, I will accept the amendment, as the clause will probably read better.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): According to the paragraph as it is proposed to amend it—

“Three members shall be elected by the contributors to any hospital.”

Under the Bill some hospitals are exempt, and I should like to know whether the amendment may be interpreted to bring in any hospital not under the Board, and whether any person would have a vote in regard to such hospital?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): If the hon. member will read further, he will find that the provision says—

“to which this Act has been applied.”

That makes the position definite.

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 8—“*Constitution of other Boards*”—

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I have a consequential amendment. I beg to move the omission, after the word “to,” on line 41, of the words—

“every hospital respectively”

with a view to inserting the words—

“any hospital.”

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 9, 10, and 11, put and passed.

Clause 12—“*Disabilities, etc.; interests in contracts*”—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word “punishments,” on line 14, page 7, of the words—

“Provided that nothing herein shall disqualify any person from being or continuing a member or render any person liable to punishment solely because he is concerned or interested in a transaction with the Board or any such hospital in respect of—

- (a) A lease, sale, or purchase of lands; or an agreement for such lease, sale, or purchase; or
- (b) An agreement for the loan of money or any security for the payment of money; or
- (c) A contract entered into by an incorporated company for the general benefit of such company; or
- (d) A contract for the publication of advertisements in a public journal; or
- (e) The sale of goods to or the performance of any work for the Board or any such hospital *bonâ fide* in the ordinary course of business and not pursuant to any written contract, and not exceeding the sum or value of twenty pounds in any one year.”

The clause as it stands is a fairly drastic one. I do not know whether it will have a very great effect in Brisbane, but in some of the country districts it might act harshly.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I realised that after the Bill was drafted, and will accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

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Clauses 13 to 23, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 24—“*Board to frame estimate and determine amount of contributions; contribution of Treasurer*”—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the omission, on line 48, of the words—

“sixty per centum of,”

with the object of moving a further amendment at the bottom of the page providing for the appropriation. The whole question in regard to the Bill is the basis on which money is to be raised for the hospitals. Hon. members on this side consider that the basis of collection is inequitable and unjust to one section of the community.

My object in moving the amendment is to provide for what we consider a more equitable system of taxation and one which will not press heavily on any individual, but will have a basic principle underlying it. The local authorities have various methods of raising taxation, and I would like to quote from this very useful book on “Local Government Law and Finance,” by Mr. C. E. Chuter, Assistant Under Secretary to the Home Department. On page 22, under the heading “Local Government Finance Based, in the Main, on Taxation of Land—Charges,” Mr. Chuter says—

“This appears if reference again be made to section 59, from which it will be seen that the local authority may provide land, buildings, etc., for almost any purpose of work, and afford the use thereof to the inhabitants of the area or any persons on such conditions, either without fee or charge, or for such reasonable fees or charges as the local authority may prescribe by by-law. Construing this section by itself, it would seem that all services (even roads) could be paid for by some form of charge on the user, and not by taxation on the land. It, however, cannot be so construed, because there is the provision which requires that a general rate must be levied each year, and the compulsory special rates. But the general rate need not be more than the minimum prescribed, and therefore subject to this limitation, and the other provisions mentioned, all services could be paid for by charges, and not taxes on the land. On the other hand, all services can be paid for out of the proceeds of a tax on land, and with the exception of compulsory special rates, one tax could be levied to cover all services.”

The principle laid down is that under definite circumstances it is possible for a local authority to secure revenue by what they call a “charge” instead of a levy on land. Our opinion all along has been that a tax on land is not a fair principle in a country like Queensland, as it applies not only in a city but also in connection with farming lands outside, where the individual who is making a living at one occupation is going to be taxed ten times as heavily as the individual who is making a living in another occupation. When speaking on the second reading, I said that this was an easy method of raising revenue, and that it was a simple solution of the difficulty of hospital finance. I recognise that there is no easier method than to go to the ratepayer and tax him, because he cannot get away. The land is there, and it is a charge

on him indefinitely; but it is not a question of the easiness of taxation. It is a question of justice to the individual that I am endeavouring to secure. I do not know that any argument has been adduced which proves that the system proposed is an equitable system. The only argument put forward is that the tax is easy to collect. That kind of argument does not constitute a sufficient reason for bringing in such a drastic measure and putting the taxation practically on one section of the people. I want to see the taxation as broadly based as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: Before this Bill was introduced a message was received from His Excellency the Governor "recommending the necessary appropriation to give effect to the Bill." "May" lays it down that, when such a recommendation is received, no extra charge on the Consolidated Revenue can be permitted unless an additional message is received from His Excellency. I regret, therefore, that the amendment moved by the hon. member for Aubigny, which would provide for an additional charge on the Consolidated Revenue, cannot be accepted, and I must rule it out of order.

Mr. MOORE: I regret your ruling very much, Mr. Kirwan, because I thought the Minister was going to accept it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I was going to raise a question of order on the same point.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 25 to 31, both inclusive, put and passed.

Schedule, Part I.—"Rules to be observed in the election of members of the Board"—

Clause 9—"Voting by postal ballot"—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the omission, on lines 42 to 48, page 17, of the words—

"He shall then examine the declaration and attestation attached to the ballot-paper, and if they are regular shall mark the part containing the same and also the other part of the ballot-paper with the same number, beginning with the number 1 for the first vote dealt with, 2 for the next, and so on, in regular numerical order for all the votes allowed by him."

On page 18, clause 13 of the schedule provides—

"At the time of opening the ballot-box the returning officer shall produce, for the information of the scrutineers, the roll of persons entitled to vote, as well as an alphabetical list signed by him of all voters to whom he has posted or issued ballot-papers.

"The number marked by the returning officer upon a ballot-paper, and being identical with the number marked by him on the attestation and declaration, shall at a scrutiny be conclusive evidence of the vote of the person making such declaration."

If the returning officer is going to mark the declaration "No. 1" and he is also going to mark the ballot-paper "No. 1" the scrutineer will know whom the voting-paper is from, as it will not be very difficult for him to remember the number on the ballot-paper.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think you are exaggerating a little bit. It is necessary to have a check when the recount takes place.

Mr. MOORE: If the returning officer places a distinguishing mark on the declaration and he places the same distinguishing mark on the ballot-paper, anybody with an ounce of sense who wants to know how two or three individuals voted could easily remember the corresponding mark on the declaration that was put on the ballot-paper.

Mr. PEASE: What does it matter how they vote?

Mr. MOORE: If that is so, what is the object of putting in this proviso—

"If the returning officer or any scrutineer or poll clerk makes any mark upon any list of voters, or makes or writes any note or memorandum denoting, or whereby he can know or remember, for what candidate any voter has voted at an election, he shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds."

The HOME SECRETARY: How would you know that man was entitled to vote?

[5.30 p.m.]

Mr. MOORE: The returning officer checks the declaration and attestation attached to the ballot-paper to see if a person is entitled to vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are proposing to omit the whole of the paragraph.

Mr. MOORE: I do not want to omit the whole of it. What I propose is that he should omit the marks he puts on—one on the bottom and the one on the top.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would be absolutely impossible then to trace any "crook" voting.

Mr. MOORE: How can the "crook" voting take place? The declaration is attached to the ballot-paper. What is the good of putting this in, and then saying that, if a man remembers anything about it, he will be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50? He must remember it if he wants to do so.

The HOME SECRETARY: This is a similar clause to one which was put in the Local Authorities Act.

Mr. MOORE: I have been the returning officer at local authority elections, and I have never yet put a mark on the declaration and ballot-paper in this way. If I had done so, we would have had the scrutineers remembering how people voted.

The HOME SECRETARY: The paper goes into the ballot-box.

Mr. MOORE: It is put in the ballot-box and counted afterwards. The Minister cannot say that anyone could not remember the marks he saw put on if he wanted to find out how a person voted. He would know how that individual voted. Personally, I would not care a hang whether it was known how they voted or not, but what is the good of a penalty if a distinguishing mark is put on the paper? We have the ballot-papers gummed down and take all sorts of precautions, and what is the good of destroying the secrecy of the ballot by placing marks on the ballot-paper which anyone can remember?

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I hope the Minister will agree to some alteration.

The HOME SECRETARY: The amendment would destroy the possibility of any check at all.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: The amendment is a reasonable one. I take it that the object of the leader of the Country party is to preserve the secrecy of the ballot, and he showed that, if the course outlined in the clause as it stands is followed, the secrecy of the ballot will not be preserved. If the Minister assures the Committee that the object is to enable the returning officer or presiding officer to ascertain, for checking purposes, how any individual voted and the reason for so doing, that is another matter. The secrecy of the ballot should be preserved. The leader of the Country party has shown that under the clause it will be possible to ascertain how a person voted. I would not care whether the presiding officer or anyone else knew how I voted, but there are some people who will not vote if they have an idea that there is a possibility of it being known how they voted. I trust that the Minister, as representing a party which claims to be ardently in favour of the secrecy of the ballot, will either give some reason for the secrecy of the ballot being destroyed or else accept the amendment. There is a principle involved here which affects a large section of the community.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I support the amendment. I do not care who knows how I vote, but we should preserve the secrecy of the ballot. I do not think the Minister is correct in saying that people would not remember to whom these markings referred, as there are meddlesome people who are always trying to find out these things, and the hon. gentleman will be well advised to accept the amendment, or something similar in its place.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will endeavour to meet the leader of the Country party.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): In order to allow the Minister to move his amendment, I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I move the omission in subclause (13), on lines 44 to 49, page 17, of the words—

“shall mark the part containing the same and also the other part of the ballot-paper with the same number, beginning with the number 1 for the first vote dealt with, 2 for the next, and so on, in regular numerical order for all the votes allowed by him,”

with a view to inserting the words—

“shall separate the declaration and attestation.”

I think the desire of the hon. member for Aubigny will be achieved by this amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Stopford*) agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I move the omission, on lines 12 to 15, page 18, of the words—

“The number marked by the returning officer upon a ballot-paper, and being identical with the number marked by him on the attestation and declaration, shall at a scrutiny be conclusive evidence of the vote of the person making such declaration.”

Amendment (*Mr. Stopford*) agreed to.

[*Hon. J. G. Appel.*

Part II.—“*Rules relating to the proceedings and business of the Board*”—

Clause 22—“*Officers*”—

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I move the insertion, after the word “from,” on line 50, page 21, of the words—

“the Insurance Commissioner or from.”

There will be a further amendment on the following line, inserting after the word “company,” the words—

“approved of by the Minister.”

The clause of the schedule will then read—

“Before any officer entrusted by the Board with the custody or control of moneys by virtue of his office enters thereon, the Board shall take sufficient security from the Insurance Commissioner or from some association or joint stock company approved of by the Minister carrying on in Queensland the business of a guarantee society for the faithful execution of such office by such officer.”

Amendment (*Mr. Stopford*) agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I move the insertion, after the word “company,” on line 51, page 21, of the words—

“approved of by the Minister.”

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I do not think that this amendment is necessary. Guarantee societies have to get approval from the Government to carry on business, and surely it is not necessary that such a company should be approved of again by the Home Secretary when the Board is taking out a fidelity guarantee bond. The fact that the company is carrying on business prior to the introduction of the Bill indicates that it is a reliable company.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): If hon. members consider the position they will see that it is advisable, in view of the responsibility which the Government and the Minister have under the Bill, that the company which insures the Board officers should be a company approved of by the Minister.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I support the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. It is well recognised that companies carrying on business in Queensland have to make a deposit with the Government, and surely that is sufficient guarantee without the necessity of getting the approval of the Minister.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I wish to support the contention of the leader of the Opposition. We are giving the Board certain important powers, and surely it will have sufficient discretion to choose an insurance company with whom to take out a fidelity guarantee bond. If the Minister persists, it might lend colour to a suggestion that a Minister desires to support a particular company.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. KELSO: I think the Minister will be well advised to leave the amendment out. It might be suggested that a particular Minister, whoever he might be, had a particular company in view. Surely the Board can be trusted to choose the Insurance Commissioner or some private insurance company.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): All insurance companies have to get the approval of the Government before they commence business and deposit sums of money as security for the bonâ fide carrying out of the business. A second safeguard is that the Board consists of men appointed by the Government or elected by the other contributors to the hospital funds. Under those conditions surely the Board might be trusted to do the right thing. I trust that, on further consideration, the Minister will not insist on the amendment, otherwise the thing is resolving itself into a farce. I confess that it appears to me that the Minister has sufficient responsibility without interfering in these small matters. It seems so trifling and piffing to think that, when a person has to take out a fidelity policy, the matter has to be referred to the Minister! I could understand the amendment if a matter of Government policy or principle were involved. Then it might be referred to the head of the department, but here it is merely a matter of a fidelity bond, and all this circumlocution and red tape are to be used!

The matter is so absolutely trifling that I cannot understand the Minister suggesting it in Committee. I hope that he will not insist upon the amendment, but that he will at least allow the Board to have some vested control over the matters that it will have to administer.

Amendment (*Mr. Stopford*) agreed to.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the omission, on lines 10 and 11, clause 24, page 22, of the words—

“Any such penalty recovered by any person shall be retained by him.”

The HOME SECRETARY: I am prepared to accept that amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) agreed to.

Clause 31—“*Leasing of lands*”—

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the insertion after the word “use,” on line 62, clause 31, of the words—

“for any period not exceeding five years.”

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. gentleman will alter his amendment to read “seven years” instead of “five years,” I am prepared to accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*), by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word “use,” on line 62, clause 31, of the words—

“for any period not exceeding seven years.”

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

THIRD READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

FRUIT MARKETING ORGANISATION BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER FOR THIRD READING.

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

“That this Order be discharged from the paper and the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 7 and 15.”

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

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

Clause 7—“*Control of fruit marketing by Committee of Direction*”—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word “Queensland,” on line 48, page 3, of the word—

“only.”

The amendment is to make the clause quite clear.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I do not think there is the slightest danger of those interested going outside the State to trade. The Minister has been very wise in making this very proper amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Gillies*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 15—“*Regulations*”—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word “fourteen,” on line 35, page 8, of the word—

“sitting.”

The amendment is to make it quite clear that notice of disallowance of any regulation must be given within fourteen sitting days of the Assembly after the regulation has been laid before it.

Amendment (*Mr. Gillies*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

[7 p.m.]

SALARIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): No explanation is necessary for this Bill. I therefore beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

Hon. J. Stopford.]

THIRD READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I am justified, in rising to move the second reading of this Bill, in saying I consider this is one of the most important Bills that we have dealt with this session. I might be permitted to give a brief history of the co-operative movement before I proceed to deal with the principles of the Bill. The Bill does not compel primary producers to join associations, but enables them to do so. A co-operative movement can only be founded if the farmers are prepared to carry it on. It is somewhat strange in a country like Australia that, so far as I can learn, there is no legislation on the statute book which encourages co-operation amongst farmers and protects them as this Bill seeks to do. It has been truly said that the farmer, and everyone else for that matter in a civilised community, can adopt one of three attitudes to his neighbour. He can ignore him, compete with him, or co-operate with him. The farmer very often has to ignore his neighbour in Queensland because he lives so far away from him; but, if he is going to compete with him, it is a blue look out for the farmer. The only alternative is in the form of co-operative societies, not only for production and transport but for manufacturing and marketing. This Bill seeks to make it possible for the farmers to join in different forms of associations or companies for production, transport, manufacturing and marketing of products, and even for purchasing purposes. That can all be done under the provisions of this Bill.

It is difficult in a country like Queensland for the farmers to link up and form organisations as has been done in closer settled countries, such as Denmark. Denmark's system of co-operation is due to the fact that the farmers are highly educated and live close to one another. Some difficulty is experienced in Queensland, due to our broad spaces and isolation, for the farmers to become organised and to form farmers' unions for the purposes of trading, marketing, or buying their requirements.

I am going to deal with the co-operative movement, showing the progress that has been made in other countries. We have made some progress in Queensland. Our central sugar-mills in the early days were largely co-operative concerns. When Dr. Maxwell was controlling the sugar industry for the Government, the system of co-operative mills was established.

Then we have co-operative butter factories, which have made great progress in the State. It is pleasing to know that 98 per cent. of our butter and 90 per cent. of our cheese output is manufactured co-operatively. It is only a few short years since the co-operative movement was started and only a few years back when the whole of the manufacture of our dairy produce was practically in the hands of private enterprise. The farmer has only gone part of the way with regard

[*Hon. W. N. Gillies.*]

to the co-operative handling of dairy produce, and he needs to go further and market the whole of that produce co-operatively. Some steps will be made in that direction under this Bill.

I shall quote what two authorities have said with regard to the necessity for legislation to induce co-operation amongst our primary producers. Mr. J. L. Woolcock, the Parliamentary draftsman, said—

"At the present time bodies of persons are associated together for the carrying on of co-operative operations and some of these are registered under the Companies Acts and some are registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, but neither of those Acts are sufficiently comprehensive to enable co-operative operations to be carried on under proper control, or afford sufficient elasticity for effective working and management."

I think a statement like that is worthy of note, coming as it does from a gentleman like Mr. Woolcock.

Mr. L. R. Macgregor, the Director of the Council of Agriculture, in a memorandum to me after the Bill had been printed—and I want to say that Mr. Macgregor has given me valuable assistance in framing this Bill—dealt with a similar aspect of the question. If there is one thing more than another on which Mr. Macgregor does pride himself, and I think he is justified in having that pride, it is on the fact that he made a complete study of the co-operative movement, not only in Western Australia, but in the "old country" and South Africa, before he came to this country. His assistance and advice has therefore been gratefully received. He wrote—

"I can honestly say that I believe this measure to be one which will do your Government and yourself every credit and which will be of exceedingly great benefit to the agricultural industry here, and will, I think, be a model which will be availed of by other States. It is, in my opinion, in advance of the South African measure, which has hitherto been regarded as the best in the British Empire."

I said in my opening remarks when introducing this Bill that my first ideas with regard to this legislation were given to me by Mr. Stirling Taylor, in Melbourne, when he called my attention to the South African Act. In due course, I was able to get that Act and study it, and I agree with Mr. Macgregor, when he says that this measure is, if anything, an improvement on the South African measure, which hitherto has been regarded as a model in the British Empire. Of course, we have brought the Bill into line with the requirements of the State of Queensland, and I believe that it will be copied by other States as time goes on.

It has been truly said that you cannot make people good by Act of Parliament, but you can make it possible by Act of Parliament to encourage people to be good, and in the same way you can encourage farmers to help themselves; and that is what this Bill seeks to do. You cannot alter the shape of people's heads by Act of Parliament—at least, not in one generation, although you might in three or four generations. If you can alter the shape of the people's heads, you cannot make them intelligent, but you can give them opportunities

to work out their own destiny, and that is what this Bill seeks to do. There is a great field for co-operative production, co-operative manufacture, transport, the opening up of new markets, the exploitation of existing markets, the standardising of products, the purchasing of supplies, etc. These are great fields that are open to the farmer in the matter of co-operation. Again I say the farmer has three alternatives—to ignore his neighbour, to compete with him, or to co-operate with him. We believe that the farmers should co-operate, not only in manufacture but in transport, in the finding of new markets, and in the purchasing of their supplies. It has been said that the farmer sells wholesale and buys retail, and I have said repeatedly that that order of things should be reversed—that he should sell retail and buy wholesale. In other words, he should come in direct contact as far as possible with consumers through his own marketing channels, and so far as his requirements are concerned—his machinery, his fertilisers, his seeds, etc.—he should buy them wholesale, and in that way cut out the middleman, and come into direct contact with the makers and the consumers of the articles he requires, and in direct contact with the people who consume the products of the farm. In that way alone can the farmers become prosperous and be placed on a sound footing. The essence of success in co-operation is, first of all, an ardent belief in co-operation. If the farmer has no faith in co-operation, co-operation amongst the farmers cannot be a success. We know some schemes have been an apparent success where a small number of farmers did not believe in co-operation—where, as a matter of fact, they were practically forced, for shame's sake, to take a few shares in a butter factory, although they did not believe in it. I remember when the Byron Bay Butter Factory was started—then the largest butter factory in the Southern Hemisphere—the newspaper in the district all the time was full of letters, mostly anonymous, from the friends of proprietary manufacturing companies, which said that “the farmer's job was in the yard—that he did not know anything about machinery, and what did he know about the manufacture of butter—what business experience did he have?” Since then monuments have been erected to the memory of many of these people who criticised the movement to start a co-operative butter factory at Byron Bay. When that butter factory became a success, they used to expand their chests and talk about “the success of our factory.” Many people believe in co-operation when they see the benefits derived from co-operation, but it is difficult to get those people to fall into line until it is an assured success. The success of co-operation can be briefly summarised under four different heads—belief in co-operation, leadership, loyalty of the members, and sufficient business.

Those four things are essential to the success of co-operation amongst the farmers—belief in co-operation, first of all—and, after all, probably the farmer, like everyone else, when his crops are growing well does not worry much about having his own butter factory. It is when he is down and out, when times are bad, or when he finds that he is being exploited that he realises the necessity for having his own butter factory. Then with regard to leadership; there is often a feeling that a good leader can be

obtained at a low salary. That he can succeed without help from the shareholders. Have faith in leadership, and a trusted leader ought to be well paid. The loyalty of members after a company has been established is absolutely essential. I know that from my own experience, extending over more than a quarter of a century, in connection with co-operative associations, both in this State and in New South Wales. When the co-operative butter factories started at Byron Bay and other places in New South Wales, the leading proprietary concerns in that State—Prescott's, the New South Wales Butter Company—I forget the name of the third—were operating in the Byron Bay district. Many farmers, even though they had shares in their co-operative concerns, if the proprietary companies offered them 4d. or 4d. a gallon more for their milk or cream, would take it to the proprietary concerns.

Mr. KIRWAN: The co-operative bacon factories here had the same experience.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It has been the experience of all co-operative movements, just the same as it has been in the industrial field amongst workers. When they try to organise there are private individuals who will always declare that they will be all right without joining the organisation. If those individuals were consistent, they would continue to work for 5s. a day for ten or twelve hours a day. The same thing applies to the co-operative movement—it is not confined to workers or farmers. All through human nature there is a tendency to get all the benefit possible without taking any of the risk or inconvenience in connection with co-operative concerns.

I want to briefly refer to a few things in connection with co-operative history before dealing with the principles of the Bill. Rochdale, a thriving industrial centre of South-east Lancashire, about 12 miles from Manchester, has the honour of being the birthplace of co-operation in Great Britain. Feeling the pinch of high prices and low wages, local industrialists combined to purchase the necessities of life. Out of small beginnings grew what has been called the great Rochdale movement, rooted in need, nourished with the certainty of immediate practical advantage, and vitalised with a spirit of mutual aid.

From a small trading venture has grown a great co-operative wholesale society, operating mainly on the purchasing side, intelligently led, and competently managed. Each branch of its activities has achieved a success that has riveted the attention of co-operators throughout the world. Its operations have extended manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing. Rochdale being in the centre of a system of water carriage through England, the attention of the co-operative pioneers of Rochdale was early given the possibility of controlling their own shipping. Success followed the initial enterprise, and to-day many of the necessities of life are conveyed to the industrialists of England on co-operative keels.

The Rochdale movement, or rather the principles underlying it, have been extended to other countries. Spurred by the example of the intelligent industrialists of England, industrialists in Australia and other countries have united for business ends. In New South Wales, particularly in the mining centres, where the principles of co-operation found fervent advocacy by

migrant miners, the Rochdale system has taken firm root.

Briefly, the system is one of pure co-operation, founded on mutual need, inspired with the ideal of social service. Its first aim was to provide necessary commodities at reasonable rates by direct purchase, and from these small beginnings has grown the vast co-operative enterprise of to-day known throughout the economic world as the Rochdale movement.

Such a movement, in my opinion, can only succeed when the social conscience of the people has been sufficiently developed to make a success of it.

Now, with regard to the question of co-operation. One authority says, in dealing with Germany—

"We must go back to the Seven Years' War in Germany to see the beginnings of the present system of agricultural co-operation. That war hit the noble landholders a terrific blow, leaving them landpoor in the superlative degree. They had acres and acres of land, but they had not a mark with which to cultivate it. To add to the confusion, Frederick the Great suspended all interest charges against debtors for a period of three years, and afterwards extended the period, thereby banishing the money-lender, and leaving the landowner with no power to get money.

"At this juncture there came upon the scene a Berlin business man, Herr Buhning, who had the ear of the great monarch. 'Require the nobles to pool their credit,' said he to Frederick, 'and then they can borrow money.' So a royal edict was issued, forcing the nobles to join the association whether they wanted to borrow money or not, and to make their lands liable, without limit, for all loans granted by the association. In that idea were born the two greatest factors in modern commercial life—the trust and co-operative credit association.

"The experiment worked like a charm. Soon the association found itself with unlimited credit in keeping with the unlimited liability it extended, and so the first *Landschaft* started. Others were formed voluntarily. And from that day to this, nearly a century and a-half, the associations of borrowers in Germany have thrived, and have made German agriculture the world's best example of the possibilities of the soil."

Another authority sums up the results of agricultural co-operation in Germany thus—

"About an hour's walk from Neuwid on the Rhine is situated, on the plateau bordering the Westerwald, the little village of Anhausen. The district is not fertile, and the inhabitants are small peasant proprietors, some with only sufficient land to graze an ox or a cow. An owner of 10 acres is a rich man. Before the year 1862 the village presented a sorry aspect—rickety buildings; untidy yards, in rainy weather running with filth; never a sight of a decently-piled manure heap; the inhabitants themselves ragged and immoral; drunkenness and quarrelling universal. Houses and oxen belonged, with few exceptions, to Jewish dealers. Agricultural implements were scanty and dilapidated; the badly-worked fields brought in poor returns. The

villagers had lost confidence and hope, and had become the serfs of dealers and usurers. To-day, Anhausen is a clean and friendly looking village, the buildings well kept, the farmyards clean even on workdays; there are orderly manure heaps on every farm. The inhabitants are well, if simply, clothed, and their manners are reputable. They own the cattle in their stalls. They are out of debt to usurers and dealers. Modern implements are used by nearly every farmer; the value of the farms has risen and the fields, carefully and fully cultivated, yield large crops. And this change, which is something more than statistics can express, is the work of agricultural co-operation."

It is well known that Raiffeisen, the father of co-operation, lived to see his ideals of banking on behalf of the peasant farmer realised all through Western Europe—

"Denmark furnishes a striking illustration of the success which has been achieved by the application of co-operative principles in the production, manufacture, and marketing of farm and dairy produce.

"The farmers in Denmark have applied co-operative principles in—

The production, manufacture, and marketing of butter;

The curing and marketing of bacon; and

The classification, packing, and marketing of eggs.

"The first co-operative dairy company in Denmark was formed in the year 1882.

"The first co-operative bacon curing establishment commenced operations in 1887.

"At the present time about 98 per cent. of the total production of milk raised within Denmark is treated in co-operative establishments.

"Not less than 90 per cent. of the production of bacon is manufactured in co-operatively owned bacon factories.

"There exists in Denmark a comprehensive system of co-operative supervision over every phase of dairying.

"The Danes have instituted a system of co-operative supervision which is exercised over the methods of—

Feeding of dairy stock;

The selection of dairy animals;

The testing of dairy herds;

The manufacture and classification of dairy produce; and

The determination of the prices at which dairy products shall be offered for sale.

"The question might be asked as to whether the foregoing functions have been discharged efficiently under co-operative supervision. The answer is emphatically, 'Yes.'"

In Denmark it is not necessary for the Agricultural Department to have its officers going round and seeing that the premises of the farmers are up to requirements, because the Danish farmers are sufficiently alive to their own interests to have their own inspectors. I look forward to the time when the dairy farmers of Queensland will be so progressive that it will not be necessary to have State

officials going round and telling them what to do in the matter of cleanliness. The same authority also says—

“Denmark is credited with practising the most advanced methods of animal husbandry, possesses dairy herds of highest average production, manufactures butter of high standard and quality which is noted for its uniformity in quality, and commands the highest price.

“Denmark supplied 67,000 tons of butter to Great Britain in 1922, Australia supplied 51,500 tons, and New Zealand 43,000 tons. These three countries contributed an aggregate of 160,000 tons of the 188,000 tons of butter imported into Great Britain during the year.

“It is estimated that not less than 90 per cent. of this large tonnage of butter was manufactured by factories operating under co-operative control.”

It is worthy of remark that no legislation has been introduced in Denmark to encourage co-operation. In Canada the United Grain Growers, Limited, provides strong evidence of successful co-operative business. Many other countries could be quoted, but I do not intend to weary the House by going into too many details.

Those who are sufficiently interested in the co-operative movement should read Shaw Desmond's book, “The Soul of Denmark,” in which there is a chapter “Where Denmark leads the World.” That is well worth reading by anyone who believes in the co-operative movement. South Africa started the co-operative movement four years after Queensland, and has made good progress. The Bill passed by the Union of South Africa is one to encourage co-operation in all its phases in that country. I would like to say a few words on co-operation nearer home. New Zealand has made wonderful strides in the co-operative movement—I think greater strides in some directions than we have made in Australia.

It is estimated that 90 per cent. of the butter and cheese produced in New Zealand is manufactured by co-operatively owned factories.

A striking example of progress by co-operative methods is found in the New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Association of Canterbury, Limited, which was formed in September, 1881, with a nominal capital of £250,000.

Successive increases in share capital were as follows:—

21st February, 1908, increased to £350,000.

7th November, 1908, increased to £500,000.

16th September, 1911, increased to £1,000,000.

9th August, 1913, increased to £1,250,000.

The nominal capital of the association on the 31st July, 1915, was £1,250,000.

A further movement in favour of co-operative control resulted in the passing of the Meat Export Control Act of 1921-22, and in August, 1923, a further Act, the Dairy Produce Export Control Act of 1923, was enacted on lines very similar to those of the former Act.

The other night I referred to the Meat Export Control Act, 1921-22, passed in New Zealand. That Act absolutely prohibits the export of meat from New Zealand under

certain circumstances, which is a very important factor in the co-operative movement. It means that once a country has a good name no exporter shall be allowed to export an article that is not up to a certain standard. That is what has been accomplished by passing two Acts in New Zealand dealing with dairy products and the export of meat, and shows that the farmers of New Zealand are alive to the necessity of a co-operative movement. Mr. Massey, the Prime Minister, has given them all the legislative assistance that is necessary to encourage co-operation there, particularly with regard to the marketing of farm products.

The co-operative efforts of the Coastal Farmers' Co-operative Society, Limited, New South Wales, have been attended with remarkable success. Starting with a subscribed capital of only £250, that association to-day has become a powerful force in the stabilisation of the agricultural industry in New South Wales. Its effect has been to reduce selling commissions, to aid in the producers' control of values, and, generally speaking, practical education in the co-operative principle. In its efforts to counteract disloyalty to the principle among farmers, carry on the battle for lower freights, better methods, and to fight against the speculative butter buyers, both of Sussex street and Tooley street, and in its work in direct co-operation and in co-operating with other co-operative societies in London market operations, the society has been remarkably successful. Other activities of this society include co-operative fodder storage, concentration of sales, winter fodder storage, and pasteurisation of products. The fruits of each of the constructive organisations and of the Co-operative Farmers' Society on behalf of the dairying industry were revealed in the early days of the war, when it became necessary to set up a form of Commonwealth control of the products.

The principle of co-operation has been applied generally in the dairying industry. I have also mentioned that there is co-operation in connection with the central sugar-mills. Of course, co-operation has extended in other directions, but principally with regard to the manufacture of dairy products. The advent of co-operation into the sphere of dairy products was in 1901, which is really only a short time ago, and wonderful progress has been made since then. I realise that there must have been considerable difficulties during the early fights of the co-operators, which were of the same nature probably as the difficulties confronted in the early fights in New South Wales, which I experienced at Byron Bay, when it was said by certain persons, and no doubt said by politicians, that the farmer's place was in the yard. They said that private enterprise was quite capable of manufacturing and marketing the products of the farm. There is no limit to what the farmer can do co-operatively in the manufacture and sale of his own products, and in buying his own requirements through co-operative agencies. Much can be done as regards co-operative selling in dairy products. It must be admitted that much has been done, but more can be done, and I look forward to the day when the whole of our dairy products in Australia will be sold through co-operative channels. A Queensland co-operative company was formed to commence operations at Booval in 1901,

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and from that time forward the movement has grown until to-day 98 per cent. of the butter and 90 per cent. of the cheese produced in this State is manufactured co-operatively. At the present time there are forty-three butter factories and seventy-three cheese factories co-operatively controlled in Queensland. I have a list of the co-operative companies, but there is no occasion to put them into "Hansard."

That is briefly the history of the co-operative movement, and I now want to say a few words about the Bill itself. I might mention here that the Queensland Primary Producers' Co-operative Agency, Limited, has given this Bill its blessing. The manager, Mr. Alan W. Campbell, in a memorandum to his shareholders, had this to say about the Bill—

"Following the reference to this Bill made at the meeting of our board held yesterday, I have now to report that I have again looked through this Bill, and I have come to the following conclusions:—

1. That bonâ fide co-operative companies have nothing to fear from the operations of an Act such as the Bill foreshadows.

2. That some such measure is necessary for the protection of producers against consequences of the improper use of the words 'co-operation,' 'co-operative,' etc.

"I find that to a considerable extent the Bill affirms principles which have guided our company since its inception, though sometimes our company has gone further. For instance, clause 22 provides—

That two-thirds at least of the number of the shares and of the voting power of the company should in fact always be held by persons who are producers and suppliers to the company of produce or some of the same in respect of which the business of the company is to be, or is being, carried on.

"Against the 66 per cent. minimum laid down here, we have adhered to the 100 per cent., as all our shareholders are stockowners or butchers capable of supporting one or more of our three main departments."

That is a testimonial I am pleased to get, particularly in view of the statements that have been made. The Bill provides for three leading types of modern co-operative activities—

1. Associations having a capital divided into shares and with a limited liability.

2. Associations without any share capital and with a liability limited to the assets of the association.

3. And associations without any share capital and with unlimited liability.

The first type of association is fairly common in Queensland. Our butter companies are mostly of the first type, that is, associations having capital divided into shares. The Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1920 embraces provisions suitable to industrial or consumers' co-operation and for provident societies, but, being limited in its scope, does not enable adequate development of agricultural co-operation. The Bill provides for the legalising of contracts by co-operators in the associations that they set up, which form the modern co-

operative system. The principal advantages are—

1. The better security of business and finance.

2. Holding of members together.

3. Ensuring of a volume of business

4. Enabling of the management to plan intelligently in a manner calculated to be for the benefit of producers.

5. Protection of producers against one another.

6. Protection of producers against the using by opposing interests of some of their number and the produce of such with a view to wrecking or undermining the co-operative enterprise.

In any other co-operative enterprise the association of the farmers is entirely voluntary, and this Bill does not interfere with this voluntary principle. We do set up limitations with regard to dividends and lay down certain guiding principles which must be followed in all new companies. With regard to the 5 per cent. dividend that has been laid down after due consideration, it is clearly understood by anyone who has been interested in the co-operative movement—particularly with regard to the manufacture of primary products—that the object of a primary producers' company is not to pay dividends. If they are paying dividends then the farmer is not getting all he should get out of the cream cans.

Mr. CLAYTON: Why not advance the money to allow the farmers to buy out the "dry" shareholders of the co-operative company?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is provided for in another Bill. That is an important provision in this Bill. Provision is made for the farmers to borrow money to buy out the "dry" shareholders. Much loose talk is heard in regard to the "dry" shareholder. Notwithstanding those speeches, the "dry" shareholders in many of the co-operative companies have provided the money on many occasions to enable the company to operate.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: Many of them could not have been started without that assistance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would like to point out the experience of the "dry" shareholder that I had in a company I organised. I sold the first shares in that company. It is not my fault that I did not become a producer and supplier to that company, but I bought shares, and for four or five years I did not have any dividend. I am not complaining, but there are many such "dry" shareholders. I know the difficulty I had in selling shares to the storekeepers, bank managers, and people residing in the town. They pointed out that under the articles they would only get a 5 per cent. dividend, and I argued with them in this way: "If you invest £5 or £10 and get no return at all on your money, it will bring grist to the mill. If the farmers come in to the town once a month and buy produce, that means business to the storekeeper and the banker." The time has arrived when the farmers must control their own co-operative company, and, if the "dry" shareholders operate the company so as to make it a dividend-producing company, then it is not a purely co-operative company. That is one of the objects of this Bill. It lays down clearly and definitely that a

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company using the name of a "co-operative" company must comply with the principles set down in the Bill. One of those principles is that the company shall not exist to pay large dividends to shareholders. There is no reason why reserves should not be built up for replacements and renewals, but money should not be kept back from the suppliers for the payment of big dividends. I know that there will be a difference of opinion in this Chamber with regard to limiting the dividend to 5 per cent. It is laid down that larger dividends may be paid with the approval of the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture. There is no hard-and-fast rule limiting the dividend to 5 per cent. Money may get dearer; we all hope it will get cheaper—it is too dear at the present time. It is also laid down in the Bill that the principle of one member one vote shall operate. There will also be a difference of opinion in this Chamber on that principle. It has been argued that the man who puts £1,000 into a co-operative company should have more votes than the man who puts in a modest £5; but, the whole scheme of the Bill is to encourage the small man and to enable a number of small men to control the company on a democratic basis. I submit that, when the amendments of the Agricultural Bank Bill are taken together with the provisions of this Bill, it will not be difficult for the companies in future to get on without the "dry" shareholder. As I have said, a lot of the criticism that has been hurled against the "dry" shareholders is not justified. In my experience I have had great difficulty in getting "dry" shareholders to put £5 or £10 into the Farmers' Co-operative Butter Company in the Atherton district, which I represent, but since that company has been established it has carried on large and successful operations. As I said, for four or five years I have received no dividends, but I am not complaining about that because that is not the fault of the company. Had I stayed there and been a supplier no doubt I would have got my dividends through the cream can.

At 7.40 p.m.,

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

Another point I desire to call attention to deals with the use of the word "co-operative." I think I have already mentioned that seven or more can form a co-operative association in any of the three forms of association mentioned. This is the most vital part in the Bill. Mr. Macgregor, in a memorandum dealing with this important question, says—

"PART IV.

"Circumstances from time to time arise in connection with which it is desirable for co-operative associations to unite in joint operations for the supply or sale of primary produce or the purchase of requirements. Provision is made that any two or more associations may unite in forming a federation, and the co-operative principles which govern the registration of associations under the Bill are also made to the institution of federations.

"PART V.

"Unfortunately, in all countries where co-operation is not regulated by protective legislation, considerable prejudice of

the genuine interests of co-operators ensues by the operation of companies masquerading under co-operative designations. Queensland has not been free from this menace to legitimate co-operative activity, and the Bill designs to put a period to any further continuance of such objectionable practice. The Bill lays down that it shall not be lawful for any company to be registered under any State law, or to remain registered and to use the term 'co-operative' unless a minimum of two-thirds at least of the number of shares and of the voting power is always held by persons who are producers and suppliers and unless the democratic principle of one member one vote is adopted. It is also provided that it will be an offence against the Act to misuse the terms 'co-operative,' 'primary producer,' 'agricultural,' 'farmer,' 'rural,' or any words of similar import. Exemption is made for agricultural show associations and such like.

"In view of the provision which the Bill makes to preclude companies being formed and registered, embracing co-operative or agricultural designations although not operating in accord with recognised co-operative practice, it is obviously necessary also to take some steps to bring into line companies at present registered which use that designation. If this were not done we would soon find two classes of co-operative companies operating in the State. On the one hand there would be a class registered under the new Act, adhering loyally to co-operative principles, and on the other hand hybrid types of co-operation based upon existing companies or alliances which existing companies might form, which would be conducted along lines which would be an exceedingly grave reflection upon the co-operative movement, prejudicial thereto as well as to the real interests of co-operating agriculturists.

"While, therefore, it is desirable to regulate co-operative companies already in existence, it is desired to facilitate transfer of registration in a manner that will be just and which will not impose undue hardship upon individuals. The Bill therefore lays down that, within a period to be fixed, every existing company carrying on operations deemed to be or purporting to be of a co-operative nature shall call a meeting of its members to decide as to whether or not such a company or society shall transfer its registration and bring its rules into accord with the new legislation. If the decision be in the negative, the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture, may exempt the company, but if such exemption be not given the company or society must cease to use the term 'co-operative.' The determination of the question at the meeting which must be called will be on the democratic principle of one member one vote. This may be deemed to be a hardship in those cases where existing co-operative companies provide for a scale of voting which places the control of the company in the hands of those of its members who hold the bulk of the shares. On the other hand, it is contended that the voice of the majority of the members should determine the question of the future co-operative policy of

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the company, and that this should not be decided by a few who may have a controlling interest. In other countries, particularly in America, co-operative movements have time and again been under the necessity of reconstructing, and the issue raised in the Bill of the confining of co-operative activities to universally accepted co-operative principles is one big enough and of sufficient weight and importance in the best interests of the movement to justify reconstruction in those instances where the name at present used is a misnomer.

"In order, however, that there may be no undue hardship on individuals who may have financial interest in concerns at present designated co-operative, the Bill in the model rules as well as in Part II. of the schedule embraces provisions governing surrender of shares, purchase by the company of its own shares, and reissue of the same upon resolution to that effect."

That makes it quite clear what will take place after the passing of the Bill. All new companies forming will have to comply with the clearly defined principles of co-operation, and existing companies will have to fall into line or discontinue the use of the word "co-operative." If they fall into line, they will have to register under the new provisions, and adjust their voting power and shares so that two-thirds of the shareholders will be suppliers to the factory, thus ensuring that the suppliers will dominate the conduct of the company. I am sure that is the wish of the House. If "dry" shareholders exist, they will have to do as I and others have done with the co-operative movement. It will have to be recognised that co-operation is of such importance to the country that people should put money into the companies to help them along, and should not look for large dividends or ask for the control of a company which is formed for the benefit of the primary producer.

I do not know that I should at this late hour of the session occupy too much time. There are other matters, I suppose, that will be debatable, but I submit that the Bill is in the best interests of the farming community, and, after all, both sides of the House claim that they are anxious to see the farmers placed on a sound footing and receive a just compensation for their efforts. This Bill is the first of its kind put forward in Queensland, and I do not think there is anything equal to it in any of the other States. It will facilitate the forming of purely co-operative companies that will make for the best interests of the farming community. There may be some important things that have been missed in the Bill which may be discussed in Committee. I have no doubt that we shall have some discussion on the Bill in Committee. I submit that the Bill is in the best interests of co-operation and of the farmers.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It contains some very drastic provisions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers do not say that the provisions are drastic, and I am more concerned about the farmers than about anyone else. That is my job. Other Ministers may look after other interests, but my job is to look after the farmers. I am doing that by bringing

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in this Bill, which I commend to the Parliament of Queensland, as one which, in the words of Mr. Macgregor, will be "a model for the other States to follow."

I beg to move—

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

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I think we all agree that the Secretary for Agriculture has had a particularly strenuous session, and has handled his subjects exceedingly well. As he pointed out yesterday, he has had some twelve or thirteen measures of importance to bring before this Chamber, and I am sure he must be getting very tired of his job. It would ill become the Opposition, whether the Country or United party section, to criticise anything which appertains to or promises benefits of co-operation to the primary producer. Both sections of the Opposition have that prominently on their platform, and, therefore, intend to give all reasonable encouragement to anything which is going to assist the primary producer by means of co-operation. If legislation is going to assist the primary producer, then I am quite sure that we must be on the brink of the millennium. During this session we have heard of nothing else but the primary producer and his needs, and we have put through legislation which should give him all the facilities that any reasonable man would ask for to make his lot easier in the days to come. The only point that does occur to me frequently when listening to a socialistic Government introducing legislation of this nature, is how to reconcile their attitude or their policy in regard to the socialisation of industry with their desire to assist the farmer by means of co-operation.

The Secretary for Agriculture made use of this expression—that he has always argued that the primary producer should sell his products retail and buy his commodities wholesale. I wonder if he has followed that argument out to its logical conclusion. If the farmer is going to sell his products retail, it stands to reason that he is going to increase the cost of the commodities to the consumer; and, therefore, he must automatically hit those industrialists to whom the Government owe their existence. On the other hand, if he is going to buy his requirements in the wholesale market, he is going to cut out that large number of industrialists who are engaged in the capital city of Brisbane in the distribution and the middleman's operations in regard to the things he needs for his everyday life. It is difficult to reconcile the objective of hon. members opposite as spoken at election times with what we have been treated to in this session of Parliament. That being so, I say, as I have said before, that one hardly knows where one stands in these days, so far as party politics and party objectives are concerned. One of the most pleasing features in regard to this measure, as outlined by the Minister, was when he assured us that the farmer is not going to be compelled to take part in the operations of these co-operative undertakings.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Read the Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We were afraid that there was going to be a compulsory element in it, and I am simply taking the Minister's word, which he reiterated on more than one occasion, that compulsion is not to play a part in the operations of this

Bill. If it is, then it must of necessity fail, because you are certainly not going to achieve the objective we have in view by compulsion. As I made bold to say in discussing a measure of a similar nature yesterday, undertakings of this nature can only make good on the basis of efficiency, and not on compulsion. No section in Queensland, whether it is the primary producers or any other section of the community, will stand for compulsion in regard to the control of their undertakings, or in the control of their methods of trading. If it is discovered during the progress of this Bill through Committee that there are clauses which savour of compulsion, then we shall have a great deal more to say about it; but at the moment I am taking the Minister at his word, when he states there is no compulsion whatsoever embodied in this measure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said there was no compulsion on the farmers to avail themselves of the advantages of the Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I presume the hon. member means by that that no primary producer will be compelled to come under the operations of the Bill. The compulsion applies when once the primary producer has joined up with the Primary Producers' Organisation—he is then compelled to be loyal to that organisation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He must comply with the conditions of the Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Just as I said yesterday, if a producer wants to get the advantage that co-operation will provide for him, he must be prepared to take the rough with the smooth.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If he joins the undertaking, or association, or co-operative movement with his eyes open, understands the rules and regulations which govern it, then he must be compelled to abide by those regulations. My concern is to see that the primary producer is not going to be compelled to join up with an undertaking of this nature, and that he is free to stop outside its operations if he is so minded. In that regard, so far as I am concerned, I am content. The only point I want to stress is that we have to see to it that we are not overloading the ship. To-day we seem to be almost confused as to how far these Bills operate; as to how one conflicts with the other. In that regard I notice in this Bill the associations are to be permitted to market their own products; yet in a measure we put through the House yesterday we gave in to the hands of a Committee of Direction the power to control the fruits of producers. There one can immediately see there is a conflict. The one gives the association power to control the produce of its members, whereas yesterday we deprived the grower of the right to handle his produce and gave that power into the hands of a fruit Committee of Direction. There, as I say, I am quite convinced that time will show that we have too much of this legislation all in a heap. We have not been able to visualise the extent to which these various Bills will operate, and therefore I am quite certain they will conflict one with the other, and for my part I would have been a little more pleased if we had taken this co-operative medicine in smaller doses. Medicine is good at all times if taken as prescribed, but, if we take the bottleful all

in one gulp, then the results are generally pretty disastrous, and the feeling I have in this matter is that we have gone too fast this session. The Secretary for Agriculture has been compelled and propelled very much quicker than he should go or probably wished to go. He was at pains to tell us to-night that he had received considerable assistance from the Director of the Council of Agriculture in the preparation of this measure, but I venture to say that, if the truth were known, the whole Bill is the product of the mind of the Director of the Council of Agriculture. We are quite prepared to go along in a reasonable and safe way in our attempt to overcome the difficulties of the primary producers, but we do object to being propelled at a rate with which we cannot keep pace. I do not say that unkindly, but I do believe that the Director of the Council of Agriculture is trying to force us too fast in this matter. He is trying to ride roughshod over a good many of our institutions at a pace with which we cannot keep up, and it is a pity if we are going to allow our desire and enthusiasm in regard to co-operation to overrun our common-sense.

There is one clause in this Bill which probably the Minister can amplify when we get into Committee, and that is where the operations of this Bill are expressly put outside all the penalties which can be imposed upon those who restrain trade. The great safeguard to those engaged in commerce generally in Australia are those provisions which do not permit of the restraint of trade. But here is a measure that is brought in ostensibly for the benefit of the primary producer, in which we expressly override all the provisions which are made against the restraint of trade. Probably when we get into Committee the Minister will tell us exactly what is meant by this clause. When a measure expressly excludes the operations under this Bill from the penalties which apply to the restraint of trade, it makes us exceedingly cautious and very suspicious as to what is covered by this measure.

There are other points in the Bill which are of an exceedingly dangerous nature. The one feature about it which will call for the greatest comment is that interference which is going to take place with existing companies that have hitherto used the word "co-operative" in their titles. If I understand this measure aright, it absolutely overrides the Companies Act and all those privileges which were granted to shareholders under its provisions and practically forces them away from all the protection which that Act gave them. If I understand the position aright, it is possible—in fact, it becomes mandatory on companies who are using the word "co-operative"—immediately to call together their shareholders and to give to each shareholder the right of one vote for one share, or "one shareholder one vote," and to give them the power to determine the future of the company, quite unmindful of the fact that many men were induced to put comparatively large sums of money into the company by the protection which the Companies Act granted to them. If that is so,

I consider we are introducing a [8 p.m.] vicious principle which is highly reprehensible, and which is going to cut at the root of the security which British investors have looked for under the

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provisions and the protection of the Companies Act. It seems incredible to me that a man, who a few years ago—I know a case in point—invested £2,000 in a company which has the word “co-operative” in its title and which practises co-operative principles, is to have the whole security of that £2,000 cut away by reason of the introduction of this measure, which gives one shareholder one vote, and therefore deprives him of the security which he thought he enjoyed at the time he invested his money in the company. Such a thing cannot be tolerated. I can only imagine that I am either misinterpreting the provisions of the Bill or that those who have initiated it do not understand the true significance of what they are trying to compel the Minister to introduce. It is a most serious point, and, when we come to that particular clause in Committee, which we cannot now discuss in detail, I hope the Minister will prime himself with the full intentions which the Director of the Council of Agriculture has in mind in this matter, so that he can satisfy us on that particular point.

Another provision in the Bill is that which absolutely prevents any undertaking now and henceforth from using amongst others the words “agricultural” or “rural” in its title. I can quite understand the desire to protect the word “co-operative,” which in a sense conveys the very privileges which this Bill embodies, but to prevent any company now using those words “rural” or “agricultural” or any new company adopting those words in its title, in my judgment is too mandatory altogether. Why should companies be entirely prevented from using the word “agricultural”? Presuming that a company wishes to come here to register in connection with the handling of agricultural machinery, and it wants to register the title “Agricultural Machinery Products, Limited,” or something of that nature, it is not to be permitted to do so under this measure. Why not? The Act seems to me to contain altogether unusual and unnecessary powers, and it is this extreme power and extreme interference with the existing order of things that inclines some of us who are entirely and absolutely sympathetic with the co-operative movement to look for the “nigger in the wood pile,” as we are often accused of doing. We are quite prepared to go the whole hog with a reasonable proposition, but when we see in this Bill—they are not hidden, fortunately, and we see them clearly sticking out—restraints of this nature and the removal of that protection which the investor has hitherto enjoyed, then we must protest; but our protestation must not be translated into a lack of sympathy with the co-operative movement. We want to see that the investor here retains that shelter which existing business principles have granted to him in days gone by.

It seems unfortunate that we should have this flood of co-operative legislation brought in at a time when Queensland is suffering from a very severe drought. I would remind those hon. members whose aim is set on driving the middleman and the storekeeper out of existence that, if it were not for the middleman and the storekeeper in these days in which we are living, many farmers would not have their heads above water at the present moment. I venture to say that the storekeepers and middlemen in Queensland are very much more useful to the

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primary producer in the time of distress which exists at this moment than any co-operative movement which could be introduced during the next ten years would be. Who is it that is keeping the man on the land alive at the present moment? Who is it that is giving extended credit, hoping for better times and feeling assured that, when the primary producer strikes better times, he will come into his own again? It is the storekeeper and the middleman whom these co-operative companies are intended to abolish and wipe out. All I hope is that, when this co-operative movement assumes the importance which apparently it is intended to do, it will treat the men on the land as sympathetically in time of distress as the storekeeper and middleman have done in days gone by. But just now I venture to say that the man on the land is far more concerned with his storekeeper than he is with any possible benefits which the co-operative movement is going to give him.

Another point which I do not quite understand is as to why all these great benefits of co-operation should be confined to the primary producer. If, as the Minister says, co-operation is the salvation of the whole situation, why is it that the great unions which hon. members opposite represent in connection with the industrial movement generally do not adopt the principle of co-operation? The hon. gentleman gave us illustrations pertaining to Rochdale in Lancashire, and he could have given many others, showing what an enormous advance the co-operative movement has made in Great Britain. Speaking from memory, I think I am right in saying that the turnover of the co-operative companies in Great Britain last year was something like £257,000,000, showing the enormous dimensions which the movement has reached. But the point I want to make is this: In these days of high cost of living, why is it that industrialists and unionists do not themselves engage in co-operation amongst their members?

Mr. FOLEY: You would be one of the first to oppose it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. Why should I oppose it?

Mr. FOLEY: You are stonewalling this Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member's comprehension probably does not permit him to understand my argument. Here is a great measure of co-operation which is at stake, under which we are endeavouring to give the man on the land the emolument which he is looking for. Why do hon. members opposite not apply it to their own struggling members? There are thousands of men unemployed and looking for work and obtaining relief from the Government. If this measure is going to be such a panacea to the man on the land, why do the Government not apply it to the industrialists and give them the advantage of it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Some of the industrialists have provident societies.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: But you do not give them the opportunity of going into a store and buying goods co-operatively.

Mr. RYAN: There are co-operative stores in many places.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: With very restricted operations.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You will find that is so if you study the position. The point I wish to make is this: If this co-operative movement is the panacea for all the evils which exist to-day in regard to the producer, why should we not apply it to the industrialists whom hon. members opposite are so misrepresenting in these days? The industrialists want as much help as the primary producer. The Minister gave us illustrations from Lancashire, but those illustrations apply to industrialists and not to primary producers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is what I said.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Therefore, he is using illustrations in connection with industrialists in other parts of the world and applying them to primary producers here. Why should we not apply this measure to the industrialists and see what can be done? Hon. members opposite will find that we on this side will support that. We have always argued that the unions do not exercise the best of the powers which they possess—that is, the using of their funds for the co-operative marketing and buying of goods. They have in their own power the redemption which they are so eagerly looking for.

No great principle is involved in this Bill other than that of co-operation, for which, as I have said, we all stand. Therefore there is no room for disagreement. The only opportunity for argument which the measure gives us is in the application of the principle of co-operation to those whom it is intended to benefit. Therefore when the Committee stage arrives we can deal with the particularly objectionable features which apply to existing institutions and which some of us think savour of confiscation. I hope that the Minister will be able to satisfy us that what looked like defects are not so. If he can do that to our satisfaction, he will find that the measure will have a satisfactory and speedy passage through the House.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Bill which we are discussing deals with co-operation, a matter with which most members of the Opposition are fairly conversant, having from time to time advocated the introduction of a Bill to include all sections of primary producers in the co-operative movement. We cannot oppose the Bill, because it is along the lines of co-operation; but, from what I can gather as a layman reading it, there seem to be some dragnet clauses with which I am not satisfied. I trust that during the Committee stage we shall have the opportunity of amending them or getting an explanation from the Minister, because I fear that during his second reading speech—to which we listened very attentively—we did not learn much of the more important provisions of the Bill. We certainly heard a lot about co-operation, its beginning and its progress in other countries. Many of those instances have been quoted by hon. members on this side when theirs was practically a lone voice in the advocacy of co-operation and in pointing out to the Government the benefit the farmers would derive from co-operative action. We advocated that course in days gone by as against the socialistic objective of the Government, with which we disagreed. We put forward a co-operative system embracing all producers, just as our platform to-day declares

for co-operation amongst all sections of the workers. The past Government put on the statute-book measures which made industrial co-operation in the cities possible.

Mr. GLEDSON: They did nothing of the sort.

Mr. CORSER: This Bill makes co-operation in the country possible under certain conditions, but it wipes out the provision which past Governments made for co-operation in the cities, because associations of industrial workers could not register under this Bill or comply with the conditions prescribed by it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They can register under their own Act.

Mr. CORSER: Then they cannot call themselves co-operative societies.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why not?

Mr. CORSER: If we interpret the Bill aright, no company can use the word "co-operative" unless it complies with the provisions in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Or is exempted.

Mr. CORSER: If the Minister is going to exempt only those societies which suit his political colour—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you say that there should be no exemptions?

Mr. CORSER: No. I think a co-operative insurance company wished to carry on business here very recently, and from what I know of it I think it should be exempted, and I think the Minister proposes to exempt it. I believe there are others also. I hold that whatever liberties are enjoyed by one section of the community should be enjoyed by the other section.

I am afraid that the Minister has not explained too clearly some of the more important provisions of the Bill. He dealt at length with the progress of co-operation elsewhere. Hon. members on this side have shown from time to time, more particularly when the State Produce Agency Act was before the Chamber, how co-operation has made great strides in the interests of the primary producers in Queensland, and what it has done in France, Britain, Germany and America, amongst other places. We only ask for the same possibility in this State. It has taken the Government some time to bring forward the measure, which is fairly complicated. I do not think that 2 per cent. of the primary producers of Queensland understand what its provisions are, and it is to be hoped that before they bind themselves to come under the Act they will realise thoroughly that once they come in they are there for practically all time. That seems to be one of the provisions of the Bill. Before they come in—whether it is to their advantage or disadvantage—it is only fair that they should know all the provisions of the measure. No doubt we shall know more about them after the second reading goes through.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Why did you not quote the Industrial and Provident Societies Act?

Mr. CORSER: Because it did not use the word "co-operative." The Minister has made some reference to "dry" shareholders.

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I was pleased to hear him say that in the past they had been benefactors of co-operative societies. That has been my experience of the great majority of them—there may be exceptions—but there are members in this House who would try to gull the farmers into believing that they are enemies of the community because they have paid money into a co-operative factory in course of formation. From what I can gather about these people, they are men in the country districts who, wishing for the progress of their districts, have put their money into co-operative enterprises and have never looked for a benefit directly. They have looked for it indirectly. They believe that the benefit of the supplying shareholder and the improvement of the district are to their advantage. I do not know of one co-operative company in the State which has been menaced by men who may be termed "dry" shareholders, and not one of them is not prepared to sell out at any moment. I think the Minister explained that under another measure it would be possible to buy out the "dry" shareholders, and not one of them would not be willing to go out, provided someone put up the money. Though a primary producer, I am prepared to give every credit to the "dry" shareholders in our companies, because they have done nothing but good for the companies, and have found the ready cash to assist them when ready cash was the hardest thing to find.

The Minister has referred to the fact that Queensland has made greater strides in regard to co-operative dairy factories than any other State. He said that 98 per cent. of our butter factories and 90 per cent. of our cheese factories—that is, practically all of them—are co-operative. It means that we have absolute control from a co-operative point of view. That great combination was brought forward and made possible in this State without any compulsion because of the fact that the primary producers saw the necessity for coming together, and, if we show them the advantages of coming together in other callings, as is desired by hon. members on this side, I think it will be found that they will do so to their advantage and to the advantage of the State and to the detriment of no other section. That could be done without unnecessarily doing away with competition, and, after all, competition is wholesome and good. We could institute a co-operative movement along the same lines as has been done with co-operative butter factories that have been promoted in this State, and which has given complete control of that industry to that movement.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The Darling Downs Bacon Factory want to make it compulsory.

Mr. CORSER: They have the right to express their own opinion. If what the Assistant Minister states is correct, evidently their wishes have not been embodied in this Bill. They apparently have not been consulted. The butter factories are controlled by the co-operative movement, and the co-operative associations meet and dictate and adjudicate on all matters essential to butter factory management. I quite realise that in the Bill federation is possible, but we want to safeguard each section of our industries and the management and control of those sections by placing the management and control under those engaged in the

industries. You may not be able to get any better federation in connection with butter factory and cheese factory management than under the present association of farmers which has at the present time control of the possibility of marketing so far as our law permits. When we bring in a Bill providing for the complete control of the benefits of co-operation in our butter factories, we have to do exactly as has been done in connection with the Meat Industry Encouragement Bill and pass a Bill similar to Bills which have to be passed in all States of the Commonwealth. When we can bring forward a scheme that is in keeping with the scheme in other States, or in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria particularly, then and only then shall we be able to bring about the co-operation that is essential for the success of our co-operative butter and cheese factories in Australia. We cannot arrive at that successful conclusion of our co-operative sentiments and ambitions until we are able to bring that about. If the Government will do all that is in their power and try and foster that feeling among other sections, as we hope to do—

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about Bawra?

Mr. CORSER: That is a wool proposition which was made possible by the Commonwealth Government, and which was instrumental in stabilising the wool market for Australia.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Where is it now?

Mr. CORSER: No doubt the Assistant Minister would not mind being interested in Bawra. He may be, too. Bawra is all right, and the wool people are all right. It cannot be said that our dairy people are all right. If we had a Bawra for our butter in Australia to-day, we would be in a very fine position. I only hope that we can bring about a Bawra or whatever you like to call it, or bring about an organisation that is going to do just as much good as Bawra has done for the wool people. In asking for these co-operative principles we are not asking for something that has never been mooted or looked forward to by hon. members on this side on many occasions. This session I was responsible for a motion which has received the approval of every hon. member on this side and which seeks for the absolute control of marketing by the primary producers. If the Bill can bring about in some of the branches of agriculture what was proposed by the motion to bring about in the marketing of products—which is the business end and the end least organised of the agricultural organisation—then it is going to accomplish something. The motion is still on the business-paper, and I trust the Premier will give us an opportunity of dividing on it. It reads—

"That in order to assure to primary producers the possibility of controlling the marketing of their produce, legislative provision be made and loan moneys be made available for the establishment of co-operative produce agencies, to be controlled by the primary producers themselves through a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders."

There was a motion asking for something that was simple and clear and easily understood by every farmer. If the Bill will provide the same possibility of marketing as

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that motion would provide, then we can accomplish something and arrive somewhere. That motion has been set aside on the business-sheet. There is a sentiment expressed in that motion urging the establishment of a true co-operative business undertaking—something that the farmers want and something that we have been looking for ever since the motion was moved, and we have got no further towards its accomplishment. The Bill contains no clauses providing for compulsion, but once a person becomes a member of an association he will be compelled to remain there. Immediately you come under this Bill you will be compelled to stay there, and you will have to deal through those agencies with your products whether you wish to do so or not, even if you can get a better market outside. According to the motion that I moved, the farmer would have the opportunity of selling his products through co-operative channels, and, if he had the opportunity of securing a better price from private enterprise, he would have the opportunity of doing so.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Boosting the market and bursting up the show.

Mr. CORSER: The point I want to lead up to is that I have endeavoured, by my motion, to secure the highest price for the products of the producer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are not a primary producer.

Mr. CORSER: I am more a primary producer than the hon. member ever was.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will discuss the principles of the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: I intend to do so. They are not in accordance with what has been advocated on this side, because the principles underlying the Bill are the principles of the Labour platform. Will hon. members opposite deny that? Silence! We know that hon. members opposite stand for cheap food for the worker, short hours, and high wages.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARTER: Are you opposed to that?

Mr. CORSER: I stand for fair remuneration for the product of the farmer. I advocate that as against the platform of the Labour party which urges cheap food for the worker, and because I dare mention such a thing and make such an inference when the Government bring forward a co-operative measure, look at the way they would howl me down.

Mr. COLLINS: What about the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act?
[8.30 p.m.]

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Bowen tries to get me on to sugar or coal, but he never now mentions the State iron and steel works. The hon. member knows that some of his leading Ministers have stated that Labour stands for "production for use and not for profit."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: Those are the principles of the Labour party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the platform of the Labour party under this Bill.

Mr. PEASE: He should give us his own platform first.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member will agree with me that the Bill does include principles of the Labour platform.

Mr. CARTER: The Bill belongs to the Labour platform.

Mr. CORSER: Then it must be a camouflage of what it is claimed to be, and it will not be what the Minister says it will.

Mr. CARTER: It protects the primary producer from the middleman.

Mr. CORSER: It is going to place the primary producer in the hands of men who want cheap food instead of in the hands of the men who have found all the markets for their products in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to the principles of the Bill.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about the Wheat Pool?

Mr. CORSER: There is to be no compulsion brought to bear on the primary producer until he is within this organisation. If once he gets there and he desires, because of inefficient management, to get out of the organisation—which he will find savours more of communism than of co-operation—he will find he cannot get out.

Mr. CARTER: What is communism?

Mr. CORSER: It is something that drives hon. members opposite along, and something that they quite disguise, although it is foremost in their platform. This Bill does not provide all the sweet innocence that it suggests. Clause 25 (a) makes it impossible for any organisation to trade if it appears to the Government to be undesirable to do so. Our Primary Producers' Organisation, which has been responsible for the organisation of the farmers in the past, will not be able to register under this Bill. The old Farmers' Union also cannot register. They are going to be wiped out, because they will not be able to comply with the provisions of this Bill. The Minister will agree with my opinion. They can seek exemption from the Bill; but just imagine the Minister giving exemption to two bodies which politically and industrially have battled for the farmers in opposition to the principles he advocates! The Rural Bank will also be unable to register. Such companies and associations will not find room in Queensland after this Bill is passed. The provisions of the Bill are therefore fairly wide. They get away from the simple proposition of co-operation for the primary producer. They go further than the industrial field, and go right into the business of many organisations and associations which have been established in Queensland. There is a drag-net clause in the Bill, the tail of which will encircle many organisations which cannot register. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The sting is in the tail.

Mr. PEASE: It is a nice tale that you are putting up.

Mr. CORSER: It is claimed that the object of this Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill is simply along the lines that we have advocated—namely, the manufacture of primary products, the supply of agricultural and dairying machinery, seeds, fertilisers, live stock, breeding stock, etc., and providing cold storage for the produce of members.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

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Mr. CORSER: The Minister says "Hear, hear!" but he will remember that we fought the Minister for State failures—(laughter)—State enterprises—and himself when they had the co-operative stores on one side and the State Produce Agency on the other.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You had a conspiracy with the shipping companies.

Mr. CORSER: No. The Government had the money and we had the sentiment. We had only the brains at the time, and they had office under false pretences.

The Bill also provides for the co-operative societies engaging in any other objects approved of by the Governor in Council. The Government has been in power for quite a long time, and it can well be asked if they have practised what they intend to preach in this Bill. During the time they have been in office they have had the opportunity, through the Bills passed by previous Administrations, of giving co-operation that impetus that the primary producers desire, and advancing to them the money which is so much desired to start new factories.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We did more than that; we liberalised those Acts.

Mr. CORSER: During the seven years that the Government have held office they have only advanced £36,995 18s. 4d. to the primary producers of this State for co-operative assistance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How much was applied for?

Mr. CORSER: During that time £437,000 was spent in outdoor relief.

Mr. CARTER: You would starve the people.

Mr. CORSER: No; we would develop the State and provide work for all. We would not believe that the pretty picture of socialism would be quite sufficient for them. We would reward thrift among all sections of producers and find remunerative work for all in honest occupation. We would have brought about decent conditions in the State during the time the Government have been in power.

Mr. PEASE: You would bring about starvation.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member would see that he would not starve.

Mr. COSTELLO: He is a middleman.

At 8.42 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER: This is a Government of so-called starvation. We know that the railway unions' official organ, the "Daily Standard," said that in 1909 things were better than they have been since this Government came into office. (Government laughter.)

Mr. RIORDAN: You are not game to give the author's name, in connection with that little "Red Book."

Mr. CORSER: It was the Labour Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. CORSER: It was the "Worker" newspaper that published that book, Mr. Speaker. I have not got it with me or I would give it to the hon. member who interjected; but I am not going to deal with anything that is

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not before the House. (Laughter.) The Minister has quoted the Byron Bay Company, and the advance made by co-operation in New Zealand. We agree that the work at Byron Bay and the co-operative movement in New Zealand have made possible an illustration of what true co-operation means, and what it will mean to all those who are engaged in it. In New Zealand encouragement has been given to the movement which has resulted in the establishment not only of co-operation in production and manufacture, but has made possible all the things that are supposed to be contained in this measure—the assistance of cultivation, assistance with seed, assistance in harvesting, in buying and selling, and also in the conversion of a product, and in the finding of a market on the other side. Here we come to one essential factor. In the matter of butter and other products which are handled co-operatively the Bill seems to fail in not making provision for the assistance in transport and the necessity of the handling of our produce on the other side. It provides in a very intricate way for this kind of thing, but the machinery provided does not make such a system possible. The machinery of the Bill does not go far enough to make the system workable. I hope that the Minister, during the Committee stage, will broaden the principle and give encouragement that will help in the building up of co-operation, because, if we can do that here, it will give encouragement to those on the other side.

I am not going to say that the farmers in my district are behind others in the desire for co-operation. As a private member in 1921 I asked the then industrial body associated with our Country party—the Queensland Farmers' Union—if that union, as constituted, was powerless to act in the capacity of a great co-operative company. Certainly in areas where business knowledge and capital were available concerns could be started by the Queensland Farmers' Union. I said that there were great possibilities ahead, but that progress would no doubt be hampered by obstacles such as were met with at Murarrie. I urged that the Queensland Farmers' Union, which was a political body, should disband and that its constitution should be amended. It would then be dissociated from all political bodies and become non-political, and I suggested that it should register as a Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Union and should seek to become a genuine co-operative body. These were my suggestions in my letter of the 19th July, 1921.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did they take any notice of you?

Mr. CORSER: The Minister, after that, put his foot on the Queensland Farmers' Union as far as he could. I further suggested that such organisation could educate all primary producers to the advantage of co-operation; that it could advise and guide their co-operative ambitions and assist in the establishment of such institutions as were determined by their directorate, composed of men covering a wide area of the State, assisted by such advisory district council as could be decided upon, and elected by the individual members, who would be permanent members, being shareholders in the great co-operative institution.

Mr. PEASE: What did Cecil Roberts say to that?

Mr. CORSER: He came into Parliament instead. There was a sentiment then ex-

pressed which was right along the lines of the sentiments that the Minister claims are embodied in this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is wrong with them?

Mr. CORSER: Nothing; but the hon. gentleman will agree that those sentiments expressed in 1921 by me were what he boasts of most proudly as being embodied in the Bill to-day. We have constituted our District Councils of Agriculture since that time. If we can make this Bill what the Minister claims it is—simply a Bill to give co-operative assistance in buying, marketing, selling, control, and other things that he enumerated—we are going to pass a very useful measure; but, if we are going to bring in drag-net provisions that are political, and any suggestions of party politics, the thing is going to be a failure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing political in it.

Mr. CORSER: Perish the thought! We have never seen such things before! The Minister in Committee should insert provisions which will be likely to protect the farmer against party politics, and prevent anything of the kind going into the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you not admit that you are a party politician, just as I am?

Mr. CORSER: Not when I am dealing with a measure that I hope to trust the Government on. My party never stands before the State.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I do not now desire to refer to the State Produce Agency, which was going to bring about co-operative assistance, which was going to be the death of the middleman, which was going to do the selling of our produce, and which was going to do away with everything wrong, and was going to give all the opportunities to the farmer that anyone could dream of. Instead of that what do we find?

Mr. RIORDAN: That the promises were brought about.

Mr. CORSER: We find that we have to buy our stuff in other States. It is suggested that model rules should be adopted. I do not disagree with that, but I do disagree with the provision that these model rules may be altered from time to time and that a company in formation has to be subject to rules or modification of rules of which they know nothing, which may be published in the "Government Gazette," and may not be seen in the country districts until twelve months later.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are published in the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, but many primary producers will not see them. Provision is made to modify the rules by the Governor in Council and to make such alterations as are thought necessary, and a company in process of formation will have to be subservient to those amended rules, though it may wish to form under the model rules embodied in the Bill. It is stated that only under such rules will co-operative companies be allowed to form.

I hope that as a Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill—a Bill that provides that the word "co-operative" shall not

be used as a misnomer by any company—it will not use that word as a misnomer in the Bill itself. The Bill is securing a monopoly of thought and opinion, and I hope it is not going to interfere with other co-operative aspirations and schemes under which the farmer has done so well. Instead, I hope that it is going to make progress along fair industrial co-operative lines; to assist the farmer to handle and control his produce in a truly co-operative manner, and that it will not be detrimental to any section of the community.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The chances are that I shall not see eye to eye with what has been said by some hon. members even on this side of the House. No one can read the Bill and no one can go through the proposed model rules in connection with the Bill without feeling at once that, if ever there was introduced into this Chamber a measure that is drastic in the extreme, it is this measure that we now have before us. I say frankly that it is only part and parcel, like other Bills, of the Emu Park Convention. It is part and parcel of the socialistic policy of the Government. They have not denied that they support an extreme socialistic policy. What is the Federal Labour platform and what is the State Labour platform with regard to co-operation? The Federal Labour platform adopted in Brisbane in 1921 in connection with co-operation placed in the forefront—

"Socialisation of industry by first nationalising all the principal industries of Australia and then applying the Soviet principle to their government and the creation from these Soviets of the Supreme Economic Council which is to displace Parliament."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Nothing of the kind. What are you quoting from?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quoting from a statement made by Mr. Catts, M.H.R. (Government laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is most unfair.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let us take something more from the Labour Objective. It says—

"Between these two classes the struggle must continue until capitalism is abolished. Capitalism can only be abolished by the workers uniting in one class-conscious economic organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary, industrial, and political action."

With the movement that is on foot, so far as I can see in connection with this Government, they are gradually moving along certain lines in obedience to the policy which they profess. All I can say is that, if the farmers want the policy that the Government say they want, then it is the duty of the farmers to accept the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman says, "Hear, hear!" and that feeling is endorsed apparently by other hon. members on that side of the House; but I hold that such a policy is going to be disastrous to the very best interests of Queensland. What does this Bill propose? First of all it proposes to rake in practically everybody, whether they be farmers, graziers, fruit-

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growers, or people who are in no way engaged in certain industries that are not specifically mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would like to see all the producers united in one solid body.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is an argument which shows perfectly clearly that the Government have two things in mind. The gentleman who prepared this Bill for the Minister, I believe, is only carrying out his own ideas and the ideas of the Government with two objects in view. One is that through this Bill which is going to pass—all the talk anyone might put up on this side is only beating the air—it is not a question of argument at all; it is not a question of a conviction—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Opposition should get to work and let us get on.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Opposition must swallow everything; they must take it from the Minister and let it go through without taking the opportunity of speaking.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have just said that your speech is so much beating the air.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Argument does not count, because hon. members on the other side are prepared to do certain things. This Bill says that a Registrar of Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations is to be appointed, and, if you will turn to the proposed model rules provided in the Bill—I confess I have seen some Bills, but I have never seen model rules which are proposed to be adopted, and they will be adopted, which are like these—you will see that we are drifting towards the position when it will be impossible for a man even to cough; it will be impossible for him to do any small thing because there are going to be model rules, and, if he does not follow those model rules, he is going to be tied up for ten years if he becomes a member of the organisation. That is, provided the model rules are accepted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not say "tied up."

HON. W. H. BARNES: If a person joins this organisation, and if these model rules are adopted, and if he attempts to get outside them, he is liable to a fine; he is in the grip of certain powers that can get at him at their own sweet will and make him a victim if he attempts to exercise his freedom.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Employers' Federation laid down more drastic rules than that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have never belonged to the Employers' Federation, and I know nothing about it. But here we have a Government who speak of freedom and of liberty and of allowing individuals to work out—as they have the right to work out—their own salvation, bringing in rules that hobble a man at every turn—hobble him, and say to him, "You can sell here. You cannot sell there. You cannot do this, that, or the other," presumably with the object of removing some of those middle courses which previously existed in the community. A writer quite recently in a paper published at Sandgate said that a man was found to be very ill, and he was accosted by someone who asked, "Where are you going?" He said, "I am ill; I am off to

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the undertaker." "Won't you go to a doctor?" he was asked. "Doctor! Why should I go to a doctor? I do not believe in middlemen. I believe in going to the undertaker straight away." (Laughter.) That is exactly what is happening in connection with this Bill. The movement goes in one direction only, and that is to make it difficult for individuals to live.

The hon. member for Oxley drew attention to the fact that the Bill is trying to make it law that you can contract yourself out of the Federal law. Clause 6 tries to make it appear that you can contract yourself out of the Federal law. You cannot do it, and I want to tell the Minister that all the legislation that he may bring in will not permit him to do so if the case is tested. Happily we belong to a Commonwealth where there is no restriction and where is liberty. Fortunately that is the position to-day, and all the laws which the Minister is bringing in to try to tie up the people will be of no avail. One would have thought that a Government who are exclaiming so much about liberty would have brought in a policy that would have been broad and comprehensive and would have dealt with the whole of the community.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is my business to look after the farmers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I admit the hon. gentleman says he is very much concerned about the farmers, who to-day are passing through a very severe ordeal; but the hon. gentleman has a right to be concerned about other people as well. He should take a broad outlook. He has no right to take a narrow view and say that he represents only one section.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: My colleague reminds me that the middleman is quite capable of looking after himself.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know no greater middleman than the hon. gentleman.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would be able to tell the hon. gentleman why I say that if it was not out of order to do so. There is supreme power in clause 5 of the Bill. As I said before, it is, after all, only a step in a certain direction. One writer has said—

"Socialism to-day applies to various theories of organisations having for their common aim the abolition of individual action on which societies depend, and the substitution of a regulated system of co-operative action."

Karl Marx, in 1867, said—

"There is only one way and ending to it, and that is by revolution."

We are marching on! As I said this afternoon, when speaking on another subject, we are marching on in that direction. The

Minister, when speaking on the [9 p.m.] second reading, referred to the question of dividends being paid, provided, of course, that the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of an organisation, does not say that something else shall be done. I hope that there will be a 5 per cent. dividend if this Bill becomes law.

Then there is another very extraordinary clause in the Bill. It may be made compulsory to subscribe capital to the association. It is possible for rules and laws to be laid down making it compulsory to do so.

Just imagine someone going along to a farmer who is hard up and has an overdraft up to the limit, and saying, "Sell your cattle if they are worth selling to find hard cash and pay the compulsory levy."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do you pick an extreme case like that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Because we have an extreme Government, under the name of a Government who profess to help the farmers—an extreme socialistic Government, whose aim, under disguise, is to bring about certain things, and they say in this particular measure that it should be compulsory for people to subscribe capital to the association. Then there is another thing—the billets which this kind of Bill is going to make. One has noticed the keen interest somehow or other which has been taken in the Bill as it has been going through the House. By whom? Those who probably to some extent are to-day being employed by the Government. Then I notice that there is a penalty in the proposed rules of £100 in connection with co-operative companies, and another penalty of £100 per day if certain things are done. For ten days that works out at £1,000. Here is a Bill which is endorsed "Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill." Let me say, in conclusion, that it might be very fitly called a "Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill brought in to hasten on the proposed happy day when everything will be produced, not for profit, but to carry out the ideals of the Labour Government, and when every man will be on the same footing, irrespective of what his ability may be." The Minister will take care that he is out before that happens.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): For very many years I have been an ardent worker for co-operation as a means for improving the condition of the farmer. I agree with some of the sentiments expressed by the Minister when introducing this Bill, particularly when he said that he hoped that all dairy produce will eventually be sold through co-operative channels. I will go a little further than that, and say that I hope that all dairy produce will be also manufactured by co-operative effort. I regret very greatly that it has been considered necessary to introduce this legislation in the belief that it is going to assist co-operation. We have had statements made here to-night that 98 per cent. of the butter and cheese manufactured in Queensland is due to voluntary co-operative effort, and also that Queensland stands ahead of any other State in regard to those commodities. I only regret that something could not have been done to stimulate a system which has given satisfactory results rather than that we should pass what I look upon as a particularly drastic Bill. I think it is always desirable that the primary producers should be encouraged by their own efforts to adopt the system of co-operation, with the idea of materially improving their conditions. It would, perhaps, have been preferable to call this a "Primary Producers' Compulsory Pools Association Bill," rather than a "Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill," because unquestionably dictation and compulsion are being applied to the utmost—to the extent of preventing other companies from being formed and from using certain words in the English language to describe their particular activities. The Minister referred to the Byron Bay Butter

Company as being the largest co-operative concern in the Southern Hemisphere. In that I think he is not quite right, as I think the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Company's operations are greatly in excess of the Byron Bay Butter Company's operations. Had he said that the Byron Bay Company was the largest co-operative concern in Australia, I think he would have been right. There is one thing which has exercised my mind, especially since the inception of the Primary Producers' Organisation, where has the information been obtained for framing this Bill and endeavouring to mould the operations of the Council of Agriculture with regard to it? I think it has unquestionably come from a good many of the organisations in operation in America. That being so, it is rather interesting to compare the way we are getting on in Queensland with the way the farmers are getting on in certain States of America, where they have a Farm Bureau Federation in operation.

I would like to quote here from a report of the Farm Bureau Federation in Washington, which is the largest of all farmers' organisations in that country—

"The director of the Farm Bureau Federation in Washington—the largest of all farmer organisations in the country—states that one out of every sixteen farmers in the States sold out last year, voluntarily or involuntarily, that the occupant of one out of every five farms moved to another district, and that 230,000 tenant cultivators gave up the struggle altogether. A survey of 6,000 farms of more than average size, representing an average investment of £3,200, proved that the average owner-operator last year made £180 gross, and when allowance was made for livestock and machinery, had £140 with which to pay mortgages, interest on investment, and living expenses."

It appears that in America, where these bureaux are at work, agriculture is a failing factor, and whereas in 1913 the average earnings in seven groups out of eight were only 356 dollars, in 1921—in spite of a great deal of this compulsory co-operation—the average deficit was 780 dollars. We often claim, rightly, that the agriculturist in Queensland is on a particularly bad wicket in comparison with the city worker; and, if we translate the various articles produced by the farmer in America into the wages of a city worker in that country, we find that the result is somewhat the same—

"Translated into food, at the price the farmer gets, it takes sixty-three and a-half dozen, or 763 eggs, to pay a plasterer for one day of eight hours' work in New York city. It takes seventeen and a-half bushels of corn, or a year's receipts from half an acre, to pay a bricklayer one day. It takes twenty-three chickens, weighing 3 lb. each, to pay a painter for one day's work in New York. It requires 42 lb. butter, or the output from fourteen cows, fed and milked for twenty-four hours, to pay a plumber 14 dollars a day. To pay a carpenter one day's work it takes a hog weighing 175 lb. representing eight months' feeding and care."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why do you not go the whole hog?

Mr. NOTT: It seems to me that in this Bill the Government are certainly going the whole hog. Apparently the information they

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have been using in modelling this Bill has been obtained to a very large extent from America; and in America the farmer appears to be on a pretty bad wicket in comparison with the city worker—probably on an even worse wicket than our farmer.

It is not my intention to traverse the remarks of the hon. member for Burnett or other speakers. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was being passed, I stated that what I feared most was that the organisation would become bureaucratic, and I hope that everything will be done to prevent that result, and that the utmost will be done to see that efficiency obtains in every way. I quite agree with the hon. member for Wynnun that the penalties are particularly drastic, and that, when once a man goes into this scheme, it is going to bind him pretty tightly for all time, and that it is a very large step in the direction of socialisation. I do not know that we should be surprised that the present Government should do all in their power to bring about the socialisation of everything, because I admit that they are here with a mandate from the people of Queensland to put into force socialistic legislation; but I hope that under this Bill the necessity for efficiency will not be overlooked. I believe that neither the co-operative movement nor the individualistic system can do without each other, and the best way to stop the exploitation of the farmers and the people generally is for them to co-operate in every way. But, if we do not have the proprietary concerns in competition with co-operative enterprises, nothing in the world is going to stop them from dropping into inefficiency. I am satisfied that both are required, and that each will demand greater efficiency from the other, and that by doing away with one we would simply bring about inefficiency in the other.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I quite sympathise with the view of the Minister as to the advantages of co-operation and the desirability of encouraging it amongst our farmers. Of course we have all read of what it has done in other countries. We know, for example, that in Denmark and other countries the struggling peasantry of less than a generation ago are to-day prosperous farmers. Much the same result has been obtained here in some respects, and it is most noteworthy that the results which Queensland has achieved have been achieved without any such legislation as we have now before us. We all realise that there is need for such a Bill to make co-operative action effective on the part of the farmers. If the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett had been carried, it would have given some support in this direction, and the sequence of it would have been a Bill to provide the necessary machinery. This Bill goes further than anything that was needed for that purpose. The motion must have given the Government a start in this direction. I was speaking of the drastic and coercive character of the Bill. I think I am right in saying that every Bill we have had from this Government dealing with the agricultural industry has contained some coercive features. It seems strange that the Government cannot bring in Bills having for their purpose the betterment of the farmer without accompanying them to a large degree with coercive provisions. It has been pointed out that once a person becomes a member of one of these

companies it will be impossible for him to obtain relief from his membership, and I consider that some such means should be provided.

Despite what the Minister has said, we already have co-operative legislation on our statute-book. He spoke about the co-operation in connection with sugar-mills. The mills he spoke about are not co-operative. But the co-operative legislation that is already on our statute-book provides that a man can transfer his shares on leaving the district or giving up his interest in that particular undertaking. There is nothing like that in this Bill. The Bill allows the directors the right to raise compulsory loans up to £20 from the shareholders. When a member wishes to leave the district in which he no longer has any interest in the factory or whatever has been erected in connection with the industry to be carried on under this Act and goes to another district and engages in another undertaking or, perhaps, the same industry, he should have the right to transfer his interest and loan liability to someone else. He should not be subjected to the risk of a forced loan by two bodies of directors, especially when in one case he has no further interest in the first one. These are the sort of drastic coercive features which we see in the legislation introduced by this Government dealing with farmers. I could not help feeling amused at the Minister's remarks about the sugar-mills and about what Dr. Maxwell had to do with co-operation. It shows how little the Minister knows about the matter, as I can prove that Dr. Maxwell had nothing whatever to say in favour of anything that savoured of co-operation in our sugar legislation. The only really co-operative features embodied in sugar legislation were embodied in Acts passed after Dr. Maxwell had left Queensland. I knew him fairly well, and I never heard him urging co-operation to any extent. I mention that as showing that most certainly the Minister is not cognisant of the history of co-operation in Queensland. He contradicted himself when speaking on the matter, because he spoke of the co-operative features in connection with sugar legislation, and, just before that, he said that we had up to now no co-operative legislation on our statute-book. We already have on our statute-book one of the most purely co-operative Acts that I suppose is to be found on any statute-book in the world. I refer to the Co-operative Sugar Workers Act of 1914, which was passed by the Denham Government, and which provided for co-operative manufacture of farm products and also provided that shares could only be held by canegrowers. If a shareholder ceased to be a canegrower he had to transfer his shares to another canegrower. If that is not co-operative legislation, I do not know what is. Yet the Minister says that hitherto we have not had anything of the kind on our statute-book. The Government cannot blame us for our suspicion of their *bonâ fides* in this direction, seeing that they have already missed so many excellent opportunities for embodying in legislation what the Minister has stated is one of the principal functions of agricultural co-operation, and that is co-operative production. We have only to look to the position in connection with the Tully River Sugar-mill. The Minister acknowledged that the sugar industry is the most fitting and suitable

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industry in which to have co-operative action on the part of the farmers. Yet, in their legislation on the subject, they have absolutely refused to allow that undertaking eventually to become a co-operative institution, although I moved an amendment to that purpose.

We can take other agricultural enterprises that particularly lend themselves to co-operation and see what the Government did there. There were the cotton ginneries which were established recently in Queensland. That form of activity was suitable for co-operative action, as the producer should own the means by which the raw material is turned into the finished article. A splendid opportunity was lost there, and it was lost purposely, because an amendment moved from this side of the House with the object of making the cotton ginneries co-operative was definitely turned down by the Government.

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

Mr. SWAYNE: I am following on the remarks of the Minister as to the suitability of such enterprises for co-operative action. At this late hour, after the enterprises that particularly lend themselves to the purposes of this Bill have been allowed to fall into the hands of State or private enterprise, it is intended to pass this Bill under which they can be made co-operative. Such conduct justifies our suspicion of the *bonâ fides* of the Government in introducing this Bill. I am justified in saying that we have reason to doubt the good faith of the Government in this matter. The power given to directors to enforce loans from the shareholders

whether they like it or not is [9.30 p.m.] a new feature in company legislation. Again we have got the retrospective principle introduced into this Bill. A man may be carrying on business in a perfectly legal manner within the scope of the law, and then suddenly find that under a new Act of Parliament he is a criminal and has been a criminal for twelve months. That is the sort of legislation that does not do credit to Queensland in the eyes of the outside world. Penalties are provided in the Bill for any person who contravenes its provisions. That is all right with regard to anything that happens after this Bill becomes law; but the administrators of this measure will have the right to go back twelve months and penalise anyone who broke its provisions before it became law. That is not just. It is not for the good of Queensland that we should have the reputation the State has gained in the outside world of passing legislation of this kind, which makes no one safe. At one moment a person may be pursuing his avocation legally with the full knowledge that he has not broken any laws. Then, when one of these Bills is passed, he finds he has become guilty of an offence which lays him open to a fine of £100. That is not right, but that position is created by this Bill.

Co-operation is a permanent plank of the party to which I belong. I have read many books on the subject, including the history of the Rochdale pioneers. I admire the energy and thrift by which a few weavers and mill clerks bought their first bag of meal; and from that beginning in co-operation they have now extended their operations until to-day they have

millions of customers and are engaged in producing and retailing merchandise, and have ramifications all over the world. They have plantations in Africa and Ceylon and have their own factories—clothing factories, and so on—and the products of those factories are sold over the counters of their shops. That is an excellent principle, and we desire to have it come into effect in Queensland; but we cannot help thinking that it could be well brought about without the drastic coercive restrictions that are embodied in this Bill. When we go into Committee I think the Minister will be well advised to accept amendments. I think the year before last the previous Parliament passed a movement in favour of co-operative tramlines. I see no reference to co-operative tramway lines in this Bill, and in Committee I shall most certainly move an amendment to have them embodied in the Bill so that we may get whatever benefits the Bill can bring about. I hope the Minister will accept amendments doing away with the objectionable features, such as the retrospective clause and others which we shall point out. I quite realise that the Bill is necessary to carry out the principles of co-operation; but, were it not that we have been told that another Bill is to come along to provide for the financing of these undertakings, I should say that this is so much waste paper. In view of the fact of the promise of a following Bill to provide finance, I shall withhold my criticism, and I hope that, when the sister Bill comes along, it will provide some means of making this Bill effective.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): During the session that is about to close and during last session a great deal has been said about co-operation. The discussion on the Bill has been left particularly to those most interested in it, because the class of legislation that was introduced last session and a great deal that has been introduced this session has been of great interest to the primary producer. I refrained from addressing myself to other legislation of that kind, but after hearing the remarks made by the Minister and other hon. members in this Chamber, I realise that several of the measures that have been passed by the Government are of a very dangerous character. It is only necessary for one to turn to a statement by a man who wrote a book called "The One Big Union" to arrive at an idea as to the aim and objective of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the Chamber in connection with such legislation as this.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you believe in co-operation?

Mr. MAXWELL: I want to draw the attention of hon. gentlemen to the question of co-operation as I understand it, and as hon. gentlemen opposite understand it when they refer to it as the socialisation of industry. On page 824 of "Hansard" for 1922 I quoted from the book called "The One Big Union," which was written by Ernest H. Lane and had an introduction by the Hon. W. R. Crampton, M.L.C. Chapter XI. is headed "The Wings of Desire." If one analyses the statements that are made in this work and pays attention to the form of legislation that has been passed by hon. members opposite, also to the admissions made at their Emu Park Convention—

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: And to the Employers' Federation.

Mr. Maxwell.]

Mr. MAXWELL: And to interjections made by hon. members opposite admitting that the sole aim of the party is the socialisation of industry—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I allowed the hon. member a good deal of latitude this afternoon when discussing another Bill. I hope he will now confine his remarks to the Bill before the House, which is a Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am going to do so.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member informed me this afternoon that he was going to do so, but he did not do so. He must do so now, or I must ask him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. MAXWELL: According to the Bill the co-operation that is to be introduced is upon similar lines to the co-operation outlined in the book to which I have alluded, and in which this is stated—

“Who can doubt the necessity of the idealists and dreamers who, in their visioning of the future, conjure up a picture of society which serves as the basis or model of the days that are yet to be, and thus point the way that leads to the co-operative Commonwealth?”

If the “co-operative Commonwealth” is to be run on lines like this, one has to be very careful as to the class of legislation that is going to be passed, and it is unfair to the primary producers that legislation such as this is going to be placed on the statute-book if it is going to be on similar lines.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have been asking for it.

Mr. MAXWELL: They have asked for bread, and they have been given a stone. This book continues—

“But before it will be possible to attain this ideal of a nation of free men and women in place of the present one of privileged bondholders on the one side and dependent bondslaves on the other, the workers will have to have greater and higher ideals in their curriculum of reform than they have at present. Their childlike faith in old, time-worn nostrums of political fetiches and beliefs will have to be abandoned; the delusive principle of ‘a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work’ must be scrapped along with the many other shibboleths of a past epoch of evolution.

“As soon as the workers realise that arbitration courts, wages boards, and the various other methods of ‘mutual’ bargaining will never bring them any nearer to their emancipation from the toils of capitalist exploitation, that on those lines nothing that really matters can possibly be attained—as soon as that position is realised, then will another big advance be made on the onward march.”

That is the “co-operative Commonwealth” that the hon. gentleman is talking about. I could quote from a book called “The One Great Union,” by Wm. E. Trautman, an American, from which I find that the Government are adopting the system of the American “One Great Union.” The only difference between the system adopted by the Government and the system that has been advocated by this man Trautman is that, instead of tackling the workers to pre-

pare the way for the socialisation of industry, they are dealing with the primary producers themselves and organising them, so that when the time comes all that will be necessary will be to press the button and bring into existence that state of affairs which they considered so essential when they advocated the socialisation of industry at the Emu Park Convention. The very first thing that Trautman advocates is—

“The departments of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are the first things that are to be taken in hand.”

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I would ask the hon. member to deal with the Bill now before the House.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Minister claims that in the preparation of this Bill he has had a good deal of assistance from Mr. Macgregor, the Director of the Council of Agriculture. I do not know whether he is the gentleman who has given the information which the Minister presented to the House. If he is the same individual, the statements made by the hon. gentleman are not, in my opinion, in the best interests of a Bill such as the one before the House. We find that in a sermon preached by Mr. Macgregor it is stated—

“The devil has had his day,”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: No; the devil has not had his day.

Mr. HYNES: The profiteer has had his day.

Mr. MAXWELL—

“and the war is taking place whereby Christ is driving the devil from his position in human affairs.”

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill. The matter he is dealing with is not relevant to the Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am pointing out the principles in the Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must satisfy me that he is dealing with the Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am doing that. The Secretary for Agriculture stated that he had had a great amount of assistance from Mr. R. L. Macgregor in connection with the framing of this Bill. My contention is that the introduction of a Bill like this is not in the interests of the primary producer or the community generally, because according to a statement made by Mr. Macgregor at a church meeting or in a sermon which he preached—

The SPEAKER: Order! What Mr. Macgregor may have said at a church meeting does not concern the House. The hon. member must deal with the Bill if he wishes to continue his speech. If he makes a statement which deals with the Bill, I will allow him to proceed.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is what I propose to do. Mr. Macgregor said in this same address—

“The exponents of the principle of wrong and the unwitting agents of Satan are three big forces: big finance and big business; big politics; and big ecclesiastics. That is the cause of the present trouble. This great class, in whose thoughts God is not, will not give clear regard to the statements of Scrip-

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ture. They are seeking to buttress the old order on a false idea of patriotism." This is the part which may interest hon. members opposite—

"The final jubilee in 1925 would see the end of the power of money, and every man would be returned to his own possessions."

My contention is that the introduction of a measure such as this is not in the interests of the primary producers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did he mention the Employers' Federation?

Mr. MAXWELL: No, nor the Australian Workers' Union either.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the Bill. I must ask the Minister to restrain himself.

Mr. MAXWELL: I wish to draw attention to the remarks made by the hon. gentleman who is responsible for the introduction of this measure. There are certain provisions in this Bill which confer very far-reaching powers. The Bill practically overrides all other Acts.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have no right to refer to a man's religious principles at all.

Mr. MAXWELL: In these words the Director says that the Bill cannot be held responsible for any injury it may inflict upon private trading, which proves that it does not matter what companies are in existence, so long as they come under this scheme; but if they do not feel disposed to come under the Bill, then they are going to be slaughtered—associations such as the United Cane Growers' Association and the Primary Producers' Association, which have done good work for the community.

Mr. CARTER: The painters' monopoly.

Mr. MAXWELL: Organisations such as those I have mentioned and the United Graziers' Association, the Queensland Farmers' Union, and the Poultry Breeders' Association will be obliterated entirely unless they are prepared to link up under this measure. The suggestion has been made by hon. members who have preceded me that certain amendments are to be moved in Committee. I do not know that there is any good to be gained by submitting them to the Minister, because the treatment we have received in connection with measures such as this does not lead me to believe that he is disposed to accept amendments from this side at all. But we can certainly put the position before the people who are interested.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Put it honestly.

Mr. MAXWELL: I always do so. The Bill is one of the most tyrannical measures ever imposed on an industry. It practically binds the members of an association to trade only as the Council of Agriculture dictates. It is one of the most drastic measures which has yet been tabled, and, if passed in its present form, will make the conditions of industry in Queensland more uncertain than ever. Irrespective of what hon. members on the other side may say, it is one of the links in their socialistic chain. All that it is necessary for me to do is to point out the legislation which has been passed practically to forge a chain of socialistic measures—the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, the Primary Products Pools Act, the Fruit

Marketing Organisation Bill, and now this last important link. Although I do not represent a primary producers' constituency but an important metropolitan seat, I think I would be failing in my duty if I did not point out—not to hon. members opposite, because they do not seem disposed to listen, but to the people outside—the class of legislation which is being forced through the House at the end of the session.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The Minister's second reading speech was very disappointing. He did not point out one particular in which this Bill is going to assist the sugar industry, the butter industry, or any other industry. Most of those industries are organised under a pooling system or a co-operative system. The fruit industry is to be organised under a separate Bill altogether.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARREN: I am not going to discuss that Bill. I am merely mentioning it in passing to show that this Bill cannot possibly affect the fruitgrowers. If it did, it would do so detrimentally, because it would conflict with the Fruit Marketing Organisation Bill. I am concerned about co-operative organisations. I know that we are not going to have the millennium through co-operation—that beautiful time in 1925 which has been prophesied—and I notice that the very persons who are talking about this change have a five-year agreement. (Opposition laughter.) I do not for one moment believe that nonsense; but it is the duty of every person who considers his State to perfect a co-operative scheme, and I believe that that is the greatest thing we can do at present. Under existing circumstances we can go in for co-operation in any section of industry.

If a certain co-operative store at Caboolture were protected by an Act of Parliament, there would be nothing to stop us from making a success of that. That has been proved during the last three years. We took over a proprietary concern and absolutely ran it for cash. There is a butter factory at Caboolture which is probably second to none of its size in Australia. That has been carried on under the existing organisation. The Minister is not in a position to assist the weak co-operative concerns financially, and will not be in such a position, and here is an opportunity for him to demonstrate his generosity. It is no use talking about these schemes when there is always something behind them. I want to know what is behind this viper that is hidden from the public to-day. The Minister, during his speech, gave us a long catechism about co-operation, and spoke of it in its infancy when it had not got its first clothes on; but he never told us about the aims and objects of co-operation, and he did not tell us one thing about how this present movement is going to benefit the producers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You tell us now.

Mr. WARREN: Any co-operative society can win through if it is efficient; but no co-operative society under this Bill or any other scheme will win through if it is not efficient. It is efficiency that counts every time. This Bill does not in any way tend towards the efficiency and towards making co-operation a success. The Bill is only out to destroy the existing co-operation and bring discontent and appease the desire for a change. A change, so long as it brings life

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to efficiency and betterment to the organisation, will not destroy the cause. I listened with the keenest attention to the Minister's speech, but he did not point to one way in which this Bill is going to tend towards efficiency. For co-operation to be better than a private system—I am not one of those who believe that proprietary concerns are blood-

sucking concerns and destroy [10 p.m.] things—it should give a certain percentage back to the grower in the transaction. This Bill is aiming to destroy private concerns that have been built up and have done good work for the people on the land. The Bill is only muddling and fooling and monkeying with the position. I would like to take the Minister to districts where at the present time they are suffering from drought and where the storekeepers are involved to the fullest extent possible with the financial institutions in Brisbane. These people have charged a certain percentage for handling our goods which we should expect to pay. We are not so mean and contemptible as to think that we should not pay these men for the work they do. They certainly have made something out of it. The very men that this Bill is out to hit have stood by the producer in dry periods like the present through which Queensland is passing. The Government did not come to the aid of the producer promptly, but throughout these men have stood by the producer.

Mr. W. COOPER: Who helped the store-keeper?

Mr. WARREN: Not you.

Mr. W. COOPER: The farmer did, though.

Mr. WARREN: The farmer is only too anxious to go in for co-operation. An hon. member quoted the position of co-operation in America to-day. We are rapidly drifting in Queensland to the horrible state of affairs which exists there. It is no use blinking the fact. America is more advanced in co-operative measures than we are, but they have nothing to show for that more advanced knowledge if we except the fruit industry.

We have practically everything we want in Queensland. I have been associated with co-operative concerns in Queensland for years—perhaps more so than the hon. gentleman who originated this Bill, and I have not heard one man engaged in co-operation demanding increased co-operative power. He naturally wants more financial assistance from the Government or financial institutions, but, if the conditions had been normal, that assistance would not have been required. Primary producers cannot assist themselves if they have not a certain amount of income. The primary producers do not desire this Bill, but greater financial assistance. In addition to that, they require more education in the co-operative movement. They want to be educated in the management of their co-operative concerns. It is no use saying that a body of directors without experience can successfully manage a co-operative concern on the business lines on which it should be conducted if success is required.

I want to protest against the elimination of the "dry" shareholder. I am a "dry" shareholder in five different co-operative companies. The "dry" shareholder is a disinterested man. I have never cast a vote in one of these companies. I do not know of any other "dry" shareholder who has done so either. They put their money into

the concern so as to assist the industry. I know one man who invested £1,000 in the Stanthorpe co-operative canning factory, and he did not do so with the expectation of making anything out of it. I think these men should be commended for assisting these companies by putting their money into them. The Minister will be well advised to work these schemes on a different principle. What the farmers genuinely want is something which will enable them to increase the productivity of their industry.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): One can agree with the Minister when he says that this Bill is merely to legalise machinery that may be utilised by those engaged in primary production. I think we all recognise that one section above all others in the community should have the greatest consideration of Parliament. I mean the section engaged in primary production. It is difficult to recognise that fact if we turn to the legislation passed by this Government. It is difficult to reconcile that fact with the policy and platform of the present Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman must deal with the Bill.

Mr. KERR: I have not yet started on it. I shall deal with the Bill and will give utterance to any remarks that I think are connected with the Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman must obey my call to order.

Mr. KERR: I will obey your call, Mr. Speaker. The farming section of the community should have the best that can possibly be given them by Parliament. Judging from previous Bills passed by this Government we have difficulty in reconciling the fact of there being any sincerity on the part of the Government in regard to this Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why don't you say straight out that you hope it won't be a success?

Mr. KERR: If the hon. member for Brisbane thinks so, he may hold that opinion, but I will not allow him to put words into my mouth.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: Already a scheme of co-operation has been in operation in Queensland for a considerable time. It has taken this Government a number of years to do something for the various co-operative enterprises that have been formed. We have the co-operative butter factories, co-operative cheese factories, co-operative bacon factories, and various other co-operative concerns, which have their own distributing and selling agencies. This Bill brings in nothing new. The same result could have been achieved by making a couple of short amendments in the Companies Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You should be the Parliamentary Draftsman.

Mr. KERR: I am not talking about that. The Labour Government are renowned for bringing in legislation and giving it wrong names—calling it something that would appear to be advantageous to the people. If the Minister reads the Companies Act, he will find that what is desired by this Bill could have been achieved by making a few short amendments in that Act.

Without dealing in detail with the Bill itself, I notice that any company may be registered by having capital divided into shares and having a limited liability. That is so under

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the Companies Act. I do not know how the liabilities are to be adjusted. No doubt by the aid of another Bill which is to be introduced a certain part of the difficulty may be overcome. There is also mention of the formation of a company without any share capital and with unlimited liability. That may be operated, but I do not think so when it comes to the point. Already we have in Queensland and of recent date so many organisations cropping up through our legislation that the farmers will have the greatest difficulty in knowing where they stand.

It is desired by this Bill that the Local Producers' Associations should become a sort of co-operative concern. Does that meet the situation? Is everything that was desired included in this Bill? I say it is not, because these Local Producers' Associations are composed of men in every occupation in the primary industries; yet when you want a co-operative society, you have to discriminate between one section of growers and another section. If you desire to have a butter factory under the co-operative scheme, the very first thing you have to do is to get the dairy people together and organise them; yet under the same Bill we find that the Local Producers' Associations may become co-operative societies.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: "May."

Mr. KERR: Of course it is "may"; there is no "will" about it. How in the world can the Minister reconcile the Bill with a straight out "dinkum" co-operative Bill? If they desire a straight out co-operative Bill, in a Bill of a very few clauses they could have provided for the primary producers of Queensland. But instead of that they bring in a Bill with the high-sounding name of "Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Bill," and it does not meet the situation. They want to extend the principles. As other hon. members have mentioned the question of the socialisation of industry, I do not wish to refer to it. If there is nothing in that, where do the Local Producers' Associations come into these associations? If you look at the objects of the Bill, you will find that the Minister has had the greatest difficulty in the world in defining what these co-operative societies are going to do. They are going to harrow, plough, and scrape the ground under the co-operative scheme. The thing is impossible, and what is more, it has never been asked for by the primary producers. What they have asked for is an opportunity to market their produce under a co-operative scheme. The Bill goes a good deal further than that. If it was a simple measure allowing for seven or more persons growing a specified commodity coming together as a co-operative society and getting financial assistance in the selling of their products, we would have nothing to say. Are the Government satisfied to stop at the Local Producers' Associations? They sent out men to organise every primary producer in Queensland. When they got that they next want to get the Local Producers' Associations into co-operative associations. The name "Co-operative" is a wrong one. Not satisfied with getting these specified growers into co-operative concerns, they have gone in for a federation of associations. The Bill, if you take it in conjunction with other legislation, is more far-reaching than people realise. I venture to say that the pool system under other Acts is exactly what this Bill is providing

for. No one can tell me the difference between co-operation as provided under this Bill and a pool where the commodity is brought to one authority and distributed by that authority. If there is any difference, I would like to see where it comes in.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I am entitled to criticise this Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is entitled to criticise the Bill, but he must not get out of order in doing so.

Mr. KERR: I have gone very carefully through the Bill. I want again to express my sincere regret that the Minister has not had more in view the benefit of the primary producer. It is impossible on the one hand to do a certain thing and on the other hand to reconcile it with price-fixers and other things. The primary producers are entitled to all we can do for them. Had the Bill contained a plain statement as to what the various growers could do—had it stated that they could establish their factories and distributing agencies, and do the purchasing as well as the selling, and financial assistance had been provided for them, there would have been nothing to cavil at. We as an Opposition represent a larger number of primary producers than the Government do, and it is our duty to point out the difficulties that are likely to ensue. It is impossible under the Bill for the primary producers to go ahead. The Bill is a camouflage in regard to the co-operative scheme which the farmers themselves desire. I hope that the Minister will accept some of the reasonable amendments which we shall put forward in Committee.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am not going to debate the Bill unnecessarily, as, after all that has been said, there is very little for me to add. I take exception to some of the clauses.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may deal with the clauses in Committee.

Mr. DEACON: I do not intend to deal with the clauses—I only mentioned that there are some clauses which perhaps do not express fully the meaning intended. Any number of persons in Queensland, if they choose to do so, can join together and help one another in carrying on business. The Bill simply registers these associations and gives them a certain amount of protection, which will make it easier for them to come together and carry on their projects. I hope to see the voluntary principle retained in the Bill. When farmers or other producers are willing to join together and understand what is involved in doing so, there is no reason why they should not be allowed to be registered. There is one matter which may cause some trouble. It is provided that Local Producers' Associations may register as co-operative companies. It is always possible that some of the members of those associations may not care to come in. I understand that in that case they may have to resign from the Local Producers' Associations. They still should be allowed to remain as members without being bound up in any co-operative company which may be formed. We want to keep up the main organisation of primary producers; and, if we mix up the affairs of the organisation with other things, there may be a feeling in the minds of the farmers that they may be drawn into something which

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they do not care for and which may work against them. That, however, can be attended to in Committee. I hope that in Committee the Minister will be reasonable, and that the Bill may be amended so as to make it a more workable measure than it is now.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I cannot understand the necessity for this measure, because it appears to me that all that is required is embodied in the joint stock provisions of the Companies Acts. It seems to me extraordinary that the Minister should bring in a Bill to provide for something which has existed for a number of years, unless there is a desire on the part of the Council of Agriculture to draw people into the organisation whether they want to come in or not. It is in effect a compulsory measure. It has been freely stated, and it has not been contradicted, that the genesis of the Bill lies with the Director of the Council of Agriculture, and it seems to me that if he has produced this Bill, he has gone a tremendously long way in order to do very little. Surely the opinion of the Minister or that of the Director of the Council of Agriculture is not the last word as to what co-operation is; but apparently the Director has power to embody his views in a Bill. There are two vital points which the Minister wishes to bring into operation. First, no company dealing with primary produce shall use the word "co-operative" unless two-thirds of the shareholders are producers. The Minister himself admitted that the people known as "dry" shareholders have been very useful, and it passes my comprehension why they should be wiped out. The Minister admits that he is a "dry" shareholder and that he did not put his money into the venture expecting a very big profit. There is no particular harm in inserting a provision in the measure to restrict dividends to 5 per cent. One of the finest examples of co-operation in the Empire is the Manchester Wholesale Co-operative Society, in whose articles of association it is provided that no shareholder shall receive a dividend of more than 5 per cent. The right idea of co-operation is not to give dividends to shareholders but that the producers shall have returned the profits to them in proportion as they provide the product. As the hon. member for Enoggera said, it would have been a very simple matter by a few short clauses to amend the Companies Act of 1863 and do what is wanted, and still allow any number of persons to form an association, using the word "co-operative," under the Companies Act, without any necessity for this elaborate Bill at all.

The idea of co-operation is not new. The old Liberal Government brought in some very efficient co-operative measures, and I am informed by the hon. member for Mirani that one measure provided that the dividends to sugar-growers were to be restricted to 5 per cent. The main object of the Bill appears to be to allow of the formation of a primary producers' co-operative association "to make from time to time with its members contracts requiring members to sell for any specified period of time all or any specified part of their primary produce exclusively to or through the association."

The Minister has evidently recognised that such an extraordinary provision is in

restraint of trade, because later on there is a provision which says—

"All the foregoing objects and each of them shall be and be deemed to be a lawful object, notwithstanding that the giving effect thereto might otherwise be held to be in restraint of trade."

Evidently those, who are responsible for designing this Bill thought that some of the provisions were in restraint of trade, because they say that, notwithstanding that, the provisions are not to be regarded as being in restraint of trade. I do not know that any Bill that has provisions that are in restraint of trade will ultimately be a good one, because it may happen that some of the members may make contracts that may be detrimental and through a misunderstanding, but once they are bound down under this Bill those contracts become legal and binding, the law with regard to restraint of trade notwithstanding. Why should we have such a long drawn out Bill with so many sections taken from the Companies Acts?

I can at random pick out twenty sections that have been taken word for word from the Companies Act. Why transfer those sections to this Bill when the same thing could be accomplished by a further amendment of the Companies Act? The Bill provides that existing companies cannot continue to use the word "co-operative," and after a certain time they can be compelled on the determination of the Governor in Council, following on the request of the Director of Agriculture, to cease using that word. The Council of Agriculture is to be the judge as to whether a company is being controlled co-operatively or not, and then within a certain time the shareholders have to call a meeting and, on the basis of one man one vote, 80 per cent. have to decide whether they will come under the provisions of this Bill. We have already pointed out the injustice that will be done to those people who have put money into these companies and are to be deprived of their interest on a different franchise from that which existed when they put their money into the company. What will really happen to those individuals in that direction will amount to a violation of the contract which the people have entered into. That is altering the Companies Act in a very material particular. The Minister has power to veto the registration of a company. Why should the Minister have power to veto the registration of a company under this Bill when that company has conformed with all the required conditions?

Is the Minister going to discriminate in these matters? One begins to wonder why the Minister comes into this matter. Then we find that if a company wishes to change its name the Minister must be consulted.

We do not find under the Companies Act that, if any company wishes to be registered, it has to go to the Minister. There is a certain procedure laid down under that Act for the registration of a company, and if the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies is satisfied that the company has conformed to the Act, it is registered. A clause in the Bill says that if the Minister is satisfied with the application for registration he can register the company. I cannot see for the life of me how the Minister is going to interfere. The articles of association are either right or wrong, and the Registrar of Joint Stock

[*Mr. Deacon.*]

Companies is the correct official to say whether they are right or wrong. Under the Companies Act the Registrar has full power to disallow the registration of a company if he thinks that its articles of association are not in conformity with the Act. That is one reason why one wonders why the Minister desires to interfere in the matter. If a company formed under the Bill wants to change its name, it must approach the Minister and secure his consent.

There are also certain provisions under which the Minister, on the advice of the Council of Agriculture, can allow certain companies to come under the Bill and still use the word "co-operative." That is an extraordinary provision. It means that the Council of Agriculture will have its own way in the alteration of the articles of association, or else force it to stop business. The question of exemption rests on the recommendation of the Council. It can be taken for granted that the Council of Agriculture will insist on certain alterations being made in the articles of association to suit the particular lines they are running on.

We have, wrapped up in this Bill, some model rules. The Minister will admit that these rules are not compulsory. A company may take these model rules just as it may take Table A under the Companies Act. They may take them or leave them. A large number of companies will come under this Bill and adopt the model rules to save expense of the alteration of their articles of association, on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture. If any hon. member will take the trouble to read through the model rules he will be astonished.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are permissive.

Mr. KELSO: I said that they were permissive. We shall have an opportunity of reviewing them when the Bill is in Committee. The Minister seems to have gone the longest way round with this Bill to do the least work. It will be found that the Council of Agriculture is wrapped up in the Bill right through it, and that it will spread its tentacles around in order to set hold of the co-operative companies. The Minister could have made this Bill a very simple one by introducing an amendment of the Companies Act and obviated the whole of this verbiage. I do not see why any company should not use the word "co-operative" if the spirit of co-operation is exercised by the company. Simply because they happen to fail to conform with the idea of co-operation as defined by the Government it is a misdemeanour and an offence. It seems to me to be taking away the liberty of the individual. The Director of the Council of Agriculture has his own peculiar ideas and will insist on impressing those ideas on every farmer in Queensland. I think that the whole thing is monstrous. Surely the liberties of the subject should be recognised to a certain extent! If a man dares to form a co-operative company and does not conform with the ideas of this Bill, it is to be considered a misdemeanour.

I presume that the Bill will apply only to primary producers. I should like the Minister to answer that. I instance the Civil Service Stores in Brisbane. They are not primary producers, but the Bill apparently embraces any company dealing in the distribution and sale of primary produce. I imagine that a company like the one I mention—and there are numerous others of a similar nature which deal in groceries mainly but also have the produce of the primary producer for sale—will not come within the meaning of this Bill. The Minister evidently overlooked that point when defining a co-operative company. Some of the companies I mention do deal with primary products, such as the sale of hay, chaff, etc., and I take it that, if they use the word "co-operative" they are liable to the fine of £100 mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.