

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 1924

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER, 1924.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 10 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

OLD AGE AND INVALID PENSIONERS, DUNWICH.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. What is the rate of old-age and invalid pension actually paid to inmates of Dunwich?”

“2. What amount is received by the State towards the maintenance of inmate pensioners?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford (*Mount Morgan*), replied—

“1. 3s. to inmate and 10s. 6d. to Curator.”

“2. The payments last financial year amounted to £14,308 2s. 1d.”

RESUMPTIONS OF FREEHOLD LAND IN BANYAN DISTRICT.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. Has the Government resumed freehold land in the Banyan district?”

“2. If so, on what date was notice of resumption given?”

“3. Has the compensation payable yet been determined?”

“4. Has compensation been paid? If not, when is it likely to be paid?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), for the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. 27th July, 1923, and 6th August, 1923.

“3. No.

“4. See answer to Question 3.”

LINE OF STEAMSHIPS ON WHICH PREMIER RETURNED TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Premier—

“1. Is it a fact that upon his recent return trip to Australia he travelled by one of the Commonwealth line of steamers?”

“2. If not, by what line did he travel, and is such line owned in Australia or elsewhere?”

“3. Is it run by Government or by private enterprise?”

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

“1. No.

“2. Orient Line.

“3. It is subsidised by the Government.”

AGREEMENT *in re* SALE OF PRECIOUS STONES FROM ANAKIE SAPPHIRE FIELD.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. Will he lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the agreement relating

to the sale of precious stones acquired from the miners of the Anakie Sapphire Field?

"2. What is the name of the person, firm, or company acting for the Government in this matter?"

"3. What progress payments per ounce have been made to the miners for the various classes of stones, respectively? What is the total amount of such payments?"

"4. What quantity of stones has been—(a) acquired from the miners; (b) sold?"

"5. What prices per ounce have been realised for the various classes of stones; and what is the total amount received to date on account of sales?"

"6. Have any final settlements yet been made with any of the miners?"

"7. If so, what quantities of the various classes of stones have been finally paid for, and at what prices, respectively?"

"8. Would a statement made in London 'that the miners were only getting half the commercial value for these stones' be worthy of further investigation?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

"1 to 8. A full statement of sales to date is now being prepared, and I will deal with the question of marketing sapphires fully when the Mines Estimates are before the House."

OCCUPANCY OF STATE INSURANCE BUILDING AND RENTS PAID.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. How many square feet of space are occupied in the State Insurance Building by—(a) The State Insurance Department; (b) the Public Curator?"

"2. How much rent per square foot is charged for such accommodation?"

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

"1. State Insurance Office, 34,128 square feet; Public Curator's Office, 11,766 square feet.

"2. State Insurance Office—

	£
For year 1921	6,500
For year 1922	6,500
For year 1923	7,000
For year 1924	7,500
For year 1925 and thereafter	8,000

based on various rates per square foot, according to different floors occupied. Public Curator's Office, 3s. per square foot."

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD—REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION ON ALLEGED DEFECTIVE SEWERAGE WORK.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"Will he cause to have printed, for the benefit of members of the House, the report of the 'Royal Commission appointed to inquire into certain alleged defective work in connection with the reticulation sewer in the vicinity of Laidlaw parade, East Brisbane, the sewer near the Baby Clinic in Alfred street,

Fortitude Valley, and such other sewers and reticulation sewers as the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board may determine?"

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

"No. A copy has already been laid on the Table of the House, and members can peruse it at their leisure."

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—THIRD ALLOTTED DAY.

(*Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.*)

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

HOSPITALS.

Question stated—

"That £207,310 be granted for 'Hospitals.'"

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): An engagement in my electorate yesterday prevented me from remaining to get the answer provided by the Home Secretary in connection with the "Golden Casket." I want to say straight away—and in saying it I want to acquit the hon. gentleman of being in any way party to what I am going to say in connection with the withholding of information—that I do not think full information has been supplied by his department. I believe that the position is something like this: Two officers deliberately altered the board after the numbers had been put up. They had tickets, and at least one of those officers got the prize money according to the number on one of the tickets. If it were not so, why was restitution made?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was not made.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then I withdraw that. I understood that restitution had been made.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. I understand that two persons claimed a £50 prize, but the person who held the right ticket afterwards received the prize.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad of the admission from the Home Secretary that they paid £50 to someone whose number did not appear on the board and who was employed in the office, and that somebody else received £50. That is the point I want to make. The Minister admits—I do not wish in any way to distort his statement—that for one of the prizes apparently two amounts were paid. Does not that at any rate induce us to believe that there is something wrong somewhere? Hon. members know that I am personally not interested in the "Golden Casket," but I do say that it should be run in such a way that people who put their money into it know that things are square and right. Apparently that was not done in this case. Were the men, or was the man who got the £50 that he should not have got, asked to make any restitution?

The HOME SECRETARY: I could not tell you that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman says he cannot tell. Surely he is in control of the business and should know what is going on, and if something has been done that is not right, it should be cleared up straight away. There is another phase of the incident. I do not know how many men are on the staff of the "Golden Casket,"

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

but I take it that every man there is, at any rate, liable to the accusation by outside people that he has had something to do with this matter, and the question is so big that we have a right to have an inquiry made into the circumstances. If my information is correct—and I believe it is—the charge was sheeted home as a result of the fact that the rightful winner happened to be in the hall when the winning numbers were announced.

The HOME SECRETARY: I made a mistake. I thought the prize money was paid twice.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Can the hon. gentleman say that my information is not correct? I am not here to insinuate anything against anyone connected with the administration, but I do say that the discovery was brought about as a result of the man who held a winning ticket being on the spot and hearing his number called, and then, when he went to get his prize, finding that it was not available. I say that, if one of the servants of the committee took money to which he had no right, the Government have a duty to ask him to make restitution.

Mr. VOWLES: He ought to be prosecuted.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister in his reply said that it was not possible to get sufficient evidence to prosecute, but here these people can say that persons have deliberately taken down the Crown to the extent of £50, and if it were found out on one occasion, on how many occasions has it been done and not been found out? I would like to have some further information.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I admit that the statement which the Minister made yesterday was made upon information that was passed on to him. The Minister stated definitely yesterday that there was no suggestion of dishonesty on the part of any employee. In this morning's "Courier" he is reported as saying—

"No error was made in the drawing but in the transference of the numbers from the sheet at the drawing to the published result. I am not conveying any suggestion of dishonesty against the employees."

The Minister was quite right in conveying to us the information that he got, but I protest against any wrong information being conveyed to the Minister after this vote had been discussed during the morning and the afternoon. The information should not have been wrong, and the true facts should have been placed before the Committee. In view of what has been stated by the Minister and following on the remarks by the hon. member for Wynnum we now find that there was dishonesty. There is an admission that some employee actually did wrong and robbed the "Golden Casket" committee of £50. We are in an extraordinary position. I do not think we are quite clear even yet. I quite agree with the by the hon. member for Wynnum, we now be an inquiry into this matter. We had one story yesterday, and another story to-day. Those statements were made by the Minister on information given to him. We do not know how far this thing is going. We do not know how long it has been going on. Since yesterday, more especially in the train this morning, the one topic of conversation has been the irregularities in the "Golden

Casket" office. A great number of people are interested in these drawings. Like the hon. member for Wynnum, I do not indulge in the "Golden Casket." I do not hold that it is the correct thing, but there are a great number of people who think it is the correct thing. They have their own opinions. Many of those who indulge in the "Golden Casket" say they do so because it gives practical assistance to the hospitals and is a form of charity, and those people should be protected. There is an air of unrest in the community at present in connection with the "Golden Casket." If the explanation given yesterday was accepted as a fact, and to-day as a result of the speech by the hon. member for Wynnum a different story is given, then what I want to know is, if we ask the same question to-morrow and this discussion is continued, we are going to get some more information? I quite agree with the hon. member for Wynnum that the question is of such importance to the community at large that an inquiry should be held and the whole thing sifted to the bottom.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I have not made a different statement to-day from what I made yesterday. I said yesterday that a few irregularities had occurred in putting down the numbers. The matter was investigated by the "Golden Casket" committee.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I say it was willfully done.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not going to brand the men unless there is sufficient evidence to brand them, and I have been informed by the representatives of the "Golden Casket" committee that there is no evidence that the men benefited. It was a case of gross carelessness.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Who got the £50?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was paid to the rightful owner.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Who was the individual who got the other amount?

Mr. MORGAN: Then there is £50 short.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. KELSO: Was it paid twice?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have since been informed that it was not paid twice.

Mr. MORGAN: Is £50 not missing?

The HOME SECRETARY: No, because the man presented himself, and investigation disclosed that he was the right man and he was paid £50.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to hon. members that this discussion is very much out of order. I made a mistake in permitting it to start yesterday. This vote does not deal with the "Golden Casket." Hon. members will be in order in referring to it in passing, but they will not be in order in discussing the whole of the activities of the "Golden Casket," which is not a governmental department. To discuss the "Golden Casket" on this vote would be just as much out of order as it would be to discuss a certain undertaking firm conveying bodies from the hospital for burial. I gave the Minister an opportunity to reply in order to close the debate on this question. Hon. members will have to take another opportunity of discussing the "Golden Casket."

Hon. W. H. Barnes.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I do not wish to refer any further to this episode, but I do wish to make certain remarks in regard to the disposal of the funds of the "Golden Casket" for hospital purposes; I understand that I shall be quite in order in so doing. I want to draw the attention of the Home Secretary—and I suppose there are similar cases in other parts of Queensland—to a case last year where a hospital in the country which had saved a certain amount of money and put it away for a rainy day was prevented from participating in the distribution of the "Golden Casket" funds. I refer to the Miles district hospital. The committee had saved £3,000 and placed that sum in the bank at fixed deposit. The people in the district, through drought and other causes, were unable to subscribe to the hospital last year as they had previously done; and, owing to the fact that the committee had this fixed deposit, the Home Secretary would not allow them to participate in the distribution of this fund. The result has been that the people of the district have not since subscribed to the hospital, and the committee have had to use this fixed deposit, which is now almost exhausted. The policy of the Government in regard to participation in the distribution of the fund appears to be that the hospital must first be in an unfinancial position. That policy is not an inducement to those people who have previously subscribed liberally to continue doing so. In my own district the people subscribe to the hospital liberally, but they are not in such a good financial position as the people of Miles. It is not right that those people who are prepared to meet their responsibilities and subscribe liberally for the upkeep of their hospital should be deprived of participation in the distribution of the "Golden Casket" funds. Such a policy is only penalising the willing horse. It should not be so. Many of our districts have neglected their duty to assist their charitable institutions, and Brisbane and Toowoomba are notable instances. The people of those districts have been recompensed for their neglect.

I notice from the newspapers yesterday that a further grant of £10,000 has been made from the "Golden Casket" fund to the Brisbane General Hospital. When a hospital gets into difficulties owing to the fact that the people will not do their duty and recognise that the institution is there for the benefit of the people in the locality, it is subsidised by the Government; but wherever the people recognise that it is their duty to contribute to charitable institutions, they should not be penalised but rather helped, patted on the back, told they were doing good work, and that, as a result of that good work, the Government would not withhold their portion of the "Golden Casket" funds, which was primarily established, we were told, to assist our charitable institutions. That fund is not for the purpose of assisting hospitals in distress, but to assist them to perform the function for which they were established. The Home Secretary will agree with me that this position should not exist. The result of the action of the Home Secretary has been that the Miles hospital has practically exhausted its fixed deposit and is reduced to a struggling position because the Government would not give it any assistance in the good work it is doing. The hospital is going to become a charge upon the State the same as are a large number of other institutions at the present time. I think the Home Secretary

will admit that a mistake was made in withholding the proportion of "Golden Casket" funds that the Miles Hospital was entitled to. I believe that the Miles Hospital is not the only one affected in this manner. A certain amount of money should be allotted to each hospital according to the amount of money expended each year whether that hospital is in funds or not. I hope that the Home Secretary will recognise the fact that it was a wrong action last year, and that he will not continue to withhold "Golden Casket" distributions from hospitals that are in a good financial position owing to their wise methods and the support of the people in the district. Such hospitals deserve support just as much as those in districts where the people have failed in their duty to support the institution.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I wish to say a word in passing regarding the controversy connected with the "Golden Casket" funds. I quite appreciate the Home Secretary's desire to make public any information he has with respect to any inaccuracies connected with the running of that institution. It is to the advantage of the "Golden Casket" and of the hospitals that such a matter should be ventilated in Parliament, but prior to that action it is only right that the Minister and his officials should carry out a full investigation and secure a complete history of the circumstances of the case. Such action would prevent any suspicion being cast upon those carrying on the good work of the "Golden Casket" and the hospitals. When the inaccuracies are investigated, they should be rectified straight away and so dispel any suspicion that would otherwise exist.

We know that in country districts there is no desire on the part of the department to establish hospitals in too close proximity to existing hospitals. At the same time, I think the Home Department would be wise in considering the localities where hospitals have been applied for. We know that it is not only the distance between two hospitals that governs the case, but that there is a considerable number of people in the surrounding districts who need attention. It is to be hoped that the Home Secretary will give encouragement and subsidies for the establishment of such institutions when it is obvious that they will be of advantage to a big circle of back-block residents.

With regard to the withdrawal of subsidies to institutions that are in a good financial position, I know the Eidsvold Hospital was a sufferer in this respect. That hospital had a credit fund—which, of course, has not been enjoyed by the Brisbane General Hospital. Because the Eidsvold Hospital had a credit at the bank from which interest was being gathered, it was refused any appropriation from the "Golden Casket" funds. The unfortunate part about it is that that hospital had not then estimated what its requirements would be with regard to an up-to-date building. Those concerned were carrying on the hospital in a building that was not suited to future requirements, and they were waiting until they had accumulated sufficient funds to enable them to have their quota in hand to establish a building suited to modern requirements. Because they had that credit instead of dissipating it unwisely, they were penalised and denied any assistance from the "Golden Casket" funds.

That should not be the point of view of the authorities. Instead, hospitals endeavouring

Mr. Corser.]

to make their financial position strong enough to secure their quota for the establishment of new and up-to-date buildings should receive every encouragement from the department.

The establishment of a hospital assists very much in preserving to the district the assistance of a medical man. In districts where a medical man cannot find a remunerative practice and where there are no hospitals to help him, it could well be the duty of the State to give a subsidy to a medical practitioner to enable him to practise in those outback places for the convenience of the settlers there. There is no shortage of medical men in the towns and cities, and any assistance that can be given to enable medical men to reside in the more sparsely populated districts of the State should be granted in the interests of humanity. There is another matter that often strikes me as being one of the very greatest importance. We find very often people in outside districts, where there may be only a small hospital, suffering from some complaint which necessitates special treatment and a specially trained nurse in order to preserve the life of the individual. Probably after spending some weeks or some months lying in the hospital his financial position does not enable him to continue in the hospital and he goes home awaiting the end. Special treatment should be provided in Brisbane for all such cases. Where special treatment is required in such cases, surely there is sufficient human nature amongst the members of the medical profession to provide the necessary treatment. A small remuneration to a specialist should be sufficient to induce him to execute a Christian duty to a fellow Queenslander who is unable, because his pocket is not deep enough, to protect his own life. I have come across cases in my own district where such special attention is required in order to secure a cure, and the State is responsible for seeing that these individuals have the very best medical attention, such as is provided for those in the cities who have sufficient money to pay for it. I do not think we are asking anything too much in asking for that.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): It is pleasing to note that throughout this debate there has been no criticism from the Opposition in regard to the baby clinics that have been established by the Government. One can offer nothing but praise of the work that they are doing at the present time. From the little notice that I have taken of the baby clinics I could not help noticing the efficiency and enthusiasm of those in charge of these institutions. I have in my mind the registration of a birth just recently in the police district of West End, and on the following morning a nurse from the baby clinic paid a visit to the mother, showing that the nurses are well in touch with their work and are really serving a useful purpose to the community.

What I would like to touch upon to-day is the question of an extension of these institutions to various outback parts of Queensland. Up to date the Government have concentrated mainly on the large industrial centres and some of the larger towns of Queensland, and nothing has been done in many of the outside districts. Take the Central West as an illustration. I would suggest to the Home Secretary that he give consideration to the establishment of baby

[*Mr. Corser.*

clinics in some of the outback parts of Queensland. I have in my mind a most suitable centre for the establishment of a baby clinic, and although it is in my own electorate, I do not wish to be charged with working the parish pump. If a baby clinic was established in that centre the whole district could be worked from that one main centre. I recognise that it is impossible for the Home Secretary, with the funds at his disposal, to establish a baby clinic with a nurse in every little country town in Queensland. Take the Clermont-Springsure-Alpha district. Emerald is the centre of that district, and it is served by branch railways, and a baby clinic established at that point with a permanent nurse and an itinerant nurse could work right up the line to Capella, Clermont, and Blair Athol in one direction, and in another direction up the Western line to Ruby Vale, Sapphire Town, Bogantungan, and right up to Alpha. The third railway line runs from Emerald through all the centres on the Springsure line right up to that place. Let us consider the position of the people in those parts.

Take Ruby Vale and Sapphire, [10.30 a.m.] for instance. I have in mind a doctor visiting that place on being appointed by the hospital committee there, arriving with a sugar bag as his portmanteau, the only suit he had being a brand new one that he had purchased at Finney, Isles, and the ticket still visible on the suit when he arrived at Ruby Vale in a drunken state. If that is what they have to put up with, one can imagine the position that a woman with a sick baby visiting that doctor to get medical attention for the child would be in. The same applies to Capella. The district there is not one which warrants the establishment of a hospital. The result is that any call from Clermont or Emerald means £15 or £20 to the person who has to make arrangements for medical attention. The Home Secretary might well consider the question of establishing a head centre, with an itinerant nurse to visit the various centres in the surrounding districts. Arrangements could be made with the Postmaster-General so that a mother in any of the towns surrounding the head centre could go to the post office and communicate with the head centre or the baby clinic at Emerald should occasion require.

I have very little to say in regard to hospital matters. I hope that when the Hospitals Act comes into operation it will serve the purpose of making those who dodge their responsibilities at the present time come up to the mark. In conclusion, I would urge the Home Secretary to give my suggestion his sympathetic consideration.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*): The work done by the hospital section of the Home Secretary's Department in the matter of the establishment of maternity hospitals in the far West has earned the gratitude of those people who under a less humanitarian system of Government were subjected to perilous conditions such as the people in the cities have never known. The scheme of finance of the hospitals has had a certain amount of criticism in the way of allegations against the conduct of the "Golden Casket," but the work of the "Golden Casket" in financing hospitals has been practically the first thing done in Australia for putting hospital finance on a proper basis. The old method amounted

to a Government subsidy equal to the amount of successful cadging from private individuals, and, as we know, once that was started such charity was run for the benefit of the collectors long after the necessity for the object had passed. There were cases of women allegedly collecting for the Red Cross three and four years after the War, and anything that can be done in the direction of a State-wide or an Australian-wide lottery, which will have the result of financially benefiting the finances of the hospitals should be done. As a sample of what private charity consisted in I might refer to the balance-sheet of the Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane. For the year ended 30th June, 1922, the Society collected £675 and received in Government endowment £396; from the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust it received £205, which, with the balance and interest from the Government Savings Bank, brought the total to £1,413 16s. 11d. Salaries and administrative expenses absorbed £787 15s. 6d., and there was distributed in actual relief in the way of charity £502 0s. 4d. These things are sufficient to show that even though people engaged in respectable forms of gambling but still hating the name of it—even though “wowsers” may object whilst engaging in gambling in their own businesses—the benefits from the “Golden Caskets” have been such that there is not the slightest possibility of interference with them except in the direction of extension. I notice in the report of the Commissioner of Public Health—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in dealing with that on this vote.

Mr. BEDFORD: The work done here in regard to venereal disease has been done better than in other cities, although we shall have nothing really effective until a little more interest is taken in it by the medical profession and more enforcement is given to the law, and the registration and examination of prostitutes is resumed. Everybody knows the conditions of things which existed here—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member may not discuss that question on this vote except so far as it affects hospitals.

Mr. BEDFORD: I shall endeavour to do so. I notice that in New South Wales the venereal hospital has had to be closed in Sydney, although the Government at the same time were capable of supplying money to an explorer from Lapland to enable him to rediscover Arltunga and White Range in Central Australia, and it has been possible for them to spend money in dozens of other ways. I would like to call attention to the better results that this Government have been getting, even under present conditions. The whole trouble is that, whenever any attempt is made to deal with this matter, “wowsers,” in their usual way of telling conventional lies—just as they said that tuberculosis should not be a notifiable disease because it was alleged that the birth-rights and liberties of the subject were being interfered with by such regulation—right through the piece have been responsible for the spread of disease, for the spread of darkness, simply because they hated light and would not permit publicity unless and until such matters as this had been studied and taught and forced upon them by other

men. From the beginning of the treatment of venereal disease in all hospitals, the main idea of people opposed to notification and registration and certain other necessary provisions for coping with this trouble has been that it was wrong to show any expectation or approval of anything approaching natural desire. Until children are taught that the facts of life and of the generation of life are not to be learned nastily and haphazard but decently and from people whom they trust, so long shall we continue to have a high death rate amongst children; so long shall we discover a tremendous proportion of children born and subject to syphilitic ophthalmia, and so long shall we find that the general strength of the community is being sapped by diseases which could be wiped out if we were only honest about it. For instance, as showing what this general respectability in government has done, the worst legacy that England gave to America was its “wowsers.” Those people went to America to practise religious freedom, meaning thereby their own religious freedom. At the time they were doing the most unchristian things, as the early Christians being “wowsers” started to “scrap” with the later Christians, and in the “scrap” Christianity was lost and has not since been found. I do not say that Christianity is a failure; I say that Christianity has not been tried.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: I am sorry if the truth is out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: Do not reflect on the Chair.

Mr. BEDFORD: I say that Christianity has never been tried. It is a fact that this “wowsersism,” which is the greatest bar against the successful handling of diseases, afflicted America in this way—that, while they have the greatest number of homicides in the world, they also have the greatest number of churches.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: The modern education of women is more in the direction of educating them for typists than for housewives. There is no particular objection to that, because it is the rotten system—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. gentleman does not obey my call to order, I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am connecting up my remarks with hospital matters.

Mr. CLAYTON: Try something else.

Mr. BEDFORD: I was about to say that the ignorance of mothers has been to a large extent the cause of the high death rate in children. The quality of the children is of much more importance than the quantity. It is apparent that many believe that just because there is a high birth rate we can well continue to multiply independent of the number that die in the first fatal three months of life. The stock of healthy parents is restricted by the cost of raising families. In Victoria, for instance, they are spending £300,000 on 4,000 insane people, while the basic wage is not sufficient to keep a family of four or five in decent comfort. There is the case of a congenital idiot in the Parramatta Asylum who is now about forty-five years of age—

Mr. Bedford.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I give the hon. member a last opportunity of obeying my call to order.

Mr. BEDFORD: In Bradford, with a population of 400,000, a sum of £40,000 is spent in the prevention of infantile mortality. Yet the mortality rate per 1,000 there borders on 132. In Connaught, in a much poorer county, the mortality rate is only 50 per 1,000, because the mothers do not go out to work and are much healthier than the people of the English industrial cities. There is here then a reason why betterment of conditions would result in a greater proportion of children being saved and fewer cases of death in childbirth. The figures I have quoted are conclusive, and show that even in poorer places where the comforts of life are not nearly so great as they are in these big industrial cities, simply because the mothers do not seek employment outside, the results are a greater saving of life of children in the first year because of better conditions. This is a position that comes right down to the crux of the Labour platform—better conditions and better payment for men so that the State in the future will be able to boast of results such as were obtained in a commune near Paris where in ten years not one death has occurred in childbirth nor has one infant died. That is the aim we must have in dealing with new life—the extension of the baby clinics so that the great ideal may be reached of not one death of the child in the first year, because they are all preventable, and not one death of the mother. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I am sure it must be a great surprise to hon. members, as it certainly is to myself, that the hon. member for Warrego has adopted the new role of a divinity student. (Laughter.) I trust he will continue those studies, for I have no doubt that if he does so it will be of material benefit to himself. I rose for the purpose of directing that hon. member's attention to an amendment of the Health Act which I introduced and which is now the law. It deals completely and fully with enthetic diseases.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I would like to point out in connection with baby clinics that whilst I was at the Home Department I directed full inquiries to be made for the establishment of baby clinics in Queensland. The information was obtained.

Mr. WRIGHT: But you did nothing.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: When I left the Home Department all the information was there complete so that a start could be made. While I commend the Home Department for taking action in this matter at last, it is regrettable that they have allowed so many years to elapse before doing so when all the information was in the department ready for them to proceed. The claim has been consistently made by hon. members opposite that they alone introduced and carried out this humane measure. I consider, therefore, that the knowledge of the actual facts should be known to those hon. members, some of whom are new to the Committee and to the public generally.

Mr. HARTLEY: We know what you talked about, but what did you do?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: My record stands, and if the record of the hon. member is

[*Mr. Bedford.*

only as good as the record that was left by the Administration of which I was a member, then he will be entitled to claim credit for something. That record has never been equalled and certainly never excelled. Before the scheme could be carried into effect I had left the Home Secretary's Department, but the information was there, and I only regret, while commending the department for carrying out that humane measure, that they allowed so many years to elapse before taking action.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I want to congratulate the Home Secretary's Department upon the establishment of maternity homes and baby clinics. The hon. member for Albert claims that all the information was collected while he was Home Secretary.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Just at the end of my term.

Mr. COLLINS: Yet nothing was done by the hon. gentleman's Government.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They went out. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. gentleman was associated with a party that to all intents and purposes had the Government of Queensland in their hands for over fifty years. During that time they never thought of doing anything with regard to baby clinics.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: It was then quite a new idea.

Mr. COLLINS: Yet now we find the hon. gentleman taking credit for the institution of those clinics. Something on a par with the hon. gentleman's attitude is to be found in connection with another organisation now seeking to take credit for the establishment of these clinics. I have in my hand the "Annual Report and Balance-sheet of the Northern Executive of the Country Women's Association." A paragraph in that report just fits in with the remarks of the hon. member for Albert when he takes credit for the innovation. After the Labour Government have established maternity wards and baby clinics these people say—

"Other subjects dealt with included the establishment of maternity wards in local hospitals, and baby clinics."

We do not need the Country Women's Association to tell the Labour party what to do. The Labour party set out to do it and did it. After we did these humanitarian acts—

Mr. ROBERTS: You have done something; why do you not do more?

Mr. COLLINS: After the Government had established maternity wards and baby clinics in many centres of population the Country Women's Association commenced to discuss it.

Mr. CORSER: Hear, hear! Why not?

Mr. COLLINS: The point I want to make is that we claim that we established the maternity wards and baby clinics, and we are the people who have been looking after the country women. The Country Women's Association come in after we have taken action. I know that a good deal more can be done and that the Country Women's Association can help in this regard, but I object to them taking credit for what has been done. I am not going to allow them to take that credit.

There has been plenty of opportunity for hon. members opposite to pass humanitarian

legislation, but they have been lacking in that direction. We want the people of Queensland to know that we are in sympathy with humanitarian legislation.

Regarding maternity wards, I want to thank the Home Secretary's Department for the two already established in my electorate, one at Bowen and one at Proserpine, the latter recently completed. I want to ask that consideration be given—and I know that it will be given—to the erection of a maternity ward in connection with the Home Hill Hospital.

This morning we heard something about the support given to our hospitals, and I desire to say a word of praise regarding the Home Hill District Hospital. There was a little opposition to the building of that hospital owing to the fact that it was only 8 miles from the township of Ayr. At that time the Home Secretary's Department argued that they did not think the Home Hill district capable of supporting its own hospital. I am very pleased to be able to state that I believe it to be one of the most financial hospitals we have in the whole of Queensland, and if the same spirit of co-operation that exists in that district had been exhibited throughout Queensland, there would have been no need in the last session of Parliament to pass a Hospitals Act. At any rate I am very proud of that hospital.

I desire to say that the miners on the Bowen coalfield realise the advantages of a hospital, and, although they are only a very small community and have only been raising funds for a period of about twelve months, I had a letter from the secretary the other day in which he stated that their funds had now reached nearly £900, and they hoped that shortly they would be able to raise the necessary quota to enable them to build a hospital at that centre.

I would not have risen to speak on this vote but for the speech delivered by the hon. member for Albert, and I wanted to emphasise the point that to this party belongs the credit of establishing baby clinics and maternity wards, and not to the Country Women's Association.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): No doubt the Minister in charge of this department will be very flattered at the speech of congratulation delivered by the hon. member for Bowen. The Minister is asking for an appropriation of £207,310 for hospitals, whilst last year the amount expended was £241,632, so evidently there is a reduction in the vote of £34,322. We have had very little information as to the necessity for this reduction except that we were told that it will be saved as a result of the activities of the local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: I explained that previously the Government had to pay the whole of the Brisbane Hospital expenses, which amounted to a little more than that sum. Now, of course, it is not necessary to provide that amount.

Mr. BRAND: That is satisfactory. For hospitals generally throughout Queensland there was an appropriation last year of £170,000, and this year the Government are asking for £180,000 for that purpose. Out of that appropriation will be paid the endowments to hospitals, ambulance brigades, and first-aid hospitals throughout the State, and it is stipulated that the total endowment on these institutions must not exceed the vote

of £180,000. I would like the Minister to give the amount that was spent last year in this connection.

In all the speeches of congratulation that we have had from hon. members opposite we have not heard one word about the reduced subsidy to ambulance brigades throughout Queensland. The ambulance brigade is not only the best charitable institution of its kind in Queensland, but the best institution of its kind throughout the whole world.

Mr. FOLEY: It is rather too charitable at times to those who can afford to pay; that is the trouble.

Mr. BRAND: Yet the Minister during last year thought fit to reduce the subsidy to this grand institution. There is a feeling amongst those connected with ambulance brigades that the Minister is endeavouring to take the control, of the Brisbane Ambulance Brigade, at any rate, out of the hands of those at present controlling it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That has never been suggested.

Mr. BRAND: There is a feeling that under a Bill to be introduced in this Chamber in the near future control will be taken out of their hands.

The HOME SECRETARY: We do not want a Bill to do that. The Hospitals Act passed last session gives power for that to be done.

Mr. BRAND: I hope the Minister will see his way clear to increase the subsidy to ambulance brigades to what it was originally—that is, £1 for every £1 subscribed. That is small enough, seeing that it

[11 a.m.] is one of the best institutions we have. I shall be very grateful if the Minister will give me the information I have asked for, and I hope that the ambulance brigades will not be asked to take a reduced subsidy on account of the possibility of the amount of this vote having been exceeded.

I would like to know whether the Maryborough District Hospital has ever asked for a grant as a base hospital. I do not see any item showing that Maryborough receives any extra amount as a base hospital, although Rockhampton and Townsville receive a grant of £1,000 each, and also the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Brisbane of £2,000. The Maryborough District Hospital receives patients from as far west as Kingaroy and Mundubbera. It also receives patients from Childers and Howard, and also from the Pialba district and as far south as Gympie. I think Maryborough should receive some recognition for its hospital being used as a base hospital. If we received a grant of £1,000, we could do a great deal of work for the benefit of suffering humanity in and around the Maryborough district. I sincerely trust that the Minister will carry out his duties sympathetically not only towards the hospitals of the State, but to the ambulance brigade, and that, whatever Bill may be introduced, he will not allow the control which at present is in the capable hands of the Ambulance Committee to be taken away.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I desire to make some reference to the fact that Townsville is receiving an extra subsidy as a base hospital on account of the large number of people who come from all over the northern portion of the State for treatment. It must

Mr. Hynes.]

be obvious to hon. members that country hospitals cannot have the necessary scientific equipment for the treatment of disease. I have visited the Townsville Hospital on many occasions and found patients there from Croydon in the North and others who came from as far as Camooweal in the West, and I contend that the subsidy of £1,000 is not sufficient to pay the extra expense incurred in the treatment of patients from such a large area of the State. We have been endeavouring to get a maternity ward established in connection with the Townsville Hospital, and I am hopeful that it will become an accomplished fact before the end of the year.

We have a clinic in Townsville which is certainly a boon to the people there. Every mail I receive letters of commendation from mothers in Townsville in connection with the treatment they are receiving and the advice they are securing from the nurses in charge of the baby clinics. There is one aspect of the organisation in Townsville which I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister; that is, that better facilities should be provided to enable the nurses to visit the homes of the prospective mothers. One can understand the strain on the physique of nurses who have to walk many miles in a day to visit prospective mothers in order to advise them. I would suggest to the Minister that in places like Townsville, where we have not got any tram service and not a very adequate bus service, the nurses should be provided with a Ford motor-car to enable them to carry out their work with justice to themselves and enable them to cope with a larger number of cases. The sphere of usefulness of baby clinics in Townsville and other parts of the State is only limited by the number of nurses which the finances of the Government will enable them to engage. I consider that a nurse with a motor-car would do at least three times the amount of work in visiting prospective mothers in their homes that she can do if she has to walk. I trust that the Minister will give consideration to this most important matter.

I desire also to refer to the lack of facilities for training nurses in connection with the work of baby clinics. We have girls in the North equally as intelligent and industrious as the girls in any other part of the State, but they have great difficulty in getting a training in this very important work. The Government should do something to encourage people in the outlying parts of the State to come to Brisbane, and make arrangements for them to study at the training school in the Valley, so as to equip them for clinic work in outlying districts. The best nurse you can get is one who has had the same training as the city girl, but who also understands the people and the climatic conditions of North Queensland. I hope that the girls in the North who are anxious to undertake this most humane work will receive the same consideration as the girls in the metropolis are already enjoying.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): With the hon. member for Albert and other hon. members, I do not claim that our Government have done everything in the way of establishing hospitals. I am prepared to give the old Tory party when they were in power the credit of having done a very great deal, and particularly the hon. member for Albert, who was their last Home Secretary. They have done a great deal, and like many other people in the world, have talked of many

things that ought to be done. Nearly everybody on earth has built castles in the air at some time or other. Hon. members opposite are no doubt well-intentioned—I give them credit for what they have done—and, if they had remained in power for another fifty or sixty years, their party might have established what the present Government have established to-day.

Our Government well deserve any praise which may be bestowed upon them for what they have done in regard to hospital treatment. Our hospitals have benefited immeasurably right throughout the State. With the hon. member for Bowen, I realise that the establishment of baby clinics and maternity hospitals has put the State of Queensland as far ahead as any other State in the Southern Hemisphere. New Zealand claims a great deal of credit for her hospitals and the up-to-date treatment they have there. When I was over there I made a few inquiries; but unfortunately I did not meet the medical man who takes the keenest interest in the matter, as he was away, and so I did not gain as much information as I desired; but I had an opportunity of seeing some of the hospitals and their methods of treatment, and am satisfied that our Government are as far advanced in this matter as the New Zealand Government. I am sorry that the Government are not in a position to expend a larger sum than £207,000. I am quite sure that their hearts are much bigger than the amount put on the Estimates; but every individual has to cut his coat according to his cloth, and I suppose the expenditure has to be restricted on that account.

Hospital treatment, both in ordinary sickness, maternity cases, and baby clinics, is a most important matter in every community, as the hon. member for Warrego has pointed out. We have some very good hospitals—although I want to touch upon one or two things in which some of them could be improved—and I am hoping to see attached to every hospital of any importance a maternity ward so that treatment may be conveniently given to prospective mothers. Here I would like to say a word or two in connection with one maternity hospital which came under my notice—that is, the Lady Chelmsford Hospital at Bundaberg. There has been considerable complaint in my electorate, which touches upon Bundaberg, of the treatment which has been given in that hospital. I am not blaming the Home Secretary in any way, but I think there should be more local supervision of the committee charged with the management of hospitals. All over the Southern portion of my district there is complaint that more septic cases come out of the Bundaberg Maternity Hospital than out of any other hospital in Queensland. Only recently a most unfortunate case came under my notice. A resident of my electorate, who had been a patient at the hospital for the birth next previous to the one for which she was recently treated, came out of the institution on the first of those occasions suffering from septic poisoning. She was evidently treated in such a manner that she suffered from that poison from the time she left the hospital until recently. In spite of the fact that during the whole of the time she was suffering from septic poisoning, she on the second occasion gave birth to a child. On that second occasion the doctor was forced upon her who had attended her previously, although she insisted that she should have

[*Mr. Hynes.*

whatever doctor she chose. The matron insisted that she should have one doctor—that is, a doctor who turned her out of a hospital a septic person.

Mr. BRAND: That is a serious charge.

Mr. CARTER: It is, but it is quite true. She was sent away from the Bundaberg Hospital. Whether they were unable to treat her or not I do not know, but I have been informed by the husband and parents of this unfortunate lady that she was sent out of the Lady Chelmsford Hospital under chloroform. It was intended to perform an operation, but she was taken off the slab and was sent to St. Martin's Hospital in Brisbane, where no doubt she got the very best treatment they could give her. Despite that treatment her condition was such that she could not pull through, and a few days ago passed away. There should be such close supervision of hospitals that these things could not take place. Too much is left in the hands of the committees, and I would like to see some arrangement made whereby a patient is not compelled to have a doctor whether she likes it or not.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Do you say that the patient complained that she was forced to accept the services of a doctor against her will?

Mr. CARTER: Not only is that the complaint of the patient, but also the complaint of some of the doctors in Bundaberg. I desire now to touch upon a matter in connection with the committee of the Children's Hospital in Brisbane. I was on that committee for a short period, and I can speak in terms of the highest praise of some of the members of that committee, particularly the ladies associated with it, but—like them—I was not permitted to get into the inside running of things. I soon realised that the whole of the members of the committee were not allowed to know all that was being done. Not having the time to investigate the matter and get to the bottom, I pulled out. The result is that I have had to gather information since. A great deal of building is being done there, and I could speak of more than one case, but I am going to speak of one of which I have the most knowledge, that is, the establishment of cooking equipment and hot water service in the administrative block. This work was completed some time last April or May. One would naturally suppose that the expenditure on behalf of the Children's Hospital would be above question, but what happened? Firms catering for the installation of cooking equipment and hot water apparatus naturally made offers or sent in tenders, and amongst those who made offers or submitted prices was Metters, Limited. I know of no better firm for that kind of work in Queensland. They are an Australian firm, employing Australians, and what I have seen of their work is of the best, and they have done a good deal of work in various institutions. They made an offer to do this job for £1,525 18s. 8d. They did not get the work to do. Another firm which apparently made an offer was the firm of Wildridge and Sinclair, Ltd., of Brisbane. Why they should get the job against Metters, Ltd., who are possibly the fittest people to do it, I do not know—I must leave it to hon. members to form their own conclusions. However, the work was given to them for something like £1,900 or £2,000. The firm of Metters, Ltd., were approached by Wildridge and Sinclair to

do the work, and they carried it out for £1,525 18s. 8d., leaving a clear profit to a firm who had nothing whatever to do of between £400 and £500.

Mr. MAXWELL: They sublet it?

Mr. CARTER: Yes, apparently they sublet it. The price which Wildridge and Sinclair quoted was between £1,900 and £2,000.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is a serious charge.

Mr. CARTER: It is, and that is why I am making it. I am quite satisfied that some of the committee, unknown to the great bulk of the Children's Hospital Committee, gave this job to this firm. I may say incidentally that the managing director of the firm of Wildridge and Sinclair, Ltd.—Mr. Robert Joyce—was on the Children's Hospital Committee. That should not have been permitted. I am satisfied that that is not the only thing of that character which has happened, and I would like to see the Home Department make a close investigation into the actions of some of the members of the committee. I do not blame the Home Department, because I think it was outside their control and was left in the hands of the committee; but the closest investigation should be made.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That has not happened since the Hospitals Board was established?

Mr. CARTER: It took place last April or May. It is quite a recent affair. I have not been able to get all the information I desire on this and similar matters, but I propose to do so later. That has taken place, and I think it is my duty to give the public the information. I do not blame the department, but I do blame some of the members of the committee.

There are many members of that committee who do not know anything about it, because, like me, they were shut out. The hon. member for Toowong was on the committee when I was on it.

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes, but not at the period that you have referred to.

Mr. CARTER: No. I was shut out on every occasion by the secretary or someone instructing him.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That was done by the old hospital committee.

Mr. CARTER: The Children's Hospital Committee.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman should make that clear.

Mr. CARTER: I am quite satisfied that the people who are responsible are those who were on the Children's Hospital Committee, because they carried out the work independent of any State department. The Department of Public Works, which makes furniture and carries out all kinds of work, had to tender like any other firm for any work to be carried out by this committee. The department's only duty was to inspect the work before advancing any money in payment. There are one or two other matters that I would have liked to touch upon, but I have just about exhausted the time at my disposal, so I shall deal with them when the opportunity offers. I have said sufficient to direct attention to the necessity for action in a certain direction.

Mr. Carter.]

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Quite a number of things have been said on this vote, and some of them, if correct, should be investigated. Hon. members made various charges, and evidently they have gone very carefully into them before making them. They are certainly very serious, more especially in connection with what occurred at Bundaberg. If things like that are allowed to go on, then it is because of some oversight or because something is required to be done to prevent such things taking place, more especially where human life is concerned. We know quite well that baby clinics were started by the Labour Government in Queensland, and we also know that when that legislation was going through this Chamber it received the full support of hon. members on this side. The hon. member for Leichhardt stated that he would like to see baby clinics established in the remote parts of Queensland. It seems to me that that is almost an impossibility at present. In connection with the Department of Public Instruction we have what are known as correspondence classes carried on throughout the State, resulting in very effective work, and the Home Secretary might well take into consideration the adoption of a similar system through the maternity homes where maternity nurses are established, and even through the baby clinics. It could be made known to the prospective mothers in the remote areas that if they applied for information at a certain period, that information would be freely supplied to them from the established baby clinics and maternity wards.

Mr. FOLEY: There is nothing like getting into personal touch with the person.

Mr. TAYLOR: I quite agree with the hon. gentleman.

Mr. FOLEY: I suggested an itinerant system.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think a very great deal of very useful work could be accomplished in the way I have indicated. When legislation providing for maternity wards was going through Parliament I do not recollect one single member on this side opposing it. We gave the Government the fullest support possible, because we recognised the difficulties of women out back. All men, if they are men at all, must recognise that the women in our outback areas and in the scattered parts of the State are entitled to every consideration, and if there is any class in the community that deserves all the sympathy and all the support which can be given by any Government, it is women who are so placed. No man who has any spark of humanity in him at all would consider for one moment the curtailment of anything in the way of advantages to women so situated. I understand the primary object was to establish baby clinics in the thickly populated portions of the State—that is, in the large cities and towns where there is a considerable number of births taking place the whole year round. Those institutions are placed in the large centres of population so that the women concerned can come along to the baby clinics and get advice from those in charge of those institutions. It is a physical impossibility in the outback areas for women to go for that advice. Those women are living 10 miles, 15 miles, or 20 miles away from the nearest baby clinic, and if they expect to become mothers at a certain date, they cannot travel those distances to get information from a baby clinic and leave

two or three children out in the bush. It is almost impossible for an itinerant system to do all that would be required, notwithstanding that the member for Leichhardt says the personal touch is a very excellent thing. Taking everything into consideration, we have nothing to be ashamed of in Queensland in connection with hospitals and humanitarian legislation dealing with such institutions. There is nothing to be ashamed of on the part of the present and past Governments. The charge is often made that the people of the metropolitan area do not do their duty in maintaining their hospitals, but I would like to remind hon. members that there are probably ten hospitals in Brisbane, in addition to other charitable organisations numbering probably ten or twelve. Hon. members know perfectly well that nearly every week—on Friday in particular—a collection is taken up in the streets to maintain and carry on some charitable organisation. I think, by and large, the people have responded very well in the past.

The PREMIER: The hon. member must not overlook the fact that the State pays for the upkeep of the Children's Hospital, the Brisbane General Hospital, the Diamantina Hospital, and a number of other institutions.

Mr. TAYLOR: I quite agree with that. The contributions to those institutions practically ceased, and the whole charge of maintaining and carrying them on devolved upon the Government. I do think that we have nothing to be ashamed of either in the city area or the country areas in respect of the work carried on by the medical men of the community. There are individuals in the community in whom we repose the utmost confidence. They are individuals who often come into our homes, though one, or perhaps two, of them we would like to keep out of our homes as much as possible. They are men in their walks of life who have the fullest confidence of the community. I am referring to the clergyman, the doctor, and the lawyer. We like to keep the doctor and the lawyer away as much as we can. I do not know so much about the parson. (Laughter.)

Mr. FARRELL: More so.

Mr. TAYLOR: They have free entry into our homes, and they have the confidence of every member of the community. I think the doctors have our fullest confidence. There may be some like the one spoken about by one hon. member who came along with all his goods and chattels in a sugar-bag, and with a tag hanging on his clothes disclosing where he had purchased his suit. I do not think there are many doctors in the community who act in that way. I know of no higher and nobler profession than that of a doctor. Many of them carry out their duties, and very often do not get a single copper for what they do. In many cases they do not expect it, but render very necessary work in the community gratuitously. I think we could place the management and the upkeep of our hospitals generally in the hands of those men and feel satisfied that they would carry out the work well.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I wish to refer to certain matters that have arisen under the Hospitals Act so far as it affects shire councils. As the Act stands, all shires have to contribute to the hospitals if hospital areas have been proclaimed in their

[*Mr. Taylor.*

areas. When the Act was going through this Chamber an attempt was made by the Opposition to carry an amendment allowing the shires to set aside part of the contributions from their areas towards the maintenance of a particular hospital if the district allotted to that hospital extended over their boundary. That amendment was not accepted. The Hospitals Act is operating unfairly in some shires. It has been found necessary to make the boundaries of a shire conform with the areas set out for hospitals, and that has resulted in some instances in people being included in certain shires against their will. It would be much better if the Government during the [11.30 a.m.] session brought in an amendment of the Act making it possible for shires to allot a portion of the funds to the hospital concerned. That would suit the shires much better than the present arrangement. They desire that this amendment should be made. I have never ceased to protest against the principle of raising the money necessary for the carrying on of our hospitals solely from the ratepayers. As hon. members on this side pointed out when the Hospitals Act was going through, that is an unfair principle. Under the present method many instances can be found where fairly wealthy men get off very lightly because of the low valuation of their land. It will often be found that a struggling man with an overdraft at the bank has to pay considerably more than those who are getting considerably more money. That state of affairs cannot go on for long, because the Government will find that there is not a single shire which is satisfied with the existing conditions. I am not contending that we should not raise the money for our hospitals. I recognise that the necessary funds for carrying on our hospitals must be raised by compulsion in some way, but it would be much better to raise it through the income tax than obtain it from the ratepayers only. This aspect of the matter deserves the serious attention of the Government, as sooner or later it will have to be reviewed.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): I can endorse the complaint of the hon. member for Port Curtis in regard to the question of the selection of doctors for our hospitals. At Ingham the medical superintendent of the hospital went into partnership with another doctor, and these two doctors were able to attend the patients at the hospital. A third doctor, who represents the Australian Natives' Association and the Oddfellows, has not been able to have the same privilege as those two doctors have in that centre, and this has caused a considerable amount of discussion there, and the representatives of the A.N.A. and the Oddfellows have asked me to deal with this matter on the Estimates.

I would like to say something with regard to the distribution of the "Golden Casket" funds. The present method of distribution, which was recently introduced, has the effect of discouraging those centres which have in the past actively canvassed and raised large sums of money for the support of their hospitals, while it will encourage those who do not subscribe to continue the practice of not subscribing to their hospitals. The Toowoomba hospital, situated as it is in one of the richest centres in Queensland, and the Brisbane General Hospital, have received large grants from the Government to enable

them to carry on their activities. On the other hand small communities in the back parts of Queensland have raised money for their hospitals and, with the Government subsidy, have carried on their activities. The practice adopted originally of granting a fixed sum from this fund to the hospitals of the State was the correct method.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: It stands to reason that those who are actively engaged in the work of carrying on the hospitals and the people who are willing to support them will not continue their activities if they find that, in consequence of those activities, the grants from this fund are withheld from them and given to those centres which have not displayed similar energy.

I have had an opportunity of seeing the maternity homes in operation. They are a magnificent improvement on our hospital scheme, especially in our country districts. It is a lesson in what can be done by a thoughtful Administration. One has only to go through a maternity home and compare the conditions with those which prevailed prior to their establishment to see the truth of my statement. While it would be desirable to do what the hon. member for Leichhardt suggested in relation to baby clinics, I have doubts whether it would be practicable. I urge the Government to continue their present efforts and extend as far as possible the baby clinics to the remotest part of the State, because there is no doubt as to their value. If a mother in Brisbane has some slight trouble with any of her children, she has only to go to one of these clinics to get all the information necessary for the welfare of the child without consulting a doctor. That is a condition of affairs that is eminently desirable throughout the State. The Government should extend the operations of the maternity homes and baby clinics. Their benefit has been immense, and hon. members while travelling through the country districts hear nothing but praise and satisfaction expressed by our women folk concerning them.

Mr. FARRELL (*Rockhampton*): I rise chiefly to express my appreciation of the work that has been done by the Government in the Rockhampton district with regard to the grants that have been made and the great consideration that has been given to hospitals and hospital work generally. It was Burns who wrote—

"Midst this mighty fuss just let me mention

The rights of women merit some attention."

The Government can claim some credit for trying to carry out the spirit of those words. They might probably go a little further yet, and it is chiefly in this direction that I want to bring under the notice of the Home Secretary the improvement that can be effected in connection with the nurses' quarters at the hospitals of Rockhampton. Much as one admires the women folk, we must hold in much greater admiration that section of them who devote their lives to nursing the sick. Every consideration should be given to providing proper and decent living apartments for them at the hospitals.

I am going to suggest to the Home Secretary that out of the funds provided from the "Golden Casket" there should be set aside

Mr. Farrell.]

a certain sum of money to provide nurses' quarters at the different hospitals in Queensland. I know that at present the system is that the hospital committee has to provide a certain amount of money and that amount is subsidised by the Department of Public Works.

Mr. MORGAN: A good subsidy, too.

Mr. FARRELL: I quite agree with the hon. member. Pending the time that the committee raises the money, something should be done per medium of the "Golden Casket" to provide those quarters free of any other charge on the hospital. I do not think that any difficulty would be experienced.

I wish just to mention the Children's Hospital in Rockhampton. There the nurses are a fine body of women and are doing excellent work. They are housed in a small hut that was previously used during the influenza epidemic in Rockhampton. That, I am sure, is not suitable accommodation for women who are sitting up during the whole of the night and for others who are working during the long hours of the day attending to the children in the hospital.

Mr. MORGAN: That is a reflection on the people of Rockhampton.

Mr. FARRELL: It is not. In Rockhampton we have a Children's Hospital, a General Hospital, a Women's Hospital, a Benevolent Asylum, and various other institutions, and they have all to be maintained by subscriptions. It is not merely a matter confined to Rockhampton, but applies to all hospitals and charitable institutions in Queensland. I wish to impress upon the Home Secretary that consideration should be given to the application of funds from the "Golden Casket" for this purpose.

I also submit for the approval of the Home Secretary the desire to bring Rockhampton and district under the Hospitals Act. I hope this will be done in the very near future. At present excellent work is being done by the womenfolk of Rockhampton who are acting on various committees. They are doing splendid work under difficult circumstances which should not be placed in their way. I hope that Rockhampton and district will soon be brought under the Hospitals Act; the hospital committees will then have some encouragement to go on with the very good work they are doing.

I think the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville in connection with baby clinics an admirable one, and I hope that it may be applied to Rockhampton. There we have a town with a population of between 25,000 and 30,000 and an area extending over a radius of 5 miles from the post office. The population in that area, so far as the baby clinic is concerned, is under the jurisdiction of a matron and nurses. If the nurses were provided with a small motor-car—which need not be an expensive one—the operations of that clinic would be even more beneficial than at present. I want to express my admiration for the excellent work that is being done by Matron Macdonald and her assistants. I hope that the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville will be taken into consideration by the Home Secretary, and that the work of those nurses will thus be made much easier and the scope of the clinic widened.

It is interesting to read the views of some of the visitors to Queensland regarding the excellent hospital work being done by this

[Mr. Farrell.

Government. Lady Forster, when addressing a meeting of women during her recent visit to Queensland, said—

"It depends whether your Government is a generous one. I have never met a Government as helpful as the Queensland Government as regards health and hospital work."

The Governor, Sir Matthew Nathan, when speaking recently in Brisbane, said—

"Generally I assure you, from conversations I have had with them, that members of the Government are keenly interested in the living conditions of the country women and their families."

I think those statements by Lady Forster and His Excellency the Governor reflect great credit on the work performed by this Government in regard to hospitals.

Mr. LOGAN: Was Lady Forster addressing the Country Women's Association?

Mr. FARRELL: I am not quite sure, but I believe she was. I have here an extract from the annual report of the Commissioner of Public Health for the year 1922. He has something very interesting to say regarding the operations of the baby clinics—

"The improved record in the infantile mortality rate is most pleasing, and is largely due to the good effects attained through the active steps taken by the Government in providing baby clinics as well as propaganda in educating young mothers in the care and upbringing of infants. This has naturally brought about a marked saving in infant life, and which can be traced to a better knowledge of hygiene, infant feeding, as well as advisory precautions taken by expectant mothers."

He then quotes the following table:—

<i>Rate of Infantile Mortality.</i>			
—		Infant Mortality Rate, per 1,000 Births.	
		1915.	1922.
Queensland	64	54
Victoria	68	72
New South Wales	66	78
Tasmania	72	78

It will be seen that in every State except Queensland there has been an increase in the infantile mortality. In Queensland there has been the appreciable drop of 10 per 1,000. The Commissioner of Public Health expresses the view that this is directly the result of the establishment of the baby clinics in Queensland and of the operations of those wonderful institutions. I compliment the Government and the Home Secretary on the work that has been done during the year, and I commend to the hon. gentleman's notice the suggestions that I have made regarding further activities.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I was particularly pleased to hear the hon. member for Rockhampton make his very apt quotation, and also to hear his expression of admiration for women's activities in Queensland. I regret that one hon. member opposite represented the country women taking action to ameliorate the burdens of our hospitals and charitable institutions. I think the hon. member for Bowen and the rest of us should be only too thankful to receive whatever assistance is given to improve those conditions in Queensland.

There has been quite a lot said in regard to the "Golden Casket." The hon. member for Wynnum and the hon. member for Nundah both indicated that they did not altogether approve of the "Golden Casket" and said that they never invested in tickets. I am perhaps constituted somewhat differently from those two hon. members as there have been very few "Golden Caskets" held in which I have not had a ticket. If these "Golden Caskets" are the means of providing funds for the establishment of maternity homes, baby clinics, hospitals, and ambulances, they are doing very good work, as by means of these "Golden Caskets" funds are collected from practically all classes in the community. But I do think that the system adopted at present for the distribution of these funds is somewhat unfair. It would be far better if these funds were distributed among the various hospitals according to the services rendered.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is to say, you favour a general distribution, irrespective of the financial condition of the hospital?

Mr. NOTT: Yes, a general distribution according to the services rendered by the various hospitals. That would be a very big improvement on the present method, because the people in many of the country districts where the hospitals fulfil their obligations get no assistance in this way, whereas the people in a neighbouring locality who may not be fulfilling their obligations get this assistance. It is a case of penalising the people who are carrying out their obligations.

Many people in the country districts are wondering how the new Hospitals Act is going to work. The hon. member for Port Curtis referred to a somewhat scandalous state of affairs in connection with the Children's Hospital, and I wish to cite a case that happened at the Brisbane General Hospital next door. Some little time ago there was a returned soldier who had been suffering very greatly from shell shock since the war. At times he got very bad, and now and again would practically go off his head for a time. This man lived in the vicinity of Woodford, and while there he was looked after by the returned soldiers at Woodford as well as possible. At one time he became ill and he was started off to Brisbane, and it was thought that he was not likely to reach Brisbane. Unfortunately he became very ill and got lost. A search party was formed by the Woodford Returned Soldiers' Association, and they found him. They then provided a motor car and took a good deal of trouble to get him down to the General Hospital in Brisbane. He was taken in at the institution, but within a few hours after the people who had brought him safely down to Brisbane had departed he was turned out. This unfortunate man knew nothing of what he was doing, and a few days afterwards he was found dead in one of the parks adjacent to the hospital.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Who turned him out of the hospital?

Mr. NOTT: He was turned out by somebody at the hospital, and I understand was given a few shillings.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Was he turned out by the matron or by the medical superintendent?

Mr. NOTT: If the hon. gentleman desires it, I shall let him know the date on which this occurred.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I shall be very pleased if you will let me know the whole of the facts of the case, and I assure you that the matter will be investigated.

Mr. NOTT: The circumstances of the case were brought under my notice by the returned soldiers at Woodford, and I certainly think that it is a matter that should be mentioned. I shall be very pleased to get all the details from the people who were directly interested in bringing this man to Brisbane and forward them to the hon. gentleman.

At 11.55 a.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Like my colleague, the hon. member for Rockhampton, I have not very much to complain of in regard to the hospital in Rockhampton. Fortunately, we have had public-spirited men there who have from time to time made generous bequests, and I must say that we have always had sympathetic consideration from this Government. There are only two things that trouble us in connection with the Rockhampton General Hospital. One is the question of the treatment of insane people while on their way to Brisbane. Since the closing of the reception house in Rockhampton, it has become necessary to take insane persons in at the Rockhampton hospital. While the number of insane patients coming through might not have been sufficient to warrant a big staff at the reception house, still there were sufficient coming through to make it necessary to provide some means of dealing with them, and the closing of the reception house has thrust a pretty awkward problem on to the staff of the Rockhampton General Hospital. There was a good deal of trouble with one patient, as is well known to the Home Secretary, and he has promised to go into it. In my opinion the patient in question should never have been sent to the hospital, but rather ought to have been put under police restraint, because his complaint was of a temporary nature and he was subsequently discharged after being two days in the hospital. While he was there he made himself so troublesome as to disturb all the patients in the vicinity of the padded cell in which he was placed.

The HOME SECRETARY: If he was coming to Brisbane, why did he not come straight through in the first instance?

Mr. HARTLEY: That is one trouble resulting from the closing of the reception house. It may be economical from one point of view, but people coming from Clermont or Mackay do not reach Rockhampton in time to catch a train to Brisbane straight away, and often it is not a good thing that they should get a train at once. The trouble is that in the meantime they are very often sent to the hospital. The Home Secretary has promised both my colleague the hon. member for Rockhampton and myself to try and find a solution of the difficulty when next he goes to Rockhampton, so I do not intend to enlarge on it now. I am quite satisfied that, when he gets there and the facts are put fully before him, he will see

Mr. Hartley.]

the necessity of making some better arrangement.

The only thing I have to say in regard to the baby clinics is that their value does not seem to be sufficiently widely known. The Government could well afford to spend a good deal of money in letting it be known throughout the country where the clinics are established, and what their duties are, not only as to the care of babies but also as to advice to mothers.

Mr. FOLEY: There is not a sufficient number of clinics established in the country.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are not many clinics in the country, and it is really in the country where their work would be of greatest value. The value of the clinics in a great measure is in the direction of advice and assistance given to the mother both

[12 noon] before and after the birth of the child, but, unfortunately, a lot of young mothers or women about to become mothers do not know anything about the clinics, and they simply carry on until they come to the last couple of days, when they go into a nursing home, or else depend upon the kind offices of a neighbour and on a doctor coming at the last moment. I want to emphasise the point that the benefits of the clinics and the duties of the nurses are not widely enough known. A lot of young women have a good deal of suspicion about the Government clinics, and have an idea that they are not quite satisfactory.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I would like to inform the hon. member that a pamphlet on the subject has just been prepared and is ready for issue.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am very glad to hear that. That is a very fine method of making the facts known. This is one way in which the department are doing good work, and I hope that money will not be spent with any niggardly hand. It is most important that a mother, at the time of child-birth, should be well nursed and have suitable food. The hon. member for Warrego mentioned that the basic wage is not sufficient. I think that has a very important bearing on the bringing of healthy child life into the State. The work of the baby clinic is admirable in the way of giving to the mother the nourishing food which she could not get for herself under the present basic wage. Fancy a mother carrying a child about to be born in a couple of weeks, with four or five children dependent on her, and the father, perhaps, working three days in the week on the wonderful basic wage we all yell about! Fancy a mother facing a time of child-birth subsisting on what that would be able to buy!

Mr. MORGAN: Yet you have a Labour Government in power.

Mr. HARTLEY: We will take all the blame for it. I do not wish to side-step any responsibility for one moment, but take it from me the first chance we get we are going to give a bigger basic wage. Do not then squeal—you over there with £3,000 or £4,000 a year—you big squatter chaps, whose wives send away to the South for £60 worth of flowers to decorate their tennis court ball-rooms! We know that the economic system to-day is tying us down, so that we cannot make the basic wage sufficient to enable the mothers to live in comfort and to get the full

[Mr. Hartley.

nourishment they ought to have when they are nearing their time of bringing young life into the world.

Mr. BRAND: Why don't you do it now?

Mr. HARTLEY: I make no apology for not being able to do it now. Just at the present moment you people over there, and your big people outside, know that you have jammed us with our backs to the wall with your financial system.

Mr. MORGAN: Pure tripe.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the vote.

Mr. HARTLEY: I know that this is not strictly in accordance with the vote. I want to say that with a better system of economics the health of the people would be better than it is, and these baby clinics would not be necessary, but I am glad that, while they are necessary, the Government are filling the gap and providing the delicacies and the nourishing food which are necessary for the mother for the few weeks before the time when the baby will be born.

Mr. MORGAN: The worst condemnation that the Labour Government have had.

Mr. HARTLEY: We will take all the condemnation, but do not squeal over there when we come to right the position. Do not squeal when we raise the basic wage, so that these people will get a better deal. We know that the financial system is responsible for present conditions, but do not squeal when we burst up this boodling system—this financial sharper's trick which you call the system of exchange.

Mr. MORGAN: Good old "Charlie Collins!"

Mr. HARTLEY: "Charlie Collins" and other hon. members on this side, while we may not succeed, may, perhaps, pave the way for some younger and abler men to come in and succeed where we can only see the possibility of success.

I noticed that the hon. member for Stanley took the hon. member for Bowen to task for his criticism of the Country Women's Association.

Mr. MORGAN: What is wrong with it?

Mr. HARTLEY: I will tell you all that is wrong with it. I am taking nothing back that I said on the debate on the Address in Reply.

Mr. MORGAN: You ought to apologise.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not intend to apologise.

Mr. EDWARDS: You couldn't.

Mr. HARTLEY: I can apologise when I am wrong—don't make any mistake about that. I never do anything wrong that I do not try to put right afterwards when I become aware of it. Anyone who knows me will admit that.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: Didn't you call it a dirty scheme?

Mr. HARTLEY: No; I am talking about the Country Women's Association, and I did not say anything about it being a dirty scheme. What I did say was that, while it has very fine ideals, behind it all is the power of a political party.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is absolute rot.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am going to show that it is correct, and to give the evidence which

leads me to that conclusion. By the way, I saw by a paragraph in the "Toowoomba Chronicle" of Thursday that Mrs. Fairfax called several times to see me about my remarks on the floor of the House.

Mr. MORGAN: Is not Mrs. Theodore one of the presidents?

Mr. HARTLEY: She is patron of the Northern branch, but that does not matter to me; I am going right on. I noticed that Mrs. Fairfax said in the "Toowoomba Chronicle" of Thursday last that she called several times to see me, but could not do so. If she did, it is not my fault that I did not see her. I had no information either by telephone or letter that she was coming—I had no intimation whatever of her visit, except on one occasion when she left a message with one of the Ministers. I would have been pleased to see her any time she called, or I would have made it convenient to call on her if she wished. I will connect the matter with the vote in this way. This Country Women's Association has certain objectives—namely, the development of better conditions of the life of women in the country, the establishment of greater methods of enjoyment, the establishment of maternity and baby clinics, book clubs, and all that sort of thing. They are very fine ideals—no one can cavil at them for one moment—and will help to make the lives of the women in the country and in the isolated parts of the State happier and brighter, and they are objectives to which I give my most hearty support.

Mr. BRAND: What is wrong with that?

Mr. HARTLEY: I will tell the hon. member directly. I notice in their annual report this statement—

"Inquiries for bush nurses were received, and were forwarded to St. George's Home, Brisbane, where they received attention. Representation was also made to the Government for an allotment of money, which is set aside from the 'Golden Casket' funds for bush nursing."

I want to ask the Minister whether, when representations are made in any part of the State for assistance from any fund for a bush nursing, maternity, or any other scheme, they should not come through the official channel, which is the hon. member for the district. This association should not be allowed to come into the business of the State except through the member for the district. (Opposition interruption.) The reason why I say what I have said in regard to the Country Women's Association, is that I am satisfied that it is in accordance with their objective that it shall be a political machine to support hon. members opposite at election times.

Mr. MORGAN: Not true!

Mr. HARTLEY: I am saying it is true. I am warning our Labour women to keep out of it.

Mr. MORGAN: Shame!

Mr. HARTLEY: Anything that has been done in the direction of maternity wards and baby clinics is now being done by the Labour Government, whilst hon. members opposite for years talked about it. It reminds me of the story of an old Greek who wanted a seat at a gathering. The Athenians were very polite but could not find him one, but a Lacedæmonian got up and gave him his. The Athenians knew what was good, but the Lacedæmonians practised it. Hon. members

opposite knew that these things were good, but the system that they lived under and worked for—the capitalistic system—would not allow them to put them into practice. We differ there. As to the reasons why I say this is going to be a political organisation, in the first place it was formed by the Brisbane Women's Club. They called the conference which formed it—I have the agenda-paper of their first conference. There are such well-known names upon it as those of Mrs. Anderson, Miss Ogg—

Mr. KELSO: Mrs. Theodore?

Mr. HARTLEY: Not upon this.

Mr. KELSO: If it is not, she has resigned.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not upon this. This is the agenda-paper of their first conference. Mrs. W. S. Anderson was the chairwoman of their first conference, on Friday, 11th August. She is a well-known Nationalist opponent, who in the Red Cross organisation during the war gave Mrs. Ryan, the wife of the late Premier, as much annoyance and trouble as a political opponent could. Then there is Mrs. E. B. Harris, a daughter of the Hon. F. T. Brentnall, formerly a member of the Legislative Council. At that conference all the resolutions submitted were drafted by Miss Ogg—

Mr. COLLINS: Oh, oh!

Mr. HARTLEY: And the secretary of the club, Miss Macfarlane. The President of the branch at Townsville last year was Mrs. Green, wife of the late member for Townsville, Mr. W. H. Green, who was displaced in this Parliament by Mr. Hynes. These are reasons why I believe that this Country Women's Association will eventually become a political organisation backing hon. members opposite. One other point I would make is this: If this Country Women's Association is not political or destined to be political, why should they form their branches in every part of Brisbane—Taringa and other suburbs?

Mr. KELSO: To try to raise money.

Mr. HARTLEY: They want country women. Why go to the settled centres of population?

Mr. MORGAN: The city women have no votes at all. They are only honorary members. They are only allowed to attend meetings and take part in conferences.

Mr. HARTLEY: It does not matter whether they have votes or not.

Mr. KELSO: They are only there to raise the money.

Mr. HARTLEY: If this Country Women's Association is allowed to interfere in the bush nursing scheme and the baby clinics—

Mr. MORGAN: Can you not tackle it with the women?

Mr. HARTLEY: Let the hon. member get up and prove that I am wrong. The whole personnel shows that it is only the same as other women's associations, supposedly non-political, but which afterwards opposed all Labour members.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): Fortunately the Committee can discuss this vote, or ought to be able to discuss this vote, on broad lines. In my opinion everything that can be done for suffering humanity should be done. The very best arrangements should be made

Mr. Maxwell.]

to give the very best to anybody who comes in that class, and it seems to me that the attitude of the hon. member for Fitzroy is a paltry method of discussing the vote. He has talked about the policy and the propaganda of the Country Women's Association. He is endeavouring to drag into this debate an atmosphere which is absolutely unjustified. My experience of bush nursing associations and similar women's organisations is that they do their work free from any political feelings, and hon. members opposite should welcome an organisation such as this. If the time should ever arrive when they find that it is using its influence in the wrong political channel, they can deal with it then: but I would just like to say in passing that, so long as the politics espoused by such an association were the same as those of hon. members opposite, it would be all right. In saying that, however, I want it to be clearly understood that I consider that the Country Women's Association is not a political organisation. Why have hon. members opposite not asked their wives and sisters to link up?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: How many Ministers' wives have been asked to attend their functions?

Mr. MAXWELL: I reply to that interjection by saying that invitations were extended through the press to everybody interested. The mayor of the town in which the hon. gentleman is living called a public meeting and through the press invited everybody to attend; the opportunity was given to them then to attend. But why raise this question at all? To me—more particularly on such a vote as this—it seems unfair to introduce party political questions when we are trying to arrange for some benefits for the sick and suffering. I would like to go further than some hon. members have gone and say that from what I can learn there are instances where not only the finest motor traction should be used in cases of dire distress in the West and North and Central districts, but, if necessary, aeroplanes should be used to convey medical men and nurses to outlying centres where it is not possible to have other maternity assistance.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Brisbane has a very fine ambulance; there is nothing like it in the world.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am quite satisfied with the ambulance we have, but there are instances of which old Northern and Western people have been telling me and instances even at the present time in which aeroplanes are really necessary to relieve the sick and suffering. One of my friends on the front bench was telling me that he had known instances where women who were in need of attention when their time had come had to ride 100 miles in a cart. In a community such as this that is nothing short of scandalous, irrespective of what the Government may say or of what they have done in the introduction of maternity homes and baby clinics. There are men on this side just as humane as any on the other side.

Mr. HYNES: Why did they not do the same thing while they were here?

Mr. MAXWELL: The answer to that interjection is that my friend was like myself—he was not in Parliament.

Mr. HYNES: Your party were in power.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not going to cavil about what other people did or did not do.

[Mr. Maxwell.]

Those who did the pioneering did some wonderful work. In saying that I do not want to detract from the good work done by the Government in creating the maternity homes or the baby clinics; but I would remind hon. members opposite that in that work they received the co-operation and assistance of hon. members on this side.

A certain matter has been raised by the hon. member for Port Curtis in connection with the Children's Hospital, and I would not have mentioned the matter had not some of my friends reminded me that I was formerly associated with that hospital. The Home Department or somebody else should clean up the charge that has been made. The committee is composed of honourable people. I had the honour of being chairman, and there were Labour Ministers' wives, Labour members, and others on the committee. In connection with the calling of tenders for the supply of a heating apparatus, I venture to say that the committee who were interested, knowing them as I do as honourable men and women, will be able to give an answer to the Minister, if he seeks any information. The matter did not eventuate during my term as chairman of the committee, and I know nothing whatever about it. I do not want to be egotistical, but I can say that anything that I have been associated with will bear the keenest scrutiny and examination. A most serious accusation has been made against a body of decent and respectable people, and the least that can be done is to give those people an opportunity of denying the charge, or giving reasons why such a condition of affairs obtained. It came as a very great surprise to me. I do not want to say that I did not hear something about it previously.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. gentleman has not been on the committee for some considerable time.

Mr. MAXWELL: No. I was not there when the tenders were called. Knowing the committee as I do, I want to defend them this morning because they are not in a position to defend themselves. Seeing that the good women and the good men who are on the committee have done good and honourable work for that hospital, it is a pity that such a statement should have been made; but the hon. member for Port Curtis has now given the Home Department an opportunity to inquire into it. I do hope that it will be inquired into, notwithstanding that the Minister may think it is outside the control or the pale of his department because of the creation of the Joint Hospitals Board; but I would impress upon him that the Government advanced certain money for the conduct of that hospital while the old committee was in existence. It is a perfectly just and legitimate request to make this morning in the face of the statement by the hon. member for Port Curtis that these people, who are working in the interests of suffering humanity, should be given an opportunity of saying "Yea" or "Nay" to the statements that have been made.

Mr. CARTER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: I know that it is not necessary to say that hon. members on this side were not associated with anything like that.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (Bremer): I do not know whether this is the proper time to

discuss the hospitals supported entirely by the State or not, but, notwithstanding the views we may have in that connection, I think we should not lose sight of the fact that the needs of the day must be attended to. The hospitals must be maintained, and they have to be equipped and supported in the best possible way. If the methods employed are not entirely to our liking that is no reason why we should not encourage to the best that is in us the efforts that are being at present made to maintain the hospitals. The subject brings up that old question of whether our good offices are to go as much to the undeserving as to the deserving. The Home Department to-day is somewhat perturbed by this question as to whether they should give big donations to hospitals that will not collect funds or whether they should deal with them all on the same basis. I know it is a very difficult thing to decide. We bump up against it, and we do not know whether to follow the line of the Dombey's, the Scrooges, and the Pecksniffs, or whether we ought to be a little more broad-minded and charitable and generous, and follow the lines of the Betsy Trotwoods, the Cheeryble Brothers, and the Cratchitts. The situation always arises as to whether we ought to withhold our donations because certain people will not subscribe to a hospital, or whether, because the Government will not give donations, the people should give donations. Still, the question agitating the minds of a lot of us is whether we should do our very best, irrespective of whether "Golden Casket" funds are coming our way or not. I believe the people who are administering the "Golden Casket" fund should not give all the charity to the hospitals that will not help themselves. I do not see why the hospital in Ipswich should suffer in the matter of its donations from the "Golden Casket" funds because the workers and children of Ipswich and the surrounding districts do a great deal towards subscribing funds for the hospital. I do not see why donations should not be given from the "Golden Casket" funds in accordance with the amount of work done. I trust that the view that will actuate the giving of those funds will not so much be according to the needs as according to the deserts. In speaking on this question, I must point out—as you have pointed out many times yourself, Mr. Gledson—that the Ipswich General Hospital is helped to a very great extent more by the industrial workers of that district than by anybody else by a system of donations out of wages. This is the case more particularly with the miners. Money is paid out of their wages at so much in the pound, irrespective of the amount they earn. That amount is contributed to the hospital fund. The miners, by resolution, have agreed to that, and every miner contributes to the hospital fund. I believe that is a very good thing, and for that and other reasons we have a very fine hospital in Ipswich.

At 12.28 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I think it would not be out of place here to mention that the "Queensland Times" has also done much in the matter of encouragement of the upkeep of the hospitals, and through one of its columns—"The Children's Corner"—it has for the past few years endowed cots in the

children's ward. In the first year it was very little, but it endowed a cot to the extent of £30. By doing the same thing in 1922, the same good results were obtained. In 1923 the spirit of giving had so entered into the lives of the children of the Ipswich and West Moreton districts that they were able to endow cots to the extent of £60. Up to 30th June last, so wide-spread had become the spirit that through the efforts of the "Queensland Times," by its "Sunshine Cot Fund," the children's ward was endowed to the extent of £150, and in addition they were able to buy two new cots at a cost of £12, and also hand to the hospital an aseptic equipment costing £150. During those years of effort an amount of about £500 was raised directly, and, with the Government subsidy amounting to £1,000, the Ipswich hospital benefited to the extent of £1,500 through the good offices of the children of the Ipswich and West Moreton districts, prompted by the editor and staff of the "Queensland Times." Things such as that should be recognised. We may not approve of the method, and we may say that that is not the right method. I do not say that it is the absolutely correct method, but, as things are to-day, it is one of the right methods and should be proceeded with. If we encourage the system of leaning on somebody else and saying, "We need not do anything. Let us hang on to someone else," we shall have our hospitals in a poor way, and the people will suffer thereby.

The proper thing to do is to devote the whole of our energies to the upkeep of the hospitals, irrespective of the manner in which it is to be done, and to pursue those methods which we think are right [12.30 p.m.] in order to bring them in at the right moment. It is deplorable for anyone to allow the poor, needy, and sick to suffer because their particular brand of ideas is not given effect to straight away. I hope that throughout the State there will be a better recognition of the work performed by hospitals. We have had a fair amount of talk and flapping as to what the State should do, but I hope, in spite of all of it, that these people will recognise that they have a duty to their brother, whether they like it or not.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I am very sorry that several hon. members of the Government party have thought fit to attack that very fine body of women known as the Country Women's Association. Their remarks if not refuted will tend to bring about a disparagement of that organisation. The association is doing a wonderful amount of good work, more particularly for the poorer classes. Many people in the country who are well-to-do are taking an interest in this association, not because they get any benefit from it, but because they have for their objective the establishment of homes at the seaside for the use and benefit of that section in their midst who cannot afford to engage rooms or a house there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member will only be in order in discussing that association in so far as the vote for hospitals is concerned.

Mr. MORGAN: I am replying to an attack made on the association by several hon. members opposite when you were out of the chair. The Deputy Chairman allowed them to criticise the association.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. HARTLEY: They are asking for a grant under this vote. That is why I referred to them.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Fitzroy was allowed by the Deputy Chairman to make an attack on the association, and I am justified in replying to him. The attack was made by the hon. member because he does not fully understand the aims and objects of the association.

Mr. HARTLEY: I understand its aims.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I understand that the vote for the Country Women's Association is from the "Golden Casket" Fund, which does not come under this vote at all. I therefore ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. MORGAN: I regret that I cannot reply to the attack of the hon. member for Fitzroy, because it is desirable that I should do so. The hon. member was allowed to proceed by the Deputy Chairman in error. His remarks will be circulated in "Hansard," and I regret that through that mistake I shall be unable to reply to them.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am very sorry that you have not the opportunity to reply.

Mr. MORGAN: Perhaps I shall be able at a later stage to make the remarks I intended to make now. It would be wrong for the remarks of the hon. member to go out in "Hansard" without an explanation from those who are acquainted with the aims and objects of the association.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): The discussion that has taken place on this vote has been an interesting and informative one. It is evidence of the growth of humanitarian sympathy in connection with those people who fall sick or meet with accidents and need the attention of the hospitals of this State. Hon. members were at first concerned with the large decrease of £37,000 in the vote, but the Home Secretary has explained that that has been brought about by the fact that some people who had been getting privileges for some years past now having to shoulder the responsibilities of those privileges. That is fair and reasonable. It would be unfair that one portion of the State should be relieved of their responsibilities in that direction and practically carried along by the rest of the State. The Charters Towers Hospital is an inland hospital, and therefore does not come within the definition of a base hospital. Nevertheless, it is just as much a base hospital as any institution that is recognised as such. It serves an extensive area of country, and people from north and north-west enter it for treatment. It is one of the most up-to-date and best-equipped hospitals of the State, and, strange to say, has just as large a number of patients to-day as when the population of Charters Towers was three times as large. That fact goes to show that it is not only catering for the citizens of Charters Towers, but for a much wider area outside. The people of Charters Towers have always subscribed to and kept their institution in good working order. They have not only provided for the comfort of the patients themselves, but have had erected in a convenient situation comfortable nurses' quarters. There were some old dilapidated buildings used to house the other members of the staff which were entirely out of keep-

ing with the other building. The Home Secretary, when in Charters Towers, saw the need for something drastic to be done, and came to the assistance of the committee in the direction of providing suitable accommodation for those members of the staff. The assistance that he rendered has been appreciated to the very fullest extent. Any person acquainted with the work that has been done there will admit that the better the hospital is equipped the better the medical services provided, and the humane provisions made for the nurses and other members of the staff all result in greater demands being made for the services to be rendered by the institution. I reiterate now, as I have done in previous years, that hospitals, whether situated on the coast or not, which practically serve the purposes of base hospitals, should get some other assistance than the payment of the annual endowment.

So far as the maternity homes are concerned, I am proud of the fact that some of the northern centres which saw the advantages that were to be gained, and the benefits which would accrue, from the establishment of maternity homes got their applications in early. The result has been that those homes have been built and are now established on pretty sound lines. The advantages that have come to the communities where these have been established are practically untold. So great have been these advantages that inquiries have been received from other centres and from other States as to the basis on which the homes were established, their method of working, and the cost to the patients who use them. In this connection the question has arisen in one or two instances as to the cost to patients who have taken advantage of the homes. I take it that the idea originally held was that those people who were well able to pay for the services they got in those homes would have to pay for them, but the people who needed them most—the wives of working men—would not be expected to pay any exorbitant fees. This question has very naturally arisen and been discussed. The Home Department, as a result, has recognised the fact that a maternity home should be placed much on the same basis as a hospital. That is, those who need the services of the institution and are not able to pay for them should get those services in any case.

Regarding baby clinics, it is natural that they should at first be established in the large centres of population, notwithstanding the fact that there are other means by which the people there can get the required attention. I believe the baby clinics have rendered good service in the populous parts of the State. I also recognise that there are other places away from the large centres of population where the need for clinics is greater than in the cities. Little has been done for those centres. Take my own electorate. There are ten or a dozen small townships in my electorate, none big enough to have a hospital or a baby clinic, and I think something should be done for those townships.

The Department of Public Instruction send out itinerant teachers, and domestic science cars are run on our railways to deal with the sparsely-populated districts which have not the advantage of technical colleges or rural schools. I think something of a similar nature might be established, and that qualified nurses should be sent out to visit the outback places along the railway line. Those visits could

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

be monthly, or even once a quarter would be better than the existing conditions. Those outback folk are put to considerable expense to get to centres of population when they need medical attention. I recommend this suggestion to the Home Secretary, and ask that something should be done.

Regarding ambulance matters, there is one fairly large town in my electorate, and the ambulance is the only centre from which medical attention may be received. There is no hospital, doctor, or chemist. The superintendent of the ambulance has to perform all the medical services rendered in that town, even those usually associated with maternity hospitals. In a place like that, which is not a rich place, it is a difficult task for the people to support the ambulance as it should be supported. The area is a large one, and necessitates the use of the motor-car. Consequently, the revenue is not sufficient to keep the service well equipped, and I think such an institution is entitled to some of the "Golden Casket" funds.

I have never had two opinions regarding the disposal of "Golden Casket" funds. I think every hon. member will agree that when the department have these funds to disburse, maternity homes are deserving of assistance, and when it comes to a distribution in connection with hospital funds generally, it seems to me that the "Golden Casket" funds are treated entirely different from endowment funds. The ordinary endowment is £2 for every £1 that is subscribed. When a man knows that his £1 is going to mean £3 for the hospital, he is only too willing to assist the funds, and I think the "Golden Casket" fund should be similarly treated.

At present those hospitals which finance themselves get nothing whatever from the "Golden Casket" funds. It is necessary for them to be financially distressed or bankrupt before they can get anything, and I think that is a wrong idea. I am in accord with the views expressed by the hon. member for Murrumbidgee and other hon. members that anything granted from the "Golden Casket" funds should be in the nature of a subsidy that would encourage subscriptions, whether a hospital is in funds or otherwise. There are quite a number of hospitals having £500 or £1,000 at fixed deposit to their credit. That money is not available to be expended. They cannot get the principal, and only receive interest from the fund, so that, in reality, while the amount is to their credit and appears to be available, it is not available; therefore those institutions are at a disadvantage. While appearing to be financially well off and in good circumstances, they are practically at the end of their finances. I am satisfied that every hon. member recognises the fact that hospitals should be as well equipped and as well staffed as possible, so that they may render the best medical service possible. I know some people who in this year of grace say that we are making a blunder in connection with the way we are conducting our baby clinics. They say we are saving a lot of infant lives that are unfit, and that it would be better to let those babies die. I think that is wrong, because a lot of infants die, not from sickness, but from bad surroundings, and sometimes from neglect and ignorance. If those infants were well looked after during their early months of life, they would grow physically and mentally strong. I, therefore, think that a better basis should be devised by Parliament for the distribution of what-

ever funds are available from the "Golden Casket." They should be used in such a way as to encourage private subscriptions, rather than discourage them, as at present. Such a plan would encourage the ladies and willing helpers who are assisting to run our hospitals. It would enable them to keep the hospitals well equipped, and put them in a position to render better service than they have rendered in years gone by. I am sure the suggestions raised this morning will receive the favourable consideration of the Home Secretary and his department.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): Dealing with the matter of hospitals, I think it is right that the Government should keep their eyes on hospitals in all parts of the State. The good work already done by the Government can only be advanced by practical experience, and by realising what is happening in the various constituencies of the Government all over the State.

In Maryborough we have been in the same position as that set forth by other hon. members. Our hospital, from time to time, has been languishing from lack of funds, and the burden placed on those responsible has been of considerable magnitude. That refers particularly to the maternity hospital—the Lady Musgrave. We find that the available accommodation in that institution is anything but adequate. We are fortunate in this regard, that the Home Secretary has a scheme in hand, or I am told he has, whereby something may be done to lift the institution to a better footing. The Maryborough City Council have taken the initial step of asking that the area should be brought under the Hospitals Act. I notice that the committee of the Maryborough General Hospital have done nothing in this regard, and if the proposition gets any opposition at all, I quite expect that it will be from that committee. On the other hand, the committee of the Lady Musgrave Hospital have taken a proper view, and recognise that some good may result from the new idea.

What might seem small at first sight eventually turns out to be a large matter. When the effect of the Act is introduced into a district, it will at least have the effect of keeping the nurses from cadding at the street corner. I do not think that the woman who gives her life to nursing—and it is a noble profession—should go out into the street and cadge for the sustenance of the hospital.

It is the duty of the public to keep the hospitals in a proper state of efficiency so that they will be in a position to meet the demands of the sick. Certainly that duty of raising the necessary funds should not devolve upon the nurses. I trust that something will be done in regard to the resolution passed by the Maryborough City Council and that the Hospitals Act will be put into operation at the earliest possible date in the Maryborough district. That will go a long way towards making those hospitals what they should be.

We have had a clinic built just recently, and within the next few weeks I hope to see the clinic opened by the Minister, and, like the hon. member for Townsville, I hope to see the operations of that clinic enhanced materially. I believe two nurses could do a lot of good work in the city itself and a lot better work if they are allowed to get about with some decent facility at hand. After all, what is the mere buying of a motor car compared to the good services

Mr. Weir.]

performed by those women. It is a mere bagatelle. If the nurses were not tied up as they are with bus traffic, they could do four or five times as much useful work for the people. I trust, therefore, that the remarks of the hon. member for Townsville in that regard will be seriously considered.

We are in the position that the ambulance brigade in Maryborough is not in any way associated with the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. This has been a burning question for some considerable time, and I trust that the fact that they are not associated with the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade will give the Government some encouragement to link up the ambulance with the hospital. I am hoping that when we introduce the Hospitals Act in Maryborough, the ambulance will be linked up with the hospital. If that were done a lot of work would be taken off the shoulders of the women folk which is not women's work. I say that certain necessary attention to men is not work that women should fulfil, and for that reason the ambulance men could do a lot of useful work and the women would do better work if the ambulance and the hospital were linked together. I trust no weakness will be shown in that regard, and if anything is done in Maryborough that the ambulance and the hospital will be in the same organisation.

The Country Women's Association may be referred to under this vote in so far as it affects their request for assistance, as they state themselves, to establish clinics, bush nursing homes, and maternity homes. In so far as it does affect these particular issues, I say we are justified in expressing our opinion of the merits or demerits of their claim. One thing that makes me doubtful about the intentions of these people is their motto. They say "Loyalty to the Throne." When I hear anything in the nature of "Loyalty to the Throne," it makes me suspicious. I wonder what happened to those people who were loyal to the throne during the war. I am just afraid that these people desire to do other work outside their own functions—political work. I am afraid that these people are not only doing the work that they ought to do. Any advance these people may get in any electorate should be at least submitted to the member for that electorate to see if it is justified or otherwise. The Country Women's Association cuts no ice in Maryborough at all, and I do not think this Government, and I do not think the member for Maryborough, requires their assistance.

Mr. MORGAN: I rise to a point of order. I would like to ask your ruling, Mr. Pollock, as to whether the hon. member is in order in discussing the Country Women's Association. You practically prevented me from saying anything in connection with that association, and, if I was out of order, then the hon. member is out of order in debating the functions of the Country Women's Association.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been listening to the hon. member very closely, and I was on the point of asking him to keep to the vote and to obey the ruling I gave a little while ago.

Mr. WEIR: There was nothing further from my mind that attempting to evade your ruling, Mr. Pollock. I am contending that these people do come within the sphere

[Mr. Weir.

of operations of this vote. I shall read what they are after—

"Other subjects dealt with included the establishment of maternity wards in local hospitals and baby clinics."

That must be discussed under this vote, and I suggest we are justified in criticising the form of the organisation. After all, it is our duty to provide these maternity wards and baby clinics, and if the Government are looking after their business there is no need for this organisation at all.

Mr. MORGAN: Does not that apply to the Council of Agriculture?

Mr. WEIR: It applies to everyone so far as I am concerned, but the Council of Agriculture is created by the Government. I say to the Country Women's Association or any other organisation, let them be as loyal to the throne as they can, they are not going to interfere with my business without my resenting their interference. They have endeavoured to organise in Maryborough without any success, showing conclusively that we do not want them to put their nose into our business. This Government have done more for the maternity hospitals in the State than any other Government. Then why allow these people to interfere with our business. I submit I am within the confines of the vote. I say again that the very motto of these people makes you dubious whether they are genuine and whether they are out to do anything of a material kind to improve the conditions of the hospitals in this State. I have my doubts. I believe they have bigger fish to fry. I believe you will find that this huge organisation is organised for one object and one object only, and that is to oust the people who are in charge of the affairs of this country at the present time. It is a political organisation in disguise. I say that without any hesitation. Why dodge about the bush?

Mr. MORGAN: Now that you have made an attack on them we should be allowed to defend this organisation.

Mr. WEIR: If you do not understand the Standing Orders, that is not my fault.

Mr. MORGAN: I had to obey the ruling of the Chair while you did not.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that reflection on the Chair.

Mr. MORGAN: I did not make any reflection on the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member said that he had to obey the Standing Orders while the hon. member for Maryborough had not. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. MORGAN: I think you are most unjust, Mr. Pollock, seeing what has happened. Evidently an attack can be made on an organisation and then when we wish to defend—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw his reflection on the Chair.

Mr. WEIR: Take your gruel.

Mr. MORGAN: Very well, I withdraw—very reluctantly, I must admit, but I shall have something to say later on.

Mr. WEIR: There is another phase of this hospital question that I wish to touch on, and

that is the necessity for an insane ward at Maryborough. I am not dealing with the hon. member for Murilla.

Mr. MORGAN: If you make insulting remarks across the Chamber, you will get more than you want.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member for Murilla has never found me squealing yet, while I am not sure that you good Christians do not frequently offer insults to us. I have endeavoured for a considerable time to have something done regarding the establishment of an insane ward at Maryborough. Years ago there was an insane institution there and I am very glad that science has now rendered it unnecessary to have an insane institution there. I quite see that it is very unfair to expect people who are temporarily insane or permanently insane to be taken to the police cells, and that is the only place to take them to in Maryborough at the present time. There is on record an instance where one poor unfortunate was taken to the police cells, and I am told he died in the cell. As a result of that the Police Department issued regulations that in the future no such cases should be taken to the cells. We are in that unhappy position that there is no place in the city to which insane persons can be sent while on the way to Goodna.

I want to draw the attention of the Committee to the necessity for an insane ward being provided in the Maryborough Hospital. On one occasion, as I have said, unfortunately a demented patient caused a lot of trouble owing to no accommodation which could be used for the purpose. It has been stated that inmates of that kind should not in future be detained in that cell, but that would simply mean that some other place would have to be found for these people. If we look to the general hospital there for relief in that direction, we find that there is no accommodation available in the building. There is certainly what might have been intended to be a padded cell there, but it is most inadequate for the purpose, and its position renders it useless or worse than useless. It is immediately below the main staircase, and is far from being sound-proof, with the result that anybody who happened to be confined and made themselves objectionable by screaming or making a row, would interfere with the comfort of people upstairs and those on the ground floor who might be wanting serious medical attention. I trust that the

Minister will find some means of [2 p.m.] assisting in this direction and appoint some one to take the responsibility for these patients. I am quite convinced that the place for these patients should be somewhere in the grounds of the general hospital. It will be necessary that any provision made for them should be sufficiently far from the main building to render it absolutely impossible for these unfortunate people to in any way interfere with the welfare of those who are receiving medical attention.

In connection with the matter of clinics, I think that serious consideration should be given to pre-natal clinics. The clinics for the children are useful, but the conditions obtaining in the Lady Bowen Hospital might be extended and developed in other centres of the State. At the Lady Bowen Hospital, the medical men have voluntarily built up the institution from its infancy a few years ago to its present position. At

first there were only three patients a day, but now they are treating about twenty patients a day. Apart from the fact that that hospital is doing good work, it is certainly not out of place for me to mention the fact that I appreciate the good work the honorary medical practitioners have done in that institution. I think the work at the institution was first started by Dr. Gall, who in turn was relieved by other medical men, such as Drs. Stark and Wilson, who were willing to give their services free. These men are to be commended for the good work they are doing in their honorary capacity. It is quite all right to look after the little one after it is delivered into the world, but everyone knows the more carefully the mother is attended to the more likelihood there is of a healthy child being born, whereas a woman who was without sufficient care might produce a child which it would be impossible to nurse to a healthy life. The proper care of the mother will go a long way towards making the child healthy. We should certainly look after the child and do the things which are essential in that respect, but I think we should go further along the road and couple with that system of pre-natal clinics a system which guarantees to the mother the requisite food and attention which are so essential, if we are to expect good Australian children. This would be another monument to the humane Labour Government.

We know perfectly well that no woman, unless she is properly cared for, can possibly produce a healthy child, and I trust that while we develop our maternity hospitals and baby clinics we shall not lose sight of the fact that prior to the maternity there is a necessity for pre-natal treatment, and I hope to see some scheme on those lines introduced by this Government. I am inclined to think that the baby clinics in Maryborough and other cities will not do all the work which we expect of them for the reason that in all the big cities we have many members of friendly society lodges and those people will depend on the lodge doctors. It is just as well, while we take advantage of all the assistance of honorary physicians and others we can get, that we should take into consideration the desirableness of the Government taking over the care of pre-natal cases and thus be the leaders in another branch of humanitarian legislation in the Commonwealth.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I want to say something about the remarks which have been made by hon. members on the other side about the Country Women's Association. I have taken a keen interest in it and, whilst I admit that baby clinics and maternity wards have done a great deal for child life and mothers, it is being done mostly in the large centres of population, and, if the Country Women's Association wish to make an extension of that work into the bush in order to give the children and the women there similar opportunities to the women in the cities, there is no reason why they should not do so. It does not follow that they will be influenced by party politics or party jealousies or by members of Parliament, any more than the organisation set up by the Government in the Council of Agriculture is influenced by members of Parliament. Because the Central District Council passed resolutions and sent them down to the Government it is

Mr. Morgan.]

not suggested that they were controlled by members of Parliament, and it is quite clear that they have a right to object in any way to the decision of the Government or the Minister if they so desire. The Country Women's Association is not confined to any particular locality. It is not a matter of one electorate, but of the whole of Queensland. They are working on a broad system, without considering whether it is the Murilla electorate or the Fitzroy electorate. It does not matter whether it is one or the other.

Mr. HARTLEY: It does matter whether they are political or not.

Mr. MORGAN: Just to show the hon. member for Bowen what the Country Women's Association propose to do, I would like to read an extract bearing on the town of Bowen. It says—

"Two main objectives, to assist the town band and to establish a 'seaside home' on Queen's Beach, where three acres of land and £50 have been donated by Mr. Daniels, and £90 has been raised by other means."

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I am just going to show that this women's organisation which has been criticised by hon. members opposite is carrying out a great work. It is being criticised by hon. members on the other side on the ground that it is political, but I want to read from its rules to show that it is not. The first rule is that the association shall be non-political and non-sectarian.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For the last time I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote under discussion.

Mr. MORGAN: I am endeavouring to do that. The report points out that the women are endeavouring to have baby clinics established throughout Queensland. In their endeavour to do that they are being criticised by hon. members opposite, who state that the movement is purely and simply a political movement. I want to point out that, because those women have taken an interest in baby clinics, it does not prove that the movement is a political one.

Mr. WEIR: The fact that the hon. gentleman is backing them does.

Mr. MORGAN: Their first objective is to look after the interests of the women and children living in the country. A city woman cannot be a member of the association.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: She cannot have anything to do with it at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is going to obey my call to order.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. I am not going to do what the hon. member for Maryborough did; I am going to respect your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*): Just in passing I would like to say that I think some of the criticism that has been directed by hon. members opposite at the "Golden Casket," and ostensibly concerned with the administration, is actuated by a desire to discredit that art union. It is the desire of some hon.

members opposite to see that institution destroyed. I think I am safe in saying that if the huge monetary turnover by the "Golden Casket" art union and the scope of its operations were compared with private institutions, the work of the committee of the "Golden Casket" would have a very favourable record in regard to the number of delinquencies that have taken place.

Mr. KERR: We do not hear of them all.

Mr. DUNSTAN: I think some reversion ought to be made to the previous system of distribution of profits from the "Golden Casket" art union. They should be distributed among the hospitals on the basis of the average expenditure and the scope of operations of the hospitals in the various districts. Take the Gympie Hospital. It is well equipped, it has an efficient staff, and is admirably managed by the committee. So much so, that for a long period there has not been a single complaint from the country districts or the city over which its operations extend in regard to administration or treatment of patients. Although it is not recognised as a base hospital, it practically serves in that capacity. It serves in an admirable way a large and growing district, and at the present time there is an ambulance brigade which is an admirable adjunct to the hospital as an institution, but which is competing with the hospital for monetary support, and ample funds are necessary to keep the hospital in an up-to-date condition. I think the present method of denying those well-managed hospitals a share of the proceeds of the "Golden Casket" art union and granting the money instead to those hospitals which are not given adequate support by the public is really a bonus on the laxity and slackness on the part of the public in not maintaining those institutions in the manner in which they ought to be maintained. I consider that, as in the case of the Gympie Hospital, good management and efficient administration ought to be recognised and encouraged in a proper way by at least a fair share of the apportionment of the "Golden Casket" proceeds, and if that were done, I am satisfied that the well-springs of charity would not dry up in that community, and it would be encouragement to those hospitals and the committees to advance along modern lines of efficiency and progress for the wellbeing of every country constituency.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): I very much regret the attitude that certain hon. members opposite have assumed in connection with this vote. It is a vote that the Committee could have well discussed without the introduction of any party feeling whatever. It is a vote that deserves the careful consideration of every hon. member without bringing to bear upon it a prejudiced mind and dragging in the Country Women's Association. It is a great pity that has occurred. In my opinion, the Country Women's Association directly comes in in connection with this vote, and I am going to show how that comes about. The association has taken certain steps in my district to assist the bush nursing scheme. When a nurse went to Burrandowan, arrangements were made by the association to see that a young girl accompanied her. Members of the association on other occasions travelled over 30 miles to help the bush nursing scheme. I know of instances myself where members of the association have seen that families were

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

clothed and fed, and that they received treatment in hospitals. They have done everything in their power in my district to bring about better conditions in the hospital. One of their officers is at the present time a member of the visiting committee of the Kingaroy Hospital, and she reports to the mothers in the various districts upon the workings of the hospital, who thereby gain a first-hand knowledge of the institution. I therefore regret that the association has been made the subject of a political attack, as there is nothing political about its constitution or work in any shape or form. I hope that hon. members opposite who showed such bitterness this morning will see their way clear to assist the association in every possible way.

Mr. HARTLEY: And get behind you in Nanango?

Mr. EDWARDS: For the information of the hon. member for Fitzroy, I might say that members of the association came to me and said that they would not under any circumstances whatever ask me even to assist them in any of their functions.

Mr. WEIR: You are putting the show away.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member is well aware of the fact that I gave a ruling on this particular matter a while ago.

Mr. EDWARDS: I was not in the Chamber at the time.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not intend to allow hon. members to deal with that association other than as it affects the vote under discussion. To ensure that hon. members will respect and pay heed to my ruling, I wish to point out that I shall ask the next hon. member who departs from that ruling to resume his seat.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Speaking to a point of order as to whether hon. members are out of order in discussing the relationship of this association to the vote under discussion, as the hon. member who first introduced this subject, I wish to say that I quoted from the official report of the Country Women's Association, showing that their activities embraced the establishment and care of baby clinics, bush nursing, and other schemes. I submit, therefore, that it is in order to discuss the association when we are discussing the establishment of those nursing schemes.

The point I want to make is that this association in its annual official report announced its intention of approaching this Government for funds to establish a nursing clinic. I submit that, if we cannot discuss the acts of outside associations when we come into the parliamentary and administrative arena, then we are in a bad position. I sincerely ask that you, Mr. Chairman, extend the widest interpretation of the Standing Orders on this subject, particularly in view of the fact that I had a complete opportunity of discussing it when you were not in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I would again point out that this merely bears out my original ruling, that is, that any hon. member is at liberty to discuss this association in so far as its activities come within the scope of this vote, but only so far as the vote is concerned. The nature of the organisation

and its activities, apart from this vote, has nothing at all to do with the Committee or this vote, and consequently I cannot allow discussion in that direction.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is practically the view I was taking up in connection with this association. I said that it has a big bearing on the working of the hospitals and charitable institutions, which are dealt with under this vote. You will excuse me, Mr. Pollock, for saying so, but I cannot see where this particular association, which has been declared to be of no value except politically—

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say that it was of no value.

Mr. EDWARDS: That was said while you, Mr. Pollock, were not in the chair, and it is unfortunate that we cannot now clear an association which we believe to be working in the best interests of the institutions we are discussing this afternoon. I therefore ask you, Mr. Pollock, to allow me to reply in a few words to the hon. member for Fitzroy, who tried to prove that the Country Women's Association was a political body merely because it did not put its request for assistance through the hon. member for their district.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Why not table a motion to discuss this next Thursday morning? That is private members' day.

Mr. EDWARDS: While I agree to some extent that you are right in your ruling, Mr. Pollock, I think it is a wrong attitude to take up, seeing that the matter was fully discussed when you were not in the chair.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say the association was of no value. I said it was of high value to the community.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member said that it had no value so far as its work is concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member deal with the vote under discussion.

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes. I agree with your ruling, Mr. Pollock, but I hope the occasion will be given to the Opposition at least to clear the Country Women's Association from the insinuations and criticism that have been fired at it during your absence from the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I may point out that there is provision under the Standing Orders to discuss any question arising in connection with a matter like this, if hon. members like to turn them up. This is not the place to discuss the question, and I hope every hon. member will give me assistance in seeing that my ruling is carried out.

Mr. EDWARDS: Regarding hospitals under the jurisdiction of the Hospitals Act, it has been pointed out by other hon. members of the Opposition during this debate, and it is my opinion, that the rate-payers are quite justified in making a keen protest against the operations of that Act. I think every fair-minded man will agree, whether he is in this Chamber or not, that every working man who is earning a fair wage should subscribe to a hospital on a similar basis to his neighbour. I do not believe that the honest hard-working men ever asked for such an Act of Parliament whereby the payers of rates would be asked to supply the quota they contribute at the present time, while high-salaried men in

Mr. Edwards.]

some instances get off scot-free. It does not apply to the manual workers only. It applies in some instances to men drawing salaries, and who are in a much better position than the farmers in the country districts to pay a fair quota towards the upkeep of the hospitals.

Hon. members opposite have charged past Governments with not having done anything for the welfare of Queensland in the way of assistance to charitable institutions; but, when we take into consideration the forward movement in this connection that has taken place in the whole of Australia because of the increase of population and the bringing of people closer together, every member of this Chamber must realise that no matter what Government is in power they must rise to the occasion and see that every consideration is given to charitable institutions, and to some extent the present Government have no doubt met the case. There is, however, a good deal more to do, particularly in the country districts. It is well known that in the larger centres, if there is any difficulty, those responsible can be got in touch with quickly, but in country districts there are many difficulties to contend with; therefore I suggest to the Home Secretary that he should not relax his efforts to extend the best consideration that possibly can be given to the country hospitals and also to the bush nursing staff. Bush nursing should receive the greatest possible consideration. Too much cannot be said in praise of those noble women who are prepared to go out into the country and live far from railway communication—far away from any facilities necessary for nursing—and do the very best they possibly can under very difficult circumstances to assist the sick. Too much assistance in this direction cannot be given. With other hon. members, I think that it is quite unfair to penalise a hospital by withholding any of the funds because the committee has been keen and thrifty in the way of getting subscriptions and has succeeded in getting the hospital into a good financial position. That is absolutely unfair, and it will have a tendency to lead hospital committees to say, "What is the good of trying to keep the hospital financial, because, if we do, we shall get no assistance whatever?" I hope the Home Secretary will take that into consideration when next considering the distribution of the "Golden Casket" funds, and will see that the hospitals that are prepared to help themselves get full consideration.

The country districts should also receive greater consideration in the matter of the establishment of baby clinics. The Government should not spare any effort in order to preserve the child life of the State. We need every child born in the State of Queensland, and therefore I hope the Home Secretary will give every consideration to these all-important questions.

Mr. CONROY (*Muranoa*): I do not intend to say anything about the Country Women's Association on this occasion. I just desire to take the opportunity of saying a few words in connection with the [2.30 p.m.] hospital vote, and to compliment the Government upon their success in connection with baby clinics and maternity homes.

There is another matter which I wish to bring under the notice of the Committee. It

[*Mr. Edwards.*

has not been touched upon by other hon. members, but to me it is a very important matter, and I think that every hon. member will agree with me when I mention it. I refer to that dreadful disease known as cancer, which, unfortunately, is increasing to an enormous extent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: One out of every six deaths in the population is due to it.

Mr. CONROY: We have yet no grant provided for the treatment of that disease, and I wish to give reasons why the Government should take the matter in hand. In the "Daily Mail" of 18th June last it is stated—

"CITY DEATH RATE.

"In view of the demand in the South for a campaign to endeavour to stem the scourge of cancer, it is interesting, but nevertheless alarming, to note the ravages of this disease in Queensland.

"The deaths in the metropolitan area of Brisbane for May totalled 186, of which cancer claimed nineteen victims, and was exceeded only by heart disease in the mortality rate. The deaths from cancer thus represented roughly 10 per cent."

I think that is a matter which the Government should take in hand, in addition to all the good work they have done in connection with maternity homes, baby clinics, and other matters which have been referred to by hon. members this morning. My contention is that a portion of the "Golden Casket" funds should be utilised in an endeavour, if not to cure, at least to give relief to those unfortunate people who are suffering from this dreadful disease. The following is a quotation from a letter by Dr. Richard Arthur, M.L.A., in the "Sydney Bulletin" of 8th May last:—

"There are certain forms of cancer (among others sarcoma) which sometimes respond in an almost miraculous way to treatment by what is known as deep X-ray therapy or by radium and radium emanations. Other inoperable cases are greatly relieved, and have pain lessened by exposure to these rays. The lamentable thing is that, as far as I am aware, there is as yet no public institution in Australia where patients can receive free treatment by this method. I believe a public subscription was being raised to supply the necessary apparatus to the Melbourne Hospital, but I cannot say if it has materialised. I have tried to induce the Minister for Health in New South Wales to do something for this State, but he has evidently more important matters to attend to. It seems deplorable that poor persons are denied the help which some, at any rate, could obtain were this treatment available. A few private medical men have the apparatus, and very kindly treat a certain number of indigent patients; but it is not fair to impose this tax upon them, as the cost of installing and running the plant is very considerable. I would urge that every State Government should equip an institute—say, at a cost of £25,000—where any persons in their State who cannot be relieved by surgical means, and who are unable to pay private fees, should be given the chance of cure or

alleviation of their condition by treatment by deep X-ray therapy and radium."

I understand that there are two doctors in Brisbane who have the necessary apparatus for the treatment of cancer, but that their charges are very high. I might mention that at the present time a certain person is receiving treatment from one of these doctors, and the fees are £10 for each of the first two applications and £5 for each subsequent application. I am not objecting to these charges, because I presume that the apparatus, whatever it is, is very expensive, but I would urge upon the Minister the advisability of allocating sufficient money from the "Golden Casket" funds to purchase the apparatus necessary for the treatment of cancer, so that people who are unfortunately suffering from the disease may get treatment at a reasonable fee.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) who was received with cheers, said—To listen to some of the speeches of hon. members on the Government side of the Chamber, one would believe that they on that side were all humane, and that we on this side were all inhuman monsters. I can safely say that during the administration of the Home Department by my friend, the hon. member for Albert, he was credited with being one of the best administrators we have ever had. Not only did he do everything he could from a human point of view to ameliorate the condition of the poorer classes, but he also improved the lives of the poor people at Dunwich, and made them very much happier than they had ever been, and I believe that at the present time the conditions there are not as good as when he left the Home Department. I give the Government credit for all the humane legislation they have put on the statute-book, but I would remind hon. members, since the Country Women's Association has been dealt with by some speakers in a very unfair manner, that when the women of Queensland had the franchise extended to them they were the means of inducing the Government to pass much useful legislation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with this vote.

Mr. PETRIE: I am just coming to the point where I can do so. They were the means of inducing the previous Government and this Government to bring forward legislation of the nature which we are discussing—namely, maternity hospitals and baby clinics. I give this Government credit for all they have done, and I admit that it was all very necessary; but I want to point out that the late Home Secretary had collected all the material necessary for going on with such things when the previous Government were defeated.

If they had had the opportunity, they would have continued the good work and placed more humanitarian legislation on our statute-book. I give credit to the present Administration for what they have done, but we are just as much in favour of humanitarian legislation as hon. members opposite. I believe that the selection of the present Home Secretary and the Assistant Home Secretary was a very wise selection, and I believe that they will do all they possibly can in the interests of the majority of the people of Queensland. I am not going to touch on the "Golden Casket," because

sufficient has been said about that. I am very sorry that any exception was taken this morning to the Country Women's Association, and it is unworthy of those hon. members who did so. Before resuming my seat I would like to say one word in connection with the Diamantina Hospital. I think the Government and the country are to be congratulated on having the present superintendent there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: The Diamantina Hospital comes under this vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot permit hon. members to discuss portions of the vote and then discuss the vote as a whole.

Mr. PETRIE: I understand that the Diamantina Hospital comes under this vote of £207,310. The vote deals with "Hospitals," "Baby Clinics," and "Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman is quite right.

Mr. PETRIE: The Government and the community are fortunate in having the present superintendent of that institution. I regret that her salary is only £270 per annum. If a man was in charge of that institution, he could not do the work any better and perhaps not as well; but he would be receiving a considerably higher salary than this woman is receiving.

Mr. WARREN: Does she belong to the Country Women's Association?

Mr. PETRIE: I do not know, but I dare say, if the hon. gentleman rings up the association, he can get that information. Reference was made by the hon. member for Maranoa to that dreadful disease, cancer. I think that one person in six becomes afflicted with that disease, though I am not certain on that point. I hope that something will be done by the Government in the direction of relieving, if not curing, the people suffering from that dreadful disease. I know of cases in Brisbane, and with poor people it is impossible for them to obtain treatment, because even the X-ray treatment is a very expensive one. I only hope that before long the scientific world will produce something which will be able to cure this much dreaded disease. When discussing matters of this kind I hope that party feeling will be put on one side. We are all anxious, or should be anxious, to see the conditions of the workers and the people of Queensland improved in every way. Years ago, before many hon. members opposite occupied the positions they do, the employees of the firm that I was connected with—and in those days we paid £2,000 to £2,500 a fortnight—voluntarily contributed their quota towards the support of the hospital.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETRIE: They were not asked to do so, but they thought it their duty to do so. I was very pleased to hear from the hon. member for Bremer that the workmen in his district also make voluntary contributions to the support of the hospital.

*Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): The system under which our hospitals are administered will compare very favourably with the administration of institutions of a similar character in other parts of Australia. I would not have had much to say on this

Mr. Barber.]

vote had it not been for the fact that the hon. member for Port Curtis during my absence from the Chamber this morning made some drastic statements in connection with the management of the Lady Chelmsford Hospital in Bundaberg. I presume that there are occasions in connection with the career and management of any institution when some criticism might be launched against it. After all, hospital committees are only human like myself. I presume other individuals are likewise, but, whether a hospital committee is composed of ladies or gentlemen, the administration of these fine institutions entails a considerable amount of sacrifice on their part. I believe that the hon. member for Port Curtis made the statement that patients entering the Lady Chelmsford Hospital were compelled to go into the hands of one particular doctor. I wish to deny that.

Mr. CARTER: I do not think you heard me.

Mr. BARBER: I have the hon. member's speech here, having obtained it through the courtesy of the chief of the "Hansard" staff. Practically every doctor practising in Bundaberg visits and attends to the patients in that hospital, and I can verify that statement by reading from the annual report for last year. Dealing with the hospital staff, the report says—

"A change was made in the medical staff, Dr. Beaman resigned in August, 1922. Dr. E. Burton Reed was elected to fill the vacancy, who, with Drs. E. Schmidt, E. G. Thomson, and I. C. Hains, have loyally carried out their duties as medical officers of the institution."

If the matron insisted on one doctor attending to the patients, there would be no necessity for the other doctors to visit the institution. I know that, when a little bit of gossip is started about some Government or semi-Government institution, a molehill soon develops into a mountain. This clap-trap is passed on from one to another, and it tends to ruin the good character and good management of the committee. I claim—and I have said this in this Chamber before—that I do not know of any hospital committee with which I have been associated or in which I have been interested that performs its work more efficiently than that of the Lady Chelmsford Hospital. They are not a body of young "flappers," to use what might be termed a vulgar expression, but women who have reared families themselves, and in that regard, outside of professional matters, probably know as much as to what is required as does the matron herself. I am satisfied that if any lady patient wanted to have any particular doctor the committee would see that she got that doctor if he were available. Another serious statement was made by the hon. member for Port Curtis—I suppose, again, from hearsay—

Mr. CARTER: Oh no.

Mr. BARBER: The hon. member may have heard of one case—

Mr. CARTER: No.

Mr. BARBER: The hon. member said that there were more septic cases leaving the Lady Chelmsford Hospital than were leaving any other hospital in the State. I deny that. I say the hon. member's statement is incorrect. There was a serious outbreak of pneumonic influenza in the hospital about

[Mr. Barber.

two years ago, when there was a general epidemic throughout the State, but the complaint was introduced by a patient who was admitted, and one or two died. That was the first death in fourteen or fifteen years.

Mr. CARTER: Nonsense! What bunkum!

Mr. BARBER: I say it is a deliberate lie, and an insult against that institution.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to withdraw the expression that it is "a deliberate lie."

Mr. BARBER: Well, it may be somewhat unparliamentary, but I say the hon. member for Port Curtis is prevaricating or tergiversating when he makes such a statement. The same sort of thing could be said of any hospital in the State or in Australia. Probably I could dig up some statements that I have heard of—cases that have been turned out of hospitals in the electorate of the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. CARTER: Possibly.

Mr. BARBER: Then why damn the Lady Chelmsford Hospital?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. BARBER: I thought I was doing so. Mr. Pollock. I was merely looking a little off my starboard bow. (Laughter.) I say it is an insult to the committee of the hospital. I stand here as the representative of that committee, and I resent it.

It is proposed to extend the hospital, and I am hoping that the money will be forthcoming to allow that extension to be carried out. Last year approximately 400 births took place in that hospital.

Mr. CARTER: Good old Bundaberg!

Mr. BARBER: The hospital does not cater merely for Bundaberg and its immediate environs. People come in from considerable distances because they believe in the capabilities of the matron and the staff. I have my doubts whether a lady more fitted by qualification could be found than the lady we have in charge of the ladies' hospital in Bundaberg.

To show how easy it is to pick up some calumny against an institution, I would point out that a few months ago sensational statements were made in a district paper in respect of the Bundaberg ladies' hospital to the effect that it was costing £600 per annum for cow feed. I immediately went up and made inquiries. I want to say here that I visit that hospital every time I go to Bundaberg. As a matter of fact, the statement in point did not refer to the ladies' hospital at all. A question had been asked by a committeeman attached to another institution in the district, and the answer given by the chairman of committee was that it was costing about £600 for cow feed. Mr. O'Brien, the Police Magistrate at Bundaberg, said that, if that was true, they ought to be able to purchase sufficient milk to bathe in. That shows how easy it is for sensational statements to get about. That statement was attributed to the wrong institution altogether. I found on making inquiry that the average cost per month for cow feed—they have five or six cows of a very good type—was about £12 10s. to £15, and I do not think that is a very excessive rate, especially in view of the fact that, if you had to purchase the milk and cream required and the butter made from the milk received

from those cows, it would probably have cost five times as much. That statement was simply absurd, and it is on a par with some of the remarks made by my friend, the hon. member for Port Curtis. I presume there are occasions when accidents happen at any institution. Accidents happen in our own homes at times, no matter what our intentions may be. We have had a "dust-up" at the Bundaberg General Hospital, but I have taken very good care to keep out of it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The trouble has been adjusted.

Mr. BARBER: I have always found that, when an outside individual "butts" into a family quarrel, he generally stops a "straight lift," or something of that sort.

The Bundaberg General Hospital is one of the finest institutions of its kind in the State. It is a well-run institution, and while these little troubles arise among the members of committee, I do not know of any charge of mismanagement against the institution itself. I understand from the Home Department that the Bundaberg General Hospital is run much more economically than most institutions of a like character in Queensland, and it is a big institution. If there is one thing that stands to the credit of the late Sir William MacGregor, and one that will immortalise the name of that gentleman as Governor of the State, it is that the last public duty which Sir William performed before leaving Queensland was the laying of the foundation stone of the Bundaberg Hospital. I am very pleased to say that since the old institution was established, over forty years ago, we have had some of the most capable medical men and matrons in charge that you would probably find anywhere in the State. I am sorry that, when some hon. members make remarks about these institutions, they do not take more care not to hurt the feelings of the noble men and women who work for the institutions.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I would like to preface my remarks in regard to this particular vote with a warm word of appreciation of the work which has been done at the

Lady Bowen Hospital. The committee of that institution is composed of a noble band of ladies, who in their activities have given rise to something which is very necessary—that is, the saving of young life in the community, especially in regard to the pre-natal clinic which they have established. We owe a lot of gratitude to them in that regard. I hope that their good work will be in no way discontinued, and that a great many of the benefits of the system originated by these ladies will be extended to other parts of the State.

Recent reports in regard to hospitals generally, and particularly in regard to the Brisbane General Hospital, have disclosed the fact that there is a fairly large amount of money required to bring that hospital up to date. I would ask why it is that the Government have permitted the institution to get into the state which it is in to-day? The Government have failed dismally to overcome the difficulty in regard to the institution. When they came to the point that they could no longer control the institution because of the financial stress—

The HOME SECRETARY: They were leaving the rest of the people of Queensland to carry the burden; that is why. The Government carried it for years.

Mr. KERR: Do the Government not realise that a number of well-to-do people are not asked to-day to carry the burden?

The HOME SECRETARY: They are.

Mr. KERR: They are not. The whole of the burden of the Brisbane hospitals to-day is carried partly by the Government subsidy and partly by the ratepayers' money. This is the point I want to stress: Where the ratepayer is also an income tax payer, he pays twice, but the income tax payer who is not a ratepayer does not pay twice. That is the position, and the difficulty has not been solved by the Government. The Government are saving themselves many thousands of pounds to-day by calmly placing the burden on the ratepayers.

The HOME SECRETARY: In Mr. Kidston's time the Government had to make up the financial loss on the Brisbane hospital.

Mr. KERR: I am quite satisfied that charitable contributions will never meet the requirements of any of the hospitals in Queensland. I disagree with one of the members of the Hospitals Board, Alderman Jolly, who said—

"There are a lot of residents who are not ratepayers, and the special appeals gave them an opportunity to subscribe."

That is going back to the olden days, when people gave to charitable institutions. The time has passed when people are going to give to charitable institutions like hospitals, for the simple reason that they are asked to pay a certain amount of income tax, which, in my opinion, was instituted for the maintenance of these institutions, and not for other purposes which I cannot mention in this debate. The money which is taken from the people and should be used for the upkeep of the hospitals is not used for the right purpose at all. To prove the truth of my statement, that the Government have not been able to do what is necessary at the General Hospital, let me quote one or two remarks of the medical superintendent—

"In spite of all attempts to meet the demands, it is necessary to often refuse to admit cases and even sometimes to warn ambulances to only bring desperate cases. Complaints naturally arise both from those who are refused admission and from those who are requested to leave to make room for those much worse than they are. The attention of the nurses must suffer under such conditions. The lavatory accommodation is also over-taxed."

Another short extract—

"The most important trouble in the hospital, and one which is a constant source of anxiety, is the continued overcrowding. Patients are kept on unsuitable couches in wards and on verandas. The ventilation is insufficient inside the wards, and those outside on verandas are exposed, particularly in winter, to the inclemencies of the weather."

The Government were faced with the expenditure of £150,000 for buildings alone. That is the amount that the Hospitals Board propose to spend over a number of years. The Government, owing to their financial deficiencies, conceived the idea of making the local authorities take the responsibility and of saving themselves many hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Kerr.]

Mr. FARRELL: Do you not think it is a local authority matter?

Mr. KERR: I do not. Let me ask the hon. member whether Dunwich and the hospitals for the insane are local authority matters.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then why not nationalise the whole lot?

Mr. KERR: All right. I have said in this Chamber many times that the hospitals should be paid for through the income tax.

The HOME SECRETARY: And in the next breath you say that the income tax is too high.

Mr. KERR: It is too high, but that does not destroy my argument, for the simple reason that the money is not being used in the right way. I do not think any reasonable person can say that the ratepayers—that is to say, those who own their own homes—should alone be taxed for the upkeep of the Brisbane General Hospital. It means a sum of over £20,000, or ½d. in the £ on the local authority valuations. Why should a man struggling on the basic wage and attempting to become the owner of his own small home be charged ½d. in the £ on the value of his land? I say it is unjust. Compare his case with that of the man who decides not to have a home, but whose income is £2,000 or £3,000 a year. Such a man would get off altogether. There is no equity in that arrangement at all.

Similar remarks to what I have made about the Brisbane General Hospital apply to the Diamantina Hospital, which is a Government institution. If you turn to the reports, you will understand that the Government have to give very serious and urgent attention to its condition. Hon. members may be surprised to learn that an average of twenty-five persons a year die whilst waiting for admission to that institution. The Brisbane General Hospital has a number of cases that should go into the Diamantina Hospital, but there is no accommodation and a long waiting list. We are utilising Dunwich as a sort of temporary accommodation for people who rightly should be in the Diamantina Hospital receiving attention.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not at all. Dunwich has just as good a hospital as the Diamantina Hospital.

Mr. KERR: I know that.

The HOME SECRETARY: They have more. They have a resident doctor there.

Mr. KERR: I frankly acknowledge that a number of people do not like the idea of going to Dunwich. They know that the Diamantina Hospital is the recognised hospital for incurables, and it is to that place they seek to go for assistance in their illness. They would be helped considerably if they were permitted to enter. The Government should give immediate attention to the extension of the operations of that hospital. No longer can we afford to talk about financial stringency. That should not enter into any question affecting the sick, the aged, the infirm, and the incurable. The Government should cut out some of their other schemes, if necessary, and give the strictest and closest attention to those people. I hope that some notice will be taken of what I have said to-day, and that we shall get back to some equitable basis in connection with the upkeep of our hospitals. The sooner we do that the better it will be for all.

[Mr. Kerr.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): The hon. member for Bundaberg in his speech made some reference to the remarks that I made this morning with regard to the Lady Chelmsford Hospital in Bundaberg. I might say that the hon. member is not the only individual who can gather information, and if he were as keen on gathering information amongst his constituents in Bundaberg as I am in my electorate, he would know more about the case. I am not guided only by my experience, but I am also guided by the information given to me by people who have been in the maternity hospital in Bundaberg. I was told that an endeavour was made by the matron to force a certain doctor upon the woman to whom I referred. The woman had been to the hospital twice, but she is dead now. She was in the hands of this particular doctor, and on the birth of the child previous to the last one she was sent out of the hospital in a septic state, and was in a septic state until she went in again, and she died from septic poisoning contracted in that hospital. I am told by other people who were there that a great deal of septic poisoning is dealt with in the hospital. I was informed by no less a person than a nurse who had been in the hospital herself that they were puzzled by the amount of septic poisoning in the hospital. I am not speaking from my own personal experience there, because I did not visit that institution. I can understand the hon. member for Bundaberg working the parish pump to some extent, because this hospital is in his electorate. I am not working any parish pump—I did not mention the hospital in my electorate. I am interested in the people who have to go to those places, and, if something is wrong, I do not care in whose district it is in, I am going to make a statement as to what transpires in the interests of the people who have to go there. Matrons are no more perfect than other individuals, and no more are doctors. These mistakes may occur in other hospitals. This matron might be as good a matron as any other; I am not concerned with the matron; I am not concerned with the doctor. I am concerned with the people who have to go to these institutions, and so long as I have sufficient reason for making a statement of this kind, in the interests of the people who have to go to those places, I am going to make that statement. I trust that some inquiry will be made into what has taken place in that hospital.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Whatever differences there may be regarding the administration of this hospital and the other by hon. members opposite, and whatever differences may arise between hon. members on this side and hon. members opposite in connection with the Country Women's Association and things of that nature, such as whether they are political or non-political, we must recognise the good work that is accomplished by those institutions. If they are political, they have no right to be political, and I sympathise in that respect with hon. members who have raised that matter. Whatever differences there may be, it is quite evident, on looking at the Estimates, not only for this year, but for years past, that every hon. member agrees with the passing of humanitarian legislation. But humanitarian legislation was adopted in the past under previous Governments, and may become more liberal in the future.

The vote under consideration is for no less amount than £207,000. The aggregate of the humanitarian votes on the Estimates must be something like £500,000, which is the best evidence that can be given that this Committee is in entire sympathy with the work that has been carried out among the afflicted of our land. The glory of this age and the glory of our civilisation is in the fact that it stands out and helps, as no other period of history has stood out and helped, in directions like these. However much hon. members may differ as to the best method of carrying out certain things, they are in perfect agreement with the great objective. Whilst I differ with the hon. member for Maryborough in many things, I must say that I believe he gave expression to a new point—and all credit to him for having done so—when he made reference to the need of caring for women in the pre-natal stage. If there is a time in the experience of womenkind when help is necessary it is just at that stage. I commend the hon. member for his suggestion, as I believe it is just as essential to care for the woman prior to the birth of the child as it is to give the attention that has been and is being given by the extension of our baby clinics and other schemes for the care of the infant child. Any hon. member who has had to do with the people knows that again and again his sympathies are being appealed to in connection with this very matter, which has received very wise consideration and attention. It could be worked economically and well in connection with the maternity hospitals that have already been established.

While I agree with the hon. member for Maryborough on that particular point, I disagree with his suggestion regarding the amalgamation of the ambulance brigade with the hospitals. The ambulance brigade has done a wonderful work, and will continue to do so. It has no need of Government assistance beyond what is already given. The Government have treated it very liberally. There is no need to step in and amalgamate the ambulance with the hospitals, and I hope that amalgamation will not come about. The two institutions should certainly work together, but my experience leads me to believe that the ambulance now receives a support that it would not receive should it be directly connected with the hospitals. It would not be so sympathetically or generously dealt with if it were directly connected with the hospitals. I am speaking from my own experience in connection with the ambulance brigade in Warwick, which is a great institution. In every way that one looks at the working of that very fine brigade one can only speak well of the work done.

Mr. WEIR: It is one of the best ambulances in the State.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes; I do not know another of which one could be proud. The equipment, staff, and work of the Warwick Ambulance Brigade commend themselves to every thinking man. It—and every institution—advertises itself by its work. It is no ostentation about it, but it advertises itself and the State as the result of work done, and contributions come in proportionately.

I am sorry that I cannot agree with the new Hospitals Act in the way in which money

is to be levied. I support very heartily and fully the expressions of opinion given by hon. members to-day to the effect that it is unfair that only the ratepayers are to be called upon to support the hospitals. It seems to me to be manifestly unfair that the many wealthy individuals and single men who are living in flats or in boarding-houses, and who are not ratepayers, may escape from contributing towards the upkeep of our hospitals. Such men are going to escape scot-free, whilst the industrious man who puts up a small home for himself, the business man who is running our enterprises, and the wealthy man, are alone to maintain these institutions. Surely there should be a degree of pleasure experienced by any man, no matter what he is, in supporting laudable institutions such as our hospitals.

I wish to say a word regarding the erection of a maternity ward at the Warwick Hospital. The Home Secretary knows exactly the feeling in Warwick with regard to that matter. The hon. gentleman gave a very nice audience when he was waited on a few weeks ago, and expressed very capably the attitude of the Government. Unfortunately, the hon. gentleman's proffer of help was in the direction of saying, in effect, "If you wish to reap the full benefit, you must come under the Hospitals Act."

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not indicate that you would have to do so to get a maternity ward.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman indicated that the short-cut method of achieving that object was by coming under the Hospitals Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was in regard to the nurses' quarters, and not the maternity ward.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Then I misunderstood the position. When the Minister was in Warwick the two matters came up for consideration, and I understood the remarks of the Minister applied to both.

The HOME SECRETARY: Since my return I have approached the Works Department, and have asked them to send an officer up to report as to the class of building required.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Is that for the maternity ward or for both?

The HOME SECRETARY: For both. I want a report on the other as well, but there are no conditions attaching to the building of the maternity ward.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am very glad to know that. When the Minister was approached at Warwick in connection with this matter he was all that any body of people could desire, and I am glad to know that the door is open to carry out what the committee had in view in regard to the maternity ward, and that, if they want the full benefits regarding the nurses' quarters, it will be for them to decide as to whether they elect to come under the Hospitals Act or not.

I should very much like to mention the other matter that you have vetoed, Mr. Pollock. I want to assure the Committee that I quite agree with what other hon. members have said as to the good work done by that organisation, and there can be no two opinions on the subject. If anything is attempted in the way of restricting their operations, I shall be right up against it.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I have always realised that this vote is a sort of parish pump affair, but at the same time it is absolutely essential that we should refer to the requirements of our districts. I would like to express my appreciation of the action of the hon. member for Fitzroy in so generously stating the position in regard to the discussion in connection with the Country Women's Association and in urging that a discussion should be permitted. I appreciate his action very much.

I would like to return to a challenge made by another hon. member in connection with the Brisbane General Hospital. I am referring to a case where hundreds of pounds apparently have been thrown away. When we are spending many thousands of pounds to alleviate trouble and ill-health we can ill afford a waste of that description. The reason I am referring to the charge is that I hope the Home Secretary will take some steps to clear the matter up one way or the other. If there is a man in this State making hundreds of pounds out of the children of the State, then he ought to be branded.

To get back to the parish pump part of the business, I wish to thank the Home Secretary for his reasonable treatment, generally speaking, of the Beerburum Hospital, and I trust that he will remember that that hospital is absolutely unique in many ways. It is one of the most up-to-date institutions in Queensland, and it is run by one of the cleverest of doctors. It is well managed, and it is situated in a place where there is practically no income from the people.

I want to impress upon the Home Secretary the necessity for some different scheme to that which is in vogue at the present time, so that hospitals in particular cases will not be penalised. I quite agree with [3.30 p.m.] the hon. member for Enoggera that the hospitals must be financed out of the income tax—I do not care if we have to pay more income tax. The days have gone by when we can depend upon charity. I think that charity to-day is one of the last things to trust in. More money will have to be provided as we go along than ever was necessary in the past.

We have been asked by hon. members opposite why our Government did not do this. My answer is that forty years ago, if you went to some of the pioneers on our lands and offered them assistance, you might get a black eye for your trouble. The whole system in regard to hospitals is changed, and it was changing when this Government came into power. More assistance is now needed than ever. In land settlement, for instance, at one time a man with a family could go on the land with a bag of flour and a few tools, but to-day that cannot be done; and the position is the same in regard to assisting those who cannot help themselves. The Caboolture Shire is helping to support two hospitals—the Beerburum Hospital and the Woodford Hospital. Under the Hospitals Act a tax is placed on the ratepayers in the district, instead of appealing to the generosity of the people, which was very marked in connection with the upkeep of the Woodford Hospital. I think the Home Secretary will agree with me that the Woodford Hospital is the most efficiently financed institution in Queensland. The Act takes away the oppor-

tunity of contributing to the hospital from a considerable number of charitably disposed people, who are better able to pay than the bigger section which is being rated under the Act. I do not think any hon. member is in favour of the method adopted of collecting this tax or agrees with the way it is imposed. The struggling farmer in the Caboolture district who is eking out an existence will have to pay towards a tax for the upkeep of the Brisbane General Hospital or base hospital, whilst a doctor or solicitor receiving £1,500 a year and living in a rented house will not have to pay anything towards the upkeep of the institution in the way of rates. The Home Secretary must recognise that something will have to be done before we can say that we have an equitable system in regard to the upkeep of the hospitals. If the hospitals, the baby clinics, and similar institutions have come to stay, as we all hope, there will have to be some decent application of taxation to keep them going, because the moment you cut out the necessity for charitable donations everybody becomes unwilling to make them. Take the case of the Beerburum Hospital. Only a little while ago it made a special appeal, and I spoke to several persons about assisting it. In nearly every instance they said, "Oh, we have to pay the hospital tax now," and it was a reasonable reply. At the same time, unless the Home Secretary gives us something extra from the lottery money, we shall not be able to carry on.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I do my best.

Mr. WARREN: I admit that the hon. gentleman has acted generously, and he has personally promised me that he will look into the matter, but there is a broader consideration than how it affects one hospital. It is very fine to have a base hospital here in Brisbane, and no doubt it is possible to get better treatment in it than at little country centres; but, at the same time, I am quite prepared to say that at least twenty cases which have passed through the Beerburum Hospital would have died if they had had to come to Brisbane. I can say that of my personal knowledge, and I believe that the position is even more marked in the Woodford district. We cannot get away from the system of district hospitals.

Many persons talk about the ambulance. I am very keen on ambulance work, and I am confident in saying that we have 50 per cent. more efficiency than in New South Wales, and that our system is equal to that in any other country of the world.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN: That is no mere humbug. Having this very fine and efficient institution, it would be very foolish of us—until we can be sure of getting some better system—to destroy what everyone in this Chamber has admitted is one of the very finest institutions of its kind in the world. It would be foolish to tack it on to any hospital. As to the necessity for district hospitals, let me take cases of accident and snakebite, for instance. Unfortunately, they are rather frequent in country districts, and they must be dealt with right on the spot. It may appear that the expenditure involved in the upkeep of a country hospital is big in comparison with that purpose, but, at the same time, it is only wise for the people in each district and the Government to consider whether it is not prudent to keep these

[*Mr. Warren.*]

hospitals going. Right out in the West, away up in the North—in whatever direction you like to go—the district hospitals are doing a good work. The committees, the doctors, and the nurses work with the very best intention of relieving the necessities of the unfortunate sick and suffering. I hope that the Home Secretary will devise some better means of dealing with the ambulance brigades. If he were merely to tack them on to the hospitals it would be disastrous in the extreme. I hope that he will give very serious consideration to the taxation imposed in connection with the upkeep of the hospitals.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosswood*): I have listened to the statements of hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Murrumba, in connection with the taxation imposed on the ratepayers for the upkeep of the Brisbane General Hospital. I think the hon. gentleman has taken a rather narrow view of the application of that tax. He stated that a doctor might be receiving £1,500 per annum and living in a rented house and not be paying a penny towards the upkeep of the hospital. That is not quite correct. A man who rents a property, whether he be a doctor, an ordinary workman, or anyone else, has to pay the whole of the rates and taxes upon the premises that he rents. A man may construct a residence and let it to a doctor. He takes into consideration the general rates to be paid, the cost of upkeep of the building, the taxation that is imposed by the local authority, whether it be a hospital tax, a general rate, a gas rate, or a water rate, and fixes his rent so that the whole of those rates will be paid by the tenant. That disposes of the contention by the hon. member that such a person would get off without paying a fair and reasonable share of the taxation, whether it be a hospital tax or not. Prior to the passing of the Hospitals Act, it appeared to me that the method of taxing the ratepayers only was quite unfair if there was no system of imposing a tax upon everybody. I am still of the opinion that a fair and reasonable tax on incomes applied generally throughout the State, not only for the upkeep of the Brisbane General Hospital but for the upkeep of the country hospitals, would be the fairest means by which we could make the hospitals efficient and thus enable them to carry out the duties imposed upon them. In the past we have found those who have had to bear the biggest share of the cost of the upkeep of the hospitals have been those in the business world. When there was an appeal to the people in the past, those who were appealed to generally were the commercial people of the State, and they were compelled for business reasons to put their hands into their pockets and pay a great deal more than they were justly entitled to pay for the support of these great humane institutions. The time is now ripe when the possibility of imposing some sort of tax upon the whole of the people for the upkeep and maintenance of hospitals should be taken into consideration. I do not know whether an equitable division of that tax could be secured by dividing the State into subdivisions and allowing the income derived from that taxation in a particular centre to be allocated to the hospitals in that centre, or whether the Minister administering the hospital vote could make a fair and reason-

able distribution of the tax to the hospitals in the various districts. That is a question that could be gone into at a later stage. At present we have a system which does not work out equitably to the whole of the people. In the Ipswich district, where there is a large number of industrialists employed, a voluntary contribution is made by them week after week and year in and year out towards the upkeep of the Ipswich Hospital, and, as a result, that hospital to-day is in as good a position as any other hospital in the State.

Mr. ROBERTS: I understand from their last report that they are in very serious difficulties.

Mr. W. COOPER: If they are, they are not and have never been in the same difficulties that the Toowoomba Hospital and many other hospitals in the State are in.

Mr. ROBERTS: The award of the Arbitration Court was responsible for that.

Mr. W. COOPER: A scheme will have to be devised to obviate hospitals getting into such difficulties as they have got into in the past. The Minister would be well advised to try and evolve a scheme under which the hospitals will not have to depend on charity. The men who possess the greatest amount of wealth are those who are most reluctant to put their hands into their pockets for such a humanitarian cause as the upkeep of hospitals. All hospitals have in the past depended upon the Government for subsidy. The common taxpayer furnishes that subsidy, which comes out of the Consolidated Revenue. If a tax was imposed and specially earmarked for hospitals, those institutions would not get into difficulties, and the heated debate that has taken place in this Chamber to-day on this vote would never take place again. The Government of the day have done their duty as far as they possibly can. Every Government and every administrator of the hospital system of Queensland has found himself up against difficulties.

Mr. ROBERTS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. COOPER: I believe that hon. members on all sides are in accord in so far as a tax for the upkeep of hospitals is concerned, although differences of opinion may exist as to the manner in which the tax should be collected.

Some criticism has been levelled at various hospitals during the debate. I have had the opportunity in the past of serving on a hospital committee, and one thing which I found to act very detrimentally to the institution was the attitude adopted by various medical practitioners who were practising in and around the district where the hospital was situated.

I found, as a committeeman, that doctors were quite prepared to take into their private hospitals patients who were in a position to pay up to a certain period. When they found that the funds of the patient were exhausted, they took up the attitude of advising the patient to go to the General Hospital to complete the cure, if possible. I think that a contemptible attitude for any medical man to take up. If he found that a patient was not in a position to pay—and a medical man will not take in a patient for nothing, unless he is very charitably disposed—he should advise the patient. If the doctors owning private hospitals were honest

Mr. W. Cooper]

they would make inquiries as to the amount of money which the prospective patient might have available, and if the patient had not sufficient money, they would say, "As a professional man dependent on my profession for a living, I do not think I can treat you and effect a cure within a certain time. After making inquiries, I find that your funds are not sufficient to pay for my professional services, and I advise you to go to the General Hospital." The General Hospitals are provided with funds from the public purse, or from the pockets of the public, and those hospitals should get the benefit of anything that the patient can afford to pay.

I do not think it is necessary for me to dilate any more on this. I think the Home Secretary would be well advised to go into the matter of taxation in Queensland, so that we may continue to carry out the humanitarian work which this Government have started. Let us get all the expert knowledge and the services of experts to relieve the sufferings of those who are unable to help themselves, but if it is convenient for patients to pay, they should be made to pay.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I would like to add my quota to what has already been said on this vote. I was particularly interested in some of the speeches made during the day, and I wish to refer to that made by the hon. member for Rockhampton. I must say I was very much pleased with what the hon. member had to say. He made suggestions which, if given effect to, would be the means of getting over some of the difficulties with which we are at present faced.

The hon. member said that perhaps it would be a wise provision for part of the funds raised by the "Golden Casket" to be used for the purpose of constructing nurses' dwellings. At present there is agitation in my own district for the provision of better accommodation for the nurses. While the hospital is in a pretty sound financial position, we are up against it to a certain extent, inasmuch as the committee are not satisfied as to just how we are going to be treated with regard to future endowments. Some time ago there was an art union conducted in connection with our hospital. Before I go into this, I might say that the Home Secretary's Department have treated the committee at Laidley and the Laidley Hospital very fairly, in so far as they have given us a fair contribution from the funds available from the "Golden Casket."

Last year I think our quota from that fund was £240. About that time it was found necessary to remove the hospital, and after removing it we found we were somewhat behind, and application was made for the right to run an art union for the purpose of raising funds. The Laidley Hospital benefited to the extent of £2,736 8s. 6d. as a result of that art union. That hospital is working under the old Act, and, while it has benefited to the extent of £2,736 8s. 6d., I have received information from the department that it is not their intention this year to subsidise that amount.

The HOME SECRETARY: You will get a subsidy from the Home Department on a portion of it.

Mr. LOGAN: I am coming to that point. I recognise the difficulty of subsidising hospitals already in a fairly sound financial position. I am sorry that the Secretary for Public Works, who controls buildings, is not

[*Mr. W. Cooper.*

in the Chamber at the present time, as I want to know whether, if the committee of the Laidley General Hospital saw fit to undertake the construction of nurses' quarters for that hospital, they would receive a £2 to £1 subsidy on the amount collected? I would like to know whether the committee would be allowed to carry on that building, and whether a portion of the subsidy now due would be made available so as to cover the cost of erecting nurses' quarters, without touching the money already in hand? I understand that the Home Department has no objection to the hospital committee going on with the erection of these buildings, but I understand that when it is a question of erecting further buildings we come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works, and therefore the subsidy on this amount will only be at the rate of £1 for £1, instead of being £2 for £1.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. It will be £2 for £1.

Mr. LOGAN: I am glad to hear from the Home Secretary that the subsidy will be £2 for £1, and I am sure the committee will be pleased to hear it, too.

The HOME SECRETARY: What the committee should do is to establish a building fund and allocate a certain amount of money to it. When they are allowed to erect that building the Secretary for Public Works will subsidise the amount at the rate of £2 for every £1. My subsidy is only for maintenance.

Mr. LOGAN: I understood that, if this work is gone on with, the subsidy from the Department of Public Works would only be £1 for £1.

The HOME SECRETARY: No: £2 for every £1. The only difference is that I get a certain amount of money from revenue for maintenance, and the Secretary for Public Works gets a certain amount of money from loan for buildings. He subsidises from loan, and I subsidise from revenue.

Mr. LOGAN: The subsidy will be the same?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. LOGAN: Thank you very much. I appreciate the efforts of the Government in connection with the establishment of baby clinics. One of the most essential things in the country districts at the present time is the establishment of maternity homes. There is no doubt that many country women are placed at a very great disadvantage through not having proper attention in this direction.

My district is situated between [4 p.m.] Ipswich and Toowoomba, and I am strongly of opinion that it would be a good thing to establish a maternity home in the vicinity of the Laidley General Hospital. There are a great many people living a great distance away from the railway line who make Laidley their centre, and it would be of great benefit to a large area if a maternity home were established there as soon as possible.

Reference has been made to the reduction of the subsidy to the ambulance brigades. I am rather surprised to see that reduction. The ambulance brigades have done a wonderfully good work in the State, and wherever you go you will find a branch established somewhere in the district. It has been difficult to raise funds from subscriptions in the respective districts to

keep the brigades going, and it is regrettable that the Government subsidy on the amount of the subscriptions raised for this purpose has been reduced. It is desirable to encourage the ambulance brigades in their work, which is supplementary to that of the general hospitals, and we should increase the subsidy so that they will be able to carry on.

I do not want to pursue the question of the Country Women's Association, Mr. Pollock, as you have given your ruling on that matter, but I have had something to do with the association, and I know that they are out to assist the hospitals in every shape and form. They have provided rest homes at the seaside, which will alleviate the necessity of people going into the hospitals, and in that direction they have done good work in assisting the institutions which have been provided for sick people. We have heard something of their objective. We know that they stand behind all institutions which are formed for the betterment of the women and children of the State. I regret some of the remarks which have been passed about the association during the debate. Those of us who have some knowledge of the work which these women do are glad to express our appreciation of their work, and to give them every credit for what they are doing. I have had the privilege in my district of attending the annual meetings of the association for the past two years, and have been greatly impressed with the work they are endeavouring to do. I shall always be glad as their representative in my electorate to place their ideas and desires before the Government, although I think they are better able to voice their wants themselves, knowing as they do so well the requirements of the women and children of the State.

Mention has been made about the possibility of reducing the assistance given to those hospitals which to-day are in a fairly financial position, but I should regret any step being taken which will make it harder for those people who have been industrious enough to make their institutions financially successful, while in other places the residents have been lacking in their support and consequently their hospitals are poor. I have seen indications that there have been protests by certain local bodies, not only in the Lockyer district but right throughout the State against the present method of collecting taxes. The Lockyer-Rosewood District Council of the Local Producers' Association have protested against the whole of the burden being thrown on the property-owners. They say the whole of the people of the State should be contributors to the upkeep of the hospitals, and in my opinion that view is quite justified. In many towns business people may not contribute at all because they do not own any land, while the unfortunate man who holds land either in the town or outside has to bear the whole burden. Whilst the amount of the taxation thrown on these landholders may not be heavy, there are people living in these districts who would probably contribute to the hospital every year under the old system, or whenever an appeal is made to them. I always do whenever the opportunity is presented to me; but by instituting this method of taxation there is a possibility that those people will withdraw their contributions and pay much

less in taxation than they are paying by subscription at present. I would like to see the scope of the Hospitals Act enlarged so that everybody in the community would have to contribute something. Such a contribution has been referred to as a poll tax, but it is only a reasonable thing. In conclusion, I hope that the payment of the subsidy to the Laidley Hospital will be carried out faithfully, and that everything will be done to assist hospitals where necessary.

At 4.7 p.m.,

MR. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

MR. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I have already had something to say with reference to the hospitals, and I would not have risen again had I not noticed that the hon. member for Fitzroy has made some reference to the Country Women's Association. I want to deny the statements made by the hon. member, and say in definite terms that the Toowoomba branch of the organisation has actually done work connected with the baby clinics.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in dealing with that association.

MR. ROBERTS: I am not going to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Cooper, if you will not allow me to discuss it, but I want to show where the Toowoomba branch has actually been dealing with the baby clinics. I have here the report of the committee presented at the annual meeting in February, 1924. I may say that it was proposed to put the baby clinic in Toowoomba in a most unsuitable part of the town, and it is pointed out in this report that the committee had been instrumental in making successful representations to the Minister in charge of the administration of the clinics as to the desirability of changing the site.

In their report the Country Women's Association referred to the matter. The report says—

“We were also instrumental in having the site of the baby clinic removed to its present position, from a most unsuitable part of the town.”

MR. HARTLEY: Where was the member for the district?

MR. ROBERTS: The member for the district was the then Assistant Home Secretary.

THE HOME SECRETARY: They made their representations to the member for the district.

MR. ROBERTS: I do not want to hide anything.

MR. HARTLEY: You are hiding something. I have recommended that the representations be made through the member for the district.

MR. ROBERTS: A certain amount of public money was to be expended, and it was found that the site was not a suitable one, but I am not concerned with that for the moment. I am not saying to whom they made their representations.

MR. HARTLEY: The hon. gentleman is trying to step round it.

Mr. Roberts.]

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not trying to step round anything.

Mr. WEIR: You want to give the "sticky-beaks" a go.

Mr. ROBERTS: I think it is disgusting to apply the term "sticky-beaks" to such an honourable body of women.

Mr. KERR: Scandalous!

Mr. ROBERTS: They are a credit to the State of Queensland, and the Commonwealth of Australia.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. gentleman is not cutting much ice with us.

Mr. ROBERTS: These women undertook the very big problem of providing a home for the children of waiting mothers and invalid mothers. Do hon. members opposite object to that? The object of the association is to do the best they can for the womankind of the State. A considerable amount has been said about the taxation imposed for the upkeep of the hospitals.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not competent on the Estimates to discuss the merits or demerits of any Act of Parliament or prospective Act of Parliament.

Mr. ROBERTS: We have one Chairman who allows a discussion on this matter, and then another who forbids it. I heard certain hon. members discussing this phase of taxation about five minutes ago, but we now have a change of Chairman and a change of ruling.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I want to have no misunderstanding as to my attitude in connection with assistance to baby clinics, bush nursing schemes, or anything else. What I did ask the Home Secretary at the commencement of my address, after quoting a passage from the report of the Country Women's Association, was that any recommendations which they made which trespassed on the duties of a member of Parliament should be made through his acting as their representative, and by those means any political tendency would be avoided. The hon. member for East Toowoomba emphasised my recommendation when speaking of the baby clinic at Toowoomba. He confirmed what I said would happen. What I said would happen did happen at Toowoomba in connection with the baby clinic.

Mr. ROBERTS: The site was previously in my electorate.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. gentleman did not say so. He said it was in the electorate of the present Secretary for Public Instruction. He emphasises what I have said by quoting from their own report to show that they were instrumental in having the site removed from a certain place to a more central situation. Where was the hon. member when he did not see that the baby clinic was erected on the site where it was required?

Mr. ROBERTS: I had been to the department and made representations prior to that.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you mean to say that the Country Women's Association exercised more influence with the Minister than you did?

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not say that at all.

[*Mr. Roberts.*]

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member said that he made representations to the Home Secretary, and that the Country Women's Association subsequently saw that gentleman and got the site altered.

Mr. ROBERTS: No, that is quite wrong.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Secretary for Public Instruction, who was then Assistant Home Secretary, is the hon. member for Toowoomba. The Country Women's Association waited on him, he in turn waited on me, and I consented to the alteration of the site.

Mr. HARTLEY: I would not like to be the Solomon to decide who got the baby clinic removed to its present site. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: Because the Secretary for Public Instruction introduced the matter to me as hon. member for Toowoomba, I gave him the credit for having represented it officially to me.

Mr. HARTLEY: No hon. member recognises more than I do the value of an association of women without any political objective, who band themselves together to advance the cause of women and secure the establishment of baby clinics and such schemes. What I have said, and what I do say, is that any association whose executive and principal officers are well-known and bitter opponents of the Labour party can only expect that members of the Labour party will view them with suspicion as a political party.

Mr. WEIR: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: There is just one other matter that I would like the Home Secretary to touch on when he is replying, and that is in relation to the establishment of the seven bush nursing schemes. I want to show the significance of the good work of that association, and how these things work. Those schemes have been established at Amiens, in the Carnarvon electorate; Cecil Plains, in the Dalby electorate; Coominya, in the Stanley electorate; Tara, in the Murilla electorate; Burrandowan, in the Nanango electorate; Gunnewin, in the Maranoa electorate; and Ubobo, which I believe is in the Port Curtis electorate. That shows where the power of that association has been working. Such a scheme is absolutely necessary, and will do good work in these centres, but why in these places they are established and not in those places which are more remote from the big centres, and where bush nursing is needed, I cannot understand.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): It has always been the practice when representations are made to me by anybody which affect the interest of an hon. member of any electorate, to first consult that hon. member. (Hear, hear!) The matter of the seven bush nursing homes mentioned by the hon. member for Fitzroy does not come under the Home Department, because the Bush Nursing Association has provided the money for their own schemes.

Mr. HARTLEY: Don't you provide them with £100 per year for each home?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Home Department has secured a vote of £100 a year from the "Golden Casket" funds for each of the homes. That is a very profitable investment for the department, because if it were not for such schemes we would probably have to provide hospital accommodation in the districts where they are centred.

Mr. WEIR: Why are they all situated in Tory centres?

The HOME SECRETARY: We did not ask what centre they were to be established in. The application was received from the association and dealt with on its merits.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: As it should be.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is evidence of the activity of the people in that district.

The HOME SECRETARY: That may be so. I can only judge the matters that come before me. The hon. member for Burrum asked for certain information, which I desire to supply. The cost of endowment as at 30th June, 1923, was—

	£	s.	d.
Hospitals	186,896	6	1
Ambulance brigades ...	44,388	6	11
Total	£231,284	13	0

To make up that amount the payment from the "Golden Casket" was £61,284 13s. In addition to that, a further amount was allocated from the "Golden Casket" funds of £65,000.

The statement has been made that a system should be evolved whereby we could support our hospitals by means of the income tax. While the debate was taking place I worked out the total expenditure for hospitals for last year, so that hon. members may realise what the proposal to meet this charge by additional income tax would mean to the State.

Mr. ROBERTS: I could not get a chance to illustrate the subject to the Chamber.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will quote, without talking of taxation at all, what the expenditure has been from all sources for the upkeep of our hospitals and ambulances. I shall give the figures for 1922, as the figures for 1923 are not available. In that year the cost of upkeep of our hospitals, including the Brisbane General Hospital, was £483,984. The cost of the upkeep of the ambulances had increased until it represented £113,823, or a total for the two of over £600,000. I can assure hon. members that the figures for 1923 will be over £500,000.

Mr. WARREN: Is that for the whole State?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; and it is extraordinary for the population we have. That will give some idea of the position confronting us if we alter the present system. Naturally, on every discussion on a vote affecting the hospitals, the question of the application of "Golden Casket" funds comes up for consideration. I want hon. members to appreciate the fact that the "Golden Casket" funds are allocated only with a desire to assist in a fair and legitimate way those hospitals requiring assistance. No set scheme can be evolved that will operate in such a way that every hon. member will consider his particular district fairly dealt with. I shall take the case of the Miles Hospital, which was mentioned to-day by the hon. member for Murilla.

In 1920-21 the grant to the Miles Hospital was £494 10s. The following year the condition of the hospital was worse, and the vote was increased to £791 6s. 8d. In 1922-23 it was reduced to £500. Last year no "Golden Casket" grant was made. The reason was that the balance-sheet submitted to the Home Secretary's office disclosed the fact that the hospital had a credit at fixed

deposit and in bonds of £2,508. I wish to say that most of the credit balances at fixed deposit or invested in Government securities are the result of utilising the endowment for purely maintenance purposes. We are daily confronted with the position of finding accumulated funds placed with banks at fixed deposit. The committees are drawing only a small interest on those deposits, while the bank is securing a high rate on them. No provision has been made by the Miles Hospital for anything in the nature of a building fund.

Under the present system hospital committees must estimate their revenue and expenditure before they commence the year. We shall then have the opportunity in the Home Office, with the experience gained by years of work by the staff, of scrutinising and carefully analysing the proposed expenditure, so that we may keep a check on any extravagance that may be going on in any part of the State. Hon. members very often make the mistake of thinking that there is only one vote on which the Home Department can draw to pay subsidies to hospitals. The Home Department has a set vote given to it by the Treasurer to meet all requirements, but, if we cannot finance the hospitals within that vote, we must draw upon the reserve "Golden Casket" fund to meet ordinary endowments, because, although in the Estimates it is definitely stated that endowment will only be paid to the extent of the vote, we have never carried that out, but have always endeavoured to meet the endowment payments to the various hospitals.

A point has been raised by the hon. member for Lockyer regarding the payment of endowment. The Home Department, as I say, has a very limited vote to meet the increasing demands of hospitals which have raised funds by some special effort. We claim that, if we endow sufficiently to enable the hospital committee to carry on their activities for that year, they may then put their own money into the bank; but they will not have our subsidy of £2 for £1 to draw interest on or allow the bank to play with or invest at a high rate of interest either. But we do not rob them of one penny of what they are justly entitled to, because next year we shall carry on the unendowed portion of their fund. The allocation of the "Golden Casket" funds yearly presents greater difficulties. By listening to the debate one would think that the "Golden Casket" fund was an inexhaustible fund that the Home Secretary could dip into and take whatever he required. Requests have been made in this debate for nurses' quarters, for baby clinics in country districts, and for every conceivable sort of expenditure. The present distribution has not yet been allocated, but on the previous Estimates I said that we were not going to give to hospitals money from the "Golden Casket" fund to be placed in the bank merely to create a surplus, as that would, in a large measure, stop people from subscribing; but that we would judge every hospital on its merits, and if, after the allocation, it was found that a hospital had been unjustly dealt with, we would review the matter towards the end of the year so that they need not finish the year with a deficit. That has been done. In several cases, even in the last quarter of the financial year, I have come to the assistance of hospitals.

Hon. J. Stopford.]

The department and the Government have been congratulated upon the work done in connection with the maternity scheme and the providing of baby clinics. I am pleased to notice that this has the approval of all sections of the House. It will be interesting to hon. members to know that we have now in existence eleven clinics, and we have also a very modern training school in the Brisbane area that we hope to open in a very short time. We have already opened twenty-eight maternity wards in country districts. There are fifteen new ones almost completed, and there are several others in the course of construction. We have endeavoured to meet the requirements of every district in the State. It has been advanced by several hon. members, and particularly by the Central members, that a training school for nurses in pre-natal, baby clinic, and child welfare work should be erected in the Central and Northern districts. There is really no need for that at all. We can quite understand that it may develop in years to come, and in the larger centres we may be able to extend it.

[4.30 p.m.]

It may be interesting for the Committee to know that we intend that every nurse in charge of our back country maternity hospitals shall be given an opportunity of coming to the school in Brisbane to be trained in pre-natal and child welfare work, so that they may in a measure carry on baby clinic work in connection with the maternity scheme in the various country districts, as well as do any visiting which is required in pre-natal work, which is so necessary in the State. As soon as our training school has been properly equipped we intend to train nurses who can become instructors, and in association with the Department of Public Instruction we intend to have a portion of the domestic science, child welfare courses, and subjects of that description taught in the technical colleges and high schools of the State by trained and capable instructors. I think that that portion of the scheme is founded on very fine lines. I want hon. members to realise that there is ample scope for all the activities which come within the orbit of the "Golden Casket" funds. During my short period as Home Secretary, what has struck me very forcibly in travelling in many of the country districts of the State is the fact that many of the hospitals, while they have provided everything possible for the comfort of the patients, have been very neglectful—that perhaps is a harsh term to use—they have not had the foresight to provide proper accommodation for the women who carry on the noble work of nursing. Probably the Government may take a share of the responsibility for that, inasmuch as their preaching and legislation have brought about for the nursing staff the inception of eight hours a day instead of the long dreary hours they previously worked. While it probably imposes very little hardship on the hospital committees to provide the extra amount required for salaries, the question of providing accommodation to meet the needs of the increased staff has been greater than they could manage. The Cabinet arranged in urgent cases of that description that, if the Department of Public Works could not cope with the matter, they would come to the assistance of such country hospitals, and we are doing that.

As one hon. member pointed out, a further

[*Hon. J. Stopford.*]

scheme will require attention in the very near future after we have erected and completed our maternity wards. When a sick woman who has young children comes to the maternity ward, some place will be required where those children can be kept while she is in the maternity ward and afterwards while she is in the hospital ward, and that is one of the things which will receive attention after the maternity scheme has been completed.

Several hon. members have drawn attention to the lack of proper accommodation for the reception, in various centres, of patients who are to be sent to Goodna or other asylums, and they have asked that proper accommodation should be provided by the hospital committees as the accommodation at present is not what it should be.

The hon. member for Fitzroy raised the question with reference to Rockhampton, and I have given him a promise, seeing that we have a reception-house at that centre, that we will try to meet the Rockhampton Hospital Committee and ascertain whether there is not some other method of dealing with such patients. The hon. member for Maryborough has also brought the matter under my notice, and I intend to deal with other centres in a similar way.

The hon. member for Port Curtis brought forward a charge which everyone must regard as very grave indeed, but which is not the fault of the Hospitals Board. I want hon. members clearly to understand that the charge is levelled against the old committee of the Children's Hospital, because, although the hon. member referred to only one member, the other members of the committee are equally responsible if they have been foolish enough to allow such power as he indicated to rest in the hands of any one man, so that he might do what this committee were charged with doing. I can only say that, as we have two Government representatives on the board, I am going to request the board to have a proper inquiry.

A further charge was levelled against the conduct of the Lady Cheimfords Maternity Hospital in Bundaberg. This hospital is not supervised by the Government and does not come under the Government scheme. I have, however, had the opportunity of visiting the institution, and, whilst I do not set myself up as an expert, I am prepared to say that I was greatly impressed with the work of the committee and the very valuable service which the institution gives. If conditions are such as the hon. member states, it is a reflection on the committee and not upon the matron, because they have charge of the work of the institution, and they are the ones who should take the responsibility if any hospital doctor or town doctor is forced upon a patient. Of course in every institution rumours and statements of fact or supposed fact are made by patients, but the grave charge that people leave the hospital and die from septic poisoning is one that can only be decided by a medical man, and I intend to draw the attention of the committee to the matter, since they have built the hospital and otherwise seem to have conducted it in a way which seems to reflect credit on them.

The hon. member for Stanley quoted the case of a returned soldier who had been admitted to the Brisbane General Hospital and was discharged and was afterwards

found dead in a park. I do not think those statements are borne out by the investigations which have been made. I understand that the board made a full investigation and sent a copy of their report and findings to the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Imperial League. At any rate, the matter is before the board, and I suggest that the hon. member may get information from them.

The hon. member for Queenton referred to high charges which had been made to maternity patients in Charters Towers. I think he was referring largely to private institutions. The practice in the maternity wards erected under our scheme is to request the committees to make the charges as reasonable as possible. We make one stipulation—that no person who has not the means to pay the fees shall be refused admission, and we make a further stipulation that every doctor practising in the district shall have the right to send his patients to the maternity hospital.

The hon. member for Maranoa brought forward the treatment of cancer and the large increase in the number of persons suffering from it, and said that certain treatment was being used to-day and he hoped that treatment would be made available by the Government.

I might say for the benefit of the committee that this matter has occupied my attention for some time past. Dr. Halford saw me, and put forward a scheme whereby a machine might be housed in Brisbane, and the treatment would be available for application by all the doctors. Nothing came of that scheme, but recently a friend of mine underwent this treatment in Melbourne, and on his return he so impressed me that I made an offer to the Brisbane Hospital Board that, if they would instal an up-to-date plant, I would find the money and equip the hospital, provided that every doctor would have the right to send his patients there for treatment. I understand that the Board have made certain inquiries, and as a result Dr. McLean and an architect will shortly visit Melbourne, and I hope the people of Queensland will soon have the benefit of that treatment.

MR. COSTELLO: What about the second charge made by the hon. member for Port Curtis in connection with the Children's Hospital?

THE HOME SECRETARY: I have dealt with that.

MR. KERR: Do you propose to have an inquiry?

THE HOME SECRETARY: I am not sure that I have the power to order an inquiry. The Government have two representatives on the Hospitals Board, and although the matter was one that occurred before the Board was constituted, I am going to ask those members to bring the matter up for discussion at the Board, and the Board must then take the responsibility.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

INSANITY.

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

“That £193,077 be granted for ‘Insanity.’”

Question put and passed.

LAZARET.

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

“That £9,636 be granted for ‘Lazaret.’”

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): Yesterday the Minister was good enough to give some information in connection with the lazaret. We all know the deplorable condition of those unfortunate members of the community who are overtaken with this dreaded and fearful disease, and have to be shut away from all other human beings. I notice that there is a decrease in the appropriation under this heading. I would like some information from the Minister as to the cause of that decrease, and also whether inquiries have been made as to whether this is the most suitable location for a lazaret. Some years ago the Commonwealth health authorities made a suggestion that the whole of those hospitals should be taken over by them, and that the lazaret should be situated at a place where the best medical advice possible would be available to those afflicted with this dreaded disease. I would like the hon. gentleman to say whether anything further has been done in that matter, and whether, after the experience that has now been gained, the Peel Island site is considered the most suitable for the purpose. During my period of office I made a personal visit to the lazaret on two occasions, and it enabled me to deal more effectively with the wants of these unfortunate people. We all know that in many instances they have fantastic desires.

It was always the policy of the Administration of which I was a member, when the requests were not altogether too fantastic, to approve of them. I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. gentleman who is now administering the affairs of the department is giving effect to that same policy; but, in view of the number of inmates as disclosed by the information given to the Committee yesterday, I would like to know the cause of the decrease in the vote. It was usually necessary to supplement the amount of the original appropriation under this heading. I would like the Home Secretary to state whether there are any points fixed in connection with the exercise of the ambit of the patients. During recent visits to the vicinity of Peel Island, I have noticed patients walking at the place known as the Horseshoe. It is quite the proper thing that these unfortunate people should have the greatest scope of the island, but it would be well if the department would warn yachting parties of this fact, because many of them for many years have made this a favourite resort.

At 4.46 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If the patients are permitted to use that beach, it would be as well, in the interests of the health of other members of the community, that these yachting parties should be informed that the whole of the island is reserved for these unfortunate people, and that, in view of the infection that might accrue, they be warned against landing there.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): When the hon. member for Albert was Home Secretary, he had very largely to do with the lazaret, and I, as a former colleague of the hon. gentleman, ought to say that no one was

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

more sympathetic than he towards the unfortunate people detained there. His administration was most sympathetic, as it also was in connection with Dunwich.

Any hon. member who has been to the lazaret—and I have been there, as it is a part of my electorate—can only come away with feelings of deepest sympathy towards the unfortunate people there. As the hon. member for Albert has said, many of the inmates have very strange notions as to what should be done for them. Many of them consider that they have been put there when they had no right to be so treated. One thing that has struck me—and I do not want to blame this Government more than any other Government—is that in some directions the site is not altogether an ideal one for people afflicted as they are. It is ideal in the sense that it is isolated, and if a site was wanted where there were mosquitoes then the lazaret is that site. A person requires to be active all the time that he is on the island in brushing the mosquitoes away with a bush, or something of the kind. I would very respectfully suggest that, if we are going to make certain attempts to destroy the mosquito, the hon. gentleman in charge of the Department of Public Health should be asked to move in that direction at the lazaret. I am perfectly certain that there must be an element of danger through contamination by mosquitoes, especially to visitors, as it is recognised that mosquitoes are responsible for the carrying of disease.

Apart from that, we have those people there and we should make their lives as bearable as possible. They are prisoners. I recognise that in some directions they have advantages. Those who are fond of boating may go out in the boats that are supplied; but, if one places himself in the position of those who are detained there, one can quite understand that, if they think they are detained for no legitimate reason, it creates a feeling of unrest and discontent. I am on my feet to-day to say that nothing should be spared to make the lives of those people as pleasant as possible under all circumstances, and I commend that matter to the attention of the Home Secretary.

I notice that some increase has been made in the provision for nurses, etc. That is a very proper increase. Nothing should be spared to make the lives of those people as interesting and comfortable as possible.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): The question asked by the hon. member for Albert is explained by the fact that there was a sum of £365 last year appropriated for the removal of lepers from Cairns to the lazaret, and that is not shown on this year's vote.

The hon. member for Wynnum stated that people who are isolated by society's laws and for the sake of society should have every consideration. I thoroughly agree with that view. The hon. member for Albert brought up a question that has occupied the minds of those in charge of the Home Department for some time. I refer to the feasibility of removing the lazaret to the mainland. That has been in the minds of those in the Home Department for some years, and that is the only reason that has prevented us from making proper improvements on Peel Island. This year I am spending something in the vicinity of £4,000 to improve the buildings and accommodation for the people at the

lazaret. I have also made arrangements to give the people who are isolated there some opportunity of losing sight of their isolation, and have arranged to instal on the island a listening-in wireless set so that the inhabitants may keep in touch with the outside world.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

MEDICAL.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—
“That £2,465 be granted for ‘Medical.’”

Question put and passed.

OUTDOOR RELIEF.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—
“That £29,166 be granted for ‘Outdoor relief.’”

Mr. LLOYD (*Kelvin Grove*): I note with satisfaction that this vote has been increased. Opposition members have occasionally blamed the Government for spending a great deal of money on outdoor relief, forgetful of the fact that we must provide, in a way that is not humiliating, the wherewithal to enable people to subsist without begging or stealing. I am very glad, after an experiment in economy has been tried, and possibly good results obtained from it, that we have reverted to a more liberal policy. We are doing all we possibly can to battle with the unemployed question, but it is impossible for a State like this to solve it on its own, and in the meantime it is our duty to assist those who, through no fault of their own, have not the means of support.

I notice with regret that the very capable officer in charge of this subdepartment is still left at the salary of £310 per annum. That is the salary of a mere clerk, and it is quite inadequate for an officer with the responsibilities that he has. I think both previous Governments and the present Government owe a great deal to this officer. He is a man possessed of special qualification for these duties, a man with keen judgment, and a man with a good deal of natural shrewdness combined with sympathy towards people in distressed circumstances, and he is a man whom it would be very hard to replace. I should be very sorry to see him remain on his present salary much longer, but I should also be very sorry to see him removed from that position, and I hope by the time the next Estimates come round, more liberal treatment will be accorded to that gentleman.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I notice there is an increase in this vote of £17,500 in connection with ‘Maintenance and Incidentals’ as compared with last year, and I think the Home Secretary should give us some explanation as to why that increase is required for the present year. We are all agreed that outdoor relief is necessary in deserving and necessitous cases. When a woman with a family has lost the breadwinner, every possible assistance should be given to her. But, while we think there should be liberal treatment in the matter of outdoor relief to those who really require it, there are quite a number of cases probably where some

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

return might come to the State as a result of that expenditure.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would cost more to collect it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know that it would cost so much to collect it. The local authorities in the State have always got a lot of work on hand, and, generally speaking, have not too much money, and possibly by making some arrangement with them the department might get some return for this expenditure. I know that in quite a number of cases it would be impossible to get any return.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I would like to support the remarks of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove in regard to the salary of the officer in charge of this sub-department. The officer in charge is very sympathetic at all times to every deserving case brought under his notice. Although the sum provided for outdoor relief this year is

[5 p.m.] apparently £29,166, we know that on another Estimate an amount running into something like £170,000 is provided for sustenance for the unemployed. I do not want to refer to that, because that is on an entirely different vote, but I mention it in passing. There has been a rearrangement in another department which is closely connected with this. Time and again I have made the suggestion that there should be a closer co-ordination between this department and that of the Director of Labour, and I again make that suggestion to the Home Secretary. It is necessary for me to amplify that point a little. The Director of Labour is responsible for labour, in the sense that he has to place the unemployed. Then he is responsible for sustenance for those who are unemployed, and who come under the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act. After they have received that sustenance while unemployed for a certain time, they come back to the Relief Department, so that we have practically the same matter being dealt with by two departments. I am not suggesting that the officer in charge of this relief should be done away with, but I think there should be closer co-operation between the two departments from the standpoint of economy. The officer in charge of relief would have all information at his command, because under the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act such information must be obtained. An average of something like 283 able-bodied men per month, according to the report for 1923, go to this department for relief and draw rations. We must remember that somewhere about 1,000 children also draw rations, in most instances because of the unemployment of their parents. There is a close connection between relief payments and payments from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The unemployment insurance, of course, works out gradually, and then the recipients come back on to this department. I hope that some action will be taken by the Home Secretary to bring about some co-ordination and thus save expenditure. We all know that it is incumbent upon us to maintain the aged, sick, widows, and deserted wives, and that they cannot be permitted to starve. I would stress the point that this department should be connected more closely with the Unemployment Insurance Fund branch, because the same men may from time to time receive benefits in both cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have too good a check.

Mr. KERR: I am glad to know there is a check, because it is necessary. There seems to be a considerable duplication of work. The officer in charge should have all information about the man who ultimately gets relief after his sustenance allowance is exhausted.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): The hon. member for Windsor asked me for an explanation in regard to the increased amount of the vote this year. During the year the demand on the fund might possibly be more than it is at present. There will always be a number of deserted wives, prematurely old men, and children who cannot come on the Unemployment Insurance Fund but who must live. If hon. members will look at the table compiled by the officer in charge they will see that the number of able-bodied men in the whole of the State who have come on the Outdoor Relief Fund is only eighteen. The whole of the State has been absolutely combed, and a special officer has been appointed for that purpose.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): It does not matter how sympathetic the administration of a Government may be, there will always be men and women and little children for whom the State must provide relief, and in a department such as the Home Department it is absolutely impossible to say definitely what amount of expenditure will be required, because it happens, as it has happened in this case, that a greater amount of relief is necessary than was anticipated. There is, however, one form of State relief which I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister. Many years ago, as hon. members know, a number of South Sea Islanders whom the Commonwealth Government decided should no longer be employed in the Commonwealth had to be deported, but exemption was granted to those of them who were too old to return to their islands in the Pacific. A number of those boys got farm and other work, but as the years have gone by they have become too old and decrepit to support themselves in that way. They have no claim on the old-age pension, and apparently they have no claim on this "Outdoor Relief" fund. I do not know whether there is any legislative enactment which prevents the Minister from granting them relief.

The HOME SECRETARY: They can get the indigent allowance.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Will the hon. gentleman grant them that?

The HOME SECRETARY: We have been doing that in cases.

HON. J. G. APPEL: To my own knowledge some of these old chaps have been living in a particular locality so long that to take them away and put them into the Dumwich Benevolent Asylum would terminate their existence at once. It has to be remembered that the State has benefited by many thousands of pounds of wages which were not claimed by the South Sea Islanders and that money has gone into the Treasury, so that to that extent these unfortunate boys or old chaps, whichever you like to call them, have in their declining years a claim upon the Government's generosity. As the Minister has been good enough to indicate

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

that the matter will receive consideration, I shall notify those interested in my electorate to that effect.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): There is one thing that I cannot quite understand. The Home Secretary said that last year about £29,000 was spent. According to the table relating to the Treasurer's tables, a sum of £40,869 was spent.

Mr. BRAND: That is true.

Mr. DEACON: I would like an explanation on that point. I quite admit that relief must be given in necessitous cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: Probably that amount has something to do with the relief granted by the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. DEACON: No; it is in connection with "Outdoor relief," under the heading "Home Secretary."

The HOME SECRETARY: Taking the total expenditure, I have ascertained that the amount expended was about £38,000.

Mr. BRAND: Including "Maintenance and incidentals"?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. DEACON: Last year £38,000 was spent, and this year £29,166 is being appropriated. What is the reason for that reduction in this vote?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stoppedford, *Mount Morgan*): The officer controlling this matter informs me that, as the Unemployment Insurance Fund comes more into operation, there will be a corresponding decrease in these payments. It is anticipated that this vote will be sufficient to meet requirements for this year.

Mr. DEACON: We ought to know how much money is being spent on outdoor relief.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Unfortunately, we do not get much time to go into the reports dealing with this matter, but I find that the amount spent in Brisbane and suburbs on outdoor relief up to 30th June, 1923, was £16,311, and up to 30th June, 1924, £7,122, and over the whole State last year we spent a total of £38,813. That amount was expended, notwithstanding that the Government only provided an appropriation of £12,064. If I am any judge of the position, I believe that in the next few months these payments are going to be very heavy. I only hope that the anticipation of the hon. gentleman, who is answerable for the compilation of this estimate, will be correct. Hon. members must realise that Queensland is facing a somewhat difficult position in the matter of prospective employment. I have in my mind, as I related yesterday, all those men who report daily at the Labour Bureaux. I do not know where the Home Secretary got the figures he gave this Committee, as I cannot reconcile them with the table attached to the report of the Home Department showing the average number of men unemployed.

The HOME SECRETARY: The figures I quoted were for the metropolitan area.

Mr. ROBERTS: With all due respect to the hon. gentleman, I take it that he did not do so. Appendix B, page 31, of the report of the Home Department is headed—

"Number of persons in the metropolitan area receiving relief rations during each month of the years ending 30th June, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, respectively."

[*Hon. J. G. Appel.*

The monthly average number of able-bodied men receiving relief in the metropolitan area in 1924 was forty-five.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are talking about the number of able-bodied men receiving rations.

Mr. ROBERTS: On perusing this table I am struck with the remarkable reduction in the numbers for the months from November to June, as against the months from July to October. I cannot imagine the reason, because I see large bodies of men unemployed. I recognise that the Government have to keep those people, but I would like to support the remarks of the hon. member for Windsor when he said that the Government should get some return from those able-bodied men. It would be better to give those men even £1 worth of rations and get a certain amount of work in return. These men would be better off if only two days a week work at the award rates were given them instead of issuing them with rations, as the State would then get some return.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I would like to say a few words on this vote, more particularly in connection with the difference that is shown in the treatment of the agriculturist owning a piece of land with a family dependent on him, and the ordinary swagman. I will give the Committee an illustration to show what I mean. During the worst period of the drought in my electorate a man with a family of four children came into town one afternoon, only to find that his credit was stopped. He could not get any food for his wife and family anywhere. He applied to the police, but it appears that the police had instructions from the Home Department that all such cases must be first reported to headquarters before relief was given. This particular case for some unknown reason was turned down by headquarters. It seems to me very unfair that an able-bodied swagman can come along and demand rations, whereas a person in difficulties with a wife and children dependent upon him must first be reported to headquarters. I want to be fair to the Under Secretary, and to say that I had a similar case brought under my notice recently, and I personally brought the matter before the Under Secretary, who made every possible effort to see that the family was fed until relief was obtained. When it comes to a case of starvation, the people who happen to own a little home or a piece of land should get just the same consideration as does the swagman. If any case is hard, it is that of the man with a family who cannot obtain food. It is only right to say that it was the Country Women's Association that came to the rescue and fed the distressed family I have referred to.

Another matter has appealed to me, because I have been without a shilling in my pocket and did not know where I would get my next meal from on one occasion, and I think that able-bodied men who go to the police and ask for rations should be requested to earn them. Give them rations if you like, but find a means whereby they may in some shape or form earn those rations. If this were brought about, I am confident a considerable percentage of swagmen would not go for rations. They would keep clear and would not fall into the trap. I am confident that at present a percentage of the men with swags on their backs are living on these rations. They are old students at the game. The Home Secretary has his work cut out

to catch them. They live on the business and do not intend to work. I have seen many cases where they have been offered work and have refused. I know the Home Secretary will ask for a definite case, but you cannot get a man from the country to come in and say that a certain man refused work. He would not be bothered. I think the Government should see that any able-bodied man should earn the rations.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I listened to the hon. member for Nanango when he brought forward a specific case of a farmer being refused relief when suffering from the recent disastrous drought. In all fairness to the Home Secretary and his department, I must say that I have had in my electorate many similar cases, and in no instance have they been refused relief. I agree with the hon. member that it does not matter whether a man is a pick and shovel man, a mechanic, or a man on the land, there should be no differentiation.

I have at least five cases in my electorate of men who went out on the land and evidently found the drought too severe. Perhaps their financial position was not strong enough to justify them going on the land. They made appeals to me, and through me they received every consideration, just as much as any swagman ever received. There is one thing I will say about the farming community. If my memory serves me aright, during the drought the farming community practically all over Queensland declared that they did not want to be handed doles.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

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

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.